

## **Dear Dorothy**

The letters from a soldier, who longed  
to return home to the girl who waited for him.

Written By

**RUSSELL FREDERICK WATLING**

Between 1939 and 1946

**For Fred and Dorothy's family  
and the generations yet to come.**

These letters have been typed as Fred wrote them with  
formatting keeping as true to the originals as possible.

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## **I Won't Let You Down**

**Date: 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1939**

Sent From: 8 Legge Street, Lewisham, SE13

Sent To: 50 Vicars Hill, Ladywell, Lewisham, SE13

Dear Dorothy,

Please will you write to me to let me know where you are living at present as I would like to see you again and explain things. If you have lost all interest and do not want to see me again, please don't answer this letter. I have called often at No. 50 to try and see you, but have received no answer to knocks, taking it that your people have gone away during the crisis and you have gone to stay with relatives for a while. I shall look forward to hearing from you soon, hoping you are still OK and if I should not see you again, I wish you the best of luck.

Fred

xxxxx

P.S. Please excuse writing.

**Date: 6<sup>th</sup> September 1939**

Sent From: 8 Park Street, Lewisham, SE13

Sent To: White Lodge, 32 Holmfield Road, Leicester

Dear Dorothy,

I received your letter OK. Will you meet me at 3 o'clock on Thursday by the garage by the churchyard in Lewisham High Street. I cannot say any more now, as I am in a hurry just now, so cheerio, the best of luck.

Fred

xxxxxxx

P.S. This time I won't let you down.

## **Bushfield Army Camp, Winchester**

**Date: 17<sup>th</sup> January 1940**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, 3 Squad, No. 1 Company, K.R.R.C.,  
Bushfield Barracks, St Cross, Winchester, Hampshire  
Sent To: 5 Knighton Park Road, Sydenham, SE26

Dear Dorothy,

Just a few lines to let you know I am getting along OK so far, although I should rather be at home. Still it's no use thinking that way about it or getting downhearted. We are here for eight weeks rifle training and have been told by our Sergeant that we do not get any leave until those eight weeks training is over. Then we get shifted somewhere else. The weather down here is very cold and windy. I wish old Adolf would call the whole darn thing off and let us all come home again to Blighty. Anyhow, I get plenty of time off down here, but there's nowhere to go. The town is two miles away from the Barracks and all there is in town is pictures and most of them I've seen. Well Dear Dorothy, there's not much I can talk about now, but I will write often and let you know what's happening. I shall keep my chin up. That's what I want you to do for me, so cheerio for now.

Fred

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P.S. Please will you ask Mum if she will send me a pair of mittens and a balaclava helmet. When we are on the rifle range it's cold. We can't wear gloves, but can wear mittens if we have them.

**Date: 30<sup>th</sup> January 1940**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, 3 Squad, No. 1 Company, K.R.R.C.,  
Bushfield Barrack, Winchester, Hampshire

Sent To: 5 Knighton Park Road, Sydenham, SE26

Dear Dorothy,

Just a few lines to let you know I am still OK and getting along fine so far, although I wish that I could get out of the Army.

The weather here is terrible, we are over our boots in snow and everyone in our squad have got bad colds, some of them have got a touch of the flu and been shifted to hospital, at nights the coughing in the barrack room keeps you awake half the night and it's beginning to get on my nerves. Anyway, they told us a few days ago that we were having a weekend leave on Friday, 16<sup>th</sup> February until Sunday 11.30. But this may have to be cancelled now owing to a great number of the squad being laid up and putting us behind with our training, but I hope not. I shall be looking forward for the 16<sup>th</sup> to get home again even if it is only for a couple of days. Well Dear Dorothy there is nothing more I can say at present but will write again soon. Cheerio, all my love and lots of kisses.

Fred

xxxxxxx

**Date: 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1940**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling

3 Squad, No. 1 Company, K.R.R.C., Bushfield Barrack, Winchester,  
Hampshire

Sent To: 5 Knighton Park Road, Sydenham, SE26

Dear Dorothy,

Sorry I have not wrote before now, the truth is I don't know what to write about, besides this life is getting me down and I don't feel like doing anything at all. Just as we begin to settle down here they bundle us off somewhere else, next Saturday we shift to Chiseldon about 42 miles from here. I hope to get Easter leave from there at least they tell us we will. Our squad have won the Barracks rifle shooting shield and

the boxing, we lost the darts, but hope to win the machine gun championships next Thursday.

I had a letter from Doll and Florrie. They said the weather was pretty bad at home. We have only had a couple of wet days down here since we got back from leave other-wise the weather here has been lovely. Mum wrote and told me you had been down home. I hope you are finding something to do with yourself these days because I can't. Well this time next week we shall be at the other place. I will write next Sunday and let you know what I think of it, what we hear about it doesn't sound so good, so anyway whatever it's like we shall have to put up with it, will say cheerio now.

All the best.

Fred  
xxxxx



## **Chiseldon Army Camp, Nr Swindon**

Swindon army base was a key training facility and staging post for soldiers bound for the First World War and then the story was repeated during the Second World War.

There is an intriguing addition to the plot, in the fact that it was the very first camp in Britain to receive American soldiers, thus providing a page in a chapter of American history.

On the 29<sup>th</sup> March 1940, King George VI took tea in the Officers' Mess after carrying out inspections - his daughter, Queen Elizabeth II would visit in 1954 - and by now, regular regiments were receiving training at Chiseldon.

**Date: 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1940**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, 1<sup>st</sup> M.T. Btn K.R.R.C., Infantry Company, 3 Platoon, Chiseldon Camp, Chiseldon, Nr Swindon, Wilts.  
Sent To: 5 Knighton Park Road, Sydenham, SE26

Dear Dorothy,

Just a few lines to let you know I am getting along OK, hoping you are the same. I would rather be at Winchester because here there is nowhere to go when we have finished work, the nearest town to us is Swindon that's 6 miles away, and we have to get a special pass to go there. I shall be glad when our eight weeks here are over, from here I may be lucky and get posted somewhere in London. Anyway I may get a weekend leave on the 6<sup>th</sup> April, get home about 5.30 Sat and return about 9 o'clock Sunday night. I will let you know as soon as possible if I get it. Well this is all for now, don't forget to write as soon as you receive this letter, cheerio.

Fred  
XXXXX

**Date: Sunday ? 1940**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, 1<sup>st</sup> M.T. Btn K.R.R.C., Infantry Company, 3 Platoon, Chiseldon Camp, Nr Swindon, Wilts.

Sent To: 5 Knighton Park Road, Sydenham, SE26

Dear Dorothy,

Just a few lines to let you know I received your letter OK. At present things are going fine for me. Hope you are finding it the same. Yesterday, Len and I went to Swindon to have a look round. I found it quite a nice place. It reminded me of Lewisham on a Saturday. It was a hard job amongst the crowds to get along. We walked around until about 5 o'clock, then went into the pictures and saw "Charlie Chan at Treasure Island" also Arthur Askey in "Band Waggon". It was a good show and I enjoyed it, when we came out it was nearly half past 8 so we went into a YMCA till almost 10 o'clock and came out just in time to catch the bus back to camp. During the time we were in Swindon, Len and I got the eye now and again from some nice looking lumps of skirt, but we just ignored them (Hm).

Now I hope you are not expecting me home next week because I know for sure that I can't get leave. They have now given orders that we can only have one weekend per month. Still we should soon be getting a few days leave, anyhow I am looking forward to it.

A fortnight from today, I shall not be here. Where we are going is still not known, but each day we keep getting issued with something to make up our full kit, if we get much more I shall have to hire Pickfords to move me from here. I have got another battle dress for the summer. I don't know if I shall wear it, because it fits me like a sack. Well this is about all for the present, hope to see you again soon, cheerio.

All my love.

Fred

xxxxxxx

P.S. I wrote to Ma on Friday, if you go down this week tell her that today I am feeling fine. I don't even know I have had anything done to my arm, in fact I am feeling better than ever before.

## **Brigg Army Camp, Lincolnshire**

**Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> ? 1940**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, B. Coy Rangers K.R.R.C., c/o  
Postmaster Brigg, Lincolnshire

Sent To: 5 Knighton Park Road, Sydenham, SE26

Dear Dorothy,

Just a few lines hoping to find you all merry and bright as I am at present.

Well I expect Mum has already told you where I am. It's not so near home now as I have been used to being, no weekend leaves from here because it would take all my time up in travelling, never mind I am looking forward for that next leave, but I don't think it will come before I go abroad, but when I do get home that still goes with me what I told you if it is OK with you.

This place, what I have seen so far of it, is not so bad, anyway there is a picture palace that is as welcome as anything anytime. Len and I went there last night and saw Victor McLaglen in Ex-Champ. Not a bad film, but we are only allowed out until ten o'clock, we can only go out every other night at that, you see the other nights we are on guard in case Jerry comes over by parachute.

Well Dear Dorothy, I hope you are finding something to do with yourself these times, keep your eyes off the other guys or I shall be putting my hands round that dear little throat of yours (now don't start crying) (laugh). Well I haven't much to say at present. I shall be looking forward to a letter from you, cheerio, all my love.

Best of luck.

Fred

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**Date: 9<sup>th</sup> June 1940**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, B. Coy Rangers K.R.R.C., c/o  
Postmaster Brigg, Lincolnshire

Sent To: 5 Knighton Park Road, Sydenham, SE26

Dear Dorothy,

Just a few lines to let you know I am still OK, everything going along fine for me, hope you are finding it the same.

This last week we have been rather active, the three last nights we have had air raid warnings, Wednesday morning was the first. We had just got to bed when the sirens went off at 20 past 12, we had to go out on the trucks and scout around the countryside. We saw a German plane the guns were firing at, the plane dropped bombs at Scunthorpe, 10 miles from Brigg, not much damage was done. We were hoping for a few parachutists to come down, we were all set for them. I should have loved to have a pot at a few Jerries. Well I am getting settled down again, it seems we are going to be here quite a while, it's over this parachute business, we will be a home defence battalion until they move another crowd here to take our place. Just as we all get properly settled, I suppose we will have to shift again.

The weather here is great, have not seen a drop of rain for the last 3 weeks, we have a river there to go bathing in, fishing and boats as well we can hire out. This week we went to the pictures and saw "The Sisters" with Bette Davis and Errol Flynn, last night we saw "Let us Live" Hendry Fonda and Maureen Sullivan were the stars, both pictures were good.

Yesterday I had a letter from my Sister who is staying with Ma. I expect you have seen her if you have been down home, her husband was very lucky, by what she tells me, his ship was bombed, but they all came out of it OK.

Well Dear Dorothy, I have not got anything more to write about at present; thanks for the stamps, I wish I could get home for a few days, but as things are now, there is not the slightest hope. Anyway, I hope to see you again soon, keep smiling, cheerio.

Best of luck.

Fred  
xxxxxx

## **Rushden Army Camp, Northants**

**Date: 28<sup>th</sup> June 1940**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, B. Coy Rangers K.R.R.C., c/o  
Postmaster Rushden, Northants

Sent To: 5 Knighton Park Road, Sydenham, SE26

Dear Dorothy,

Just a few lines hoping to find you in the best of health as I am at present. Well I expect you have already heard that our Company has moved again, this time we are under canvas. It's alright so long as the weather is fine but when it rains, it's pretty uncomfortable, still it's no use grumbling, it's got to be put up with.

Well Dear Dorothy, it's now over seven weeks since I saw you last, it's the longest run I have had without leave. I am sorry to say, that I think it will still be a long time before I get home again, we even can't get a weekend, as it is now we are only allowed out one night in every four. I heard you went with Ma to Doll's for tea. What you do you think of Orpington, myself, I think it's a nice place and cannot understand why Florrie ever moved away.

Well I hope you are not having to get up as much as we are during the night, almost every night now we get raid warnings, but nothing has come of them so far, except for a couple of nights at Brigg, we had German planes over there. They dropped some bombs close by, but none of them did much damage. Well Dear Dorothy, I guess we are here now for quite a time, on account there is no place overseas to send us at present, we would have gone over, instead of coming here, if France had never signed an armistice, all we can do now I guess is defend ourselves.

I think this is about all I can think of at present, keep smiling and don't worry about anything, will write again soon, cheerio.

All my love.

Fred

xxxxxxx

**Date: 25<sup>th</sup> July 1940**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, B. Coy Rangers K.R.R.C., c/o  
Postmaster Rushden, Northants

Sent To: 5 Knighton Park Road, Sydenham, SE26

Dear Dorothy,

Just a few lines to let you know I am still keeping OK. Hoping you are also. Sorry I have not wrote before as I have not had much time this week.

Well Dear Dorothy, I returned safe and sound. I could not even lose myself on the way back "worst luck". It is alright coming home but it's the going back that gets you down. I hope that one day it will be only a one way ticket, that is for home and no going back. Well it's the same old thing over and over again here. That's what makes you get fed up, if we only had something different to do now and again it would not be so bad, still as I always say, it's no use grumbling, it's what we have got to put up with. Yesterday, we had a big surprise. We were told we were going to be inspected by someone but who it was we did not know, not until he got out of his car did we know who it was, it was a surprise for all of us for it happened to be Winston Churchill. He came down and inspected the whole brigade.

Well Dear Dorothy, I have been thinking of what we were talking about last Thursday night or should I say early Friday morning, it was ¼ past 2 before I arrived home, had to walk all the way, still I did not mind that. I suppose you remember what it was about, well I told you exactly how things stood, but if you care to do what you said, live with your Aunt or Ma, until this is all over, I can't see where anything is to stop us from getting married soon.

Anyway, I want you to think about the responsibility you are taking. What I mean by that is, we don't know how things are going to turn out and I may not be so lucky to come out of this alive, but don't think I am looking on that side of it, I have every confidence that I shall come out of it all OK.

Next time you write, tell me what you think about what I have said. I have never said anything to Ma about it, but I have been thinking of doing so, anyway I will wait until I hear from you.

Well Dear Dorothy, we are having soon nice weather again for a change. I hope it is the same as home, as it is here. Whilst it's fine it does help you to get down to what you are doing. Let's hope the weather stays fine for a while anyway. Now Dear Dorothy, I think this is all I have to write about at present, so will close. Hoping to have an early reply from you.

Best of luck.  
All my love.

Fred  
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XXXXXXX  
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**Date: 7<sup>th</sup> August 1940**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, B. Coy Rangers K.R.R.C., c/o  
Postmaster Rushden, Northants

Sent To: 5 Knighton Park Road, Sydenham, SE26

Written on back: V Robinson, 92 Hawthorn Road, Penge, SE20

Dear Dorothy,

Just a few lines to let you know I received your letter OK. I hope you are still in the best of health as I am at present. Well I am glad to know you are still feeling the same about us getting married. The next leave I get, we will have to let Ma and Dad know. Well Dear Dorothy, they have started giving us 7 days leave here. I think I told you about it in my last letter, but in case I did not, I thought I would let you know, but they are only letting 8 a week ago, which means I won't get mine for about 3 or 4 months. Never mind, the time will soon go and I shall be home again. I have lost Len for a while, he went from here last Monday to a place called Guilsborough, about twenty six miles from here. He has gone on a guard job down there for a month or maybe two. He does not know yet. Well Dear Dorothy, I have not much news, it's only the same old thing over and over again here, but the weather has been lovely, really been too hot for us, anyway it is better than being ankle

deep in mud. I think this will be all for now so will close hoping to see you again soon, cheerio.

All my love.

Fred

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## **Sawston Army Camp, Cambridgeshire**

**Date: 18<sup>th</sup> August 1940**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling

B. Coy Rangers K.R.R.C., c/o Postmaster Sawston, Cambridgeshire

Sent To: 5 Knighton Park Road, Sydenham, SE26

Dear Dorothy,

Just a few lines to let you know I received your letter OK. Hope you are still keeping well as I am at present. Last week you had a warm time I see with the air raid at Croydon. I hope it has not upset you. Did you see anything of it, you must let me know, we seem to be dodging it all, the only raid warning we had last week was Friday at tea time, the all clear went 15 minutes after. I hope those raids in London has not upset Ma. I have been wondering if she heard the bombs at Croydon or saw any of the planes.

Well Dear Dorothy as you can see we have made another move. We came here last Wednesday it is about 8 to 10 miles from the town of Cambridge, it is a big wood where we are, out in the wilds 2 ½ miles from the nearest village. So far it's been all work since we got here, from 6 in the morning till 9 o/c at night. We have had to chop down trees and bushes to make way for our tents and trucks to get in, 6 weeks we are supposed to be here for, I have hope we don't stay any longer. Every move we make gets worse. Well Dear Dorothy I don't think it's worth you coming down to see me, not in this place anyway. We will have to wait until I get my 7 days leave. That is if nothing happens in the mean time before we see each other again.

You say you are having your weeks holiday soon, let me know what date you get it on.

Well, I hope you are still getting around and enjoying yourself it seems the best thing to do these days have a good time while you can. I think this is all for now, so will say cheerio for the present, hope to see you again soon.

Best of luck.

All my love.

Fred

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P.S. Will you give this address to Ma it's a bit different to what I told her.

**Date: 6<sup>th</sup> September 1940**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling

B. Coy Rangers K.R.R.C., c/o Postmaster Sawston, Cambridgeshire

Sent To: 5 Knighton Park Road, Sydenham, SE26

Dear Dorothy,

Just a few lines hoping to find you in the best of health as I am at present.

I am sorry I haven't written to you earlier only we have been very busy with one thing and another. Well I hope you are not having many raids lately. I very seldom see a paper, so I don't know much about what is happening at home, only what I gather from fellows who come back from their 7 days leave and what they say does not sound very pleasant. Anyway, keep your chin up and let's hope it will soon be over.

Well Dear Dorothy, I expect Ma told you that I was trying to get leave this week, so that I would have been able to see my nephew who was on leave, but I was unable to get any owing to the Battalion having a big training scheme on, they would not allow anyone to have leave until it is over. I don't know when I shall be coming home again, but it's almost certain to be somewhere around the end of Oct or Nov, still I shall try and get it sooner if I possibly can. Talking of air raids, we are getting quite a lot of it here lately. The other morning about 30 to 40 of them came over our heads, but it was not long before our own fellows were up and after them. There is quite a few airdromes around us here, so I guess that is what they are after.

How is the weather at home, it's grand here, much too hot for me, it's alright if you can walk about with nothing on, but I am afraid they have

not yet turned our camp into a nudist colony. Well dear, I think this is all for now, hope to see you soon, don't forget to keep the chin up.

Cheerio.

Best of luck.

Fred

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P.S. You still insist on not writing until I have answered your letter, still I don't blame you.

xxxxxx

**Date: Weds, ? 1940**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling

B. Coy Rangers K.R.R.C., c/o Postmaster Sawston, Cambridgeshire

Sent To: 5 Knighton Park Road, Sydenham, SE26

Dear Dorothy,

Just a few lines hoping to find you safe after the terrible raids you have been having. Well the house at Legge Street where Mum and Dad were has been wrecked, the windows have all been blown out and the roof has fallen in so they made Mum and Dad go to Yorkshire with Florrie, my Sister Alice is with George, they were in the shelter at the time it happened. No one got hurt thank goodness. It was a landmine that did it. Ladywell Park it landed, it has blown half the road to ruins and killed more than 30 people. Our street caught the blast of it and now there is no one living up there they have all had to get out.

Well Dear Dorothy, Doll and Geoff are going to write to you, perhaps you will be able to go over and see them one Sunday. I have given them your address. You could go early perhaps one Sunday morning so that you could get home again before it got dark. Soon we will be going to Northampton in billets, it's getting rather cold under canvas and as soon as they start leave again, I shall try to get my 7 days. Well if you should think of going over to Doll's, the best way to go would be to Bromley South Station and ask for St Mary Cray, it's only about 10 mins walk from there, anyone could direct you, the address is 24 Friar Road.

Well Dear Dorothy, I think this is all for now so will close wishing you the very best of luck.

Cheerio.

All my love.

Fred

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P.S. We don't get many raids here. What we do get aren't worth mentioning. I wish you were all down here.

## Northampton Army Camp

**Date: 9<sup>th</sup> October 1940**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, B. Coy Rangers K.R.R.C., c/o  
Postmaster, Northampton

Sent To: 5 Knighton Park Road, Sydenham, SE26

Dear Dorothy,

Just a few lines in answer to your most welcome letter. Glad to hear you are keeping well, as it leaves me at present A1. As you can see we have moved again, last Sat night at 10 o'clock we had orders to move at 9 o'clock Sunday morning. What a scramble it was to get all our kit ready, still we got over it OK and here we are, in Northampton. I like it here, some of our Company are billeted in a big hall, but our platoon are in an empty house. It's alright, I wish we were going to be here for the winter, but that is not to be, we are only here for about 3 weeks then we are going on a long voyage. I am sorry to tell you this, but I thought it better for you to know, we are going abroad. Yesterday we were measured for all new stuff, such as they wear in the East. Anyway, I shall see you before I go, either next Monday or Sunday. I shall be on my seven days leave, but as Mum & Dad are in Yorkshire I shall go there first from here to see them. I shall stay there for about 3 days then come to London. I want to see you and all my family before I go, it may be a long time, but I get another chance, as soon as this damn war is over. I hope we will be able to settle down. I don't want you to think, I have forgotten about what I asked you a few weeks ago, but I will be able to speak to you about it when I see you sometime next week I hope. Well Dear Dorothy, I have only been out here two nights with the boys and I must say we have enjoyed ourselves. We are going to make the best of it for the next three weeks. I hope you are also making the best of things while you can. I don't see much in the papers about air raids lately, but I suppose London is still getting them.

Well, I think this will be all for the present. So will close, will be seeing you shortly. Cheerio.

All my love.

Fred

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**Date: 15<sup>th</sup> October 1940**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, B. Coy Rangers K.R.R.C., c/o  
A.P.O. 725

Sent To: 5 Knighton Park Road, Sydenham, SE26

Dear Dorothy,

Just a few lines to let you know I am at Florrie's with Mum & Dad. I arrived here Sunday at 7.30pm after ten hours travelling in the trains. I left Northampton by the 9.14am train. Four times I had to change and each time had to wait a long time for the next train to come in.

I thought I was going on leave Monday, but they altered it to Sunday. I have to be back next Sunday at 12 o'clock noon. I am sorry to say I will not be coming to London as I told you, it is over 200 miles and with all my kit and one thing and another it is a bit of a job, but the next leave I get I shall come to London. Ma and Dad want me to stay with them for the week so I don't like to say no.

Well Dear Dorothy, I am sending you a photo I had taken in Northampton. I hope you will like it, I don't like it much myself, but perhaps you will.

Well I have not much to write about at present, only I hope you still find plenty to do, although old Jerry does not seem to give you much chance to do anything at all, but never mind I think it will soon be all over.

I think this is all for now, so will close. Wishing all the best of luck, cheerio.

All my love.

Fred

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**Date: 19<sup>th</sup> October 1940**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, B. Coy 1<sup>st</sup> Rangers K.R.R.C., c/o  
Postmaster 725

Sent To: 5 Knighton Park Road, Sydenham, SE26

Dear Dorothy,

Just a few lines in answer to your most welcome letter. Glad to hear you are still OK and keeping that chin up. Well Dear Dorothy, I am very sorry about not seeing you on that 48 hours leave I had, but the truth of that was, I never really had any leave. I deserted for 4 days, but don't say anything about what I have told you to any of them at home. I had a letter from home saying the home had been damaged, so I asked my commanding officer for leave to see my people. It was refused me, so I took it, all I got was 5 days CB for it, so I didn't mind. I would have come home for a few days if I had not had all my kit to carry around with me, but it is a long journey to London from here. It would have meant nearly all travelling for me on this leave, so I hope you will see it that way for me, although it will be a long time before we see one another again, because I have already told you I am going abroad, but just in case we should never see each other again, I want you to know, that I love you and will always do so. All I hope is that I come back and if you still want me, we will be married and settle down.

Well Dear Dorothy, I think this is all for the present. I have only one more day left with Ma and Dad. Sunday morning I go back, so will close. Ma and Dad send their love to you, cheerio.

Best of luck.

All my love.

Fred

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P.S. When you write again, use the address I have put the number is 725.

**Date: 24<sup>th</sup> October 1940**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, B. Coy 1<sup>st</sup> Rangers K.R.R.C., c/o  
A.P.O 725

Sent To: 5 Knighton Park Road, Sydenham, SE26

Dear Dorothy,

Just a few lines to let you know I have got back alright after my seven days leave. It was not a very nice journey on the way back, knowing that it was the last leave for goodness knows how long, but all I can hope for now is that the war will soon be over and the next leave will be a one way ticket.

Well Dear Dorothy, you asked me if you could come down here to see me. I don't think it is worth chancing, because we may be going any day now. You may come here and find I have gone. We have been given all our new stuff, so I don't think we will be here many more days.

How are things lately at home, same as usual I suppose. Len came home from leave Monday and told me Ladywell had been damaged a good bit again. It seems so strange to me, that they should keep finding the same places over and over again. I am hoping that the winter brings things a lot quieter for all at home.

In your letter I received at Florrie's, you did not mention whether you got the photo, or if you liked it or not, so I hope you tell me in the next letter. I expect you forgot all about it.

How is the weather in London lately. It has turned very cold here, it's a good job we are in billets and not still under canvas, we would be frozen at night. Well Dear Dorothy, I think this is all for the present. Will write again before I leave so will say cheerio until next time.

Best of luck.

All my love.

Fred

XXXXXXX

XXXXXXX



**Date: 29<sup>th</sup> October 1940**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, B. Coy 1<sup>st</sup> Rangers K.R.R.C., c/o  
A.P.O 725

Sent To: 5 Knighton Park Road, Sydenham, SE26

Dear Dorothy,

Just a few lines in answer to your welcome letter. Glad to hear you are keeping well, as I am at present.

I am sorry to hear that your Aunt's house has been damaged and that you are having to go elsewhere at nights. Still it is a good thing that you all escaped any injuries, that is the main thing. Last Thursday we had the Jerries here. They did not drop any bombs, but they lit Northampton up with flares. It was just like daylight here. I was on guard at the time and 3 flares were dropped right above me. I quite expected to hear some bombs following them, but lucky enough none did. Anyway if it was for me, I would have been unable to take cover as you must not leave your post under any circumstances.

Well Dear Dorothy, you say you saw Doll and Geoff. I am glad you did. I guess they were glad to see you. They always mention you in their letters to me. Well I think that we shall be going this week and some of the boys are going tomorrow and the rest will follow them soon after. I don't mind if we do go because the sooner we go the quicker it will be for coming home again, that's how I look at it.

Now that we know we only have a few more days here, I and some of the boys, Len as well, have been celebrating, you know what I mean (having one over the eight as they say) we may as well make the most of our last few days in good old England.

I shall always be thinking of you and my family while I am away and looking forward for that day when I shall come home and see you all again.

Well my Dear Dorothy, I think this is all for now, so will say cheerio until next time.

Best of luck.

All my love.

Fred

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P.S. I almost forgot to mention the letters you sent me without a stamp, I did not have to pay anything, thanks very much for the stamps.

## HM Ships

**Date: Censored – date removed 1940**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, B. Coy 1<sup>st</sup> Rangers K.R.R.C., c/o  
A.P.O 725

Sent To: 5 Knighton Park Road, Sydenham, SE26

Dear Dorothy,

Just a few lines hoping to find you in the best of health, as I am at present.

I am writing these few lines on board ship, which is now many miles from England I am sorry to say.

Up to now, it has been a fine voyage, if it stays the same all the way, it will be alright for us. So far I have managed not to be sea sick, which at first I thought I was going to be and at present I am feeling fine.

There is a canteen on board where we can almost buy anything. Cigarettes are cheaper here for us. Players cost us 1/8d for 50 and Weights 1/3 for 50. What a big difference to the price in civvy street.

Well Dear Dorothy, I hope you are having a much better time at home. We get the news on board, and according to that, it is not quite so bad as it has been. I hope it stays that way for you and all. Nobody knows exactly where we are going, and will not know until we get there. Still I guess it's best for our own safety that we do not know.

Although we are still many miles away from our new destination, I am looking forward to when the time comes, for coming home and seeing you again. I expect you still write to Mum & Dad in Yorkshire. I am sure they like to hear from you and to know how you are getting on. Perhaps you can manage to go and see them next year when you get your holidays, but let's hope it will all be over by then.

This letter will be posted at the first port we arrive at. I don't know where that will be, for the last 5 or 6 days we have not seen land at all, but I hope you receive it alright.

Well Dear Dorothy, I think this is all for now, will write more later. Don't forget to write back, cheerio.

Best of luck.

All my love.

Fred

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**Date: Censored - Late December 1940/Early January 1941**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, B. Coy 1<sup>st</sup> Rangers K.R.R.C., c/o  
A.P.O 725

Sent To: 5 Knighton Park Road, Sydenham, SE26

Dear Dorothy,

Just a few lines hoping to find you in the best of health as I am myself at present.

At the time of writing this letter, I am still at sea, but in a few days time will have reached our final destination. I will not be sorry either to get on land once again, after so many weeks at sea.

Up to the present time everything has been great for us on the journey, no trouble whatsoever. On the boat we have all had a good time, anyhow much better than I expected to have.

About a fortnight ago, we stopped at a certain port for the purpose of taking on board fresh supplies and refuelling and so on, we were there a few days and were allowed to go ashore each day.

We had a grand time ashore, the different places we saw came as a surprise, it was not like we expected to find in a foreign port. For instance, all the buildings were so modern and built rather tall, looked more like New York in places. The traffic here was almost as bad as in London on a busy day, the trams and buses were all free to the troops. We could go anywhere we liked on them for nothing. We took advantage of this and got around to different places quite a lot.

The people at this port were also very friendly to us. Those with cars were taking the boys round and showing them some of the interesting places that were to be seen there.

Myself and 3 mates were asked by a lady in a car if we would like to go for a ride round, of course we jumped at the opportunity. She took us too many different places such as beauty spots and so on, it was very interesting. Some of the places, I shall never forget. After we had been riding round in the car for quite a time, this lady invited us to her home for tea, the four of us had a fine time and were very sorry when it came to an end, but like all good things they have to end sometime or other (worst luck).

Well Dear Dorothy, our few days shore leave ended and once more we set about on our journey again. We had Christmas Day on board, but had a real good time. Hoping you also had a Merry Christmas at home with lots of luck. I am hoping to be home with you and the family next Christmas Day. There is no place like home Christmas time.

I think this is all for now, so will close, will write again soon, so cheerio, hoping to see you again soon.

All my love and best wishes.

Fred

xxxxxxxxxx

Dear Dorothy,

This is a photo we had taken at the port where we had shore leave, received them just after finishing this letter, we had them sent on to us as we were unable to collect at the time. You can see Len in it, the other two fellows are our mates. How would you like to meet our other mate in the photo, in the dark, nice looking chap "what".

I have only two of these photos, I am sending the other one to Mum, so will you let the family see this one when you go to see them.

Cheerio

Love

Fred

## **The Pyramids, The Sphinx & The Handbag**

**Date: 25<sup>th</sup> January 1941**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling

B. Coy 1<sup>st</sup> Rangers K.R.R.C., Middle East Forces

Sent To: 5 Knighton Park Road, Sydenham, SE26

Dear Dorothy,

Once again, I am taking the opportunity of writing to you and in doing so I sincerely hope that you and all at home are in the best of health etc, as I am myself at present.

Our journey across on the boat was a very satisfactory one and I was rather sorry when the time came for disembarking.

We are now stationed somewhere in the desert, a lonely place I must say, miles from anywhere. The nearest city is about 80 miles away, but in a week or two's time, I expect to get 48 hrs leave to go there and have a look round the place. It will make a chance to get away from the camp here, for a couple of days.

There is a picture palace here, which we visit almost every night. It is only a roughly built affair made with wood, but serves for the purpose.

Every night there is a different programme shown and although the films are old ones, most of them I have not seen before, which is one consolation.

Tonight they are showing "Hit Parade" with Judy Garland and Phil Regan, also a short comedy and maybe we shall get some news shown. The news is usually very old, some of it I saw when I was at Cambridge and Northampton, anyhow I have not seen the big picture so I shall be going tonight.

About a fortnight ago, we had a sandstorm which lasted for quite a few hours. Everything in the tent got smothered with sand dust and most of the time we had to keep our eyes on the tents in case they blew up in the air. Now and again we had to go outside and hang onto the ropes. It was like a thick fog while it lasted, if you walked too far away from the tent, it was a bit of a job to find your way back. The picture house at the time had a canvas roof, but that was torn to threads and the canteens were unlucky. Most of them were blown clean down. Still everything has been put right now, so I guess we will be OK until we get another storm like that one.

Well Dear Dorothy, the weather here is quite warm enough, although it's still winter time, when the summer gets here I guess we will feel the heat and it will take us some time getting used to it.

Every morning the Arabs come round the camp selling papers and the news lately has been very pleasant to read. The war out this way seems to be going very well for us and if it stays that way maybe they won't need us out this way much longer.

I was very glad to read in the paper this morning that London had not had any air raids for four nights. If only it would stay that way until the war was over, it would be great, but I guess that is asking for too much. All we can hope for is that things don't get as bad as they have done in the last few months or so.

Well I think this is all the news for now, will write and let you know what sort of a time I have on my 48 hrs leave. I shall be going with Len, so you can guess we will make the most of everything while we can.

Will close now, hoping to see you again soon, keep smiling, it won't be long now, give my love to all, cheerio.

Forever yours.

Fred

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**Date: 11<sup>th</sup> February 1941**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, B. Coy 1<sup>st</sup> Rangers K.R.R.C.,  
Middle East Forces

Sent To: 5 Knighton Park Road, Sydenham, SE26

My Dear Dorothy,

Once again, I am taking the opportunity of writing to you and in doing so I sincerely hope that you and all at home are in the best of health etc. I hope you received my other letter I sent a few weeks ago from here. Sorry I have not wrote before but there is not much news to write about here. A week ago today, Len and I with another chum went to Cairo on leave for a few days. We had a grand time there, visiting the pyramids

and sphinx and quite a few other places which were very interesting. The three of us stayed at a hotel while we were there, living like lords while it lasted. It was grand to be able to lie in bed in the mornings and have our breakfast brought up for us. We never used to clean our boots ourselves as soon as we put one foot outside the hotel, about half a dozen shoe shine boys used to rush up to us and want to clean our boots. We always let them clean our boots for us and paid them (one piastre) for it, which in English money is about 2 ½ d.

In the evenings, we went to different cabarets to see the shows. The shows here are quite different to the London ones, the sort that suit the old men, but would not interest the women so much. I guess you know what I mean, but don't worry, I never spoke to one girl all the time I was there. I bet you don't believe me, but it is true. Hope you are still feeling the same about me, as you were when I left England. I am longing to hear from you. A couple of days ago I had a letter from Mum. It was the first one since leaving Northampton. It was posted on the 5<sup>th</sup> Nov, so you can see how long letters take to reach us out here. I could not open it fast enough. Letters seem like gold to us since leaving home.

Well my Dear Dorothy, while I was in Cairo, I bought you a little souvenir, a handbag with Egyptian patterns on it. In the shop where I bought it, they asked me if I would like them to send it home for me, so I said yes, I paid the postage and left your address with them. When I returned to camp, one or two old soldiers, who have been out this way before, heard about what I had done, while some of the boys and myself were discussing presents we had bought. They said if they had been me they would not have trusted the people at this shop to send home the bag to you. In some cases they have heard of other fellows doing the same thing and their people have never received the parcels. I am afraid it is too late to do anything about it now. Cairo is 60 to 70 miles from the camp, but there may be another chance some day of going there, so all I can do is hope that the people at this shop are genuine and that you receive it OK. But I am going to ask you to send me a telegram, if you receive the parcel alright, just say in it (received parcel OK) and, if everything is going on well for you, put ("keeping well") or something like that. The idea of the telegram is that if I don't hear from you by a telegram in say about 4 months time, I shall guess they could not have sent the bag and if I happen to get to Cairo again, well god help them in that shop, you know what a sweet tempered little boy I am, I'll wreck the joint.



I will leave it at that, but hope to hear you get it alright. I am being a little optimistic by saying I hope to see Cairo again in 4 months. I would rather see you and dear old England again, for just a few hours than see Cairo for the rest of my life. It is hard to tell what is going to happen with our Regiment out here, we have no idea if we are moving or not, things have gone so well for our boys out here, that it seems we won't be needed for doing anything. Wouldn't it be just grand if they sent us home again.

Talking of Cairo, I don't think much of the place. Everyone who is selling anything try to catch you right and left. They ask a price which is 5 to 6 times more than the article is worth. Every time you had to bait them down if there was a certain article you wanted. In the cabarets, beer was very dear, over 2/- a bot. In Egyptian money it cost 10 piastres which is equal to 2/1. In some cases they charged 15 piastres (3/1½ d), they must think we are millionaires not British troops. In these cabarets there were plenty of girls who worked there. They would come round the table you were sitting at and try to get us to buy them drinks, but we did not have any of it. When they saw that you were not going to buy them one, they got pretty nasty about it. You can guess perhaps the other thing they tried to get us on, but believe me, we were not interested. In the particular place the disease from that sort of thing is pretty high. Well my Dear Dorothy, I think this is about all for the present, hope to have more news to write about soon, but most of all, I hope to be home again. And if everything is the same again, I hope we do not waste much time in getting married. What do you say? There is just one more thing I wish to mention and that is, the air raids at home, according to the papers there has not been many for the last two weeks, you can guess how myself and all the boys here are glad to hear such news. I wish it could always be that way. I will close now, give my love to all the family.

Cheerio  
Best Wishes  
Lots of Love  
Your affectionate sweetheart  
Fred  
xxxxxxxxx

P.S. If you don't receive the bag, I shall send something else and next time will post it myself.

## **Experience In Greece**

In September 1939: This unit was 1st Rangers, The King's Royal Rifle Corps stationed in London as part of 3rd London Infantry Brigade, 1st London Division. However on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of March 1941, it was renamed 9th Battalion (The Rangers) KRRC.

In October 1940, the Italians attacked Greece. British troops landed in Greece and Crete. Early in 1941, a German invasion of Greece from Bulgaria became imminent and the British Government decided to send further assistance. A force was dispatched from Egypt, with Lieutenant-General H. Maitland Wilson (Rifle Brigade) in command, in March.

The 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion (1<sup>st</sup> Bn. The Rangers), under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel G C. Ashburner, had left England in November 1940, and had been training in the Delta for desert warfare for two months, when it suddenly was ordered to move to Greece. The Battalion landed at Piraeus on 15<sup>th</sup> March and immediately moved north to Edessa, in the Vardar Valley – a distance of 300 miles over difficult mountain roads, very different from the desert to which they had were just becoming accustomed. It says much for the high standard of driving attained that all the vehicles arrived without a major accident or breakdown. On arrival the Battalion was posted to the Armoured Brigade.

The original plan for stemming the German advance through Macedonia was cancelled owing to the rapid move of the enemy through Yugoslavia and the subsequent threat to Monastir. This necessitated a hurried move of the Battalion from its prepared positions westward to the Florina Gap covering the road to Monastir.

The Florina Gap – 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> April 1941

Dispositions for defence were hurriedly made under continual threat of attack. The Battalion was allotted a long frontage linking up with a Greek cavalry division on a fifty-mile front on their left and an Australian brigade and more Greek troops on their right.

The Germans, part of a Hitler S.S. division, attacked on 10<sup>th</sup> April, and for four days the Battalion withstood determined assaults with heavy shelling and mortaring and very severe weather, sleet, snow and mud indescribable. Owing to the long frontage of about 4,000 yards, no reserves were possible, and it was only by the super-human efforts of all officers and other ranks that the position was held as ordered and the planned withdrawal could start on Easter Sunday. The final German attack started at 0700hrs on that morning and the Battalion held on for three hours as ordered before starting the move back at 1000 hrs. The Germans lost heavily in this attack, leaving several hundred dead in front of one company.

#### Retreat to Thebes and Embarkation

The retreat to Thebes and the sea was one long story of mud and rain under continuous enemy air attack. The roads were terrible and blocked with refugees and traffic.

Major D. R. C. Boileau now took command from Vice Lieutenant-Colonel Ashburner, who was evacuated sick. He brought the remains of the Battalion safely back to the coast, where they were eventually taken on board destroyers of the Royal Navy at the end of April 1941. The Battalion lost in Greece 1 officer killed, 3 wounded and 1 a prisoner and 150 other ranks.

**There are no letters from Greece, but in May 1941, Fred refers to his, "experience in Greece".**

**In later life, he recalled to his family that he had liked the Greek people and spoke of the little turtles on the beach.**

## Western Desert, Egypt

**Date: 27<sup>th</sup> April 1941**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, B. Coy 1<sup>st</sup> Rangers K.R.R.C.,  
Middle East Forces

Sent To: 5 Knighton Park Road, Sydenham, SE26

Dear Dorothy,

Just a few lines hoping to find you in the best of health as it leaves me the same at present.

Well my dearest I am sending these few lines together with a letter to Ma, as I have still a job to get stamps. Ma will forward this letter onto you.

I wrote a few days ago to you by airgraph to let you know I received an airgraph from you. I am very glad to hear you are still getting along OK and I also hope you enjoyed your 7 days leave which you said you were going to have on the first of this month. I expect you went to your Sister's at Cornwall. I guess she was glad to see you. Is that the Sister you once mentioned about her asking how I was getting on. I hope someday very soon I shall have the pleasure of meeting her.

Well Dorothy dear, I expect you have already heard from me saying that I am up the Western Desert somewhere. We have been up here now for quite a few weeks and I must say I shall be looking forward to getting a few days leave to Cairo or some other place. I could do with a few pints right now and a picture show on top of it.

The weather today is a scorcher again. I get fed up with it, what wouldn't I give to see a drop of snow right now.

About 50 yards from where I am writing this letter, there is quite a few tanks all smashed up which our boys have done and a few station graves, not a very nice sight, but one that you get used to these days. I can only afford to write this letter with one eye, the other is always watching the sky. "Ha" "Ha"

Two days ago I received an airgraph and a postcard from Doll. She always writes about you and how glad she is when you spend a night with them. Ma is the same when she writes. I had a letter from her and Annie about 5 days ago. I have been getting quite a lot of mail in the last 3 weeks.

I have a bit of a shock for you. The boys say I am looking old these days. They say I look about 40, but myself I can't see it. I look as well as ever and feel it to, still I will say this much that all the lads here seem to look much older these days. They say two years in the desert makes a man look 10 yrs older than he really is, so prepare yourself to marry an old man.

Well dear, I guess this is all for this time, so will close, hope to hear from you again soon.

Cheerio.

Best of luck.

All my love.

Fred

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**Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1941**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, B. Coy 1<sup>st</sup> Rangers K.R.R.C.,  
Middle East Forces

Sent To: 5 Knighton Park Road, Sydenham, SE26

My Dearest Dorothy,

Just a few lines, hoping to find you in the best of health, as I am myself at present.

Since I last wrote to you about my experience in Greece, I have received a parcel from you which you sent me for my birthday. Thank you very much and yesterday I had two letters, one from you and the other from Doll. You both mention the weekend you had at Doll's. Glad to hear you were able to get about in-between the raids. You also tell me in your letter about going to see Ma when you have your holidays. Well I hope you are able to do so. It will make a change for you to get out of London for a time.

Today I received another letter, this one from Flo, posted 14<sup>th</sup> March. By the way both yours and Doll's letter was posted on the same day.

Since my last letter to you, which is about a fortnight ago, I have had 5 days leave in Cairo. Four of us went together, same four as you see in the photo I sent you. We had a grand time there and as before stayed at a hotel. We went in the hopes of seeing the picture "The Great Dictator" which you tell me in your letter you went and saw, but it finished showing there a few days before we arrived, but instead we saw "Gone with the Wind". It was a lovely picture. It was on for 3 hr 40 mins. I hope you will get the chance to see it. We did not visit the Pyramids and Sphinx this time. Once you have seen them there is not much in seeing them again, but we did go and have another look round the zoo, case of having to go and see our Brothers there I guess. (What did you say) Yes?

The last time I was on leave in Cairo, I sent you a handbag home. Up to now, I have never heard whether you received it or not, so this time I never sent anything, but if I should hear you did get it alright, I will get you a present in the town which is a few miles from the camp here and send you, but it's no use sending things home if you are not going to get them. Best wait till the day when I can deliver personally. Which will be very soon, I hope.

Well my dear, I had a few snaps done in Cairo, but they are only very small ones. I am going to have some larger ones taken. I will then send you one on, I guess you would like to have one of me in my shorts showing my knees off (not arf you wouldn't). I think in my last letter I mentioned to you about the difference we found in the weather here, since arriving back from Greece, the heat is terrific and seems to get worse every day. What makes things worse is the flies. There seems to be millions of the blighters. If we sit or lie down for a few minutes, we have to have a book or something in our hand all the time to swat them with. We still visit the pictures pretty often. Last night we saw Irene Dunne and Fred MacMurray in "Pursuit of Happiness". Not bad at all. Will be going again tonight I expect.

Well I don't know how soon it will be before we see any more action, but things are a little different now, since we were last here, being that Jerry is now operating in the desert, but all I can say is that the sooner things happen, the quicker we will get this darn war over with and get home. It seems years since I was back in dear old England, yet really it's only a few months.

Still you can count on me, keeping my chin up, as I know you are doing so and all at home.

I think this is about all the news for the present. Will let you know if we get any more trouble again. So will close, wishing you the best of health in the future.

Best wishes and love.

Fred

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xxxxxxx

P.S. Once again, thank you very much for the parcel. In your letter you mention sending your letters by airmail. If you do, I shall receive them much quicker. xxxx

## **Auxiliary Territorial Service**

**Date: 8<sup>th</sup> June 1941**

Sent From: Doll & Geoff, 24 Friar Road, St Mary Cray, Kent

Sent To: 5 Knighton Park Road, Sydenham, SE26

Dear Dorothy,

Just a line in answer to your most welcome letter. Glad to hear you are OK, but sorry to hear you have joined the ATS, but still I hope you will like it. Mum has gone back to Florrie's, so I don't know if you wrote to Longwood. If so, I don't know whether she will get it, but I've wrote and told her you have joined the ATS, so I expect you will hear from her sometime next week. Well Dorothy, we received a parcel from Fred. He was OK when he sent it, that was the 7<sup>th</sup> of Feb. A nice cover for Mum his Regt in black velvet and seven little covers for all us girls. We were pleased it was so thoughtful of him. Bless his old heart, he said he was away from the fighting when he sent that and he seems to be having a nice time. I hope he will be able to dodge it. Flo said what a nice bag he sent you. It shows he must be thinking of us all. He said he hoped to see us all soon. Mum does fret about him. She did upset herself when she saw what he sent. He had put on it in silk (To Mum & Dad with love from Fred). She would be much happier up here amongst us. She frets so about him. Well Dorothy could you pop over next Wednesday. I will be at work till five but come and have a bit of tea if it is only a late tea. I would so much like to see you before you go. I have just come back from Yorkshire. I was glad you saw Herb. He does look well, doesn't he. Well dear, no more, do hope to see you soon. So cheerio, hope you have a peaceful night.

Yours Doll & Jep.

xxx



**Date: 9<sup>th</sup> June 1941**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, B. Coy 9<sup>th</sup> Batt K.R.R.C.  
(Rangers), Middle East Forces

Sent To: 5 Knighton Park Road, Sydenham, SE26

My Dear Dorothy,

Just a few lines hoping to find you in the best of health, as I am myself at present.

In my previous letter to you, I mentioned about the leave I had just been on to Cairo. When I wrote then, I was in camp in the desert, but a few days ago we moved into barracks just outside Cairo, the place we are at is known as Old Cairo. It feels good to get away from the sand for a change. The barracks we are in have a cinema, roller skating rink and billiard room and other different sport places, so I guess there isn't much more we could wish for. After 2 o/c every day we can go into Cairo if we want to, to get into the main part of Cairo, only costs us 3 milliemes, which in English money is about 3/4 d, but going out will not worry me much, being that there is so much we can do here in the barracks. Another thing we have here which I forgot to mention is a swimming pool. I have had some photos taken and sending you one on. I hope you like it. I did not have them taken in Cairo, but in the town near our old camp. I went there one Sunday with the boys, just after we got back from our leave in Cairo.

I must say that we all find a big difference in being in barracks and not under canvas in the desert. For one thing we can keep our things much cleaner and the food here is very good (just like mother's cooking).

I guess we will be here for quite a time, until we get reformed, you will notice that our address has changed, we are now the 9<sup>th</sup> Batt, K.R.R.C. Anyway, the longer we are here the better I shall like it.

Well my Dear Dorothy, I am looking forward to getting your next letter. The last time I heard from you was about a fortnight ago. Since then I have only had one letter from home and that was from Doll posted on the 25<sup>th</sup> of Feb. In this letter from her, Geoff also wrote a few lines to me telling me he was going up in March. I guess he is another one getting used to the life by now. Geoff finishes his letter by saying, cheerio, see you in Bulgaria. He was not far wrong, if he had joined up a bit earlier he may have done so, I was not far off being there.

I have written to Mum today, telling her about us moving, so I daresay you will both know about the same time as one another.

There is not much more news I can write about at present, only that I am always thinking of you and hoping the day will soon be here when we can be together again. Will be writing to you again soon, so for the present will close, wishing you the best of health in the future, cheerio.

All my love.  
Yours forever.

Fred  
XXXXXX  
XXXXXX

**Date: 17<sup>th</sup> June 1941**

Sent From: Doll & Geoff, 24 Friar Rd, St Mary Cray, Kent

Sent To: No 2 training Coy, Norbury House Hotel, Droitwich, Worcs

My Dorothy,

Just a few lines in answer to your most welcome letter. Glad to hear you arrived safe and so glad to know you think you will like it. Well Dorothy, you will soon have your uniform and that given, we will not know you will we when you come home. How is the weather down there. It is lovely today, we had a warning today, but we have had it rather quiet in the night, so we won't look forward to hearing it at nights again. Well Dorothy, I have not heard from anyone yet. I mean Fred or Mum, but I hope we will soon hear from our Fred, but still I suppose we must not get impatient. Herb does not like the place he has gone to, but

I don't think Herb will ever settle down in that do you. Well dear, I'm glad to hear from you, so let me know how you get on and if you get leave and you come to see me, arrange to stop for the night. So no more now, look after yourself and all the best of luck.

Yours

Doll & Jep

XXXX

**Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1941**

Sent From: No 19 Luton Street, Cowlersley, Near Huddersfield, Yorkshire

Sent To: No 2 training Coy, ATS Reception Depot, Norbury House Hotel, Droitwich, Worcs

My Dear Dorothy,

Just a few lines to you. Hoping these few lines will find you quite well as it leaves us all OK at present. Now I was very pleased to get a letter from you, as I did not get the other you wrote to me and I am glad to hear you think you will like the army. I wonder what poor old Fred will think when he gets to know you have joined up. I wish it was over, so all of us could get back home again, but I think we have got a long way to go before we put this lot over. It seems terrible to think about it but we must hope for the best now Dear Dorothy. Doll told me you went to see them all before you left. I expect you feel strange doing that sort of work. Do you think any time you get leave you would be able to come down here to see us for you know you would be welcome. So now I think this is all for the time, so cheerio.

All the best of luck.

From Mrs Watling

xxxx

xx

I am glad you got the handbag from poor old Fred xxx

**Date: 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1941**

Sent From: No 19 Luton Street, Cowlersley, Near Huddersfield, Yorkshire

Sent To: No 2 training Coy, ATS Reception Depot, Norbury House Hotel, Droitwich, Worcs

My Dear Dorothy xxxxxx,

Thanks very much for view, I think it looks a very nice place, but I expect you would rather be at home now. Dear Dorothy I just received a letter from Doll and she put Fred's letter in which she received on Monday. It is such a nice long letter and in it he says he has just received 40 letters and my parcel, which I sent him in November, thinking he would get it before he sailed, but I am so pleased he has got that parcel as it contains 3 pairs of socks and one shirt and some clean shorts which poor boy will be glad to get. That's what's worrying me to death, wondering if he is clean. Now he says he is OK up to the present, but he has been where it has been rather rough, but he has pulled through. He said he had 7 days leave and he spent it going about, him and his mate. I do hope this will end soon for it gets anybody down. It makes me all nervous keep thinking about one and all of them. Poor old Fred mentions about you coming to see me when you have your holiday. Does he know you are in the army. I expect he will be surprised when he gets to hear. I always send his letters by airmail so that he gets them quicker for he says it cheers him up. He also got that 7/- shilling that Annie sent him in November, also Florrie's 5 /-. I expect he thought he had a birthday when he got that lot.

So cheerio, all the best of luck to you, from Mrs Watling.

## **Merchant Ships – Port Said & Alexandria**

**Date: 28<sup>th</sup> July 1941**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling

B. Coy 9<sup>th</sup> Batt K.R.R.C. (Rangers), Middle East Forces

Sent To: 5 Knighton Park Road, Sydenham, SE26

My Dear Dorothy,

Just a few lines hoping to find you in the best of health, as I am myself at present.

The last time I wrote was about 5 or 6 weeks ago. When I wrote then I think I told you about us moving from the desert into barracks at Cairo. A few days after we got to these barracks, quite a few of the boys, including myself, were sent on a job. The job was acting as escorts on the merchant ships, by this I mean, we were sort of a crew on the machine guns, in case the ships were attacked by planes. We were on this job for 5 weeks during that time, we visited the ports of Port Said and Alexandria, we did not meet any trouble at all, except for one place we went to which I cannot tell you the name of, we had raids there but only at nights, but they were not too bad. We eventually finished the job at Alexandria where we had a few days leave. During our stay at Alex there were no raids, but we did see some of the damage that has been done there. Alex is a nice place, also Port Said, I prefer either of these two places to Cairo.

When I arrived back to our barracks at Cairo, I found 7 letters waiting for me, two from you. I was very glad to hear from you to know you are still safe and well. Your letters were posted on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> May, in the one posted the 17<sup>th</sup>, I heard from you, something I have been waiting a long time to hear, and that was that you received the handbag I sent you. I am glad you liked it. At the same time, I sent Ma a parcel, but up to now, I have not heard whether it was received. Anyway, I hope it was. You still make a visit to Doll then, two of the seven letters I had were from Doll. She tells me you still go to see them and stay the weekend. The film "Edison The Man" which you tell me you have been to see is on in Cairo now. I am going to see it one of these nights. The other night we went to see George Raft, Ida Lupino in "The Road to Frisco". I don't know if you have seen it, but it's a good picture.

Another letter I had was from Ma and Dad, they say that they are keeping well and also that they received my telegram I sent it a few days after my return from Greece. I think I shall send another one soon, because the letters seem to be taking quite a time to get home, even though they are by airmail.

Well my Dear Dorothy, now that I am back in barracks, I shall write more often. I am sorry it was such a long time ago since I last wrote, but I guess you will understand that while on the boat we could not post any letters, but now, will be able to make up for it.

I sincerely hope that things are much quieter at home these days. It seems now, as though we must look to Russia to help us end it all soon, if they can hold him for a time like they are doing at present, it will help us a lot to end it sooner than we ever expected.

I think this is about all for the present, so will close, hoping to be with you again very soon, cheerio, best wishes and good luck.

All my love

Fred

XXXXXX

XXXXXX

## **Return To The Desert**

**Date: 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1941**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling

B. Coy 9<sup>th</sup> Batt K.R.R.C. (Rangers), Middle East Forces

Sent To: 5 Knighton Park Road, Sydenham, SE26

My Dear Dorothy,

Just a few lines hoping to find you in the best of health, as I am myself at present.

I have not heard from you for a month. The last letter I had from you was posted on the 17<sup>th</sup> of May, so you can guess I am anxiously waiting to hear from you again.

Last week I received five letters in all, two were from Doll, two from Ma and one from Anne at Dagenham. I was very glad to hear they are all keeping safe and well.

Ma and Doll both mentioned about you having been conscripted for war work. They both say you have sent them a postcard of the hotel you are staying at and that you seem to like your new job. But I must say that I was not very pleased to hear about it. I would rather you had joined anything else, bar that, but I guess that whatever you do, it is nothing to do with me. I don't doubt that you can look after yourself and will do so.

Ma told me in her letter that she wrote to you and told you to come and see them if ever you get the chance. I hope you can manage it one day. I am sure they would very much like you to spend a few days with them in Yorkshire. The way they write about you lately, you seem to have become one of the family, especially with Doll. She always writes about you. I guess she will miss you coming to see them now, but never mind it won't be very long now, before it's all over. In a letter I heard from George a fortnight ago, he told me some very sad news. It was about one of my pals, Siddie Coomber being killed in action. I was very sorry to hear about it. I believe you knew him, he lived in Ladywell. You were with me many a time when I spoke to him, perhaps you can remember him. He was a very nice chap and played in our football team on Sundays.

Well Dear Dorothy, I have not much to say about Egypt these days, except that we are still able to get into Cairo quite often. Cairo, from

where we are camped now, is not many miles away, but we have trucks to take us there. The last time I went was last Saturday and I went to the pictures and saw "Waterloo Bridge". I liked it very much, although in places it was very sad. If you have seen it, I wouldn't mind betting it made you cry. Other pictures I have seen just recently are "Tin Pan Alley" and "One Night in the Tropics", both of these I also thought were very good. Still I guess by the time we see them here, you have seen and forgotten them at home.

In the newspaper the other day, we saw that London had only had one "alert" during the month of August. It is very good news to hear. I hope it stays that way. I am sure the people can do with a break after all they have been through.

Well my dear, I think this is all for now, so will close. Hoping to hear from you soon.

Cheerio  
Best of Luck  
All my love  
Fred  
xxxxxx

P.S. I wish you the best of luck in your new job.

**Date: 8<sup>th</sup> September 1941**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling

B. Coy 9<sup>th</sup> Batt K.R.R.C. (Rangers), Middle East Forces

Sent To: 5 Knighton Park Road, Sydenham, SE26

My Dear Dorothy,

Just a few lines to you to let you know I received your letter yesterday which you posted to me on the 29<sup>th</sup> of July. Glad to hear you are getting on alright with your new job and also that you are happy at it. Thanks very much for the photo. I think it is very good of you and that you look prettier than ever. Makes me kind of gloomy to feel that I am so far away from you and yet at times it seems that you are quite close. Although I have only had the photo a few hours, I have almost worn my pocket out by keep looking at it. You look very smart, much smarter than I can ever look in a uniform anyway. Mind you don't get into any



trouble and get CB. I myself have been unlucky lately, can't get away with anything these days. Just finished doing 5 days for disobeying an order. Never mind it's all in the life of a soldier.

I am glad to hear you were on 48 hrs leave when you wrote to me. I guess the family were glad to see you when you went visiting them, but I am sure Ma is anxiously waiting for the day when she can see you. I do hope you can manage to see her when you get your 7 days. Ma would like a photo of you if you have any more of the same one you sent me.

Well my dear, when I read the name of the place you were stationed at, I couldn't think whereabouts it was, but I looked it up on the map and I see you are a good distance away from home. Still I don't suppose it takes very long on the train. At least I wish a few hours on the train would take us back to Blighty from here. A look at a nice spot of countryside would do my eyes a world of good right now. In your letter you ask me if I have seen any good pictures lately. Well, I wrote to you a few days ago and told you about some of the films I have been seeing. Yesterday Len and I went into Cairo and saw Cesar Romero, Virginia Gilmore in "Tall Dark & Handsome". In the evening, we went to an open air cinema and saw Melvyn Douglas, Virginia Bruce in "He Stayed for Breakfast". There was another film on with it called "Behind these Walls". I forgot who starred in it, but it wasn't so good. I am sorry to hear you have been unable to go yourself lately, you must be busy, but whatever you do don't go to sleep when you are on guard.

You say that you have taken the handbag away with you, so glad to know you think so much of it and that the other girls also think it is nice. Pity I can't send them one as well, perhaps some of them have fellows out here who will send one shortly. I hope so anyway. I am sending you a bracelet home as soon as I can make up my mind which kind you will like. I shall continue to address your letters to your Aunt, so I hope you are not long in getting them. Why is it that I cannot forward them straight onto your address, sounds rather funny to me that I cannot, still you find the army awkward sometimes.

I told Len about your joining up and he has asked me to ask you if there are any nice girls where you are, who feel they would like to write to someone abroad. If so, he would like them or her ("make it one") to write to him, he will answer her letters. By saying (them) it sounds as if I mean he wants about 99 girls to write to him, but I should have said a girl. I don't want you to think he is not getting any letters from home, but he has not got a regular girl to write to. He hears from one or two

and I think he is trying to pick himself a wife out of them for when he comes home “ha” “ha”, but don’t forget if you can oblige him do so.

I also received a letter from Doll yesterday which she posted on the 28<sup>th</sup> July. I expect you heard about George going over to see them and missing the last train home, so they had to fix up an old bike to get him home. If you know Brother George like I do you can image what sort of names he called the railway that night. Geoff told me in the letter that George was now on demolishing, but demolishes more pints than he does houses. Anyway, good luck to him, I wish I was doing the same.

According to the paper and radio, London did not have a single raid last month, only one “alert”. It sure is good to hear this kind of news. I hope it stays that way for them all. I am sure they can do with a rest from it. Well dear, I hope you like the photo I have enclosed. I had it taken in Cairo. It’s not too bad although it makes me look as though I had something in my mouth or toothache or something. Still, I guess you will be pleased to get it. I had half a dozen taken and have sent them all home.

There is something I almost forgot to mention and it is about your letter. You say in it, that you have wrote before and told me about you having joined up, but this is the first time I have heard from you about it. Perhaps the other letter had been delayed and I shall get it later on. I hope I do anyway. One thing I notice about your letters is that you forget to write BY AIRMAIL on the envelope. Remember to put it on the others or else they may be sent by ordinary mail.

I guess I shall have to close now, it’s nearing five and I have to go on guard at six (“worst luck”), so here’s wishing you lots of luck in the future and hoping you find plenty of friends in your new job. Keep smiling, we will be together again very soon.

Cheerio

All my love

From your loving sweetheart

Fred

xxxxxxx

xxxxxxxxxxx

**Date: 4th October 1941**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling

B. Coy 9<sup>th</sup> Batt K.R.R.C. (Rangers), Middle East Forces

Sent To: W/59124 Pte Warwick D. G, 31<sup>st</sup> County of London Btn, A Coy A.T.S, Kings Bastion, Chatham, Kent

My Dearest Dorothy,

Just a few lines to let you know I received your airgraph yesterday, which you wrote on the 10<sup>th</sup> Sept. Glad to know you are keeping well and getting on alright in your new job.

When I received your airgraph, it was the first news I have had for over 3 weeks. I am hoping to hear from the family during the next few days.

When I last wrote to you, I sent a photo, so I hope you have received it OK. If you don't, I will send another. Well, I am glad you have been able to let me have your address, this is the first I have wrote direct to you. The others I have sent to your Aunt's. I am glad to see you are not far from home. I hope you can manage to get home on many weekends. I could do with a few of them myself right now, but I guess we will just have to go on hoping that it will last only a little while longer now.

I have not much news to tell you about at present. We are still at the same place, just a few miles from Cairo. About eight weeks we have been here now. I hope we stay here because it is not bad at all. We can get into Cairo once or twice a week, which is quite enough.

Well my dear, on a visit to Cairo the other day, I went to the pictures and saw, Deanna Durbin in "Little Nelly Kelly", it was a good film. Another I saw was called "Forty Thousand Horsemen", which was also good. Next week I want to see Alice Faye in "American Broadcast of 1941". I saw following attractions of it and it looks good.

Whilst I was in Cairo, I bought you something for your 24<sup>th</sup> Birthday. I hope you like it. I am sending the parcel to Doll in about a fortnight's time with other presents for my Sisters, so Doll will send it on to you or else keep it until you go and see them as soon as you can. She will let you know when she receives the parcel. You know the photo you have of four of us sitting in the rickshaw which we had taken at that port we stayed out on our way out here, well you know Len is in the photo, the other two fellows are Lance corporals now, and Len goes up Monday to get his stripe, I hope he gets on alright.

I shall write quite often to you by those airgraph forms. They are good aren't they? They only take about a fortnight to reach their destination. I hope the family use them. I have wrote and told them to. I guess this is all for now dear, so will close, wishing you the best of health in the future.

Cheerio  
All my love.  
Yours forever.

Fred  
xxxxxx  
xxxxxx

**Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1941**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling  
B. Coy 9<sup>th</sup> Batt K.R.R.C. (Rangers), Middle East Forces  
Sent To: W/59124 Pte Warwick D. G, 31<sup>st</sup> County of London Btn, A  
Coy A.T.S, Kings Bastion, Chatham, Kent

Dear Dorothy,

Hope you receive this little present I am sending you for your 24<sup>th</sup>? birthday. I sincerely hope we will be together on the next one.

Well, I haven't much to say in this letter. I am writing these few lines in Cairo, so that I can send the present off when I get round to the post office.

The boys are waiting for me, so will close, will write again in a few days time.

Cheerio  
All my love.

Fred  
xxxxxx

**Date: 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1941**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling

B. Coy 9<sup>th</sup> Batt K.R.R.C. (Rangers), Middle East Forces

Sent To: W/59124 Pte Warwick D. G, 31<sup>st</sup> County of London Btn, A  
Coy A.T.S, Kings Bastion, Chatham, Kent

Dear Dorothy,

Just a line hoping to find you in the best of health, as I am myself at present.

I received your postcard a few days ago, it only took 10 days to get here. I also had postcards from Doll & George. Glad to hear you are still getting along alright with your new work. How do you like Chatham, it's alright there for you I hope, but I don't suppose it is quite like the other place you were staying at. Well I haven't much to write about this time, things are about the same here. I am still able to make a weekly visit to Cairo. There has not been any good pictures there recently. The latest one at present is Myrna Loy and William Powell in "I love you again". I haven't seen it, but I may go on Saturday. Well my Dear Dorothy, in Doll and George's postcards they say that everyone at home are keeping well. I hope you will be able to go and see them soon. I have sent you something for your birthday, so I hope you receive it OK. Well cheerio for now, good luck.

All my love.

Fred

xxx

xxx

**Date: 5<sup>th</sup> November 1941**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling

B. Coy 9<sup>th</sup> Batt K.R.R.C. (Rangers), Middle East Forces

Sent To: W/59124 Pte Warwick D. G, 31<sup>st</sup> County of London Btn, A  
Coy A.T.S, Kings Bastion, Chatham, Kent

Dear Dorothy,

Just a few lines hoping to find you in the best of health, as I am myself at present.

I have not heard from you for nearly 3 weeks now, so you can guess I am anxiously waiting to receive another letter from you. I had two letters yesterday one from George and a friend at Peckham. I hope that by now, you have received my photo I sent to you, at least you should have. I am going to have some more taken so will send another one on. Well my dear, Len has been away for three weeks with malaria, but I expect to see him back any day now. I hope so anyway.

George told me in his letter that you went round to see them and he liked you in your uniform. I hope you are getting on alright with your job. I guess this is all for now, so cheerio,

All my love

Fred

xxx

xxx

**Date: 4<sup>th</sup> December 1941**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling

B. Coy 9<sup>th</sup> Batt K.R.R.C. (Rangers), Middle East Forces

Sent To: W/59124 Pte Warwick D. G, 31<sup>st</sup> County of London Btn, A Coy A.T.S, Kings Bastion, Chatham, Kent

Dear Dorothy,

Just a few lines hoping to find you in the best of health, as I am myself at present.

I have not heard from you for over 3 weeks now. There has not been much mail in lately so perhaps when it comes in I shall have more than one letter from you, at least I hope so.

Well I have not much news to write about, things are still about the same. I still go to Cairo, but not quite so often. I did not go last weekend, but did the week before.

For the first time since I left Blighty I went to a horse race meeting. It made quite a change. It brought back old memories, do you remember the night I first took you to a dog race meeting, if I remember you still have the programme of this night, at least you did have when I left England. Just think that was over three years ago, but it doesn't seem that long does it?

Well Dorothy dear, next Monday I shall be celebrating my 24<sup>th</sup> birthday and you will be doing the same 8 days later. I sincerely hope we shall

be spending the next one together. I hope you receive my present I have sent you, safe and sound.

How are you getting on with your job these days, I hope everything is going well for you. I guess by now you have got well settled into it. By the way, you haven't got any stripes yet have you, or any new boyfriends "Ha" "Ha".

I bet the weather is nippy at home now, even here it's quite cold, especially at night and early morning, it's just as bad as Blighty, but there is no snow which we can be thankful for, although I sometimes say it would be a change to be able to see a bit of snow falling. Well Dorothy my dear, I will close now. Hope to hear from you soon.

Cheerio  
All my love

xxxxxxxxxxxxxx Fred

**Date: 13<sup>th</sup> December 1941**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, B. Coy 9<sup>th</sup> Batt K.R.R.C. (Rangers), Middle East Forces

Sent To: W/59124 Pte Warwick D. G, 26 Garden Street, Brompton, Chatham, Kent, England

Dear Dorothy,

Just a few lines hoping to find you in the best of health, as I am myself at present.

Yesterday I received a postcard from you dated Nov 20<sup>th</sup>. Glad to hear you are keeping well, although you seem to be fed up with the job. You say on the postcard you wish you were back in civvy street, well I guess we all do, but can only hope for the best to happen these days. I notice your address has changed, although you are still at Chatham. I guess it's the place that is getting you down. If so, cheer up, you may get out of there soon. Surely it's not the sailors that are worrying you "Ha" "Ha". You mention on your card that you might get 48 hours leave at the end of December, I hope you do. There's nothing like a few hours leave when one is away from home.

Well I guess this is all for now. So cheerio my dear until next time, keep smiling.

xxxxxxxxxxxx All my love and best wishes

Yours forever.  
Fred

**Date: 20<sup>th</sup> December 1941**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, B. Coy 9<sup>th</sup> Batt K.R.R.C. (Rangers), Middle East Forces

Sent To: W/59124 Pte Warwick D. G, 26 Garden Street, Brompton, Chatham, Kent, England

Dear Darling Dorothy,

Just a few lines to let you know I have received your letter and birthday card that you sent on the 27<sup>th</sup> October. Thank you very much for the kind thoughts. I am glad to hear you are still keeping OK as it leaves me the same present.

I hope you are still at the same place, also your room mates that you mentioned. (Now I wonder what you girls have to talk about when you are in a room all by yourselves?) Wouldn't I like to know, "HA" "HA". Still I guess you all have a job to do, just like us fellows have out here and it's got to be done well.

Well Dorothy Dear, I went out on leave yesterday and went twice to the pictures, first I saw "Strike up the Band", and then "Sergeant York", maybe you have seen them, if so, I guess you will agree with me that they were two good films. During the last week or so, I have had mail from nearly all at home, it's good to hear they are keeping in the best of health. I hope you can get to see them often. Well will close now, give my best wishes to your friends for a happy New Year.

Love Fred xxxxxxxx



**Date: 27<sup>th</sup> December 1941**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, B. Coy 9<sup>th</sup> Batt K.R.R.C.  
(Rangers), Middle East Forces

Sent To: W/59124 Pte Warwick D. G, 26 Garden Street, Brompton,  
Chatham, Kent, England

Dear Dorothy,

Just a few lines in answer to your airgraph which I received today. You posted it on the 11<sup>th</sup> Dec, so I received it very quick. I should have said postcard and not airgraph. I am glad you went and stayed a weekend with Ma and Doll and when you get your seven days. I hope you do so again for a few days. They write and tell me that they are always glad to see you and have you stay with them for a while. Well I guess we have got over another Christmas alright. I had a fairly good time, I hope you did also. Doll tells me that she tried your uniform on and that it fitted her OK and she looked smart in it. She also says that you are looking well these days and seem to be getting on well with the job. I hope you are anyway. Well let's keep our chins up and hope for the best and if possible all be together again for next Christmas. I will write a letter next week, cheerio my Darling, happy New Year and best of luck.

xxxxxxxxxx yours forever Fred.

**Date: 14<sup>th</sup> January 1942**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, B. Coy 9<sup>th</sup> Batt K.R.R.C.  
(Rangers), Middle East Forces

Sent To: W/59124 Pte Warwick D. G, 26 Garden Street, Brompton,  
Chatham, Kent, England

My Dear Dorothy,

Just a few lines hoping to find you in the best of health as I am myself at present.

I have not received any mail from you, for quite a while now. I had those postcards a few days ago from home. They are all still keeping OK, perhaps you have been able to go and see them lately.

Well Dorothy Dear, perhaps you are like me these days, don't know what to write about, there is not much doing that I can tell you about, same routine day after day. I hope you are not finding it the same. I suppose you are still at the same address. I guess you know that Dad came home for the Christmas holiday, they tell me he is going to stay at home now and not trouble to go back to Yorkshire. I shall be going to Cairo tomorrow, going to the pictures to see Gary Cooper in "North West Mounted Police". Have you seen it?

Well I guess this is all for now. Hope to hear from you soon, cheerio, all my love.

Fred

xxxxxx

**Date: 20<sup>th</sup> January 1942**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, B. Coy 9<sup>th</sup> Batt K.R.R.C. (Rangers), Middle East Forces

Sent To: W/59124 Pte Warwick D. G, 26 Garden Street, Brompton, Chatham, Kent, England

Dear Dorothy,

Just a few lines to let you know I received your postcard dated 1<sup>st</sup> Jan. Glad to hear you are still OK as it leaves me the same at present. I am very pleased to hear that you had your leave and paid a visit to Ma and Doll and the rest of the family. I am sure they were glad to see you.

I am also glad to have heard you received the present I sent you. I did hear a few days ago that George had received a parcel I sent to him, so I guessed you had get yours as I posted them together. I am glad you liked it. Well Dorothy Dear, I am afraid Mum is still very scared these days. I find it awkward lately to be able to write a letter, but I guess something will come along one of these days, so that I can write you a nice long letter telling you all about it. I guess this is all for now, so will close hoping it won't be long now before we are together again.

All my love.

Fred

xxxxxx

**Date: 31st January 1942**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, B. Coy 9<sup>th</sup> Batt K.R.R.C.  
(Rangers), Middle East Forces

Sent To: W/59124 Pte Warwick D. G, 26 Garden Street, Brompton,  
Chatham, Kent, England

Dear Dorothy,

Just a few lines hoping to find you still in the best of health, as it leaves me the same at present. Well my dear, I received your airgraph today which you posted on the 28<sup>th</sup> Nov, taken a long time to reach me hasn't it? Still I was very pleased to hear from you. I am glad you received my letter and photo. I am afraid I don't know which one you have received, as you do not describe it, so don't forget to let me know which one it is when you write next time. Doll wrote and told me that you spent a couple of days with her, whilst you were on leave. I hope you had a good time with her and Geoff. I expect Mum & Dad had gone home when you were there, but I suppose you visited them at their new address. I often wonder if they will be able to settle down to things. I guess they miss the old place after all the years they lived there, still so long as they are keeping well that's all that matters these days. Well dear, you mention having heard from your Sister and that she asked how I was getting on. As you know, I have never met her, it is very nice of her to ask about me. I am looking forward to being introduced to her. I take it is your Sister who lives in Devon, maybe I shall meet her for the first time as my Sister-in-law "Ha" "Ha". If, when you next write to her, you care to send her my address, I would be very pleased to answer her letter if she wrote to me. I am afraid I haven't much to tell you about again, except for the pictures I have seen, one was "Boom Town" and the other "Navy Blues". I guess you know who the stars were in these two films. I hope you saw them, they were very good. Well my dear, I will close now, hoping to hear from you again soon. Remember me to your sister and don't forget about the photo, cheerio.

Best wishes.

All my love.

Yours Fred

XXXX

XXXX

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**Date: 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1942**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, B. Coy 9<sup>th</sup> Batt K.R.R.C.  
(Rangers), Middle East Forces

Sent To: W/59124 Pte Warwick D. G, 26 Garden Street, Brompton,  
Chatham, Kent, England

Dear Dorothy,

Just a few lines to let you know I received your postcard dated 26<sup>th</sup> Jan. Glad to hear you are still getting along OK as it leaves me the same at present. I expect you are still at the same address. You seem to have had a long time at this place, but when the winter is over you will very likely be shifted somewhere else. I don't suppose you will mind that so long as it is near home. Well Len and I are separated again. I will be away from the unit for a month. I could have had my letters sent on to me but I asked them to be kept until I return so I shall miss getting my mail for the next few weeks. Still it will mean all the more to read when I get back. It is now 18 months since I last saw you, but to me it seems 18 yrs. I hope we do not have to wait much longer before we meet again. Well Dorothy dear, I will close now, hoping to hear from you again soon.

Cheerio

All my love.

Yours Fred

xxx

xxx

## Buried Beer

**Date: 11<sup>th</sup> April 1942**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, B. Coy 9<sup>th</sup> Batt K.R.R.C.  
(Rangers), Middle East Forces

Sent To: W/59124 Pte Warwick D. G, 26 Garden Street, Brompton,  
Chatham, Kent, England

Dear Dorothy,

Just a few lines to let you know I have just received an airgraph from you posted 24<sup>th</sup> Feb. Glad to hear you are still keeping in the best of health, as it leaves me the same at present. I also had a postcard from you about a fortnight ago. I am sorry I have been unable to write to you just lately and I expect I shall be unable to write much during the next few months. ~~We are no longer near Cairo, but somewhere in the desert.~~ The weather here now is very hot, goodness knows how we will get on when it comes to June and the others months. Still we got over it last year, so I expect we will again this time. I hope next summer I shall be home with you and the family.

I am glad to hear you saw Waterloo Bridge. I bet in some parts of the film you had to shed a few tears unless you have come hard boiled since I've been away "Ha" "Ha".

Doll wrote and told me that she saw the film "Sergeant York" and liked it very much, but it made her cry in places. Doll writes more letters to me than anyone else. I can count on a letter from her every time the mail comes in.

Well Dear Dorothy, I was glad to hear you have been able to get leave pretty often and to spend a few hours with Ma. I hope you have a good time when on leave. I shall soon be looking forward to having leave myself after being out here a few weeks.

You seem to be having a long stay at the same address. I guess you would like a change, but one thing about it is that it is quite near home, I wish I was as near.

At the end of this month, I shall have been out here 18 months and I was thinking the other day, that at the end of August this year, it is two years since I last saw you, but it seems longer. When this is all over we certainly will have a lot to make up for. It will be a treat to be able to

look at some green fields after looking at nothing but ruddy sand for months.

Well Dorothy my dear, I think this is all for now. I will write as often as I possibly can, so for now will say cheerio, hoping to be with you again soon.

All my love and best wishes.

Yours forever.

Fred

XXXXXX

XXXXXX

XXXXXX

**Date: 6<sup>th</sup> May 1942**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling

B. Coy 9<sup>th</sup> Batt K.R.R.C. (Rangers), Middle East Forces

Sent To: W/59124 Pte Warwick D. G, 26 Garden Street, Brompton, Chatham, Kent, England

My Dearest Dorothy,

Here I am once again to let you know I am still keeping fit and well and hoping these few lines will find you the same.

Well my dear, I have just received your airgraphs and postcards OK. I hope you have been getting mine.

Two days ago I received a registered from Ma. I was very glad to hear from her that all is still well at home. She mentioned that she was hoping to see you again very soon. I hope you enjoyed your seven days leave at your Sister's in Cornwall.

I am glad you gave her my address and I shall be looking forward to hearing from her, even if it does mean me finding out from her what a really bad girl you are ("Ha" "Ha").

Well I have already wrote and told you my whereabouts these days. It is now six weeks we have been in the desert and without a doubt, I know it. It is pretty rough going at present, but I guess it's all in the game. The trouble is that water is rationed and beer is a foregone conclusion. We get about one tin a week if we are lucky and that is only half a pint. The day before yesterday the beer came up, there are six of us on my truck, the other five mates drank theirs straightaway, but I

buried mine to cool it down a bit. Well, when it came to digging it up again, I couldn't find it. I dug like a madman for about half an hour and then it suddenly dawned on me that the boys were having a lark with me. I didn't say much of course (you liar), but anyway I eventually found my beer on the tailboard of the truck. I had earnt it after all the digging I had done.

Yesterday, we had a rough day. There was a sandstorm on all day and it's still a bit blowy today, but nowhere near as bad as yesterday. Everything got smothered including ourselves. It's a good job you are not near me when these sandstorms are on, if you were you would never speak to me again and I couldn't blame you.

My mate Len is now in D Coy. I haven't seen him for a month, but I hear he is getting on alright, one of my other pals have also gone to that Company.

Well Dorothy my dear, I may not be able to write any more letters during the next 3 or 4 weeks, but as soon as I get a chance I will write. I guess we are going to do a little arguing with someone and I hope we are in the right at the end of it.

Don't forget to keep writing. It's the only thing I look forward to these days. Well I guess this is all for now, so will close.

Cheerio,  
All my love.  
Best wishes.  
Fred  
xxxxx  
xxxxx

## Missing In Action

**First Name:**

R F

**Surname:**

Watling

**Date of Action:**

18/05/1942

**Fate:**

Missing

**Incident Details:**

Reported to War Office Casualty Section for the 24 hours ending at 09:00.

**Incident Date:**

02/06/1942

**Information:**

Casualty List No. 839.

**Rank:**

Rifleman

**Service Number:**

6848122

**Duty Location:**

Western Desert

**Service:**

British Army

**Regiment:**

King's Royal Rifle Corps

**Battalion:**

9th Battalion (Rangers)

**Archive Reference:**

WO 417/44



**First Name:**

R F

**Surname:**

Watling

**Fate:**

Prisoner of War

**Incident Details:**

Reported to War Office Casualty Section for the 24 hours ending at 09:00.

**Incident Date:**

30/06/1942

**Information:**

Casualty List No.863. Previously shown on Casualty List No.839 as Missing, 18/05/1942. Service Number of 6858122 crossed through on original source which states CL866/24.

**Rank:**

Rifleman

**Service Number:**

6848122

**Duty Location:**

Middle East – Western Desert

**Service:**

British Army

**Regiment:**

King's Royal Rifle Corps

**Battalion:**

9th Battalion (Rangers)

**Archive Reference:**

WO417/45

**First Name:**

R F

**Surname:**

Watling

**Fate:**

Prisoner of War in Italy

**Information:**

P.O.W. Camp number 66, Capua Transit Camp, Capua, postal mark number 3400

**Further Information:**

Record Office number: 24

**Rank:**

Rifleman

**Service Number:**

6848122

**Duty Location:**

Italy

**Service:**

British Army

**Primary Unit:**

King's Royal Rifle Corps

**Archive Reference:**

WO392/21

## **Prisoner of War, Italy**

### **Prigionieri Di Guerra, P.G. 73 Fossoli di Carpi, Modena**

PG = Prigionieri Di Guerra (Prisoner of War). There were many POW camps based in Italy. Fred was held in Camp 73.

The camp was established by the Royal Italian Army on 30 May 1942 for the British, South African and New Zealand military personnel captured in military operations in North Africa and originally called Campo PG 73. On 22 July 1942, 1,800 prisoners of war were moved to the camp and accommodated in 191 tents in what was called the "Old camp", the Campo Vecchio. With the surrender of Italy on 8 September 1943 the camp was evacuated and all prisoners of war moved to Germany.

On 6 May 1942 the go-ahead was given for the opening of a camp at Carpi in the province of Modena, intended to house 4,000 prisoners. The camp – initially made up of tents, some of which were gradually substituted by barracks during the winter of '42-'43 had come to house more than 5,000 prisoners by February 1943.

Attached to the camp were some labour camps set up to provide woodcutters for the forestry companies which were active in the Modena area.

The prisoners, almost all of whom were British, had been captured during the military campaigns in North Africa and transferred to Italy during what became a general procedure: firstly they were held in a transit camp in Libya, then they were sent by ship to temporary camps in the south, from where a further transfer – not always the final one – took them to yet another camp.

**Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1942 - Telegram**

Sent From: Geoff, 24 Friar Road, St Mary Cray, Kent

Sent To: W/59124 Pte Warwick D. G, 26 Garden Street, Brompton,  
Chatham, Kent, England

= FRED OK LETTER FOLLOWING = GEOFF + +

**Date: 20<sup>th</sup> July 1942**

Sent From: Geoff & Doll, 24 Friar Road, St Mary Cray, Kent

Sent To: W/59124 Pte Warwick D. G, 26 Garden Street, Brompton,  
Chatham, Kent, England

Dear Dorothy,

Just a few lines in answer to your welcome letter. Glad you are back again and we hope you had a nice holiday. Well dear, we will be pleased to see you on Saturday for the weekend. Hope it will be fine. Well Dorothy, I'm enclosing a letter that was put in an airmail of Mum's for you. Fred could only get one stamp, so he enclosed one for a friend of his and yours. He said we would send it on to you. We have not heard anymore. We wish we could, so we could send him a parcel, but I suppose we must be patient. Well Dorothy, Jep is a lot better now also. We had a nice day at Alice's. I hope you found your Sister and family quite well and thank you for the card. Well don't forget we will see you Saturday. Hope it will be a nice day for you, so cheerio for now.

I remain,

Yours Jep & Doll

XXXXX

**Date: 21<sup>st</sup> July 1942**

Sent From: Geoff & Doll, 24 Friar Road, St Mary Cray, Kent

Sent To: W/59124 Pte Warwick D. G, 26 Garden Street, Brompton,  
Chatham, Kent, England

Dear Dorothy,

Just a few lines. So glad to hear you are having your holiday. Hope you have a nice time. Well dear, we heard our Fred is in Italian hands. I have enclosed the address where you can write, but we can't send parcels yet until we get his camp and when we do we will send 10/- to the Red Cross and they will send parcels to him until we hear from him his-self to tell us what he wants and then we will pack them up ourselves. They sent Mum 40 coupons in case he wants clothes of any sort, which I daresay he will. We are longing to hear from him. Jep is writing to him now.

You get a prisoner of war letter card from the post office and it costs 3d. Of course you know you must not put anything only personal affairs. Well dear, Jep is a lot better and we had a nice day when we went to Alice's. Her husband was home for 1 month. He goes back Wed week and she is coming up with him for a day or two.

Well Dorothy, hope everything is OK with you. We hope to see you soon. Hope it is a little brighter this weekend for you. Well, I don't know what else to say, but we hope you have a nice time. Don't forget to write to Fred will you, so no more now, so cheerio.

I remain,

Yours as ever,

Jep & Doll

xxxx

**Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1942**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling Camp: PG 73 PM3200 Italia

Sent To: W/59124 Pte Warwick D. G, 26 Garden Street, Brompton, Chatham, Kent, England

My Dearest Dorothy,

Just a few lines to let you know I am still keeping OK and hoping this letter will find you the same. I am glad to say I received your letter dated 24<sup>th</sup> July yesterday, yet I got your other one you sent a month ago and that was dated 5<sup>th</sup> Aug. The mail at present is all over the show, but it will get better after a time. I am glad to hear you are getting plenty of leave and so being able to see the family quite often. Doll writes very often. I have had 10 letters so far, two from you, seven from Doll & Geoff and one from Flo when she was on holiday with Ma. I know Doll writes also for Ma and I am glad to hear all are well at home. I forgot to

mention I have had one also from Annie. Well Dorothy dear, life is OK as a POW, but not what I really thought it would be like, still I am hoping we are together again soon. We have had one picture show so far in this camp, it was a Jack Hulbert film. I had not seen it and it was good, although it was in Italian language. I am glad to know you received my last letters from the desert, they were the last I shall write to you beneath the tropical sun "Ha" "Ha". Well cheerio, all my love and kisses.

Fred xxx

Poste Italiane Cartolina Postale Per Prigionieri Di Guerra (Italian Post - Post Card For Prisoners Of War)

**Date: 30<sup>th</sup> October 1942**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling Camp: PG 73 PM3200 Italia

Sent To: Miss Dorothy Warwick, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road, Chatham, Kent, Gt Britain

My Dearest Dorothy,

Just a line to let you know I have received 3 letters from you in the last week. Glad to hear you are keeping well as it leaves me the same. I have your new address on one of the letters. Hope it is as good as the last place. Well cheerio, hope to be with you soon, love Fred x

Posta di Prigioniero Di Guerra (Post - For Prisoners Of War)

**Date: 16<sup>th</sup> December 1943**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling Camp: PG 73 PM3200 Italia

Sent To: Miss Dorothy Warwick, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road, Chatham, Kent, Gt Britain

Dear Dorothy,

Just a few lines hoping to find you in the best of health, as I am OK myself at present. Well dear, today is your birthday so here's wishing you a happy one and may good luck bring us together again for your next one. A few days ago, I received my 5<sup>th</sup> letter from you dated Nov 7<sup>th</sup>. Glad to hear you are well and also the family. I am sorry to hear my letters and cards are not getting home. It's a good job I received

them OK. I have had 31 in all. Most of them from Doll. Well I guess Christmas will be here in a few days. I shall be with you and the family that day. I shall drink to you all even if it is with a cup of tea. At present we get a red x parcel every 16 days, but we are getting one a man for Christmas Day. It will make things brighter for us. It wouldn't be much of a day on Italian rations. Well sweetheart, the last time I saw you was in July 1940, nearly 2 ½ yrs ago. It seems longer at times, but things are brighter for us now. So keep smiling, it won't be much longer. I will have to close now. Give my love to all, cheerio, all my love and kisses Fred xxx

Poste Italiane Cartolina Postale Per Prigionieri Di Guerra (Italian Post - Post Card For Prisoners Of War)

**Date: 30<sup>th</sup> December 1942**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling Camp: PG 73 PM3200 Italia

Sent To: Miss Dorothy Warwick, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road, Chatham, Kent, Gt Britain

Dear Dorothy,

I received a letter from you dated 7<sup>th</sup> Nov. Glad to hear you are keeping well, as I am at present. I had a nice time Christmas. Hope you were able to get home also for the holiday. I am sure I will be with you for the next. Cheerio, all my love Fred.

Poste Italiane Cartolina Postale Per Prigionieri Di Guerra (Italian Post - Post Card For Prisoners Of War)

**Date: 14<sup>th</sup> January 1943**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling Camp: PG 73 PM3200 Italia

Sent To: Miss Dorothy Warwick, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road, Chatham, Kent, Gt Britain

Dear Dorothy,

Just a line hoping to find you in the best of health as I am OK at present. The other day I had an old letter from you dated 3<sup>rd</sup> October addressed to Rome. Glad to hear you are well and enjoying the shows. Well dearest, keep smiling. Cheerio, all my love Fred.

Poste Italiane Cartolina Postale Per Prigionieri Di Guerra (Italian Post - Post Card For Prisoners Of War)

**Date: 1<sup>st</sup> February 1943**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling Camp: PG 73 PM3200 Italia

Sent To: Miss Dorothy Warwick, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road, Chatham, Kent, Gt Britain

Dear Dorothy,

Just a line hoping to find you in good spirits, as I am at present. I have just received 2 letters from you dated 28<sup>th</sup> Oct, 15<sup>th</sup> Dec. Glad to hear you are well. I have a cig parcel arrived at the camp. I get it tomorrow. Will let you know who it's from. Well my dear, keep smiling, love Fred.

Poste Italiane Cartolina Postale Per Prigionieri Di Guerra (Italian Post - Post Card For Prisoners Of War)

**Date: 10<sup>th</sup> February 1943**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling Camp: PG 73 PM3200 Italia

Sent To: Miss Dorothy Warwick, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road, Chatham, Kent, Gt Britain

Dear Dorothy,

Just a line hoping to find you in the best of health, as I am OK at present. I have had another 3 letters from you. Glad to hear you are well. It won't be long now before we are together again. I received 250 fags from Ma. They were very welcome. Well cheerio my dear all my love, Fred.



Poste Italiane Cartolina Postale Per Prigionieri Di Guerra (Italian Post - Post Card For Prisoners Of War)

**Date: 11<sup>th</sup> February 1943**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling Camp: PG 73 PM3200 Italia

Sent To: Miss Dorothy Warwick, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road, Chatham, Kent, Gt Britain

Dear Dorothy,

Just a line hoping to find you OK, as I am at present. I had one more letter from you. Glad to hear all is well. I guess it won't be long now before we are together again so keep it up now. Thanks for the cigs they say you have sent, well cheerio, all my love, Fred.

Posta di Prigioniero Di Guerra (Post - For Prisoners Of War)

**Date: 17<sup>th</sup> March 1943**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling Camp: PG 73 PM3200 Italia

Sent To: Miss Dorothy Warwick, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road, Chatham, Kent, Gt Britain

Dear Dearest Dorothy,

Just a few lines hoping to find you in the best of health, as I am OK myself at present. Well my dear, I am getting your letters OK. I hope you are getting mine. I am glad to hear things are going alright for you and also you are able to get around to see the folks. I am sorry to say I have not received your cigs yet. I have only had one parcel from home so far and that was 250 cigs from Mum & Dad. I am looking forward to getting some of the other parcels. I had a letter from Geoff the other day. He tells me, Len, after 3 months missing, turned up a POW in this country. I wish he was here with me, but I don't think any of us will be long now before we are home again. I hope not anyway. Well sweetheart, it will be 3 years this July since I saw you last. I didn't think you would have the patience to wait that long, but according to your letters I guess I am safe for another three years. Anyway we will make up for it when I get home. The weather here is grand now, I am sitting outside the hut in the sun writing this letter. I hope you are having nice weather at home and also a quiet time.

Well my dear, I will close now, remember me to your Sister and all at home, cheerio, all my love and best wishes, from your loving sweetheart Fred.

Poste Italiane Cartolina Postale Per Prigionieri Di Guerra (Italian Post - Post Card For Prisoners Of War)

**Date: 8<sup>th</sup> April 1943**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling Camp: PG 73 PM3200 Italia

Sent To: Miss Dorothy Warwick, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road, Chatham, Kent, Gt Britain

Dear Dorothy,

Just a line hoping to find you well, as it leaves me OK. I received your cig parcel, thank you very much. I have now had 3 cig parcels and 1 clothing, which I got today. Well my dearest, I hope we will be together again soon, so keep smiling, cheerio, all my love and best wishes, Fred.

Poste Italiane Cartolina Postale Per Prigionieri Di Guerra (Italian Post - Post Card For Prisoners Of War)

**Date: 29<sup>th</sup> April 1943**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling Camp: PG 73 PM3200 Italia

Sent To: Miss Dorothy Warwick, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road, Chatham, Kent, Gt Britain

My Dear Dorothy,

Just a line hoping to find you well, as I am at present. I hope very much that we will be together again soon. Thanks again for the cigs. I am glad Easter is over, it took my mind back to Blighty too much. Let's hope we are together for the next, cheerio sweetheart, love Fred.

Poste Italiane Cartolina Postale Per Prigionieri Di Guerra (Italian Post - Post Card For Prisoners Of War)

**Date: 14<sup>th</sup> May 1943**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling Camp: PG 73 PM3200 Italia

Sent To: Miss Dorothy Warwick, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road, Chatham, Kent, Gt Britain

My Dear Dorothy,

Just a line hoping to find you well, as I am at present. Received cig parcel and letter from Ma this morning. She says you are looking well, keep it up. Well my dear, I hope we are together very soon now, longing very much to see you again, cheerio love Fred xx

Poste Italiane Cartolina Postale Per Prigionieri Di Guerra (Italian Post - Post Card For Prisoners Of War)

**Date: 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1943**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling Camp: PG 73 PM3200 Italia

Sent To: Miss Dorothy Warwick, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road, Chatham, Kent, Gt Britain

Darling Dorothy,

Just a card hoping to find you well, as I am at present. Glad to hear you get plenty of time to see the family. In 2 months time, it will be 3 years since we saw one another. It seems like 30 to me. Still I keep hoping for the day we shall meet again.

Cheerio my love, best wishes Fred.

Posta di Prigioniero Di Guerra (Post - For Prisoners Of War)

**Date: 13<sup>th</sup> June 1943**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling Camp: PG 73 PM3200 Italia

Sent To: Miss Dorothy Warwick, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road,  
Chatham, Kent, Gt Britain

My Darling sweetheart,

Just a line hoping to find you in the best of health, as I am myself at present. I received a letter from you yesterday dated 11<sup>th</sup> May. I am glad to hear you are OK and getting on alright with the job. Have you been promoted yet? If I had taken what was offered me, I don't suppose I would have been here now, still I have only myself to blame. Well my dear, I am glad to hear there are some good films about. We haven't had any more in the camp, but that don't worry me, I can't wait till I get home which I hope won't be very long now. I have now received 80 letters from home and five parcels of cigs and one clothing parcel. I expect to get Mum's January one very soon, but I am well off for clothing. I have not heard from your Sister, but will be very pleased to do so. I am also looking forward to receiving that photo you are sending. I wish the family would send some. Well my Darling, keep smiling, we will be going together again soon to a dog meeting and then you will have another card for a souvenir. Cheerio, all my love and best wishes from Fred xxx

Poste Italiane Cartolina Postale Per Prigionieri Di Guerra (Italian Post -  
Post Card For Prisoners Of War)

**Date: 8<sup>th</sup> of July 1943**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling Camp: PG 73 PM3200 Italia

Sent To: Miss Dorothy Warwick, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road,  
Chatham, Kent, Gt Britain

My Darling Dorothy,

Just a line hoping to find you well, as it leaves me at present. In the past week I have had two letters from you. Glad to hear you had a holiday with the family. I hope we are together again soon. It is 3 years this month. Well my dearest, will write a letter next week, cheerio, all my love Fred xx

Posta di Prigioniero Di Guerra (Post - For Prisoners Of War)

**Date: 15<sup>th</sup> of July 1943**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling Camp: PG 73 PM3200 Italia

Sent To: Miss Dorothy Warwick, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road, Chatham, Kent, Gt Britain

My Darling Dorothy,

Just a few lines hoping to find you in the best of health, as I am myself at present. Since I wrote to Ma last week have had six more letters. Three from you and three from Doll. I have now received ninety four since being a POW. Glad to hear you and all at home are keeping well and also managed to have a few days holiday. I was glad to hear you saw Alice, Flo and Charlie, must have been quite a family gathering. Well my dear, your news is good and it won't be long before I am home. I hope you are right, we don't get much news in this place except rumours which sometimes are true. I am pleased to hear you get some good shows at home. We haven't had a picture show since the first one 9 months ago, but we run our own concerts which are very good.

If you see Alice again, tell her there is a friend of mine in the same hut who lives at New Romney. His name is Ken Rice and he knows Lydd and all round there quiet well. His address is Hendon House, Sussex Road, New Romney. If Alice is round that way she could call in and see his wife. Well my Darling, I will close now, hope to be with you soon, cheerio all my love, from your loving sweetheart Fred.

Poste Italiane Cartolina Postale Per Prigionieri Di Guerra (Italian Post - Post Card For Prisoners Of War)

**Date: 13<sup>th</sup> of August 1943**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling Camp: PG 73 PM3200 Italia

Sent To: Miss Dorothy Warwick, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road, Chatham, Kent, Gt Britain

My Dorothy,

Just a line hoping to find you well, as I am at present. I received another parcel from Ma yesterday, the April one. Well my dear, I hope to be home with you soon. Weather is grand here, hope it's the same

for you. I have received more letters from you. Cheerio, all my love and best wishes, Fred xx

Poste Italiane Cartolina Postale Per Prigionieri Di Guerra (Italian Post - Post Card For Prisoners Of War)

**Date: 24<sup>th</sup> of September 1943**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling Camp: PG 73 PM3200 Italia

Sent To: Miss Dorothy Warwick, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road, Chatham, Kent, Gt Britain

(originally written 26 Garden Street and then replaced it)

Dear Dorothy,

I received your letter dated 4<sup>th</sup> Aug. Glad to hear you are well and it leaves me the same. This week I had a letter from Doll also Flo, which makes six. Glad to hear you are spending some nice times with Doll. She tells me about some photos, please send one.

Well cheerio, chin up love Fred xx

Poste Italiane Cartolina Postale Per Prigionieri Di Guerra (Italian Post - Post Card For Prisoners Of War)

**Date: 7<sup>th</sup> of October 1943**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling Camp: PG 73 PM3200 Italia

Sent To: Miss Dorothy Warwick, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road, Chatham, Kent, Gt Britain

Dear Dorothy,

Just a line to say I am well and hoping to find you the same. I have had 1 letter from you to date and hoping to hear again soon. Doll tells me of your visits, I hope you enjoy yourself. I hope we are together again soon. Well cheerio, keep smiling, all my love Fred xxx

## **Transit Camp: M-Stammlager V11 A, Germany**

A number of British prisoners of war who had been captured in North Africa and held for a considerable time in Italian Prisoner of War (POW) camps were “ceded” to German-run work camps.

Kriegsgefangenenpost (Prisoner of War Post)

Kriegsgefangenenlager (Prisoner of War Camp)

**Date: 8<sup>th</sup> of October 1943**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling Camp: M-Stammlager V11 A, Deutschland

Sent To: Miss Dorothy Warwick, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road, Chatham, Kent, Gt Britain

My Dear Dorothy,

I hope you are keeping well, as I am at present. This is my first card to you. I have been here a fortnight tomorrow. It was a big disappointment for us. I thought we were going to have this xmas together, but I guess we will have to wait a little longer. We are not yet in a permanent camp. Will be glad when I hear from you again, love Fred.

Kriegsgefangenenpost (Prisoner of War Post)

**Date: 23rd of October 1943**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling Camp: M-Stammlager V11 A, Deutschland

Sent To: Miss Dorothy Warwick, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road, Chatham, Kent, Gt Britain

Dear Dorothy,

Just a few lines hoping to find you in the best of health, as I am keeping OK at present. Well my dear, I wrote a card to you about a fortnight ago. I have been in Germany 4 weeks tomorrow. You must have been greatly disappointed when you heard about us being moved out of Italy, but just imagine how we ourselves felt. I thought it meant this Christmas at home for sure, but I guess we have got to wait a little

longer. We are in a transit camp at present and so cannot give you any address yet. Of course we are not getting any letters now and no red x parcels which are the only two things that keep your chin up in places like this. Promises are plentiful here, but we have been POWs too long now and they don't count with us. I guess I sound gloomy in this letter, but must admit I feel it. I hope you are enjoying yourselves and don't let the thought of me stand in your way. It's over three years now. Well my dearest, cheerio for now, all my love Fred.



## **Stalag XI-B**

The camp in Fallingbistel is one of four team camps (Stalag) in the military district XI Hanover. From the beginning of World War II in September 1939, the Stalag XI B Fallingbistel was set up in a workers' camp.

The Stalag XI B was the centre of operations for prisoners of war of all nations in the Hanover/Braunschweig area. The maximum number was around 80,000 prisoners, who were placed in about 1,500 commands for work in agriculture and industry.

Kriegsgefangenenpost (Prisoner of War Post)

**Date: 20<sup>th</sup> January 1944**

Sent From: Watling Fred 139290, Camp: M-Stammlager XI B, ARB KDO 7001, Deutschland

Sent To: Miss Dorothy Warwick, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road, Chatham, Kent, Gt Britain

My Darling sweetheart,

Just a line hoping to find you in the best of health, as I am keeping OK at present. This is the first time I have been able to write in six weeks. I am working now and time goes quick but I am looking forward to seeing you again. It will be 4 yrs this July. Cheerio Darling, keep smiling, all my love, yours forever, Fred.

Kriegsgefangenenpost (Prisoner of War Post)

**Date: 20<sup>th</sup> February 1944**

Sent From: Watling Fred 139290, Camp: M-Stammlager X1 B, ARB  
KDO 7001, Deutschland

Sent To: Miss Dorothy Warwick, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road,  
Chatham, Kent, Gt Britain

My Darling Dorothy,

Just a line hoping to find you well, as I am at present. I received my 1<sup>st</sup> letter from home a week ago, it was Doll. I am very glad to hear all is well. It's the 1<sup>st</sup> letter for six months. I am looking forward to one from you. Well Darling, keep smiling, we will be together again soon, cheerio, all my love, yours, Fred.

Kriegsgefangenenpost (Prisoner of War Post)

**Date: 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1944**

Sent From: Watling Fred 139290, Camp: M-Stammlager X1 B, ARB  
KDO 7001, Deutschland

Sent To: Miss Dorothy Warwick, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road,  
Chatham, Kent, Gt Britain

Dear Dorothy,

Just a line hoping to find you well, as I am at present. I have had two letters from you dated 23<sup>rd</sup> Jan and 28<sup>th</sup> Feb. Glad to hear things are not too bad for you. I am looking forward to being with you again. It will be 4 yrs end of this July since I last saw you. Glad to hear you are still visiting the family. Doll says she has to keep her eyes on Geoff, when you are there, cheerio love Fred.

Kriegsgefangenenpost (Prisoner of War Post)

**Date: 16<sup>th</sup> April 1944**

Sent From: Watling Fred 139290, Camp: M-Stammlager X1 B, ARB  
KDO 7001, Deutschland

Sent To: Miss Dorothy Warwick, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road,  
Chatham, Kent, Gt Britain

My Darling Dorothy,

Once again, I am able to write a few lines to you, hoping to find you in the best of health, as I am keeping well at present. I have received two letters from you dated 23<sup>rd</sup> Jan and 27<sup>th</sup> Feb. Three weeks ago, I had them, but not any more since. I hope you have received my cards. Well my dear, I haven't much to tell you about. At present I am doing a spot of work. It is compulsory in this country. Anyway, it will get me used to it for when I get home, which I pray will not be long now. I have had 8 letters from Doll. She says you are getting along OK and by the sound of things you have become one of the family. It will be 4 years the end of this July since I saw you. It's a darn long time for a girl to wait. I wouldn't have thought there were any girls who could have done it, but I guess you are a sticker. Being in a place like this, you hear a lot of funny things that fellows receive in their letters from sweethearts and wives. Well Darling, I am glad to hear Ma and Dad are well, they are my big worry in this place. Hoping that I am able to be with them again, before anything happens, they are getting on now. I will close now, keep smiling dear, all my love and best wishes. Fred.

Kriegsgefangenenpost (Prisoner of War Post)

**Date: 30<sup>th</sup> April 1944**

Sent From: Watling Fred 139290, Camp: M-Stammlager X1 B, ARB  
KDO 7001, Deutschland

Sent To: Miss Dorothy Warwick, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road,  
Chatham, Kent, Gt Britain

My Darling Dorothy,

Just a line hoping to find you well, as I am at present. I had a letter from you last Sunday dated 10<sup>th</sup> Feb and 3 from you Wednesday, all sent to Italy. Glad Darling to hear you are keeping OK. Keep it up and remember we will make up for all this when we are together again, which I hope will be soon. Cheerio until next time, all my love and best wishes. Fred.

Kriegsgefangenenpost (Prisoner of War Post)

**Date: 14<sup>th</sup> May 1944**

Sent From: Watling Fred 139290, Camp: M-Stammlager X1 B, ARB  
KDO 7001, Deutschland

Sent To: Miss Dorothy Warwick, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road,  
Chatham, Kent, Gt Britain

My Dear Dorothy,

Just a line hoping to find you well, as I am at present. I received a letter from Doll this morning. Glad to hear you and all at home are keeping OK. Her letter told me quite a lot about you, sounds as though I had better hurry up and get home. I am glad you get on well with the family. Well Darling, will write a letter to you next week, all my love, Fred.

Kriegsgefangenenpost (Prisoner of War Post)

**Date: 11<sup>th</sup> June 1944**

Sent From: Watling Fred 139290, Camp: M-Stammlager X1 B, ARB  
KDO 7001, Deutschland

Sent To: Miss Dorothy Warwick, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road,  
Chatham, Kent, Gt Britain

Dear Dorothy,

Just a line once again hoping to find you in the best of health, as I am OK at present. Well Darling, will you tell Mum and Doll when you see them that I have had 3 parcels during the past fortnight, one was a clothing parcel sent to Italy last June, one was 200 Weights which I believe George sent and the other a clothes parcel dated 1<sup>st</sup> Jan, but it had been interfered with, the underclothes and chocolate were stolen. Yesterday I had 2 letters, one from George dated 2<sup>nd</sup> Feb and one from Ma 31<sup>st</sup> October last year. Well I guess what we have been waiting for has happened, news is good, let's hope we are soon together again. If anyone had told me I was going to be away all this time when I left Blighty, I would never have expected you to wait that long, I am glad you have got on so well with the family, they all mention you when they write. I hear you have altered and I guess you find that I have, when anyone guesses my age they are usually five or six years over. Well my Darling, I can't wait now until I get home, which I think will not be long, keep smiling and I shall start looking for the ring you would like, cheerio, all my love and best wishes, Fred.

**The news, referenced in the above letter, refers to D-Day which occurred on the 6<sup>th</sup> of June 1944.**

Kriegsgefangenenpost (Prisoner of War Post)

**Date: 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1944**

Sent From: Watling Fred 139290, Camp: M-Stammlager X1 B, ARB  
KDO 7001, Deutschland

Sent To: Miss Dorothy Warwick, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road,  
Chatham, Kent, Gt Britain

My Dear Dorothy,

Just a line hoping to find you well, as I am at present. I had a letter from you dated Jan 5<sup>th</sup>, one from Doll 12<sup>th</sup> April, glad to hear everything is going alright. News is pretty good so perhaps we will be together again soon. I'm glad you are seeing some good films. Will be glad to see some myself. Well Darling, I will say cheerio, hoping to soon be saying "Hallo", all my love and best wishes, forever yours, Fred.

Kriegsgefangenenpost (Prisoner of War Post)

**Date: 17<sup>th</sup> July 1944**

Sent From: Watling Fred 139290, Camp: M-Stammlager X1 B, ARB  
KDO 7001, Deutschland

Sent To: Miss Dorothy Warwick, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road,  
Chatham, Kent, Gt Britain

Dear Dorothy,

Just a line hoping to find you well, as I am at present. I have not heard anymore from home lately. I hope everything is going OK. Well my dear, I have not much to say except that I am anxiously waiting to be home with you again, which I hope will be soon. I look forward to your letters expecting to receive a photo, but never any luck, cheerio Darling, all my love and best wishes, from Fred.

Kriegsgefangenenpost (Prisoner of War Post)

**Date: 30<sup>th</sup> July 1944**

Sent From: Watling Fred 139290, Camp: M-Stammlager X1 B, ARB  
KDO 7001, Deutschland

Sent To: Miss Dorothy Warwick, 5 Knighton Park Road, Sydenham,  
SE26, England

My Dear Dorothy,

Just a line once again hoping to find you keeping well, as I am myself at present. Well Darling, I write home every Sunday. Last week I told you I had 4 letters, during the week I had 2, one from you and Doll and this morning another from Doll dated 14<sup>th</sup> May. When she wrote this letter she said you were down home with Ma. Glad to hear all is well at home. Aren't you ever going to get tired of waiting. Today is exactly 4 years since I last saw you. I was on 48 hrs from 28<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> July in 1940, does it seem all that time to you. Sometimes I can't seem to remember what things were like at home. Every letter from you is a little disappointing because I am always looking for a photo, but it is never there. We can't get any done here, but I wouldn't like to send you one it might frighten you, "no" Darling being serious, I will send you one if ever I get any taken here, but I don't think we need worry about photos now, we will be seeing one another I hope very soon now. Doll and you seem to be like Sisters now, so you ought to make good Sister in laws. Well dearest, help Ma and Dad to keep their chins up and please remember me to your Sister, cheerio sweetheart, all my love and best wishes, yours always, Fred.

Kriegsgefangenenpost (Prisoner of War Post)

**Date: 27<sup>th</sup> August 1944**

Sent From: Watling Fred 139290, Camp: M-Stammlager X1 B, ARB  
KDO 7001, Deutschland

Sent To: Miss Dorothy Warwick, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road,  
Chatham, Kent, Gt Britain

My Darling Dorothy,

Just a line hoping to find you in the best of health, as I am OK at present. I received two letters from you last week. Glad to hear you are still well. Well Darling, the news is good and I am sure we will be together soon. I hope you are getting my letters. You don't seem to get many, cheerio Darling, will be home soon, all my love and best wishes Fred.

Kriegsgefangenenpost (Prisoner of War Post)

**Date: 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1944**

Sent From: Watling Fred 139290, Camp: M-Stammlager X1 B, ARB  
KDO 7001, Deutschland

Sent To: Miss Dorothy Warwick, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road,  
Chatham, Kent, Gt Britain

My Darling Dorothy,

Just a line hoping to find you well, as I am OK at present. The news is grand lately and it can't be long now before we are together again. There was no mail in last week, hope we get some this. There is a big change in the weather here, signs of old man winter coming back. I hope we don't have to spend another one as POWs. Well sweetheart, remember me to your Sister and all at home, cheerio, love and best wishes, yours Fred.



Kriegsgefangenenpost (Prisoner of War Post)

**Date: 17<sup>th</sup> September 1944**

Sent From: Watling Fred 139290, Camp: M-Stammlager X1 B, ARB  
KDO 7001, Deutschland

Sent To: Miss Dorothy Warwick, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road,  
Chatham, Kent, Gt Britain

My Darling Dorothy,

Just a line hoping to find you in the best of health, as I am keeping OK at present. I had a letter from you this morning dated 8<sup>th</sup> Aug. Glad to hear you are keeping fit, but you don't seem to be received much mail. Well dear, I must admit to you that I am surprised to keep getting letters from you, saying you are still waiting and feeling the same way about me. I guess I couldn't say much if you forget me, it is a long time ago now, over 4 yrs you have waited. I shall owe you a lot, but know I shall make it up to you when we meet again. In one of your letters you mention me telling you about Doll and Ma always writing about you and you were hoping they were nice things. I guess they couldn't have been better. They told me I could never have found a better girl, but I know you don't have to have me tell you that. To Doll you are another Sister and to Mum it's a foregone conclusion that you are a future daughter in law. Well Darling, in the letter this morning you say your Brother has just returned from India after 8 years. I expect you are very glad to see him again after such a long time. The news is good my dear, so I don't think it will be long before we are together again, so until then, cheerio, all my love and best wishes, your loving sweetheart, Fred.

Kriegsgefangenenpost (Prisoner of War Post)

**Date: 24<sup>th</sup> September 1944**

Sent From: Watling Fred 139290, Camp: M-Stammlager X1 B, ARB  
KDO 7001, Deutschland

Sent To: Miss Dorothy Warwick, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road,  
Chatham, Kent, Gt Britain

My Darling Dorothy,

Just a line hoping to find you well, as I am OK at present. The news is very good these days and I don't think it will be long before we are together again. In all my letters, I have asked you for a photo, you can send them, but so far I have always been disappointed. Well Darling, I shall write a letter next week, so until then, cheerio, all my love and best wishes, from Fred.

Kriegsgefangenenpost (Prisoner of War Post)

**Date: 1<sup>st</sup> October 1944**

Sent From: Watling Fred 139290, Camp: M-Stammlager X1 B, ARB  
KDO 7001, Deutschland

Sent To: Miss Dorothy Warwick, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road,  
Chatham, Kent, Gt Britain

My Darling Dorothy,

Just a line hoping to find you well, as I am OK at present. I received two letters from you last week. Glad to hear you are still getting along OK. I also had one from Doll. Everything seems to be alright at home. I hope it stays that way. I keep on saying I shall be home soon, but it still seems a good way off. Anyway Darling, we will keep smiling and hoping for the best, cheerio, all my love and best wishes, Fred.

Kriegsgefangenenpost (Prisoner of War Post)

**Date: 8<sup>th</sup> October 1944**

Sent From: Watling Fred 139290, Camp: M-Stammlager X1 B, ARB  
KDO 7001, Deutschland

Sent To: Miss Dorothy Warwick, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road,  
Chatham, Kent, Gt Britain

My Darling Dorothy,

Just a line hoping to find you in the best of health, as I am keeping OK at present. Yesterday I had two letters from Doll, in one it mentioned you being on holiday in Cornwall. I hope the weather was nice for you. It is winter here again and we are wondering if we will spend the whole of it in this country. I hope not. Well Darling, hope to be with you soon, cheerio, all my love and best wishes, from Fred.

Kriegsgefangenenpost (Prisoner of War Post)

**Date: 29<sup>th</sup> October 1944**

Sent From: Watling Fred 139290, Camp: M-Stammlager X1 B, ARB  
KDO 7001, Deutschland

Sent To: Miss Dorothy Warwick, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road,  
Chatham, Kent, Gt Britain

My Darling Dorothy,

Just a line hoping to find you in the best of health, as I am OK at present. I received 11 letters last week, two from you. Glad to hear you are still keeping well and also managing to have a few holidays. Next year, I guess we shall be having them together. Well my Darling, I will write a letter to you next week, until then, cheerio, all my love and best wishes, yours always, Fred.

Kriegsgefangenenpost (Prisoner of War Post)

**Date: 19<sup>th</sup> November 1944**

Sent From: Watling Fred 139290, Camp: M-Stammlager X1 B, ARB  
KDO 7001, Deutschland

Sent To: Miss Dorothy Warwick, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road,  
Chatham, Kent, Gt Britain

My Darling Dorothy,

Just a line hoping to find you in the best of health, as I am keeping OK at present. Well Darling, I am afraid it will not be this year again that we will be seeing one another, but let's hope it is early next year. Last Friday the 17<sup>th</sup> completed 4 yrs since sailing from England. To me it seems much longer. I'm feeling pretty home sick at present. Well sweetheart, keep smiling, cheerio, all my love, yours Fred.

Kriegsgefangenenpost (Prisoner of War Post)

**Date: 17<sup>th</sup> December 1944**

Sent From: Watling Fred 139290, Camp: M-Stammlager X1 B, ARB  
KDO 7001, Deutschland

Sent To: Miss Dorothy Warwick, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road,  
Chatham, Kent, Gt Britain

My Darling Dorothy,

Just a line hoping to find you well, as I am keeping OK at present. I received a letter from you and Doll today. They were both dated 6<sup>th</sup> Nov. Glad to hear all is well at home. Well Darling, my thoughts were with you yesterday (16<sup>th</sup>). I hope we are together early in the New Year. I guess it is rather late now, but I wish you a merry xmas and a very happy New Year, cheerio Darling, all my love, Fred.

Kriegsgefangenenpost (Prisoner of War Post)

**Date: 24<sup>th</sup> December 1944**

Sent From: Watling Fred 139290, Camp: M-Stammlager X1 B, ARB  
KDO 7001, Deutschland

Sent To: Miss Dorothy Warwick, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road,  
Chatham, Kent, Gt Britain

My Darling Dorothy,

Just a line hoping to find you in the best of health, as I am keeping OK at present. Well my sweetheart, today you are more than ever in my thoughts and I sincerely hope this is our last Christmas apart. Today I am hoping that you will spend this holiday if possible with my people. A merry Christmas and a happy New Year to you Darling, au revoir, all my love Fred.

Kriegsgefangenenpost (Prisoner of War Post)

**Date: 1<sup>st</sup> January 1945**

Sent From: Watling Fred 139290, Camp: M-Stammlager X1 B, ARB  
KDO 7001, Deutschland

Sent To: Miss Dorothy Warwick, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road,  
Chatham, Kent, Gt Britain

My Darling Dorothy,

Just a line hoping to find you keeping well, as I am myself at present. This is my first letter to you in the New Year. I hope I don't have to write too many. The news seems good so my Darling, I think this is the year when we shall meet again. I hope all at home are keeping well, remember me to your Aunt and Sister. Yesterday about 100 parcels from home arrived in camp. I was not amongst them, but there is a lot coming in again next week, so perhaps next Sunday I shall be able to write and say I have received one. Well I hardly know what to write about these times. There is not much doing in this life. I still have to work, but it is hardly what you could call work. I shall be a lazy blighter after this, so you had better look out for yourself. I can see you having to do the work while I do the cooking and believe me I'm pretty good with anything that comes out of a tin.

I am still disappointed owing to not getting any photos from you, but it's a bit too late to start now. I guess I shall have to be introduced to all when I get back home again. I shall never recognise some of the family. Well my Darling, I will close now, so cheerio, all my love and best wishes, yours forever, Fred.

Kriegsgefangenenpost (Prisoner of War Post)

**Date: 11<sup>th</sup> February 1945**

Sent From: Watling Fred 139290, Camp: M-Stammlager X1 B, ARB KDO 7001, Deutschland

Sent To: Miss Dorothy Warwick, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road, Chatham, Kent, Gt Britain

My Darling Dorothy,

Just a line hoping to find you in the best of health, as I am OK at present. I have not heard from you for quite a while now. The mail is very bad these days, but the news is just the opposite which is the main thing. I don't think it will be long before we are together again. Well sweetheart, I will say cheerio for now, all my love and best wishes, Yours Fred. xx

Kriegsgefangenenpost (Prisoner of War Post)

**Date: 25<sup>th</sup> February 1945**

Sent From: Watling Fred 139290, Camp: M-Stammlager X1 B, ARB KDO 7001, Deutschland

Sent To: Miss Dorothy Warwick, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road, Chatham, Kent, Gt Britain

My Dear Dorothy,

Just a line hoping to find you keeping well, as I am still OK at present. I still haven't heard any news from home for quite a time. I hope all is still well with everyone. News is still good and I am hoping to be with you again very soon. Well Darling, I am looking forward to your next letter to hear how you are getting on and so for the present, will say cheerio, all my love and best wishes, Fred.

## Liberation

On the 13<sup>th</sup> April 1945, British troops finally reached the POW camp and released the inmates. Stalag XIB was the first British POW camp to be liberated by advancing troops.

**First Name:**

R F

**Surname:**

Watling

**Incident Details:**

Reported to the War Office Casualty Branch for the 48 hours ended 09.00am.

**Incident Date:**

04/06/1945

**Information:**

Casualty List No. 1773. Previously shown on Casualty List No. 863 (Corrected by No. 866) as reported Prisoner of War in German Hands (Germany) now Not Prisoner of War. Previous Theatre of War, Western Desert.

**Rank:**

Rifleman

**Service Number:**

6848122

**Service:**

British Army

**Regiment:**

King's Royal Rifle Corps

**Battalion:**

9th Battalion (Rangers)

**Archive Reference:**

WO417/92\_2

## **We'll Meet Again**

**Date: 24<sup>th</sup> April 1945**

Sent From: 329 2.34 North London T 12

Sent To: Pte Warwick, ATS Company, Old Vicarage Road, Chatham, Kent

= FRED IN ENGLAND = DOLL +

**Date: 25<sup>th</sup> April 1945**

Sent From: 123 Davenport Rd, Catford, SE6

Sent To: Miss Dorothy Warwick, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road, Chatham, Kent

Hello Darling,

Here I am home in dear old Blighty and impatiently awaiting to see you again.

I arrived home yesterday morning, after flying home from Germany Sunday night. Mum got the flags to put out for me, but I am sorry to say I beat them home and they never had time to put them out. Doll came yesterday and Geoff, the same good old pair, both had a day off today to be with me and will be here again for the weekend, so hurry sweetheart, we have waited 5 yrs almost for this meeting. I will not say anything more about it now, but will tell you all about it when you arrive.

So for the present Darling, I will say au revoir and I'm putting no kisses in this letter, I'm saving them for reality.

Your loving sweetheart Fred.



## **The Queen Of The Fairies**

**Date: 12<sup>th</sup> June 1945**

Sent From: 123 Davenport Rd, Catford, SE6

Sent To: Miss Dorothy Warwick, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road,  
Chatham, Kent

Hello Dorothy Darling,

I guess you will be surprised to get a letter from me, but I just felt like writing tonight. When you left this morning I seemed to think you didn't want me to see you again before the end of the week and that's why you said you wouldn't be up again until Saturday, but if you get this letter Thursday morning and you can get up here in the afternoon until Friday morning, will you do so, but if you don't come Thursday, I shall expect you Sat night or Sun morning. Ma told me when she came back from Bickley that Doll called in to that shop and enquired about those bridesmaid's dresses and they told her they could do them only in blue and pink, but not in green. I think we can manage the coupons OK. Well little sweetheart, I went up to Joe's this evening and he gave me a list of the things I have to get for the cake. Everything seems to be OK here, except that he asks for a 1/4 lb of peel and that Ma says you cannot get. Anyway, wait and see for yourself when you come. Anne came today and of course Ma wasn't here, but I have told her we will be over for sure on Sunday. Ernie and me are going for a run over there tomorrow and Doll is coming over here on Thursday.

Well Darling, I hope my ways just recently haven't altered your feelings towards me, but whatever I do or say I know one thing is true and that is that I love you and hope you believe me. Well, I guess this is all for now, so will say cheerio, hoping to see you soon.

All my love and best wishes.

xxxxx Fred xxxxx

Please excuse pencil, pen conked out.

**Date: 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, No. 1 Selection D, Inf Training Batt, 4 Platoon (C Coy), Woodlands, Gt Missenden, Bucks

Sent To: W/59124 Pte D Warwick, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road, Chatham, Kent

My Darling Dorothy,

Just a line once again hoping you are getting along OK as I am at present. I guess you did not get my letter after all until today. I was home Saturday just after 6 o/c. I was very disappointed when Sunday evening came and you did not arrive, so now I guess I shall have to wait until next Sat before I see you again. I hope you can get home then and also have Sunday off. Well my Darling, I'm sorry I could not send a telegram. It's an out of way place here and I can't even get any stamps in the NAAFI at present. I should have got some while I was home.

At present we are doing a bit of training. It's 5 yrs ago all over again and at present I am not feeling too happy about it. We are here for 3 weeks and then we get posted to different units, which as far as I can see is going to make it awkward for me to get my leave for the 28<sup>th</sup>, but anyway I'll get it or take it. This week I suppose you will be rather busy, you are going home on Tues and Thurs I believe. If possible, I was thinking that if you had time you could ask Joe if the other is squared up. I mean catering, flowers, cars and photo business. Don't bother about it if you haven't time, Sunday will do, His address is 81 Inchmery Road.

Well my sweetheart, the weather is terrible here. I hope you are getting it better. What with the weather, training and not seeing you, I am fed up already, although I never was much good at saying a lot of loving words. I do know I love you a lot and miss you more than ever now, so don't let anything stop you from coming Sat. I went to the usual place Sat night, I only had 2 winners, but I was nothing out on the night. When I got home, there was nobody at home, Ma had gone away and Geoff & Doll had gone to the pictures. I met them at The George, they did not know I was coming home.

Well my Darling, Saturday seems a darn long way off, but I suppose it will eventually get here, so until then I will close hoping to get a letter from you this week, cheerio.

All my love and best wishes.  
Your loving sweetheart Fred.  
XXXXXXXX

P.S. I am hoping to post this tonight, but it will be tomorrow if I cannot get the stamps.

**Date: 9<sup>th</sup> July 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, No. 1 Selection D, Inf Training Batt, 4 Platoon (C Coy), Woodlands, Gt Missenden, Bucks  
Sent To: W/59124 Pte D Warwick, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road, Chatham, Kent

My Own Darling Dorothy,

Just a line to let you know I arrived back OK and hoping you also did the same. Just as I left you Sunday night, Len got off a bus from Bromley, so he came with me to have a drink and then left, John coming as far as London Bridge with us. Well dearest, I hope this week passes quick and I shall be looking forward to seeing you again next Sunday. I am very conscious to see how you look in your dress. If you say it is OK for you, I guess I haven't much to say in it, but you can't blame me for wanting to see you in it. On that certain day, I shall want you to look like the Queen of the Fairies, but after all Darling, it's you and your ways that I love especially when you get annoyed and you must agree with me that you can be annoyed quite easily, but if you don't agree "Tich", I will settle it next Sunday with you, you are just about my mark anyway.

Well Darling, we had a pretty easy time today. If they were all like it, I don't think I would moan so much, but I guess it's a big thing to please us blokes these days. It's just natural for us to always be moaning. I hope that when we are married, you will be able to get out pretty soon. I suppose you hope so too.

Well my sweetheart, I don't know how you feel about not having the hall now, but I am not very sorry about it. I think I shall enjoy it more

now it's at home and I think everyone else will be the same. I very much hope you feel the same as I do.

Len is sending Eileen your address and I am sending you hers, so perhaps you would like to write to one another. Len wants me to go to the party next Sat. I don't know yet if I shall go, but I would have done so if you had been coming up. Well my Darling, I guess this is about all for now, I will write again this week, so until then sweetheart, I will say au revoir, all my love and best wishes.

Yours for always.

Fred

xxxxxxx

xxxxxxx

Miss Eileen Aldridge  
2 White Foot Lane  
Bromley  
Kent

**Date: 16<sup>th</sup> July 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, No. 1 Selection D, Inf Training Batt, 4 Platoon (C Coy), Woodlands, Gt Missenden, Bucks

Sent To: W/59124 Pte D Warwick, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road, Chatham, Kent

My Darling Sweetheart,

Just a line hoping you arrived back OK, as I did myself.

Well my Darling, I hope to see you before you receive this letter. I only wish I could be with you every day, but I guess I will just have to be patient until I get out of this blinking army.

I am always thinking about you and as each day passes by, I know I love you more and more. When I saw the dress at first I didn't think I liked it so much, but when you were wearing it, I thought it was very nice, I'm sorry I upset you about it.

Well sweetheart, I think we are moving early on Wednesday, I don't know yet where we are going, but I shall do my best to be home Tuesday and I'm hoping to have heard by then, so that I can tell you.

The weather is pretty rough today, very windy and raining, so long as it's a nice day for us on the 28<sup>th</sup>, I don't care if it snows now.

Well Darling, I guess this is all for now, so will say cheerio until next time.

All my love and best wishes,

Yours forever Fred.

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**Date: 18<sup>th</sup> July 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, 22 Platoon 5 Company, 9<sup>th</sup> South Lanc's Regt (I.T.C), The Barracks, Chichester, Sussex

Sent To: W/59124 Pte D Warwick, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road, Chatham, Kent

My Own Darling Dorothy,

Just a line hoping you arrived home safely and as you can see by the new address, I arrived here this evening and by what I have heard so far, it is not too bad here. I did not hear anything about rushing off yesterday, so don't worry anymore about it, we were reported absent though.

Well sweetheart, either tomorrow or Friday I shall go up for my leave, so I can tell you Sat how I got on about it. I shall be home Sat, so don't let me down. I don't suppose it's much use asking you to try and get Sunday off, but if you could it would be great. Think how lonely I shall be all by myself. What did you say "oh yeah". You went off Tuesday night and did not remind me to give you that money for the ring, I don't think I'll send it, but will give it to you Sunday.

Well Darling, we are quite near the coast here, plenty of places to select from, Brighton, Worthing, Little Hampton, all of them are pretty handy, the town of Chichester itself doesn't look a bad place, we may go for a look round tomorrow night just to see what it is really like. I'm afraid it's a bit too far from here to get home during the week, but I shall come up every weekend. We are here for 6 weeks and next time I hope we go back to our own battalion.

Well my Darling little Dot, I will be longing for Saturday to come, so until then, I will say au revoir.

All my love  
Yours forever  
Fred  
xxxxxx  
xxxxxx  
xxxxxx

P.S. Write as soon as possible.

**Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> July 1945**

Sent From: 123 Davenport Rd, Catford, SE6

Sent To: W/59124 Pte D Warwick, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road, Chatham, Kent

My Own Darling Dorothy,

I am writing these few lines from home just before going back. I hope you arrived back OK.

I went for the cake this evening with Geoff, Anne and Will also came over.

Well Darling, I am ever so pleased with the cake, it's a beauty. I am sure you will be surprised when you see it. I did not expect so nice a one.

Well sweetheart Darling, I will write and let you know what time I shall be home on Thursday. On Thursday night, I am going up to Joe to see what beer he has got for me. Friday morning I shall get those things from Blenkearns. Ernie is going to give me a hand and then in the afternoon you and I, with Dorothy and Jean, are going over to Anne's to fetch some things home, including our presents Anne, Will and the boys have got for us. I don't suppose you will mind will you?

Well sweetheart, I have missed you today and I shall be longing for Thursday to come. I wish I were going to have the same amount of leave as you, but I guess it can't be done, but still it will be something we will have to make up for when we both get out of all this.

I guess this is all for now Darling, will write from the camp. I certainly don't feel like going back tonight, but I suppose I shall have to be a good boy till after next weekend. Cheerio sweetheart until Thursday. All my love and best wishes.

Yours for always Fred

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**Date: 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, 22 Platoon 5 Company, 9<sup>th</sup> South Lanc's Regt (I.T.C), The Barracks, Chichester, Sussex

Sent To: W/59124 Pte D Warwick, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road, Chatham, Kent

My Own Darling Dorothy,

Just a line to let you know I arrived back OK. I caught the 3 o/c train and got back here just after six this morning. At present, I am feeling like a wet sack, but I shall be going to bed early. We had a very easy day. I had a letter from John this morning and it seems as though he will be unlucky to get up for next Sat. If he doesn't, I shall be very disappointed. Well sweetheart, I hope you get my letter I wrote last night. I shall be looking for one from you tomorrow. I think Darling that we will not have enough buttonholes to go all round, you said there are 3 specials and 16 others, I think we could do with another 4 at least. I will give you a list of the names and see what you think.

Well sweetheart, I have not heard anything today about my leave, so I don't know where to tell you to meet me, so if you don't hear from me again, I will come straight home and see you there. I'm afraid we will be rather busy on Friday. All I hope is that everything goes off OK. Well Darling, as I already mentioned in last night's letter, I am sure you will be very pleased with the cake. I only wish you had been with me to collect it.

Anne and Will have given us a present of half a dinner set and a teapot and Bob and Alb half a tea set. They want us to try and bring them from Dagenham on Friday. Dorothy and Jean are coming, so perhaps we can manage it.

Well little sweetheart, I guess this is all for now, so I will say cheerio until next time.

All my love and best wishes.

Yours forever.

Fred.

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P.S. If I hear tomorrow about leave, will let you know straightaway.

These are the names Darling, but if you think there are enough that's OK, but if you think I am right, I thought perhaps you could call in and ask for another 4 or so.

I think you said the four specials were for me, Dad, Ma and Will or was it Len.

Flo & Charlie	2
Doll & Geoff	2
Anne, Will & Boys & Violet	5
Len, Eileen, Aunt Bet & May	2
Fred & Ruth	2
Your friends at Chatham & Beckenham	4
Your Aunt and whoever else may come	2 or 3

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19 or 20

and then I haven't counted Herb & Florrie & John. I don't know if they will be there for the breakfast. I think you would be on the safe side getting another 4. I am not including those for the specials, so you will see we are I think 3 short.



## **My Dearest Darling Wife**

**Date: 7<sup>th</sup> August 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, 22 Platoon 5 Company, 9<sup>th</sup> South Lanc's Regt (I.T.C), The Barracks, Chichester, Sussex

Sent To: W/59124 Pte D Watling, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road, Chatham, Kent

My Dearest Darling Wife,

Just a line hoping to find you arrived back safe and well, as I myself did last night. I caught the 3 o/c train and was back in barracks just after six, but instead of going on parade I felt more like having a good sleep. While I was on leave last week, my platoon went on the rifle range, so I had to go this morning with another platoon. We went at 8 o/c and did not get back till 6 o/c this evening. I almost went to sleep while I was firing, most of the time I pressed the trigger with my eyes shut and hoped for the best.

Well my Darling, I have given the marriage certificate into the office and have mentioned about you also having to do the same, so they said I will have it back as soon as possible.

I suppose you will be feeling pretty fed up when you get this letter, it will be your first morning back to work and I don't suppose you feel like it. Anyway Darling, I would if I were you put in for your discharge as soon as possible and then you will be able to please yourself what you do and not have to take any more orders from anyone (only from me of course). "Oh yeah" says you?

Well sweetheart, I shall be home Friday night for 48 hrs, but I'm not very anxious about it as you don't seem very confident about getting much leave yourself. I'm hoping you at least manage to get home Saturday night and have Sunday off. I shall get home between 8 & 9 Friday night.

Well Darling, I miss you terribly and love you more and more every day. All I hope in that we will be very happy together, but I am sure there is no reason why we shouldn't be, we both waited long enough and deserve some happiness from it.

I shall expect a letter for me at home, so don't forget to write and let know what you are doing, but I shall be very disappointed if you can't manage any leave.

I guess this all for now Darling, so until next weekend, I will say cheerio, all my love and best wishes.

Yours forever,

Your loving Husband Fred.

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**Date: 9<sup>th</sup> August 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, 22 Platoon 5 Company, 9<sup>th</sup> South Lanc's Regt (I.T.C), The Barracks, Chichester, Sussex

Sent To: W/59124 Pte D Warwick, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road, Chatham, Kent

My Dearest Darling Wife,

Just a line hoping to find you keeping well, as I am myself at present.

Well Darling, I have messed things up for coming home this weekend. Yesterday afternoon I went to the films in the camp here, it was a parade while I was in there. My ear again started to give me trouble, so I came out ten minutes before the finish. The platoon officer saw me and put me on a charge. This morning I got 4 days CB which means I won't finish them until Sunday night. I don't know how I shall get on stuck in this place all the weekend, but I want you to send me a telegram saying you are coming home for the weekend, it may help me to get home on Sat, it's rather doubtful, but I may manage something.

Well sweetheart, if I don't see you this weekend, I shall be right down in the dumps. Next Sat week will seem miles away. I don't know how I shall stick this place over the weekend. I don't think I shall anyway, if they don't do anything about it, I may come home and take the consequences, so whatever you do, get leave if you can and chance whether I get home. Send me the telegram, it might help me.

Well my Darling, I guess you will have written home to me to the Davenport address, so I can't even expect a letter here for the weekend. I'm sorry sweetheart if you get home and I can't manage it, but we will see.

Don't think I am letting these b\_\_\_\_\_ people get me down, the Jerries couldn't do it so I'm sure these people won't.

Well sweetheart Darling, if you get home Saturday and I don't turn up, it means I won't see you until Friday or Sat week.

I guess this is about all for this time, so will say cheerio until next time.  
All my love and best wishes.

Yours forever.

Your loving Husband Fred

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**Date: 9<sup>th</sup> August 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, 22 Platoon 5 Company, 9<sup>th</sup> South  
Lanc's Regt (I.T.C), The Barracks, Chichester, Sussex

Sent To: W/59124 Pte D Watling, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road,  
Chatham, Kent

My Dearest Darling Wife,

Just a line once again, to tell you that there is still a chance of my being home this weekend, you may receive this letter with another one I wrote this afternoon so you will know what it's all about.

Well Darling, I suppose you noticed that the other letter I sent was addressed to your maiden name. I wrote it with about ten minutes to spare to catch the evening post and quiet forgot myself when I wrote the address. I never had enough time to address another envelope, so I hope you won't mind.

Tomorrow morning I am going to speak to my officer about this weekend. If he doesn't consider it a good enough reason, my other hope is that I receive a telegram from you in time.

Well sweetheart, I am feeling properly fed up at present. I was looking forward to the weekend. I had been granted 48 hrs, but I of course messed it all up. I left the cinema 10 mins before time which caused the trouble, but my ear was giving me trouble again, so I came out, but the C.O. didn't think it good enough for an excuse, this all happened yesterday afternoon. This morning I had my ear syringed and no wonder I was having trouble with it, the amount of stuff that came out

was surprising. One piece was as big as a pea and as hard as iron. It's OK now and my cold is a lot better, in fact I'm feeling fine. I would be as happy as a lark now if I hadn't spoilt my leave.

Well Darling, I hope the weather is better for next week, it has rained every day here this week. Doll & Geoff, Anne & Will are going to Alice's next week and I'm hoping they have nice weather and a good time. I would have liked you to have been able to go with them, but we will go next month to your Sister's for a holiday, when you write to her remember me to her.

Well sweetheart, if you do happen to arrive home Saturday and I don't turn up by six o'clock, you will know I cannot get home, but I shall definitely be home Friday week for 48 hrs. I shall make sure not to spoil the next one.

I guess this is all for now, so will close.

Cheerio, all my love and best wishes,

Yours forever, your loving Husband Fred.

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**Date: 13<sup>th</sup> August 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, 22 Platoon 5 Company, 9<sup>th</sup> South Lanc's Regt (I.T.C), The Barracks, Chichester, Sussex

Sent To: W/59124 Pte D Watling, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road, Chatham, Kent

My Dearest Darling Wife,

Just a line hoping to find you still keeping well, as I am myself at present. I hope you arrived back OK. I got back just after 6 o/c this morning. I'm feeling a bit tired at present, so will not be long before I get to bed. Tomorrow, we are going to Aldershot to see a demonstration. What it is I don't exactly know. We go in the afternoon, so it will be a nice trip out for us. This afternoon we were roaming the country round this place, they divided us into threes and gave us maps and we had to keep on going to different places round the countryside. Len and I and another mate of ours made our 3 up and of course we finished up losing ourselves and in the end came back to barracks in a civvy lorry, which we stopped for a lift. Anyway, we enjoyed it and had many a laugh out of it. Well sweetheart Darling, I felt it very much

when we parted again last night. I hate to see you going back to that sort of life and I won't be happy till I know you are out of it for good and then there won't be any need for both us to worry about getting leave. When I get it, I shall know you are home waiting for me. I love you Darling and ever since that first night we made a date, there has never been anyone else I loved and thought so much of and there never will be now sweetheart.

Well Darling, I can't help thinking about you upsetting yourself about what Ma said. I'm sure she didn't mean anything, but perhaps you think I'm sticking up for her, but I'm not, you're my wife now and come first with me and always will do. I was going to mention it to her, but thought perhaps you would rather I didn't, so I let it go, hoping that you won't take too much notice in future of things she says. I know it's hard at times to let everything slip by, perhaps we will be lucky and get a place of our own sooner than we expect, but we must put down as soon as possible for it.

I did not have to finish my C.B. It was counted as finished. I may put in for a 48 hrs pass, but I haven't made my mind up yet. Anyway, Darling, I shall be looking forwards to seeing you next Sat. If I do get home Friday night, I shall come to Bromley South at 3.15 on Saturday and meet you. I can't let you know for sure because I won't know until Friday evening whether I get it or not and of course that if I do put in for it, I have to give a false address if I do.

Well Darling, it's been a lovely day here and it looks like continuing. I hope so anyway so that the holidaymakers at Lydd can have a nice time. I shall be glad when I get my other leave so that we can have a few days holiday somewhere. I am leaving it to you to decide where it's to be, so make your mind up and then we can perhaps make our arrangements as soon as I hear what date it is. I hope sweetheart that the photos come this week so that we can get them off our hands. That will be another job finished with, expect for the few more you want done for your friends.

Talking of Lydd, do you know if Doll took Alice a piece of wedding cake? I hope she did, I meant to ask you on Sunday, but forgot about it. And another thing I believe I never mentioned and that was to thank you for the cigarettes. In case I did forget, I'll say it now, thank you Darling.

I guess this is all for now my Darling, hoping to hear from you about Wednesday, so I will close now, cheerio, all my love and best wishes.

Yours always.

Your loving Husband Fred.

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**Date: 15<sup>th</sup> August 1945**

Sent From: 123 Davenport Rd, Catford, SE6

Sent To: W/59124 Pte D Watling, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road, Chatham, Kent

My Dearest Darling Wife,

Just a line hoping to find you keeping well, as I am at present. I received your letter this morning. Glad to hear everything is OK. We were given the day off, so I came home. I am writing this from home. I really came home sweetheart thinking that you might pop home for the afternoon, but it is nearly 5 o/c now, so I have given up expecting you. Tomorrow is an ordinary day for us, but we are getting our VJ leave this weekend. I come home Saturday and go back on the 3 o/c train Wednesday morning. Can you get any extra leave this weekend Darling. I hope you can. Well sweetheart, I will enquire about the marriage certificate, they have had to send it away to my paymaster, but I shall see if it's come back yet.

Well sweetheart Darling, I have only been indoors about ½ hour. I am rather disappointed not seeing you here, but in your letter you say you might be coming home for a few hrs on Thursday. I wish it had been today. If I could have got home early this morning I would have come down Chatham, but although they gave us the day off, we had a C.O's parade at 11 o/c this morning, so I never got away till after dinner. Still Darling, it won't be long till Saturday now. Well sweetheart, the photos have not arrive yet, but perhaps they will by the weekend.

Well my Darling, now it is all over perhaps they will speed the demob up. I guess there's a good chance of my being out now by Christmas. In any case I shall want this Christmas at home with you, I haven't had one for 5 yrs and I intend to get his one wherever I am.

I guess this is all for now sweetheart, so will say cheerio until next time.  
I am longing for Saturday to come. Try and get an extra leave Darling.

All my love and best wishes.  
Your loving Husband Fred.

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xxxxxxx  
xxxxxxx  
xxxxxxx

**Date: 16<sup>th</sup> August 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, 22 Platoon 5 Company, 9<sup>th</sup> South  
Lanc's Regt (I.T.C), The Barracks, Chichester, Sussex

Sent To: W/59124 Pte D Watling, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road,  
Chatham, Kent

My Dearest Darling Wife,

Just a line once more hoping to find you keeping well, as I am myself at present. I am wondering if you went home today. If so, Ma will have told you I was home yesterday. I sent a letter to you last night, but I guess you will get this one about the same time as the other, being there was no collection today. I hope you get both letters by Saturday morning. I would have been expecting one from you Darling by tomorrow morning, but if you sent one Weds night it won't get here till Sat morning, but then I shant be here. I come home tomorrow night until 8 o/c Weds morning. I know it's awkward for you to get leave Darling, but can you manage to get more than the Sat afternoon till Sunday night. I hope you can. Well sweetheart, I shall come to Bromley South to meet you. I will get there at 3.30 or say about 3.15 in case you are a bit earlier.

I have not heard any more about the marriage certificate Darling, but I will go into the office tomorrow and enquire if it has been returned yet. I think it is about time it should have come back.

Well sweetheart Darling, I have read your letter time and again and I am very happy to know that you are also very happy to be my wife. You say in the letter that we will be happy together. I am positive we will. I know my Darling that I love you very much and always did. Perhaps I was never much good in putting it in writing, but all the time I was

abroad I hoped very much that you would wait for me, although if I had known at the start it was going to be nearly a 5 yrs wait all that time Darling, but I think I really understand the kind you are made of sweetheart of which there are very few these days and I sincerely hope to repay you by making you very happy and so make you never regret waiting all those years for me.

Well Darling, it is not long now till Sat afternoon. I shall be there waiting, so until then will say, cheerio, all my love and best wishes.

Yours forever.

Your loving Husband Fred.

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**Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> August 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, 22 Platoon 5 Company, 9<sup>th</sup> South Lanc's Regt (I.T.C), The Barracks, Chichester, Sussex

Sent To: W/59124 Pte D Watling, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road, Chatham, Kent

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a line hoping you arrived back Ok as I did myself, although I was 15 mins late getting back to camp, but everything is OK. The 3.25 train only had one carriage on it, so we had to catch the 5.25 which got me to Chichester at 8 o/c.

Well Darling, I got your letter this morning. I have read it half a dozen times already and I suppose I shall read it many more times until I get your next one. Today we went to Southampton, it is about 45 miles from here. We had a look round some ships and saw the Queen Elizabeth there. They were going to take us round her, but couldn't do so owing to Yankee troops being on board, she is sailing today to America. It was a nice change from doing training, but I shall never be content with anything until I'm out of it and then we can settle down and not have to worry about getting parted any more. I think Bromley South will haunt me if I have to say goodbye to you many more times



there, that farewell kiss gives me a horrible feeling inside and sometimes I really don't know how I let you go back there Darling. You say yourself that you can't settle down now and if you feel like I do about it, I know what a rotten feeling it is and it makes things harder to get on with.

Well Darling, I went to the office this evening to see about the certificate, but I couldn't find the office clerk, but I'm going round again when I have finished this letter. The longer they keep it means the longer you have to stay in. I wish we had a copy now, I'm wondering if I will get it back. I wrote to Florrie last week Darling and had a letter back from her this morning. She says Bob did not go to see her. I thought he would have, he was only 18 miles away. I shall write and tell her we will be going for a few days and she can let me know if it will be OK. I'm sure it will be, Flo likes a little company and I shall like to take you as you have never been up there. I think you will like it. Well sweetheart Darling, I've been thinking that I had better be careful when I'm out on my own now. I may have a tec watching me, as you say you don't trust me, but still I said I also didn't trust you either, so maybe you had better be careful "my love". But putting jokes aside Darling, I think we are both a couple of silly buggers and don't mean half the things we say. The one I am sure of when I say it and that is "I love you" and will always mean it and I do believe that you love me.

Well Darling, I'm afraid Ma and Doll did not have a very nice day for travelling, it has rained nearly all day round this way, it's pouring now. I hope tomorrow is fine for them.

I am putting in for 48 hrs this week, I hope you get it, but don't feel so sure about it this week, but I don't worry so much when I know you won't be there, so long as I get home Sat and see you some time over the weekend I shall be satisfied, but I hope you get a little more leave than you expect. Well sweetheart Darling, I shall be looking forward to your letter, so for the present will close. Looking forward once again to the weekend, cheerio, all my love and best wishes.

Yours forever.

Your loving Husband Fred.

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**Date: 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, 22 Platoon 5 Company, 9<sup>th</sup> South Lanc's Regt (I.T.C), The Barracks, Chichester, Sussex

Sent To: W/59124 Pte D Watling, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road, Chatham, Kent

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a line hoping to find you keeping well, as I am myself at present.

I received your letter this morning Darling. Glad to hear you arrived back OK and now I suppose you are like me looking forward again to this weekend. I shall be home on Saturday afternoon about 4 o/c, I expect you won't be able to get home on Sat, but I shall be waiting for you Sunday. I suppose you will get as much leave as you can. Well my Darling, I went and saw the office clerk today and he told me the certificate had not been returned yet, so I 'm sorry you can't have it yet, it's not his fault so I can't have a crib at him, I feel like telling someone off about it.

Tonight sweetheart we are going on night manoeuvre. Goodness knows what for, anyone would think the war was just starting instead of being over. I have only about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an hour to get ready, so will have to close. I shall be thinking of you all the time, so roll on the weekend, cheerio Darling, all my love.

Yours forever.

Your loving Husband Fred.

xxxxxxx

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**Date: 27<sup>th</sup> August 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, 22 Platoon 5 Company, 9<sup>th</sup> South Lanc's Regt (I.T.C), The Barracks, Chichester, Sussex

Sent To: W/59124 Pte D Watling, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road, Chatham, Kent

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a line hoping to find you arrived back OK as I did myself.

When I left you last night Darling, I noticed the time was 10.25 and I was a bit worried if you would catch the train alright at Bromley. I hope you managed it OK. You must let me know if you did.

Well Darling, I certainly hated parting from you last night, it was all too short. To me it seemed that we were only together for a couple of hours. Every time I am with you I feel I shall never love anyone as much as I love you sweetheart, but I sometimes wonder if I am going the wrong way about showing it towards you. I sincerely hope I'm not.

Well sweetheart Darling, this is my last day in this place. We leave tomorrow morning at 9.15 and should arrive at the other camp about 2.30. I will let you know as soon as I get my leave. I would like to have it this week because at present it seems as though we are going to have some nice weather, it's a grand day here today. I hope it keeps up. I shall also enquire today about the certificate, but if it had come back, I guess they would have sent for me at the office. Well Darling, I left the money with Ma to book 3 seats for the 1<sup>st</sup> house Hipp next Saturday. If I don't get my leave, I hope to be home for the weekend, I don't see why I shouldn't.

Don't forget Darling to try and get that 39-45 Star for me, but don't trouble too much about it. We got to London Bridge about 1 o/c last night and got a seat alright. I had four hours sleep in the train, but I still feel pretty tired. I shall be in bed early tonight. I don't fancy this train journey tomorrow. I never did like travelling with the army, you always seem to get an officer travelling with you, who thinks he is handling a lot of kids and all they can seem to say is, line up here, line up there etc, I shall be glad when I'm there.

I was just thinking Darling how nice it would be if I had been stationed round Rochester or Chatham way, but I suppose it's asking too much for that to happen. Anyway, you won't be in much longer now, so I shouldn't grumble about Newmarket, I could be further away.

Well “my love”, they seem to think it is pretty definite about getting our leave 2 days after getting to the new camp, the Sergeant has just been in talking about it, but still I can’t be sure until I get there and will send you a telegram straight away.

Well sweetheart Darling, I suppose we will both wear civvies when we go to Suffolk, so I think I will get a new trilby. I guess the other one is getting a bit out of shape. It’s a good job they don’t need coupons for hats.

Well Darling, I guess this is about all for now. I shall write again on Weds, but if I am coming on leave I will just send the telegram instead. I shall be thinking of you all the time Darling.

Cheerio, all my love and best wishes.

From Your loving Husband Fred.

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**Date: 29<sup>th</sup> August 1945**

Sent From: 459 2.10 Isleham Nr 18

Sent To: W/59124Pte D Watling, St Paul’s Vicarage, Old Rd,  
Chatham, Kent

TELEGRAM

= BE HOME FRIDAY FOR ELEVEN DAYS LOVE FRED

**Date: 12<sup>th</sup> September 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: W/59124 Pte D Watling, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road,  
Chatham, Kent

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a line hoping to find you arrived back safe as I did myself. I was thinking of you all the time Darling while I was travelling back. I hated leaving you on account of what was said. I could see you were still a little upset, so I hope you forgot all about it. As soon as you get out you may be able to see about us getting a place of our own, we won't have to depend on anyone else then.

Well Darling, it was a hasty farewell last night. The train was pretty sharp leaving, but I expect to see you this weekend. I think everything is OK for me to get home. I took the form in this morning, but I've got to have the marriage certificate again. Also, I've to put your father's Christian names on it, so if you can bring the certificate home with you, please do so, then I can bring it back with me Sunday. If anything should turn up and I couldn't get home, you could send it and also let me know what your father's Christian names are. Well sweetheart Darling, I feel darn miserable the minute I leave you. I love you more than I shall ever be able to prove to you and I hope you feel the same about me, but I feel sure you love me and hope you always will.

Well Darling, I will write again before the weekend, but don't forget to try and get home this weekend, cheerio sweetheart, see you soon.

All my love and best wishes.

From Your loving Husband Fred.

XXXXX

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X

**Date: 13<sup>th</sup> September 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: W/59124 Pte D Watling, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road,  
Chatham, Kent

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a line once again hoping to find you keeping well, as I am at present. I wrote to you yesterday sweetheart and posted the letter in Newmarket. Len and I went to the races yesterday. We managed to get there for the 3<sup>rd</sup> race and we had 2 winners out of 4 and finished winning 25/- each. In the evening, we went to the pictures and saw "To Have & Have Not". I think I can remember you telling me that you also saw it. I thought it was a good film myself. Well Darling, I did not receive that letter you wrote the other week, so I guess you may have it returned to you. I can't understand why I didn't get it.

I shall be home this weekend about 5 o/c or just after. I'm hoping you get home OK. Although it is only 2 days since I left you, I am longing to see you again and you are never out of my thoughts for one moment Darling. I'm sure I shall never stop loving you. When you smile there's something about that smile and the look in your eyes that makes me want to squeeze the life out of you. I also love to see you angry. Sometimes you really look sweet when you begin to get mad. Last night Darling I was sitting on my bed having a little laugh by myself and one of my mates asked me what the joke was. Well Darling, I was thinking of last Friday night when we were walking down to the trains from London Bridge. I can't help laughing about the way you relieved yourself of the luggage. I know it was tough for you having to carry all the luggage. I even felt like throwing that paper bag up in the air myself, but we did have to have a laugh out of it, didn't we?

Well sweetheart Darling, Len goes on leave tomorrow and they go away on Monday. He says Eileen is OK to travel, so I hope the weather is fine for them. I guess this is all for this time, will be seeing you sometime over the weekend, so cheerio.

All my love and best wishes.

From Your loving Husband Fred.

The more I see you Darling, the more I love you.

xxxxxxxxxxxxxx

**Date: 16<sup>th</sup> September 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: W/59124 Pte D Watling, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road,  
Chatham, Kent

My Own Darling Wife,

I am writing these few lines from home and at present I am feeling pretty rough about not seeing you this weekend. I have been waiting two hours for you at the corner of the road this afternoon hoping you would come. If I had known you were not coming, I would have come this morning to Chatham to see you, but as you didn't come yesterday, I thought you would have come up for certain today. I wrote you a letter Thursday night to say I was coming home for sure. Len brought it up to London to post for me Friday morning, surely you received it Saturday. I did not get home until 6.30 last night, but if all goes well I shall be home next week at 4.30. I received the letter you wrote last Wednesday night on Friday afternoon. You did not mention a word about coming up for the weekend. I didn't know what you would be doing. I could kick myself for not coming down early this morning or didn't you want me to come down there. My train goes at 9.50 tonight and it was almost six o'clock before I gave you up. I am not up this week on pass unless I would have chanced it and been a day late and would have come down this evening. I don't know even now if I have got away with it until I get back tonight. Well Darling, this is going to seem a very long week this one. You must let me know about next week, in your last letter you didn't have much to say. You didn't seem to have any intentions of seeing me this week. I hope there's nothing wrong and I also hope you don't think I come home to go to the dogs because I'm sure I wouldn't trouble to come if I knew I wouldn't be seeing you. I thought you would have tried to have got here, as I told you I had to have the certificate again and your father's Christian names, they have to be given on that form.

Now perhaps you can see why I want you to come out of the army. This is the first weekend I haven't seen you, but it may not be the last if you stay in. I'm only entitled to one 36 hrs pass a month. Maybe you are still not quite certain whether I love you or not, but if you only knew I think you would have a big surprise. It's only 7 weeks yesterday since we were married and I know I couldn't have found a finer wife Darling.

If you didn't come up because of what was said last Tuesday, I don't think you are being quite fair with me. I shall be waiting patiently for your letter to know what the trouble was.

Well Darling, I shant be feeling very happy on my journey back tonight. I shall be thinking of you all the time. You may think this a strange letter, like I am at times, but I love you an awful lot and always will do, so now I will close sweetheart, cheerio, all my love and best wishes.

Yours forever, your loving Husband

xxxxxxxxxxxx Fred

**Date: 17<sup>th</sup> September 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O. Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: W/59124 Pte D Watling, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road, Chatham, Kent

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a line hoping to find you keeping OK, as I am myself at present.

I arrived back OK last night, but I'm still very disappointed over not seeing you. I am hoping to have a letter from you either today or tomorrow. I was asked this morning if I had received the certificate from you, as the form is at present in the Coy office. I hope you have sent it.

Well Darling, I know now that I shall be home next week for sure because I am on guard tonight, so I shall be free for the weekend. I expect you home next Saturday. So you were unable to get away this week, if only you had told me in that letter, I could have come down to see you. Let me know when and what time you expect to arrive at Bromley and if I am home in time, I will come to meet you. There was no one at home Saturday when I got home. Ma had gone to the Hipp and Doll went home a little early. I could see you had not arrived, so thought you would be up Sunday afternoon. I was up early Sunday and was in two minds whether to come down to Chatham, but I thought you might get away early and I would pass you on the way, so I went over to Doll's and caught the 10 minutes to 2 back and waited at Bromley for the first train in from Chatham. I went home expecting you to be there, you weren't, so I went down the bottom of the road and waited nearly 2 hrs there. I was properly fed up and didn't feel like going back. This



week will seem like a month to me, but I'm glad I've got this guard tonight, I can't get caught for it next Sat or Sun night.

Well Darling, have you put in your application to come out. If you haven't, I would like you to. You will have more time to go places and see about a place for us, although we have filled in that form, I don't think we will just leave it at that, we will have to keep chasing them before they do anything for us and we don't want them to dump us just anywhere. Well sweetheart, I don't know what you do to occupy the time when your off duty, but I'm sure I don't know what to do with myself these days. We aren't doing a stroke here, it's worse than having too much to do. I don't feel like going out, everywhere is too far away from this dump. Did you go out anywhere last week, are there any good shows on down there or (dances). You told me you were going to one. If you like dancing and went to them while I was away, I don't see why you don't go to them now. Talking of being away, there are rumours of going to Malta, but it only concerns certain groups. I haven't heard anything about 26, but it seems only for high number groups, but then it is only rumoured.

Well Darling, I have often meant to ask you how you feel about us always being apart like this. Why I ask is because I've heard so many darn arguments about it both here and abroad, some say married people get on better if they don't see each other so often, others say it's all baloney, perhaps you get or have heard the same argument. I'm afraid I shouldn't like to know I had to go abroad again and not see you for a few months. It would just about finish me I guess. Well, what do you say, I hope you see what I mean.

Well sweetheart Darling, I guess this is all for now, don't forget to let me know as soon as possible about next weekend, cheerio, Darling.

All my love and best wishes.

Yours for always

Your loving Husband Fred

Some I missed this last weekend

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**Date: 18<sup>th</sup> September 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: W/59124 Pte D Watling, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road,  
Chatham, Kent

My Dear Darling Wife,

Just a line to let you know I received the certificate OK. I received the letter just a few minutes ago. I had just come back from tea. I have taken it into Coy-office and will have it back tomorrow, so I will give it to you back Saturday.

I was sorry to hear you got messed up last weekend, but I shall be home again this week Darling and I hope you can get up Saturday. I wrote to you last night asking you to let know what time you will arrive and I will come and meet you. Don't forget to write and say. Well Darling, your letter just arrived in time, I was feeling really fed up, but your letter brightened things up for me. I hope you get home for a few hrs Weds. Don't forget to see your mother-in-law. I don't think she really meant anything of what she said. After all, she used to write often to me abroad and tell me how much she liked you and what a nice girl you were, (although I didn't need telling). I think that place has got her down just lately. The front room was nearly finished last week and she said it looked as though it would be finished by next weekend for us if we were both home. I never had much to say to her all the time I was home, although I wasn't indoors much, going over to Doll's in the morning and then waiting 2 hrs on the corner of Davenport for you. I think she noticed it, but I began to feel it a bit when the time was coming to go back, so we went out for a drink. Dad, Ma and myself, we went to The Coach about 8 and I left at 8.30. If you had been up home on Wednesday, I guess she will have told you she fainted in the garden. She has a nasty bruise on her leg and her back. You have often said Darling that I stick up for her, but how I look at it is that she may not be with us very much longer and I never feel like saying anything to her that someday I may regret.

Well sweetheart, you mention in the letter that they have sent you another form to collect the allowance book. I'm sorry they have made it out to Sydenham, but I will see you about it Saturday.

I shall be away from camp early Saturday, so if you write again and don't think I will get it, you could send it home instead. I may hitch-hike home as it is not an official weekend leave, but nearly all the boys go home, the stations are not too safe, but I'm not worrying about them, you see Darling I can get away from here around 10 o/c in the morning, but the train doesn't leave until 1.35 from Newmarket arrives Liverpool St 3.45, that gets me home around 4.30. Last week I was unlucky getting lifts, it took me 8 hrs to get home, but I was on the wrong road I guess. I go back by train Sun night, it leaves Liverpool St 9.50.

Well Darling, thanks for getting me a pen, this one I am writing with is a mate's. I told you there were 26 of us that came from Chichester to here, but we are gradually getting separated. Two have gone to Winchester where I first joined up. Len is not here at present, he comes back next Tuesday. It looks as though they are going to have lovely weather, the last two days here have been grand.

Tomorrow is our half day off. I wish I weren't so far from home, I could get there and see you, but I guess I'll have to just be patient and wait for Saturday. I don't think I shall trouble to go out, if Len was here I suppose we would go to Newmarket to the pictures, but that's what gets me down here, you have to travel so far to get anywhere and getting back is worse. Well Darling, I guess this is all for this time, so will close hoping to get another letter from you about Thursday.

Cheerio Darling, all my love.

From Your loving Husband Fred.

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P.S. Have you put in for your discharge Darling. I'm afraid I shant be happy until you are out . I hate to think of you being away from home, surely you had enough of it. xxxxxxxx

**Date: 20<sup>th</sup> September 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: W/59124 Pte D Watling, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road,  
Chatham, Kent

My Dear Darling Wife,

Just a line once again to find you still keeping OK, as I am myself at present. I have not had any other letters from you except the one I received Tuesday, which was the second one since I came back. I still haven't received that one you wrote before I had my leave, I should think you will get it returned to you.

Well Darling, I'm still browned off, all this week I haven't done a thing. I may scam from this joint Friday night and make a weekend of it. I'm properly fed up here. I do hope you get home on Saturday and hope to hear from you to say where to meet you and what time.

I met another old mate of mine yesterday. The last time I saw him was in the desert. We went to see a battalion football match yesterday afternoon at Bury-St-Edmunds and then went to the pictures in the evening and saw "The Affairs of Susan". It broke the monotony of this place. If I ever get a chance to get away from here and go somewhere else, I am taking it.

One of the lads here says he has some women's blouses for sale. I have asked him to bring me one. I don't know what they are like. He is going home this weekend and bringing them back. He also says he has silk pyjamas, so I asked him if he had any dressing gowns. He says he hasn't, but will see if he can get me one. I know you said you wanted to get one and I have been trying to buy some coupons, but no luck so far. Still if he can get me one with coupons it's all the better. Well Darling, I hope you manage to get away early on Saturday and have Sunday off. I was thinking of coming to Chatham to meet you if I was home in time, but I noticed quite a few red caps about there when I came down last time, so I don't think I'll chance it as I shall not be on pass, but I shall be at Bromley if I hear from you.

I hope Darling to bring the certificate back with me on the weekend. I had to go to the office again yesterday morning. They asked if you were living in London and I told them not at present, but would be in about a month's time (I hope so anyway). They have seen that we were married nearly 8 weeks ago and are surprised that all this hasn't been

settled before now. The last place I was at are to blame, they say the certificate shouldn't have been sent away by Chichester. I should get the license back tomorrow and then it's all settled. They told me what you should received a week, 21/6 army allowance, 14/- from me and 3/6 London allowance (39/-). Well sweetheart, I guess this is all for now, longing to see you Saturday, so try and not be too late, cheerio.  
All my love and best wishes.  
Your loving Husband Fred.

Since I left you last Tuesday week, this is my 6<sup>th</sup> letter to you, have you received them all.

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**Date: 24<sup>th</sup> September 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: W/59124 Pte D Watling, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road,  
Chatham, Kent

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a line to let you know I arrived back OK and hoping to hear you also had a good journey back.

Well Darling, I felt a bit rough again when I had to say goodbye to you last night, but so long as I can see you every weekend, I won't mind so much. It will only be for a few more months. I see in the paper this morning where the army has lost control of the demob, the ministry it says is taking over the job. Here's hoping for a speedier return to civvy street and to get settled down someplace which is what you told me yesterday you were looking forward to, plus those 10 children you were going to have, "pardon me Darling, did you say something". I received that letter sweetheart which you sent 28<sup>th</sup> Aug, so you won't have it returned after all.

Last night as I was looking in the carriages to try and get a seat, I met another pal of mine who lives in London and was in Italy and Germany with me, the last I saw of him was on the aerodrome in Germany. He is in the tank corps and stationed only 3 miles from this camp, so we will be seeing some more of each other.

I bought a ticket last night but got away with it, I'm getting a good hand at it lately thanks to D & G & yourself (Three B----- old twisters).

Well Darling, I hope the weather is better for you Tuesday afternoon when you go home. It has been raining and blowing hard all day long here. I dread spending the winter in this place. I shall be home next Saturday officially for a change. I put in for my pass this morning. I think I shall come by train, so I shall be home about 4.30.

Len comes back tomorrow, so I guess he will come up with me, if you care to write to Eileen her address is 2 Whitefoot Lane, Bromley Road, Kent.

Well Darling, I guess this is all for now. Hoping to have a letter from you tomorrow or Weds morning. I will write again on Weds, cheerio, all my love and best wishes.

Yours forever.

Your loving Husband Fred.

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**Date: 26<sup>th</sup> September 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O. Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: W/59124 Pte D Watling, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road, Chatham, Kent

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a line hoping to find you keeping in the best of health, as I am myself at present. I received your letter this morning Darling, so glad to hear you arrived back safe and well and will be looking forward to seeing you again this weekend. I shall be home about 4.30. I can see by your letter that the weather is pretty rough all round, it's very cold here and damp, but I guess we will have to expect it now.

Well sweetheart, I hope you get the other photos done OK. If you do I think that will just about finish your worries as far as other people are concerned and then our chief worry then becomes finding a home, which I hope we have plenty of luck in doing so.

Doll and Geoff are going to Hastings next Sunday, I don't fancy their day out if the weather is like this. I hope it changes by Sunday for them.

I wrote to them yesterday. I've asked Geoff to look out for a motorbike for me. Len and I are going halves for one so that we don't have to rely on the LNER too often, it would come in handy as well for Wednesday afternoons, we could be home by 3 o/c.

Len got back last night, says he has had a fair time, weather wasn't too bad and Eileen is getting on OK. He thinks the operation done her some good, which reminds me of Albert, he should be going to hospital shortly. I'm praying something turns up for him, it will break his heart and hopes for good if nothing comes of it.

Well Darling, all the time I am away from you, you are never out of my thoughts and I'm sure I love you more and more every day. I'm glad we never waited any longer, even when I saw you again in the kitchen after nearly 5 yrs apart, I was never more certain Darling that you were the girl I wanted for my wife. I shall be very happy when I see you in your own home. Can you picture us in the winter when the snow is on the ground, with a big fire and a big armchair, me of course in the armchair with my pipe and paper picking out the possible winners and you on the carpet with the twins you said you wouldn't mind having. Anyway sweetheart, I know we shall be happy, because I so many times swore I would, when I was behind the wire abroad, when I got your letters then, time and time again I said that when I get out of this I would marry you and be happy and that's all and everything I wanted.

Well Darling, perhaps you are getting a little bored with this letter, so I will close now, hoping to get another letter from you tomorrow or Friday so until then cheerio.

All my love and best wishes.

Yours forever, your loving Husband Fred.

xxxxxxxxxx

The pen writes lovely Darling xx

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**Date: 1<sup>st</sup> October 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: W/59124 Pte D Watling, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road,  
Chatham, Kent

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a line hoping to find you arrived back OK as I did myself. I am writing this letter as I am waiting to pick the boys up here on the farm, they are potato picking today, one of those jobs that nearly break your back after you have been at it for a couple of hours.

Well Darling, I was sorry the bus came along so quick last night. I wanted to ask you if you really meant what you said last night about me not being very interested in our future and about me walking along with you as though I didn't know you. I had really enjoyed my weekend with you, but you kind of upset it a little when you said that, but I don't think you meant it really Darling, or did you?

Today is Eileen's birthday, Len couldn't get out the camps so I had to send a telegram for him. I was wondering if you have wrote to her yet, when you asked before in your letter for her address, I wasn't sure of the surname, it is Aldridge.

Well sweetheart Darling, I hope you are able to get home this week for the weekend, if you aren't home till Sunday afternoon, it doesn't give us a chance to go to the pictures. I shant come home unless you get up Sat night. I'm not going to the dogs, so if you can get home, I shall come in the evening to meet you at Bromley. I was wondering Darling if I could get 48 hrs this week and sent you a telegram, if you could get leave for 48 hrs, if you know whether they allow married women home on 48 hrs because their husband gets it, let me know and I will try and get it.

Well Darling, the more I see of you, the more "I love you". I wonder if you are getting bored with me keep telling you this, but it's on the level, I think you are 100% of the best and I shall go on saying it for always. I don't know how you feel about it, but I shall be very happy when we can get a place and one day you will say to me, I am going to be Mummy and you a Daddy, but I guess before that can happen we have a little obstacle to get over first, which is pretty tough for you Darling, but speaking the truth to you Darling, I wish it were over with and so do you I suppose. Well sweetheart Darling, if I get any coupons sent to me



this week, I want you to name something you would like. It would be nice if we were both on 48 hrs next week and the coupons came, we could go out Saturday morning and buy something you want. I hate this being away from you week after week. I'm always thinking of you and wondering what you are doing with yourself in the evenings. I myself am always thoroughly cheesed off, then the night time comes, nowhere to go except Mildenhall 2 ½ miles walk. If we go there we can't get a cup of tea or anything else when we come out the pictures, there is only one cinema there, two different programs a week like the park cinema. I was kind of surprised Darling when you told me once again that you had not put your application in for coming out. I do hope you have applied for it before this month is out. I can see your way of not doing so, but I really would like to see you out of it and I shant be satisfied until you are Darling.

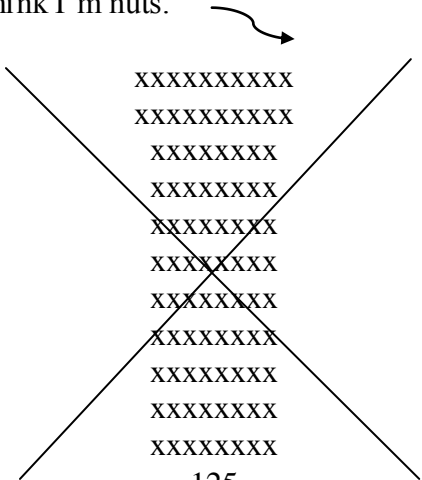
I have got bumps and bruises all over me where you knocked me about over the weekend. I'm afraid I can't stand for too much of that my girl, so you will have to alter your ways "or else" I'll have to take you under my wing and put the pressure on.

Well Darling, I guess this is all for now, I made a promise last night to write every day, goodness knows what I'm going to write about tomorrow unless something turns up, but I can tell you again that I still love you, if they kept me in the army until I was 90, and I was still writing you letters, I would still be telling you that I loved you.

So sweetheart Darling, will say cheerio now, hoping to receive your letter tomorrow, all my love and best wishes.

Yours always, your loving Husband Fred.

P.S. Please don't think I'm nuts.



**Date: 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: W/59124 Pte D Watling, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road,  
Chatham, Kent

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a line to let you know I have just this minute received your letter, so glad to hear you arrived back OK and met your friends OK at Bromley.

Well Darling, I shall be anxiously awaiting your next letter to hear whether you have managed to get the weekend off. I do hope you get it, only it won't be much of a weekend together if you are not home until 3 o/c on Sunday and we have to part again about 8.30.

Well sweetheart Darling, you said in your letter that you wouldn't part with me for all the money in the word. I'm glad you feel that way about me, the same goes for me with you. I'm sure I shall never want to part with you Darling. Well Darling, I suppose you have noticed how quiet I become on Sunday evenings when it is nearly time for us to part. I always feel as though I don't know what to say next to you. I almost feel like staying at home. If you weren't still in, I think I would stay home a bit more, it's only because I know you have to go back, that makes me return on time.

You did not mention in this letter whether you were going home during the week. I hope you enjoyed the pictures. I shall be going to Newmarket tomorrow. If all goes well, I may go to the races, but I suppose Len and I will finish up in the pictures. Well Darling, I have a good chance of getting home on Friday night this week. I have a weekend pass, but my mate on the truck is staying here this week, so I could easily get home Friday and he will draw my pass for me Saturday dinner time. I may come home Friday if you get home Saturday, but if you are not coming till Sunday, I shant trouble about it.

I shall expect your next letter about Thursday, so until then Darling, I will say cheerio, all my love and best wishes.

Yours forever, your loving Husband Fred.

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**Date: 3<sup>rd</sup> October 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: W/59124 Pte D Watling, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road,  
Chatham, Kent

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a line hoping to find you still keeping OK, as I am myself at present.

Well Darling, I have just been reading your letter again, which I received yesterday. I am not expecting one from you today, but I shall be tomorrow. I hope you can get off for the weekend.

I have filled that housing form in, so here's hoping something is done for us.

According to the demobbing news Darling, I should be out about February, so that isn't far off. I guess you had better watch out or else I shall be out before you. I wrote a few lines to Annie this morning asking her if Albert has heard anything more about his operation. I hope he has. Well sweetheart Darling, if you can get those ribbons for me, I asked you about, don't forget to do so, it has just come out on orders that we have to put them up, but they have got to be in one piece and not singles like I've got at present. They tell you to get those things, but I noticed they don't intend to pay for them.

The weather has been a lot better this week Darling. I hope it has been the same your way. Did you go and see the film last night you said you were going to. I guess I shall go tonight in Newmarket, I don't know what is on there, we have only two picture houses to chose from, if I get down there by about 2 o/c or just after I shall very likely go to the races, the first race is 1.30.

Well Darling, I hope I can get a few more eggs to take home this week. I still have a good chance to get home Friday night. I wish you could manage the same yourself, but I know that is impossible. I am hoping they have sent me some coupons by the time I get home this weekend. Last night Darling, I was thinking of you all the time, wondering if you were at the pictures and wishing I was out of these darn army clothes so that I could take you myself where you want to go, but I guess in 6 months time we will be able to do as we please.

Well, I guess this is all for now Darling, so will say cheerio, all my love and best wishes,

Yours forever, your loving Husband Fred.

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**Date: 4<sup>th</sup> October 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O. Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: W/59124 Pte D Watling, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road, Chatham, Kent

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a line to let you know I received your letter this morning, so glad to hear you are keeping OK, as I am myself at present.

I am still looking forward to your next letter to hear whether you can get away Saturday, I hope you can.

Well Darling, you say you may be able to get away next week for 48 hrs. If you do, I think I can also manage it. I am going home Friday night this week. I have a weekend pass, so my mate who is not going home this week will draw it for me Sat morning.

You have promised Darling to put your application in next week, so don't ever break a promise. I made one last Sunday night to write every day to you, so far I've kept it.

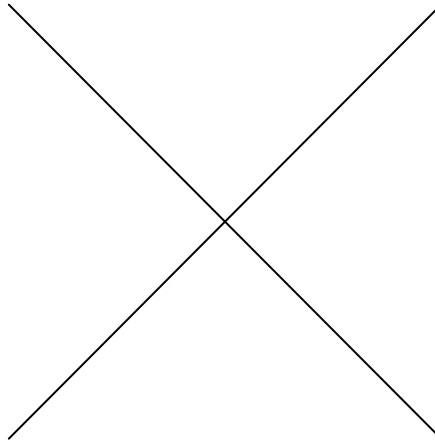
I'm very sorry sweetheart that some of things I said in my last letter upset you. To see you upset is the last thing in the world I want to see, honestly Darling, I want to make you one of the happiest little wives in the world. I shall never really understand why you kept on waiting all those years for me. The only time I feel happy is when you are with me. It's hard to describe to you about the way I feel when I know I have got to part from you. I think the worst part of it for me is because you have to go back to what I'm going back to myself, instead of leaving you in a nice little comfortable home of your own, it's that Darling, that makes me hate leaving you and when we left home last Sunday night and walked to the coach, I was thinking about it then and that is really why I would like to see you out of the ATS, so perhaps you could find more time to see about getting somewhere to settle down in. I only wish I could get to know someone who could do something for us. I haven't

much faith in these forms. I have got to send that army one in to the local borough council.

Well sweetheart Darling, I didn't know it was Doll's birthday on Saturday. I shall have to take a rabbit home for her, but I hope she doesn't wrap the skin round my neck. Up to now, I haven't been able to get eggs, but I'm still hoping to get some. I guess they are very handy for Ma. Well Darling, I shall be looking for another letter from you tomorrow, here's hoping I hear the news from you which I'm hoping to. Cheerio Darling, all my love and best wishes, yours forever.

Your loving Husband Fred.

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**Date: 5<sup>th</sup> October 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: W/59124 Pte D Watling, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road,  
Chatham, Kent

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a few lines once again to let you know I received your other letter yesterday. That made it 2 in one day Darling. Glad to hear you will be home Saturday night. I shall be at Bromley to meet you.

Well Darling, I went to the races on Wednesday, but I only got there in time for 3 races. I backed one winner and finished up level. In the evening, we went to the pictures, it was an old film called "The Sign of the Cross" with Frederick March and Elissa Landi, Claudette Colbert was also in it, it wasn't too bad. Well Darling, if everything is still OK this evening I shall be going home tonight, so roll on tomorrow, so that I shall be seeing you again. I wanted to get out today to send Doll a birthday card, but our lorry has gone to be painted, so it has messed me up for going round the farms to try and get some eggs.

Well sweetheart Darling, today is a beautiful day here, quite warm, the best we have had for a long time. I hope it stays like it for the weekend. I guess this is all for now, so will say "au revoir" till tomorrow night, cheerio Darling, all my love and best wishes.

Yours forever

Your loving Husband Fred

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**Date: 8<sup>th</sup> October 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: W/59124 Pte D Watling, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road,  
Chatham, Kent

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a line hoping to hear you arrived back OK this morning, as I did myself. I got to Liverpool St at 2.15 and managed to get a seat alright, but they had to put on another two coaches for us. I got in the camp just in time for breakfast.

Well Darling, I can't help thinking of you all the time, I am pretty upset about last night, but I never intended to without kissing you goodbye. I thought there was something wrong when you went to bed in a hurry. I didn't know what to do, but if you had not have come to the door when I was leaving, I had made up my mind to see Len and tell him I was not going back. The more I see of you Darling, the more I love you and hate leaving you behind. You seemed to be upset sweetheart about the other, if it's me you are concerned for Darling, you shouldn't be the one to worry, it's all my fault and I should have more thought for you, if you should lose your feelings for me, I should have only myself to blame.

I am writing this letter Darling so that I catch the 2 o/c post, hoping you will get it Tuesday morning. I am going to try and get home tomorrow until Wednesday evening, but if I shouldn't here's hoping to manage Saturday alright.

Well Darling, I have sent this rations card to you to give to Ma, tell her to get what she can off it straight away as it is dated 6<sup>th</sup> Oct, it's not much, but every little helps.

I posted the letter with the form Darling, I hope they give us some consideration when we eventually get our own place sweetheart, I'm sure we will get on marvellous together.

Well sweetheart Darling, every minute of the day my thoughts are with you and always will be while I'm apart from you. If I don't see you tomorrow, I will write every day until I do, so cheerio my sweet until tomorrow, either be seeing you or writing again.

All my love and best wishes.

Yours forever, your loving Husband Fred

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**Date: 8<sup>th</sup> October 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: W/59124 Pte D Watling, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road,  
Chatham, Kent

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a line hoping to find you keeping OK, as I am myself at present.

I am hoping Darling to see you again before you receive this letter. I am still hoping to be able to get home tomorrow, the only trouble is, I shall have to see the orderly sergeant first before I leave because we are Duty Company Wednesday, he will be able to tell me if I am on anything that day.

Well Darling, I have been thinking about you all the time since I left you. I had to wait about 10 minutes before the tram came last night, I still hardly know how I came to go back last night, I even felt like coming home again when I was at Liverpool St. This six month's waiting to be demobbed is going to be my worst in the army, today I've been really fed up, I can't help it, I just can't settle down anymore to this life. I know I'm not the only one, all the boys are the same. After most of us have had the best six years of our life wasted, it doesn't seem right to keep us in, even if it is only for another few months.

Well sweetheart Darling, I hope Ma managed to get the seats OK. I'm expecting to get the weekend off, but there is always a chance of getting caught for a job over the weekend, so far I've been lucky and if I do happen to be on something, I can perhaps pay one of the boys who are staying here a few bob to do my job for me, so if ever I shouldn't get home you will know it wasn't my fault and just couldn't be helped.

Well Darling, if you have made up your mind to put your application in this week, you will be out middle of Nov and then I should like to see you go for a holiday at your Sister's in Cornwall. When I get out, I promise we will go and see her and have a holiday there, the weather will be getting nice again by then.

I guess this is about all for this time Darling, so will close, hoping to see you tomorrow if not, Saturday.

Cheerio sweetheart, all my love and best wishes, yours forever.

xxx Your loving Husband Fred.

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**Date: 10<sup>th</sup> October 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: W/59124 Pte D Watling, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road,  
Chatham, Kent

My Own Darling Wife,

I am writing these few lines from home before going back this evening, I have made up my mind to go back by train, so I shall be leaving here about 5.30.

Well Darling, it was nice seeing you again for a short while. I hope you got back OK. I was thinking of you while you were travelling back and at 12 o/c, I thought to myself that you were just thinking about going on duty. I am wondering what you are doing this very minute, it's 20 to 2 by the clock. I wonder if you are thinking of me. I wouldn't mind betting you are, but don't go burning yourself.

Well Darling, it won't be long before we see one another again on Sat. I hope very much I can get someone to do my job for me over the weekend, it would drive me nuts in that place if I had to stay there knowing you were home here. I have told Ma Darling that you are coming out in Nov, everything will be alright, but perhaps it won't be for long, we may strike lucky and get somewhere of our own and then we will settle down.

When you ask me sweetheart, if I still love you, you are only wasting your breath, I will always love you, you mean everything to me Darling. Well Darling, I will write again tomorrow, I'm looking forward to getting your letter tonight when I arrive at the camp, so until we meet again Darling, cheerio all my love and best wishes.

Yours forever

Your loving Husband Fred

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P.S. I have just wrote off again about the coupons, I wonder what they will say this time.

**Date: 11<sup>th</sup> October 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: W/59124 Pte D Watling, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road,  
Chatham, Kent

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a line hoping to find you keeping in the best of health, as I am OK at present. I caught my train at 6.30 and was back here by 10 o/c, everything is OK, nobody missed me, so you can see I can't be very important in this place and that's just how I want it to be. Well Darling, up to present it doesn't look very rosy for me to get home this week. Most of the fellows who don't usually go home because they live up in the North are on their 9 days leave tomorrow, so that has cut down the drivers in the Company, but I will do all I can to get home. I shall miss being with you very much if I don't. If it wasn't so far to come, you could come down on Sunday if I couldn't get away, all I have to stay here for is to take some the boys to Newmarket Station Saturday dinner time and pick them up again Sunday night. What I shall do with myself in the meantime, goodness knows, so you can guess Darling that I won't be caught staying here if I can help it.

Before I left here on Tuesday Darling, I asked Len to see if a letter came from Orpington for me. I told him if there was, it was Geoff's football coupon which he said he was sending to me to do. Geoff sent it and Len returned it to them straightaway, we have done 4/- worth and will split the winnings (if any). Well sweetheart Darling, I hope you enjoy the pictures if you go tonight. I shant be going out this week now, just waiting and hoping for Saturday to come and finding someone to stand in for me. In your letter, which I received when I got back last night, you mentioned Darling that you enjoyed your weekend with me. I'm glad you did, I shall always enjoy being with you and I shall never stop loving you Darling. I guess this is all for now, will write again tomorrow Darling, so cheerio.

All my love and best wishes

Yours forever

Your loving Husband Fred

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**Date: 12<sup>th</sup> October 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: W/59124 Pte D Watling, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road,  
Chatham, Kent

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a line once again hoping to find you keeping in the best of health,  
as I am OK at present.

Well Darling, I am expecting a letter from you by 12 o/c today. I am  
writing these few lines early this morning so that you get it before you  
go on leave tomorrow. I can't say yet whether I shall be home. I'm still  
trying to get someone to stand in for me. I shall be very disappointed if I  
don't get home, if I can manage it perhaps we can go to the pictures,  
maybe Geoff will come down as he was going to if we were going to  
the Hipp.

I have been trying to get some eggs today, but did not have any luck. I  
shall try again tomorrow, I'll get them and chance it whether I bring  
them home. I'm thinking of you all the time Darling, it's always been  
that way since I first met you sweetheart, but guess I didn't show it that  
way to you. It wasn't long after when I first knew you, that I found out  
you meant a lot to me and it was while I was abroad that I often wished  
I had made things clear to you. I knew I had made a mess of everything  
by not seeing you before I went and was always thinking about it and  
wondering if you would wait for me. Well I was lucky, you did wait  
Darling and that is why I'm sure you love me Darling and I'm positive I  
couldn't love you anymore than I do. If two people are sure of one  
another like us Darling, nothing can stand in our way to make us  
unhappy. Well Darling when you receive this letter I guess you will be  
preparing to come on leave for the weekend, I hope I am doing the  
same. I shant give up hope until the last minute. I think I had better say  
a little prayer tonight before I go to bed, who knows it may help and it  
won't be the first time I've said one.

Well I guess this is all for now, so will say cheerio Darling, all my love  
and best wishes.

Yours forever.

Your loving Husband Fred

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**Date: 15<sup>th</sup> October 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: W/59124 Pte D Watling, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road,  
Chatham, Kent

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a line to let you know I arrived back Ok this morning and hoping to hear you also had a good journey back. I arrived in the camp at ¼ to 8, just in time for breakfast. I had a narrow escape at Liverpool St, Len and I couldn't get in the same carriage, I got a seat and was asleep when the carriage door was opened and a M.P. asked for passes, I didn't know really what to do, so I laid still as though I was asleep, there was only 1 other soldier in there and six RAF fellows, he looked at all their passes but didn't trouble about me. When he closed the door again, I was able to breathe once more, I really thought I had "had it".

Well Darling, I enjoyed the weekend with you very much and of course as it always is, I hated to leave you once again, but the weeks go quick so I guess it won't seem very long before I am out altogether and then we can forget all about this.

The weather is grand again today, more like summer now, I hope it stays like it for a few more weeks. My mate has gone on 48 hrs leave this morning, he won't be going home next Saturday, so I should get away alright next Friday. I hope Ma can get the seats today for the Hipp.

Well Darling, if you go home on Wednesday, I hope it is a nice day for you. I shant be going out myself till Wednesday and then I shall go and have a look at the races, but I may have a job to do with the truck, but I hope not, I have never seen the Caeserwitch which is being run at Newmarket Wednesday, so I'm hoping I can get there.

Well Darling, I'm looking forward to getting your letter tomorrow, but more so on seeing you next Friday, I shall not be late if I can help it.

I guess this is all for this time, will write again tomorrow.

Cheerio Darling, all my love and best wishes, yours forever.

Your loving Husband Fred.

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**Date: 16<sup>th</sup> October 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: W/59124 Pte D Watling, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road,  
Chatham, Kent

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a line to let you know I have just received your letter by the 4 o/c post. So glad to hear Darling that you got back safe. I'm thinking of you all the time and I really do love you as much as I am always telling you I do, I shall never stop loving you sweetheart, it's always going to be just the same as it is now.

Well Darling, I have to pick up a leave party at Newmarket St tonight, so Len and I may go there about 6.30 and go to the pictures and then pick the boys up at 10.30 with the truck. I guess I shall manage to go to the races tomorrow, thanks for keeping your fingers crossed for me, I shall need it.

I wrote to Aunt Bet and Florrie last night Darling, Aunt Bet hasn't answered my last letter yet, I hope she replies to this one.

The weather is still keeping fine, it has been just like a summer's day here today, it's been nice going round the farms taking the fellow's dinners round for them.

I am looking forward to seeing you again this Friday Darling, I shall get home as early as I can, but if I couldn't manage it Friday, you can be sure of seeing me Saturday. Well Darling, I guess this is all for this time, will write again tomorrow.

Cheerio Darling, all my love and best wishes, yours forever, your loving Husband Fred.

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**Date: 17<sup>th</sup> October 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: W/59124 Pte D Watling, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road,  
Chatham, Kent

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a line hoping to find you still keeping well, as I am myself at present. I hope your cold is a lot better Darling.

I received your second letter this morning, I've been thinking of you this evening Darling, I suppose you went home this afternoon. I hope you had a nice journey and got back OK. Well sweetheart, if you still kept your fingers crossed for me, I guess you brought me luck, I had two winners at the races this afternoon, but did not back the winner of the big race. I finished up 22/6 better off than when I started, so I can't grumble. I managed to get there for the 3<sup>rd</sup> race and backed the winner, I won 30/- on the race.

Well Darling, we are getting paid tomorrow, so I should, if all goes well, get away pretty early Friday. I'll have to get home in time to treat you to a drink out of the winnings.

I'm glad to hear you wrote to your Brother and Sister. I guess she will be pleased to have you go down and see her, since she hasn't seen her little Sister since she became a married woman.

Well Darling, after the races, I went to the pictures and saw William Powell and Myrna Loy in "The Thin Man Goes Home". It wasn't a bad film, but the other one with it was terrible, it was a British film called "The Man From Scotland Yard".

Well Darling, I don't think I shall have any luck this week getting Ma her rabbit, the old girl where I got the others hasn't any more, so I guess I've had it, I suppose I shall manage a few eggs again this week.

Well sweetheart Darling, I guess this is all for this time so will say "good night" it is bed time for me, I'm just going to get in, I'm looking forward to seeing you again Friday.

Cheerio Darling, all my love and best wishes

Your loving Husband Fred.

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**Date: 18<sup>th</sup> October 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: W/59124 Pte D Watling, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road,  
Chatham, Kent

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a few lines hoping to find you keeping OK, as I am myself at present.

I wrote to you last night Darling and it went out by the 9 o/c post this morning, so I guess you will get it Friday morning, I hope you receive this one before you leave Chatham on your 48 hrs.

Well Darling, it looks as though I shall have to go to the Company Commander tomorrow morning and ask for 48 hrs. My mate came back last night from his 48 hrs, but there is still some business at home he has got to clear up, so he went to the Coy Office again this morning to ask for his 7 days leave to be brought forward, if he goes again today or tomorrow, I must ask for mine or else I won't be able to get away this weekend.

Well sweetheart, I think I shall get away alright tomorrow. I am looking forward to seeing you again. I am thinking of you all the time and love you more than ever. When you get demobbed you will make me jealous. How about changing over with me when you are out, you could do one week and then me a week and so on, you could dress up like a man couldn't you? Make a better one than me, I guess.

The weather has been lovely again this week, I often wish I was just starting my 9 weeks leave again, but I've only to wait about 6 months and then I'm all set for 15 weeks. If you don't mind, I'll get drunk every night for the first fortnight, then a month's holiday and then Darling get down to do the housework while you go out and do the work. I've got it all planned out sweetheart or have you got some other ideas about that, I guess you have.

Well Darling, I guess this is all for this time, I won't write again this week, if I do you won't receive it, so here's looking forward to tomorrow night, cheerio Darling, all my love and best wishes, Your loving Husband Fred.

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**Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: W/59124 Pte D Watling, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road,  
Chatham, Kent

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a few lines once again hoping to find you keeping OK, as I am myself at present. I am writing again tonight Darling so that I can post it in the morning and you will receive it Wednesday. I may be going farming tomorrow, so I won't have any time to write until the evening, I will try and catch the 6 o/c post. Well Darling, I went to the camp picture house this evening and saw an old film called "A Night at the Ritz". Paul Lucas, David Niven and Annabella were the stars, it wasn't a bad film. Today is over so that's one day nearer to seeing you again sweetheart. I have been thinking of you all the day Darling, you are never out of my thoughts. I love you too much for that. I hope you got my letter alright when you arrived back last night. I always look forward to getting your first letter of the week, it helps me get over the boredom of the beginning of the week. I hate Mondays and Tuesdays. Well Darling, I don't suppose I shall be able to get home any more on a Friday night now that I have packed up driving, but I am almost certain of every weekend from Sat dinner time. The only thing is the guard and that we get about every 8 weeks, if you get it on the Sat or Sunday night, well I guess it's just bad luck and the one thing you can't get out of. As you are not going home this week Darling, I suppose you will be going to the pictures and perhaps the Empire. As we haven't booked for the Hipp next week, we can go to the pictures on Sat night for a change, that's if we can get in, perhaps the Park will have something good on this week. It has been a nice day again but it is rather cold tonight. I'm getting straight into bed when I've finished this letter, if I have a dream I hope it's about you and a happy ending to it.

Well sweetheart Darling, I guess this is all until tomorrow night, so will say goodnight and god bless,

All my love and best wishes.

Yours forever

Your loving Husband Fred

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**Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1945 (Posted 23<sup>rd</sup>)**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: W/59124 Pte D Watling, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road,  
Chatham, Kent

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a line hoping you arrived back safe and well, as I did myself this morning. I caught the train at 1.30, but did not get a seat, we finished up sleeping in the corridor which is nothing unusual for us. The red caps were busy again and Len had to dodge about for a while. The red cap took a fellows name next to me because his pass was only made out till midnight and he caught another one of our boys who didn't have a pass, I was lucky once again, he didn't ask for mine.

There was no trouble at the camp this morning Darling, once more the boys got away with their dodgy weekend.

Well Darling, that 10 to 10 train that I missed broke down at a place called Six Mile Bottom which is about 8 mile from Newmarket. The trucks waiting at Newmarket had to go and pick the boys up and it was past 3 this morning before they got in camp, so perhaps it was better we did miss it after all.

When we parted again last night Darling, I had that awful feeling once again that I always get when the time gets near for us to say goodbye. I'm sure I would not go back one time if you were back in civvy street and I had perhaps a year or more still to do, it will only be the thought of my coming out in 4 to 5 months time that will send me back to this place once you are out.

Well sweetheart Darling, I hope you enjoyed your weekend because I did very much. I shall always be happy now while you are with me. I'm sure we love each other a great deal and as long as we keep it that way Darling we can always be very happy together.

I'm glad we have managed to get one set of numbers thanks to Geoff, perhaps we can bring it home with us when we go again next time, that's if we don't load ourselves with tomatoes and blackberries. I can carry the clock and you (the bags) Darling. I can't help having a little laugh to myself when I think about that particular night, I guess you were getting real mad at me making you walk all that way, the end of a perfect day "eh Darling".

Well Darling, I'm feeling a little tired today, so I shant be very late getting to bed tonight. I've never felt so brownd off in all my life as I do at times in this place, it feels worse than being in a prison camp, only you have got the weekends to look forward to, which is everything. I guess until I finally get out, I guess I haven't any more to say except that I "love you" more and more every day and I shall still be saying it 50 yrs from now Darling.

I will write every day, cheerio until tomorrow sweetheart, all my love and best wishes, yours forever. Your loving Husband Fred.

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**Date: 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O. Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: W/59124 Pte D Watling, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road, Chatham, Kent

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a few lines hoping to find you keeping well, as I am myself at present.

I received your letter yesterday Darling, glad to hear you arrived back OK and you received my letter alright. What's the idea of calling me a cheeky b\_\_\_\_\_?

Well sweetheart, I didn't go farming yesterday after all, the weather was too bad, rained all day down here and it's the same again today. If it clears up I shall be going to see a football match at Newmarket this afternoon, but I shant stay down there, I shall come back in a truck and go to the pictures in the camp tonight. I also had a letter from Aunt Bet and Florrie yesterday, both send their love to you.

Well Darling, I'm looking forward to seeing you again Saturday. I don't think I shall get caught for any duties this weekend, but it looks as though I won't get away until the Sat dinner time by the leave train from Newmarket at 1.40, so we should both be home about 4.30.

I guess you are almost set now for the big day when you come out, I wonder if you are feeling excited about it. I know I shall be when my

turn comes, but I don't think you are one of those excitable people. I suppose you will just come out and think no more about it.

Well Darling, I am always thinking of you while we are apart. I often wonder what things will be like when we are both out of it and have our own place to live in. I guess it will be pretty strange at first, but it won't take us long to settle down will it Darling?

Well I guess this is all for this time. Hoping to get another letter from you today, cheerio sweetheart, all my love and best wishes, yours forever.

Your loving Husband Fred.

xxxxxxxxxxxxx

xxxxxxxxxxxxx

Back of envelope

Miss E Aldridge

Annie Zant Ward

Miller General Hospital

Greenwich High Rd

Greenwich

SE10

## Top Of The League - SWALK

**Date: 25<sup>th</sup> October 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: W/59124 Pte D Watling, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road,  
Chatham, Kent

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a line hoping to find you keeping in the best of health, as I am myself at present. Well Darling, I was surprised yesterday not getting a letter from you. I have only had one from you so far this week. I certainly expected one from you yesterday, gaud help you sweetheart, if I don't get one today.

I went to the football match yesterday at Newmarket, but came straight back to the camp and went to the pictures here, but the film was terrible. I came out half way through it, the film was called "Brazil" with Virginia Bruce, Mickey Mouse was the best.

Well Darling, have you ever heard me talking or shouting in my sleep because the boys this morning said I was last night. It must have been due to not getting a letter from you yesterday, don't tell me you done it to have your revenue on me because I missed a day last week. Remember sweetheart, I am still top of the league for most letters written. It looks as though I shall be OK for Saturday although we have a new Company Commander who looks like trying to alter things. We don't mind him trying so long as he doesn't try too hard.

Well sweetheart Darling, I haven't done any farming this week and it looks as though I am unlucky this week for any eggs. I am on a Q.M's fatigue today, so won't be able to get out, tomorrow will be my last chance of getting them.

This week has seemed to go very slow, as a rule the week goes quick for me here. I wish there was only 4 days in a week. I guess you will say I'm always moaning, if you do, you're not far wrong. I shall always be the same until I get out of this b\_\_\_\_\_ army and all that goes with it.

Well Darling, the weather has been lovely this week, for the ducks, but I suppose we can't expect any better now. It doesn't look as though I shall get that armchair and fire this year that I told you about in one of

my previous letters, but I shall be expecting it by the time next winter is here.

Well little sweetheart, the letters have just been brought in and your bacon is saved. I see you posted it Tuesday night. It's a wonder I didn't get it yesterday, 4 pages of it, how did you manage it, I know you spaced it out, not a bad idea. I hope you are taking all this as fun, because if not, I'm the one who has to look out for myself.

Glad to hear Darling that you have got the weekend off. I hope nothing stops me from getting away.

I'm glad to know Darling that you love me a great deal, I'm sure I shall never love anyone else the way I love you, nothing will ever alter my feelings towards you, I'm going to make you the

5. Please note still one up. ←

happiest little wife if it's the last thing I do and you deserve it Darling. Len has heard from Eileen today. She has gone into hospital again and is having another operation tomorrow. They have booked two seats for the Hipp 2<sup>nd</sup> house Sat-night, but won't be able to go now. Eileen mentioned in her letter if we would have them. I have said we will, so I guess the last race has had me this week.

Well Darling, I guess this is all for this time. Looking forward to seeing you again Saturday, cheerio sweetheart.

All my love and best wishes.

Yours forever.

Your loving Husband Fred.

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**Date: 26<sup>th</sup> October 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: W/59124 Pte D Watling, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road,  
Chatham, Kent

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a few lines once again hoping to find you OK, as I am myself at present.

I received another letter from you at tea time yesterday. One of your short and sweet letters Darling. I don't quite get what you mean about have I made up my mind if it's the 1<sup>st</sup> or last race on Sat-night, but now you know it's neither for me this week, as I have told Len I'll have those tickets unless we let someone else have them and (We) go to the 1<sup>st</sup> Race.

Well Darling, by the time you get this letter, which I hope you receive Sat-morning, I may already be at home. I and another fellow are trying to make up our minds whether to go home today. It looks as though I shall be waiting at Bromley for you, but don't be disappointed if I'm not. Len went home yesterday afternoon on a 72 hr pass. He went and asked for it because of Eileen going into hospital. He said he will see me Saturday. I'm expecting him to bring those tickets down, if he doesn't, I'm not going up for them. I was out when he left, he left word with the boys he would see me on Saturday.

Well Tiny, according to your letter you are having weather like us down here. It has been coming down in bucket falls all day long and the camp is like a boating lake this morning. I hope it isn't too wet over the weekend.

Well sweetheart Darling, when you are reading this letter, it will only be a few hours before I see you again. I still love you Darling, more and more every day.

I went again to the pictures in the camp last night. It was a good film, very funny with A. Menjou called "Road Show", I enjoyed it very much.

Well Darling, I guess this is all for this time, looking forward to seeing you again tomorrow, one more week nearer our demob, cheerio Darling.  
All my love and best wishes,  
Yours for always,  
Your loving Husband Fred.

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**Date: 29<sup>th</sup> October 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: W/59124 Pte D Watling, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road,  
Chatham, Kent

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a line to let you know I arrived back OK, but after a lot of messing around. We got to Liverpool St with about 4 mins to spare. Len had to get a ticket and then we ran to platform 9 which is the usual one for our train, but it wasn't leaving from 9 last night it left from 12 platform. We rushed round there and saw it just pulling out. If the porter had let us go through, we could have caught it, but he shut the gates, in other words, we'd had it. Instead of waiting for the 4.30, we caught a 10.25 which goes to a station about 4 mile from the camp, but this train goes a damn long way round. We got to this station 3 o/c this morning and then had the 4 mile to walk. We were home about 4.15 this morning, struggled into camp on our chin straps.

Well Darling, I was found out to be absent, the Coy Commander wouldn't have anything to do with it, so sent me before the Colonel. He was pretty lenient with me. He gave me 28 days detention and raised my group number to 36, so I can't grumble about that can I? So you can visit me in the nick for the next 4 weeks, would you like that?

No sweetheart, I'm only kidding, I got away with it again, but I guess I will have to go careful in future. I can't expect to get away with it every time, got to slip up sometime. I received your letter Darling, also one from Aunt Bet, they seem very pleased with the numbers, she wants to know if John and I will be going to spend a weekend with her, but I'm

afraid there's not much chance of my doing that while I can get home to see you every weekend. I told her John was moving to Ipswich.

Well Tich, I was thinking about you in the bus last night. I could picture you perched up in the back of the Rolls going to Bromley. I bet you didn't half fancy yourself, must have thought you were Lady \_\_\_\_\_ didn't you? I'm being saucy again sweetheart, you'll have to knock it out of me with all that 8 stone nothing you possess.

Well Darling, I really enjoy my being with you over the weekend. I hate having to go and leave you and I know you hate it also, but I guess there's nothing we can do about it until March comes round.

Well Darling, you looked very sweet yesterday afternoon when we went to the pictures. You always look sweet, but somehow yesterday you looked extra special. I love you Darling and it will always be the same. I want you to believe me because I know it's the truth, no-one will ever mean so much to me as you do Darling.

Last night in doors I felt sorry for Ma having to put with that darn noise over her head all the time. I didn't think they kicked up as much row as that, I'm sure I wouldn't like to be there all the week with that going on. I wish they still had their little house round Legge St, after being there for 30 yrs, I always hoped they would finish their time round the old street.

Well Darling, I'm looking forward to getting your next letter and to seeing you again next Sat. You haven't many more weekends to have in the army. No more worry then asking other people if you can have this and that, you are free then to do as you please, except of course, you will have to ask me first and get my permission, and no back chat either. Well sweetheart, I guess this is all for now, will write again tomorrow.

Cheerio Darling, all my love and best wishes.

Yours forever.

Your loving Husband Fred.

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Back of Envelope: S.W.A.L.K X



**Date: 30<sup>th</sup> October 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: W/59124 Pte D Watling, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road,  
Chatham, Kent

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a line once again hoping to find you keeping well, as I am myself at present.

I am writing this letter just before dinner. I am wondering if I shall get a letter from you before I finish.

Well Darling, it's a lovely day today, I wanted to go farming today, but they had too many. I got caught instead for a fatigue.

I suppose you are still going home for the afternoon tomorrow. I hope it's a day like this for you, think of me won't you? Trying to pick the winners tomorrow, keep those fingers crossed for me and for your own sake, because if I lose this week, I shall definitely have to come on your ear hole next week for a sub.

Well Darling, I get my next 9 days leave on the 30<sup>th</sup> Nov, I don't know if I have to take it then or not, but I am due for it on that date. We have been told to hand our pay books in. I don't suppose I shall have another long leave after this one.

Well Tiny, it's just come in, the mail I mean, yes there's one from you and you're saved again. I'm just going to open it, 2 pages I bet, hang on let's see, "ah" "ah" sealed with I.W.A. L. X, what's "I" stand for, have you made a mistake or is it another one for me to puzzle out. I'm wrong this time 3 pages, you're getting good at it aren't you Darling.

Well sweetheart, it's a very nice letter, glad to hear you got back OK and also that you enjoyed your weekend with me. I'm very sorry I said what I did on Sunday morning. I guess you are right, I do say things without thinking, but you know I don't mean them, I love you too much for that.

I see you had a busy day Monday doing all your washing, I guess you are glad it's done with.

Well Darling, if I didn't meet you next Saturday night and went to the dogs instead, I wonder what you would do to me. Would you bite, kick, scratch or just nag me to death over the weekend, let me know which of these and then if it's not too painful, I can decide if it's worth it going to the dogs.

I've been looking at the back of the envelope your letter just came in and I think I've got it. What I thought was an X isn't, but it's a Y instead so it's easy now, I.W. A. L. Y. I Will Always Love You. I am right I believe, but you needn't tell me that, because little sweetheart, if you ever stop, I'll squeeze that little lily white neck of yours until you look like a giraffe and that's something I do mean, but I know I shall never have to do it, something tells me you mean every word you say and I believe you.

Well Darling, I'm sending a little piece of your envelope back to let you see what I mean about the X looking like Y, or the other way round. I like these puzzles, do you know any more, don't think I'm mad, it will help me waste a bit of time which we get plenty of. I'll put something on this one and lay 100-1 you don't get it right, I can tell you in the next letter what it stood for, but no cheating (have a go, your father won't know).

5. ←

Well Darling, I was just thinking (can sometimes you know?) that if I get that leave on the 30<sup>th</sup> Nov, I shall be home for my birthday, that will be very handy Darling, I can go out with you then and help you buy my birthday present. Your birthday comes on Sunday doesn't it, pretty tough luck for you, I shant be home that weekend until the Sat-afternoon and the shops will be closed before I can get out in time, still Darling, I will send you a card.

Well chum, (got any gun) I guess this is all for this time, will write again tomorrow, so until then, cheerio.

All my love and best wishes.

Yours for always.

Your loving Husband Fred

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Back of Envelope

X

D.G.W.I.L.Y.T

**Date: 31<sup>st</sup> October 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: W/59124 Pte D Watling, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road,  
Chatham, Kent

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a line hoping you are still keeping well, as I am myself at present.

Well Darling, you have a nice day for your visit home, I have seen about that extra allotment you are not getting yet, they say you should have it by now, the clerk in the office is going to write up about it.

I went to the pictures in the camp last night, it was a good film called "The Man in Grey", Margaret Lockwood, James Mason and Stuart Granger were the stars, it was an old fashioned film, but I enjoyed it.

Well sweetheart, I'm hoping you have got your fingers crossed for me, because somehow I don't feel very lucky today, in the big race I am going to back two horses, one is Scottish National and the other is Vicinity, you can look at the paper and see how I got on tomorrow.

Well Darling, I won't be home this week until Saturday. I shant be going to the dogs, so will be at Bromley about 20 to 8 unless I go up with Doll. If I do, I shall go for a drink while I'm waiting, but I won't be far away and miss you again like last week. I have got Dad's birthday present for him, but I think I will make him give me enough coupons for the vests and then we can get Ma a pair of slippers, that's if she wants them.

Well sweetheart, in yesterday's letter I told you I was going to tell you what the letters were on the back of the envelope, but I think I will wait and see if you found out what they stood for, I still bet 100-1 you don't get it right.

I am hoping to get another letter from you today, it won't be long now before we meet again.

Well Darling, I guess this is about all for this time, will write again tomorrow, you will hear then how much I lost today, have a sub ready for me next week, Darling, cheerio.

All my love and best wishes.

Yours for always.

Your loving Husband Fred.

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## **The Last Race**

**Date: 1<sup>st</sup> November 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: W/59124 Pte D Watling, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road,  
Chatham, Kent

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a line hoping to find you still keeping well, as I am myself at present.

I received your letter Darling, just before I went to the races yesterday. I was right about feeling unlucky, I never backed a winner, so sweetheart, I guess I'll have to swing on your ear next weekend. I know you won't mind (much). That is the last horse race meeting I'm ever going to, I'm packing them up as well now. I suppose you will have a little smile to yourself over that one, but I mean it, the last race at the dogs is going to be my only bet on racing (don't take the mickey). Well sweetheart, I hope John is having nice time on leave. I suppose he will be at Catford tonight.

How did things go for you yesterday, it was a lovely day for your trip up home, I suppose you and Ma went on the booze. I bet you can knock them back when I've got my back turned, how many stouts and gins did you manage last night. When I left the race course yesterday, I just had enough left for the pictures and supper afterwards (but I wasn't downhearted "no siree") not much.

Well Darling, did you enjoy the film you went to see Tuesday night. Last night I saw the film called "The True Glory" it may have been, but all I could see in it was boasting the Yanks up as usual, it will be a change to see a film where the Tommy is somewhere in it.

Well Darling, I haven't been farming this week yet, I would like to get some eggs, but so far it doesn't look very promising, all I've managed to get so far is ½ dozen oranges and about 1 lb of marg. I'm sure Ma will be pleased with that, I will try for a few eggs. I know they are very handy.

I won't be home this week until Sat. Things look a bit too hot for a Friday get-a-way this week, so I'll stick it till Sat. I am looking forward to seeing you again Darling, I'm thinking of you all the time we are

apart, in nearly all your letters you will keep saying I don't believe that you love me, but I do believe you sweetheart and I hope you also believe me. What it is that makes you think that, I don't know, maybe I'm not going the right way about things to make you think that. If I'm not, I wish you would tell me. All I know is that I love you more than anything else and I shall always be happy with you. Well Darling, in your letter yesterday you mentioned writing to Eileen, I guess she will be pleased to have a letter from you, I'm sure she will answer it.

Up to now I haven't answered Aunt Bet's letter, but will do so very soon. I have also got one to write to Florrie.

Well Tich, I guess this all for this time, will write again tomorrow. I'm wondering if I shall get a letter from you today, but perhaps you never had much time yesterday to write.

Well Darling, cheerio until tomorrow.

All my love and best wishes.

Yours for always.

Your loving Husband Fred.

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**Date: 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: W/59124 Pte D Watling, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road,  
Chatham, Kent

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a few lines once again hoping to find you keeping in the best of health, as I am myself at present.

I received another letter from you yesterday Darling. Glad to hear you enjoyed the film Tuesday night. See you had your fingers crossed for me, but I guess I'm an unlucky gambler. They say the unlucky gambler is lucky in love, for me I think that saying is correct.

Well sweetheart, I hope you and Ma had your quick one at The George Weds-night. I was so brownd off last night, I went out with four of the

boys to Newmarket and had a few drinks. We went by car, it was a miserable night raining all the time. Len didn't come, he won't where beer is concerned.

Well Darling, in your letter you say you were going to be saucy, but thought better of it, why didn't you have a bit of your own back. I'm always being cheeky to you, it would do me good to have some thrown back. I managed to get nine eggs yesterday, it will be a little help for Ma, if I can get out today I may be able to get a few more.

Well Darling, I have caught a rotten cold this week, my head feels pretty rough at present, I hope I can get rid of it quick.

I shall not be going home today, it doesn't seem too good this week as far as dodging goes.

Well Darling, it's only a matter of a few hours and we will be seeing one another again, although it is only a short while we are together. I enjoy every minute with you. I guess I'm lucky to be able to get home every week, if I was stationed up the North somewhere it would be pretty rough for both of us.

Well sweetheart, I'm thinking of you all the time. I love you more than ever, the way I see you I'm sure there isn't anyone who could help themselves from loving you.

Well Darling, I guess this is all for now, hope you receive it before going on leave, but I suppose you will, as you are not leaving until late.

Cheerio Darling, all my love and best wishes.

Yours forever.

Your loving Husband Fred.

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## Call The Doctor

**Date: 5<sup>th</sup> November 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: W/59124 Pte D Watling, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road,  
Chatham, Kent

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a line to let you know I got back OK. The train was on time leaving Liverpool St. We got there at 20 to 10, but there was a queue waiting to go through the barrier, just got on the platform as it moved off, talk about packed. I didn't think I was going to get on it, as I opened a door to get in about 3 fellows fell out on me, but I scrambled in. Len had to get in somewhere else, there was still a crowd left behind coming through the barrier. Well Darling, that was another nice weekend at home with you, another one nearer the end of all this. I hated leaving you again, I don't know how I shall feel when you are out of it and I have to leave you behind. I hope your pain didn't trouble you on the way back Darling, I guess I don't give enough thought for you at times, I wish afterwards sometimes that you had punched my nose for me. I deserve it sometimes. Well sweetheart, I'm sorry you lost your little brooch, I could see you were a little upset about it. I was myself, but I will get you another one as soon as I can. You have only a couple more journeys to make from Chatham and then I guess they have had you, you will be able to come and see me off then at the station, that's if you want to Darling, but if my guess is right, I think you will. I did intend to go farming today, but my head is feeling pretty rough at present. I'm using the Vick and hope to get rid of it before next weekend. Well Darling, I love you more and more every time I see you. I could never love anyone like I love you, it will always be the same. I am looking forward to getting a letter from you tomorrow. I think the main reason why I don't like Mondays is because I don't get a letter from you. Well Darling, I guess there isn't any more to say now, writing again tomorrow, cheerio sweetheart, all my love and best wishes, yours forever.

Your loving Husband Fred.

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**Date: 5<sup>th</sup> November 1945 (night)**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: W/59124 Pte D Watling, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road,  
Chatham, Kent

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a line once again hoping to find you keeping OK, as I am myself at present.

I wrote to you this morning Darling and writing these few lines just before going to bed. I am not finishing this letter until tomorrow evening, but if I catch the 6 o/c post you should get it by Wednesday afternoon. I shall go farming in the morning if I manage to get up in time and will finish this letter when I get back.

Well Darling, I went to the pictures in the camp tonight and saw "The Young in Heart", I daresay you have seen it, it was a pretty good film.

I answered Florrie's letter today and will write to Aunt Bet tomorrow.

Well sweetheart, I am looking forward to getting your letter tomorrow, it makes me feel good when I get your letters. Honestly speaking Darling, I think I love you too much, perhaps you will think it funny saying that, but that's the way it is, I only hope you to love me as much as you say you do.

Well Darling, I'm going to get to bed now and will leave the letter over till tomorrow, so sweetheart, until tomorrow "good night".

Here I am once again Darling, I got up pretty early today about 7.30. I guess that's not early to you anyway. I haven't gone farming, they didn't need many. I suppose I shall go one of these fine days.

This afternoon I am going to see a football match. I hope the weather is fine for it, up to present it's a very misty morning. I think the Vick is doing my cold a lot of good, my head feels a lot better this morning.

Well Darling, I hope Ma gets our seats for the Hipp alright, it will be the last time I shall be able to take you there while you are still a soldier.

Many a time you find me looking at you and you smile and say, what are you looking at me like that for, I've never told you the real reason, I look at you and think how different you are to when I first knew you six or more years ago. I don't know if it's the army that made you different or mixing with that queer family of mine, you are different Darling to me, you have seemed to change in many ways. I didn't expect to come



home and find you the way I did, believe me I was surprised, maybe it's my imagination that you are changed, perhaps I didn't really know you when I thought I did, but I think I know now your ways and you and I love them.

Do you remember Eileen's Sister saying on Sunday that she thought we were well matched and suited for each other, well I believe that because I know I have the best little wife in the world, but I'm sorry I can't say that you have the best husband, unless you make and knock some sense into me. When we get our own home and there's a big cooper stick laying round, I shall be dead scared of all that 8 stone and 4 ft 11ins of you "lofty" (you said you don't like Tiny).

I have received your letter sweetheart, glad to hear you got back OK, although you had another long wait I see, it seems as though all the railways are as bad as one another.

I think you will like that picture "Blood and Sand". I suppose Tyrone Power is your dream man, he seems very popular with all the silly old women, sorry Darling I don't mean you. I've just remembered something you mentioning going to the Empire. I've been caught again, I paid for the Hipp you twister, it should have been your turn, don't say it's not because I know you are so used to twisting the railways that you're trying it on me now, don't come it too often sweetheart or I'll break your neck for you. I hope Ma can't get them now.

Well Darling, I'm getting a bit tongue tied now, so will close, wishing you all the best of luck and happiness in the future with that awful fellow you married, cheerio Lofty, see you next Saturday, love and best wishes from your loving Husband Russell ↵ nice name

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**Date: 7<sup>th</sup> November 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: W/59124 Pte D Watling, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road,  
Chatham, Kent

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a line hoping to find you keeping well, as I am myself at present.

My cold is a lot better now, with a bit of luck I may have got rid of it by next weekend.

Well Darling, there is no farming today, the Company have gone out firing on the range. I had a bit of luck and was detailed for room orderly, a nice easy job, just sweep up and light the fire, getting my hand in for later on when I have to do the housework while you're out working. I can cook as well, anything that comes out of a tin.

Today is our half-day, I think I will go and have a look round for some eggs. I hope I can get another dozen for this week.

I sent Dad off a card this morning for his birthday Darling, I guess it will get there first post tomorrow. He will get it when he gets home from work. Well sweetheart, did you like the picture last night, I bet you did, it's about 4 yrs ago since I saw it, but I can still remember one part of it, we heard later on that this particular scene was banned and had to be withdrawn from the film, much to the regret of the boys, maybe the women too.

Well Darling, I guess you are counting the days now, just a few more and then a lovely 8 weeks holiday. I bet you're anxious to get cracking on buying those new clothes of yours. I suppose you have already got your eye on some of the things you are going to get. I'm just dying to see you in a new hat, that will be something else I can chip you about (in other words, take the mickey). Before you leave next Thursday don't forget to kiss the boys and girls before you go, you will miss them very much you know, so will I miss the dear old Colonel about March, (miss him with a b\_\_\_\_\_ great brick).

Well "lofty" Darling, I hope I get a letter from you this dinner time, there wasn't much in yesterdays, but I will forgive you as it was Monday when you wrote.

Doll & Geoff sent the football coupon yesterday. I did some and posted it straight back to them. Doll said they didn't come out Sunday because

Geoff was busy all the afternoon building a shed, they will see us next weekend.

Well sweetheart, I'm thinking about you all the time and patiently waiting for the time when we can settle down together and finish worrying about being parted every week. I always feel properly cheesed off with everything when I'm on that bus to Liverpool St Sunday, my thoughts are with you all the time Darling.

Well I guess this is all for this time, will write again tomorrow, cheerio Darling.

All my love and best wishes.

Yours for always.

Your loving Husband Fred.

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Mail has just come in, none for me sweetheart, look out for yourself Sat.

**Date: 8<sup>th</sup> November 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O. Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: W/59124 Pte D Watling, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road, Chatham, Kent

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a line to let you know I received your second letter this week, yesterday afternoon. Glad to hear you are all set for the big day, you said you have made some plans, but you never mentioned what they were, perhaps they are secret ones or are they?

How did you get on with your medical Darling, I suppose they classed you A.1. alright. Sorry to hear you still had that nasty old pain when you wrote, hope everything is alright now for you.

Well sweetheart, it looks as though I won't do any farming again this week. Tomorrow is my last chance, I've managed to get ½ dozen eggs so far. I'm hoping to get a few more. I've also got my pass for this weekend, the only people to get them this week are the boys of the old Rangers Battalion, they are not giving anymore else a pass, they have all got to attend the church service for the armistice, good job I belonged to the old Rangers.

Well sweetheart Darling, after this weekend with you, I'm going to find it worse than ever leaving you at weekends, but I will be happier knowing you have not go to go back to that life anymore. I hope you will be happy until we can get our own place.

I answered Aunt Bet's letter this morning, rather long winded about it, but better late than never. I've told her we will have another week with her when I get slung out in March, that's if the weather is OK.

Well Darling, I went to a camp show last night, it was very good, they usually always put on a good show. Last Sunday night, I met another three fellows who I was with in Italy. I hadn't seen two of them since we got shifted out of Italy, but the other one I left at the airdrome when we were being flown back. It's good to see the fellows again and see them looking so well. Different to the days we knew way back. I wonder what Dad will think of his birthday card I sent him. It's the first one I've ever sent him. It's not much of one, but about the best I could pick out, the shops don't seem to have much of that sort of thing these days. Well sweetheart, I hope that darn train this Saturday isn't as late as it was last week. I can't understand why it should be, it's a special troop train and takes nearly 3 hours to do a 60 mile run, it shouldn't take all that time, it looks as though my Friday dodgies are finished, sort of tightening up now.

It's almost twelve o'clock now, so I may as well wait and let you know if I get a letter from you, only a few more minutes and the mail will be up.

"Yes" Darling I have got one from you. Glad to hear you received your other book, that's all settled now, I'm anxious to see when they have started paying you from for that extra. Glad to know you are willing to pay next time for the Hipp or pictures. I should think so to, poor old hard up like me.

Well, I don't know what I want for my birthday, it all depends Darling on how much you can afford. There I go being funny again, buy me a night-cap, so long as I don't wear the bow at the back, do you remember that one at the Hipp. You didn't mention whether your pain has gone yet, how will you feel about it when the time comes and you won't be bothered about that sort of thing for quite a few months. Will you be happy or shouldn't I talk about it like this Darling, but I must say I hope the first one is a boy.

Well Darling, I'm looking forward to seeing you again Saturday. I still love you as much as ever, even more so every day, I'm thinking of you all the time. I cannot think of any more to say just now so will close.

Cheerio my Darling, all my love and best wishes.

Yours forever, your loving Husband Fred x

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**Date: 9<sup>th</sup> November 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O. Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: W/59124 Pte D Watling, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road, Chatham, Kent

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a line hoping to find you keeping well, as I am myself at present.

I am anxiously waiting to get on that train tomorrow. I hope it arrives on time this week, if you get to Catford around 4.30 you can wait for a couple of 47's if you feel like it, but I shouldn't wait any later than 4.30 if I were you Darling, it may be 5 and past before I get home again.

Well sweetheart, I am on a fatigue again today and another tomorrow morning, it helps to pass the time away.

Did you go after all to the Empire, you did not mention in Wednesday's letter whether you went to the pictures Tues-night, you never do tell me much you little bugger, I think you are one of those people who don't believe in telling all, I know I'm only your old man and not of much importance.

I have managed to get 8 eggs this week and 4 ducks eggs, Doll can have them for Geoff, he likes ducks, so do I sometimes. When I went up to see my sweetheart this week, where I get the eggs, she also asked me if I'd like a few carrots and onions. I couldn't very well refuse them, so I shall also have to lug them home this week, it will be like Suffolk all over again, but I shant throw the lot up in the air sweetheart. She told me it's her birthday next week, she will be sweet 69, just a mere chicken isn't she.

Well Darling, you needn't worry about getting up early Sunday, I'm not going to that Sunday morning business. All you need bother about is getting up for my early cup of tea, if all's well we can go to the pictures this week, "yes sweetheart" it won't cost me anything, I'll see to that, I've got a little book now with it all down, your days of fiddling are over.

Well Darling, my head is still feeling groggy, it seemed to be going away and then it got worse again, to tell you the truth I think I'm dying slowly, I feel like it sometimes in this place. The rumours are about again that we are going to Winchester, back to the scene of my first days in the army. Well Darling, I guess this is the last time I shall write a letter on a Friday to you and post it to Chatham, a week from now and you will be a free women, at least "you think you will". I've a good mind to drag you back here and make you be my batman, one of the fellows in our room went out this morning number 20 group, I almost broke down in tears, it's torture seeing them go.

Well Darling, I guess this is all for this time, looking forward to seeing you again tomorrow and for the last time in uniform, roll on next Thursday.

Cheerio sweetheart, all my love.

Yours for always.

Your loving Husband Fred.

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**Date: 12<sup>th</sup> November 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O. Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: W/59124 Pte D Watling, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road, Chatham, Kent

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a line to let you know I arrived back OK. When we got to the station, we had just two minutes to spare, we found a corridor where there weren't many standing, used my pack for a pillow and got down to it, I slept nearly all the way.

Well Darling, I hope you didn't get cock-eyed in the coach after I left you, but I've a good mind to get you drunk next weekend, hope you got your train OK. If I get caught for any fatigues next weekend, I shall have to go up and ask for leave, spin him some sort of a yarn.

I really enjoyed the weekend with you sweetheart, I wasn't anxious to leave you last night, but I didn't want to miss that train on account of Len.

Well Darling, I'm glad I brought my coat home with me this week, it was freezing when we got out at Newmarket last night and it's very cold again today, a bit too cold for farming, some have gone out.

Well sweetheart, I am thinking about you now more than ever, wondering if it can be so, the reason why you are late this time. I guess it's got me worrying about you, but I suppose you will think me a nit-wit starting to worry so soon. I love you Darling more than anything else in this world, believe me that my love will never change for you.

I suppose John will be home again tonight for good, you have only a few more hours to spend in this b\_\_\_\_\_ army and then I hope you can settle down and be happy while we patiently wait for our own place, which you may be able to do something about now that you have a bit more time to spare.

I forgot all about asking you if you wanted to go to the Hipp next week, if you get home early on Thursday you could, if you fancy going, try and book up, I'll leave it to you Darling to decide. I know you would like to go to the dogs, but I really can't let you go Darling, you will start losing the rent and housekeeping money, we mustn't let that happen must we?

I liked the cushion covers or bolster covers whichever you call them, I can see you have been very busy. I thought they were very nice Darling. I never say much, but think all the more you will have to teach me the way it's done. I'm not too bad with a needle, but I like to wear a pair of steel gloves when I'm using one.

Well Darling, when I get home next weekend, please don't rub it in, someone's already done it last week, Johnny had the laugh this time, I had it before when he was 34 group, but my turn will come when I can say 15 weeks and nothing to do but lay in bed and rot, "oh yeah" not me, a few weeks honeymoon and then work if there's any to do.

Well sweetheart, I have just one more letter to write after this one to Chatham and then it's Mrs F, gone is the private forever, I'm not sorry and hope you're not either.

I will write again tomorrow Darling, so until then, I will say cheerio and good luck, all my love and best wishes, yours forever. Your loving Husband Fred.

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**Date: 12<sup>th</sup> November 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O. Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: W/59124 Pte D Watling, St Paul's Vicarage, Old Road, Chatham, Kent

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a line hoping to find you keeping well, as I am myself at present. I am writing again tonight just in case I go farming tomorrow and I don't want to disappoint you by you not receiving a letter from me on Wednesday. If I go out tomorrow I may not be able to get a letter wrote by 6 o/c and catch the post, in that case this may be my last letter to you addressed to Chatham.

Well Darling, I haven't been doing anything again today, only thinking of you all the time, there was no pictures in the camp tonight. I had a game of snooker instead. There will be pictures on tomorrow, so I expect I shall be going. I expect you are all packed and ready to take the bow, I think I shall have to have a chat with the Company Commander Weds morning and see if I can get official leave, at present it looks as though a good few of the boys are going to hop it on Friday which makes it very awkward for a dodgy weekend, but in any case, I shall take it, so it may be Friday or certainly Saturday.

Well sweetheart, I suppose you will be up home on Weds. If I get time tomorrow to catch the 6 o/c post, I'm going to send the letter home, you will get it there. This is my last letter to Chatham, I've just made my mind up, hope you don't mind. I know you won't sweetheart so long as you get them.

I suppose you will go to the pictures or the Empire at Chatham for the last time this week, unless by some chance we may visit there someday together and then you can show me round. I bet you know the place inside out by now. Well Darling, I hope Thursday is a nice day for your



trip up London. I wish I was coming with you, in fact I'm always wishing I was with you. A few years ago, I never thought a girl could mean so much to me as you do now Darling. I bless that night I followed you up the hill, I've never been a lucky bloke, but that was without doubt my lucky day of all days ("who are you"). Well sweetheart, it's past ten and that means bedtime for me, I'll try all I can to get a letter off tomorrow if I go farming, I guess it will be the same tale tomorrow, got up too late, but just in case who knows, cheerio Darling goodnight, all my love and best wishes, yours forever, your loving Husband Fred.

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**Date: 13<sup>th</sup> November 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O. Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: Mrs R. F. Watling, 123 Davenport Road, Catford, London, SE6

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a line to let you know I received your letter. Glad to hear you arrived back OK and also to hear you have had today and tomorrow off. I went farming, but did not do much. I got 4/9 for what I did do, just enough to buy a cup of tea and a bun. I haven't got much time to catch the 6 o/c post, but will manage it alright.

Well Darling, next Tuesday we have got a general holiday in the camp. I would like to get home Friday and stay till Tuesday night, but I guess they will have a good check up on Monday to see if anybody is absent and I bet there will be a good few.

I had a letter with yours this evening from Charlie. He answered my letter for Florrie. They are glad to hear you are almost finished with the army, funny thing he mentioned Johnny in his letter saying he was surprised that Johnny wasn't out yet, they are not sure whether they will be up for xmas, but will let us know later.

Well sweetheart, I shall be thinking of you all this week until I see you again. I'm sending this letter home so I hope you get it OK tomorrow.

Well Darling I will write again tomorrow, so until then I'll say cheerio, hoping to hear from you tomorrow, don't worry about writing Thursday, I guess you will have too much to do.

Best of luck, all my love and best wishes.

Yours for always.

Your loving Husband Fred.

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**Date: 21<sup>st</sup> November 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O. Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: Mrs R. F. Watling, 123 Davenport Road, Catford, London, SE6

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a line to let you know I arrived back OK. The train was on time leaving Liverpool St, but was 50 mins late when we got to Newmarket, it was 12.30 when I got back here.

Well Darling, I could have stayed till this evening, there was nothing on for us today. We are Duty Company this Saturday and I am anxious to see if I shall be on guard. I hope I'm not. I have just heard from a mate of mine who works in the orderly room that I am down to go to Winchester, they want me to take a job at the barracks there as a butcher, it hasn't got through to the Company yet, but I guess I shall be up office about it tomorrow. I shall refuse it because I don't think I shall be able to get away so much from there. If I took the job, I would leave here on the 27<sup>th</sup> of this month, it may mess my leave up as well. Well Darling, as I am writing this letter, I suppose you are on your way to Chatham. I hope you have had a nice afternoon out down there. I hope he didn't make you pay for the pictures, it's bad enough having one old man who makes you pay. Well sweetheart, once this weekend is over, I shall have 9 days to look forward to and after that a xmas at home, the first one for six years and then the thing most of all (demob). The part I am scared of is work again. I've been such a lazy bugger for the past few years, that I won't want to start again, but if there is going to be 3 of us, I better get cracking pretty quick. Well Darling, Len and I were going to Newmarket for the afternoon, but changed our minds.

We may listen to the second half of the Russian - Arsenal football match. I'm never very keen about going out in this place, all I look forward to is the weekend with you, "I love you" and I shall never stop. Well Darling I guess this I all for this time, hoping to hear from you tomorrow, cheerio sweetheart, all my love and best wishes.

Yours for always.

Your loving Husband Fred.

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**Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O. Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: Mrs R. F. Watling, 123 Davenport Road, Catford, London, SE6

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a line hoping to find you and Ma still keeping well, as I am OK at present. I looked forward to getting a letter today, but the evening post had gone and I'm still without a letter. I'm wondering if you managed to get back from Chatham alright. I can't say yet whether I shall be home this week, the duties for the weekend have not been posted up so far.

I told you in yesterday's letter about that job I was offered. I turned it down today, the Company Commander seemed quite surprised because I didn't want to have it.

I heard the football match on the wireless yesterday, I was surprised to hear it was foggy in London, it was quiet clear down here, but it poured with rain all the morning here today, there was nothing for us to do again today, I went to bed for the afternoon.

Well Darling, I hope I can get home alright this week now that we have booked for the Hipp, I would like to see that show.

Well sweetheart, I guess this is all for now, hope to hear from you tomorrow. I really expected one today, cheerio all the best.

All my love and best wishes.

Yours for always

Your loving Husband Fred.

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**Date: 26<sup>th</sup> November 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: Mrs R. F. Watling, 123 Davenport Road, Catford, London,  
SE6

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a line to let you know I arrived back OK and in good time. We got to Liverpool St at 10 mins past two and stayed in the Y.M.C.A. there until 4 o'clock, we done that in case the M.Ps were having a sort out on the train. We got a seat for a change and I slept all the way, got into the camp at 7.30. They had enough farmers before we got on parade, so I'm going to make up for some of my lost sleep this afternoon, I feel like it.

Well Darling, I am going to see the M.O. tomorrow morning, I hope it does not interfere with my leave because I am looking forward to having it next weekend, anyone to hear me talk would think I never got any leave wouldn't they?

Well sweetheart, it seems I shall be home alright for xmas, the rumour is that we get from Sat dinner time until Thursday night. I hope it's right, it will be a nice little leave and our first xmas together since '39. I wish we could get the things we got then to make a real time of it, but I guess we will manage without.

Well Darling, I hope you won't leave it too long before you go to the doctors to see what is causing your sickness. I shall worry a little until I know what it is. Hope Ma's leg isn't giving her any trouble. I hope to get a couple of rabbits for Friday. I will try anyway. Well Darling, I guess this is all for now, hoping to hear from you tomorrow, cheerio, all my love and best wishes.

Yours forever.

Your loving Husband Fred.

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**Date: 27<sup>th</sup> November 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: Mrs R. F. Watling, 123 Davenport Road, Catford, London,  
SE6

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a few lines hoping to find you and Ma keeping well, as I am myself at present.

I went to see the M.O. this morning and he says I have not got piles, thank goodness for that, I don't fancy having that complaint.

Well Darling, I went to bed pretty early last night. I felt very tired but couldn't get to sleep very quick. It's a lovely day today, but the air a bit nippy, this afternoon we are going for a run out on the motor-bike to see if we can order a couple of rabbits for the weekend, I hope I have some luck.

Well sweetheart, I got your letter when I got back Sunday night. I am hoping to hear again from you today. If you like, we can have a try this Friday to get into the Empire, go first house perhaps and if we can't get in then go and have a drink somewhere and then try the 2<sup>nd</sup> house. I'll leave it to you, if you fancy going, we will.

I don't know if I shall come by train or bike Friday morning, but whatever I do, I should be home before 12 o/c, it won't be long now Darling and then a nice 9 days leave, it's about time I had some "oh yeah". Well Darling, I won't be able to get any chocolate this week, there's a notice in the NAAFI, no chocolate or soap until Dec 7<sup>th</sup>, so when I get back off leave I shall be able to get seven bars.

Would you like to go and see Charlton play next Saturday, they are playing Plymouth Argyle, if not we will go to the dogs instead, you said the other week you were going to have a bet, I haven't forgotten.

Well Darling, I'm wondering if you are finding it boring now that you are back in civvy street, I expect you are at a loss what to do with yourself at times, but it won't be for much longer, just until I get out then we can forget all this.

I've just received your letter Darling, glad to hear all's well. I hope you had a nice stroll and I suppose you found time for one before going home. I see you may be going to Doll's tonight, I was expecting the football coupon from them today.

Well sweetheart, I guess this is all for this time, so will say cheerio, all my love and best wishes.

Yours forever.

Your loving Husband Fred.

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**Date: 28<sup>th</sup> November 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: Mrs R. F. Watling, 123 Davenport Road, Catford, London,  
SE6

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a line hoping to find you and Ma keeping OK, as I am myself at present.

I received the coupon from Geoff yesterday evening and sent it back by the 6 o/c post last night. I went out yesterday looking for rabbits, we have ordered them and hope to pick them up tomorrow afternoon. I hope the people don't let us down. It doesn't seem as though I shall be able to get any eggs this week, they are very scarce but ½ a dozen will be handy if I can manage it. Well Darling, I shall be home on Friday morning, we don't get our passes and ration cards until the Fri-morning so won't be able to get away Thursday-night. I won't write tomorrow sweetheart. I shall be home before you receive it. I shall come to Catford on the train, will be there between 11.30 and 12. I'll walk round the main road way in case you are out shopping and I may be able to see you.

Well Darling, did you go over Doll's after all, I expect you had a run over, I guess there's not much for you to do in the evenings. It's our half day today and I think we are going to have another look round for some eggs and a rabbit if possible. We have got an ENSA show on in the camp tonight, so I don't suppose I shall be going out, just hanging on for Friday morning.

Well Darling, in case you want a run out Friday morning, my train arrives at Liverpool St about 25 mins to eleven. I shant expect you, but

will look out for you just in case you do turn up. If you did come, I think the best thing for you to do is ask what platform the Newmarket train arrives on.

Well Darling, it's a nice day again and I hope I get some nice weather on my leave. How about a day at the zoo or don't you think you had better chance it, but you needn't worry I'll take good care of you (Please ask Ma to burn the copper stick).

Well sweetheart, I guess this is all for now, just a few more hours and I'll be seeing you in all the old familiar places, cheerio Darling.

All my love and best wishes.

Yours forever.

Your loving Husband Fred.

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**Date: 10<sup>th</sup> December 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: Mrs R. F. Watling, 123 Davenport Road, Catford, London,  
SE6

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a line hoping to find you feeling a lot better. Hope you won't leave it much longer Darling until you see a doctor. I got back OK this morning and also managed to get a seat and have a sleep. The 10 mins to 10 train, which I could have caught, broke down at Cambridge and the boys on it never got in till 2.30 this morning, I'm glad I didn't catch it now.

Well sweetheart, we are Duty Coy next Friday and Sunday, it doesn't look too good for me, but here's hoping for the best, I shall be able to let you know anyway.

I meant to mention to you that I will go halves with you for the extra photos, wait till xmas is over and we'll have a big square up. All I hope is that I can get the chickens alright and get them home. I expect we will be going out tomorrow if the weather's fine to find out what's doing, this morning I managed to get ½ dozen of these small tins of jam, one almost emptied itself in my pocket, what a state I was in, there was no marg about.

Well sweetheart, it's started to rain here, but it's turned a lot warmer. I guess this is all for now, will write again tomorrow, cheerio Darling. All my love and best wishes.

Yours for always.  
Your loving Husband Fred.

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**Date: 11<sup>th</sup> December 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O. Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: Mrs R. F. Watling, 123 Davenport Road, Catford, London, SE6

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a line hoping to find you feeling well, as I am myself at present. Well Darling, I haven't wrote earlier today because I was expecting a letter from you. I'm wondering if you are still feeling bad and don't feel much like writing, but I'm hoping to hear from you tomorrow. I received the coupon from Geoff today. I'm sending it back by the 9 o/c post in the morning. I don't suppose you will get this letter until Thursday.

Well sweetheart, I went to the camp theatre tonight and saw Carole Lombard and James Stuart in "Made for Each Other", an old film but it wasn't bad. I'm more anxious than ever this week wondering if I shall be able to get home for the weekend. My mate and I are going out tomorrow afternoon to see what we can get to bring home. I shall get what I can and chance what happens on the weekend. I think I've got another cold coming on, all day long I've been sneezing and I begin to



get a nasty taste in my mouth, it would come on just in time for Christmas. Anyway, it's you I am worrying about, I hope Darling you get rid of your sickness feeling and if it is still as bad, I hope you go and see about it at the doctors. While you are feeling like that I don't suppose you fancy going out anywhere, bringing your food up like that each time isn't doing you any good and must make you feel pretty bad. Well Darling, I am looking forward to tomorrow and hoping to hear from you. I hope I can manage to get home alright as it is your birthday on Sunday, for a birthday present I'll get up and make you a nice hot cup of tea, it's about time I had another turn.

Well sweetheart, I shall be able to let you know about Thurs or Fri, if I shall be home or not, I hope it's yes.

I guess this is all for now Darling. So will say goodnight and god bless. Cheerio, all my love and best wishes.

Yours forever.

Your loving Husband Fred.

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**Date: 12<sup>th</sup> December 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O. Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: Mrs R. F. Watling, 123 Davenport Road, Catford, London, SE6

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a line hoping to find you OK, as I am myself at present.

I received your letter today. Glad to hear Doll and Anne were over Tuesday. I hope the decorations are alright that Annie brought over.

Well Darling, I have got 3 cockerels and 3 hens ordered, they are £1 each. I also got a few eggs and sure of 1 rabbit for this week. I am the luckiest devil in this camp, the duties are up for the weekend and I'm not on anything, so long as nobody goes sick between now and Saturday, I'm sure of getting home. I can't make up my mind whether to bring any of the fowls home this week, but I think I shall have to. I won't be able to manage 6 all at once and I shall also have some more eggs next week. I've been promised a dozen for next week, so I think

I'll bring 3 fowls home this week, there are two for us, one each for George and Herb and the other two are for Johnny Oliver.

Well sweetheart, we only went out today to get our orders, after that we stayed in camp for the night. You didn't mention in the letter how you are feeling, I hope you are alright. I am feeling tired tonight, so I am going to bed now. Hope Ma is keeping OK.

Well Darling, will say goodnight and cheerio until Saturday.

All my love and best wishes.

Yours for always.

Your loving Husband Fred.

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**Date: 13<sup>th</sup> December 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: Mrs R. F. Watling, 123 Davenport Road, Catford, London,  
SE6

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a line hoping to find you keeping well, as I am myself at present.

I have not received a letter from you today, so far this week I have only had one from you.

Well Darling, I am not bringing any of the chickens home this week, I shall have to bring a case back here with me Sunday. Len is going to bring 4 home for me Tuesday morning next week, he comes on his leave then, he will have my kit-bag, so I'll have to have a case to bring the others home on the following Saturday.

Well sweetheart, I am longing to see you again Saturday. It will be about 5 o/c before I arrive, hope you are feeling a lot better now.

I wrote to Aunt Bet and Florrie today. I hope Flo manages to get up home for the holiday. We had plenty of rain here today, but it's not so cold now.

Well Darling, I haven't been out again today, somehow I don't feel like going anywhere while I'm here, all I look forward to is getting home on the weekends, get xmas over, then I won't mind so much if they do catch me for something on a weekend, at least it will only be about once

if they do get me. Well I guess this is about all for this time, I suppose you will get this letter Saturday morning.  
Cheerio Darling, all my love and best wishes.

Yours forever.

Your loving Husband Fred.

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**Date: 18<sup>th</sup> December 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: Mrs R. F. Watling, 123 Davenport Road, Catford, London,  
SE6

Via Len (envelope entitled "Tiny")

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a line hoping to find you and Ma keeping well as I am OK myself.

We arrived back OK and in good time.

Well Darling, these are the 4 cockerels, our two, Herb's and George's, I leave it to you how you are going to keep them, the man told me he never fed them just before he killed them, so that the food didn't get corroded in their throat and which he said is likely to turn them blackish, he said they will keep a fortnight easy. The old lady let us have this 3lb of pork each and also 1 ½ dozen of eggs which Len, my mate and I have shared by having 6 each.

Well sweetheart, I have still to bring 4 chickens myself next week, 1 for Diddy, 1 for Len and 2 for Johnny Oliver. I may get a few more eggs. My mate's bike is broke down and in a garage at Newmarket, he isn't likely to get it back this week, so it looks like doing our rounds on push bikes, we borrowed two to go to this place this evening, some of the boys in the camp have got their bikes down here, they come in very handy for getting about.

Well Darling, I hated leaving you again last night, I fell right off to sleep, good job Ma heard Len knock. Next week the trucks are bringing us up as far as Epping Forest or round that way somewhere and from

there we have got to make our own way into London, that won't be too bad so long as they don't leave it too late before they leave here.

I shall enjoy this Christmas at home with you. I hope you don't get that sickly feeling over the holiday and spoil everything for you.

Well Darling, I guess this is all for now, will write again tomorrow night.

Cheerio sweetheart, see you Saturday.

All my love and best wishes.

Yours forever.

Your loving Husband Fred.

P.T.O.

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I think one of these cocks shit himself when he got done in, he seemed to, he smelt a bit dinghy round the ars\_\_\_\_\_.

**Date: 18<sup>th</sup> December 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O. Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: Mrs R. F. Watling, 123 Davenport Road, Catford, London, SE6

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a line to let you know I received your letter today, sorry to hear you couldn't get any oranges.

I suppose Len managed to get home alright with the case. I hope the cockerels are OK. I'm afraid there isn't much pork but every little helps.

Next Saturday I shall leave here about 11.30 to 12 o/c on the truck, they are only taking us as far as Epping, then we make the best of it from there, with a bit of luck I'll be home about 4 o/c.

Well Darling, I'm glad to hear you got all the cards to send for Christmas. I'm afraid I shant find a lot of time this week, the motorbike's broke down and we have to make do on push bikes, it's pretty hard going, we cycled about 16 miles today putting some more orders in for other fellows in the room. I have got another ½ dozen eggs. I don't think I shall get any more, may get a couple of wild rabbits, but not sure of it.

Well sweetheart, I'm looking forward to seeing you again Sat, will get home as fast as I can. I've only about 5 mins to catch the evening post so I'll say cheerio Darling.

All my love and best wishes.

Yours forever.

Your loving Husband Fred.

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**Date: 20<sup>th</sup> December 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: Mrs R. F. Watling, 123 Davenport Road, Catford, London,  
SE6

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a line hoping to find you keeping well, also Ma, as I am myself at present.

I have been waiting to hear from you yesterday and today, but have not heard since that letter I got on Tuesday. I had a letter from Aunt Bet yesterday, she tells me she has Edna and Percy with her for the xmas, she asked me if I could get a chicken for her, I got her one today already plucked and sent it off. I hope she gets it alright.

Well Darling, I'm longing to see you again Saturday, if I never had so much stuff I could come home by motorbike, but I'm afraid it's too much to carry. I have the 4 chickens to bring, some more eggs and 3 rabbits, the rabbits are wild ones and look small to that one I had last week, I have no marg this week, nothing doing.

Well sweetheart, if I can get home before the shops shut, I would like to take you and get your Christmas present. I hope you have got something in mind that you would like.

Well Darling, I haven't much time in which to catch the 6 o/c post, so will close now, cheerio until Saturday.

All my love and best wishes.

Yours for always.

Your loving Husband Fred.

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**Date: 31<sup>st</sup> December 1945**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O. Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: Mrs R. F. Watling, 123 Davenport Road, Catford, London, SE6

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a line to let you know we got back OK. We just got to Liverpool St as a train was leaving, it arrived at Newmarket at 3 o/c and after having something to eat we got into camp at 1/4 to 5. There was a big check up this morning because there was only about 30 fellows on parade this morning. When I got into my hut one of the boys said I was down as absent, so I went over the office to book in, it happened that I wasn't down as absent so I let myself in for it, all through this fellow in the hut saying I was down as absent. Anyway the C.S.M. let me off the charge, but told the orderly sergeant to put me on duty next weekend, so now I've got to wait and see what happens next week. I felt like kicking this bloke in the teeth who told me I was absent, there is still a lot of fellows absent, but they have a list of their names. I suppose the boys who couldn't get home last night made up their minds to have the New Year's eve at home. I think if Len had not come up for me, I should have done the same. Len being on pass, they knew he wasn't back and he is up the office tomorrow morning. I'll let you know how he gets on. If you see Geoff before I do, ask him what he thinks of a bloke who goes and reports himself as being absent, because that's what I did (silly bugger) as you are always saying.

Well Darling, I've been speaking to a fellow tonight who got married just after us and he was saying about his furniture docits running out this month and that he's got to get the furniture and store it. What about ours sweetheart, I think you had better go and find out how we stand with them and the first weekend I get home for, we are going to Lochaber Road and without fail.

Well Dot Darling, I don't care what you think or how many times you snap your fingers and say that's how much I care about you, I do know I still love you as much as ever, but Darling, and I mean this, I will punch that dear little nose of yours one of these days and then hope for the best I guess.

By the time I get home again, I hope to hear from you what the verdict is about yourself, either yes or it seems it can't be anything else about your sickness, please go this week Darling and find out. Next weekend there is a church parade on Sunday and it certainly looks bad for me getting home now. I'm hoping either Len or I can manage it so that the eggs and rabbit get home for you to take away on Monday. Tonight I went to the camp cinema and saw Don Ameche and Henry Fonda in a film, which I've forgotten the title of but was all about the old days where Don Ameche invents the telephone, it was pretty good.

Well Darling, I'm going to bed now, it's almost 12, so here's wishing you a very Happy New Year, goodnight sweetheart.

All my love and best wishes.

Yours forever.

Your loving Husband Fred.

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**Date: 1<sup>st</sup> January 1946**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: Mrs R. F. Watling, 123 Davenport Road, Catford, London,  
SE6

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a few more lines hoping to find you and Ma and Dad keeping well, as I am myself at present. Len got away with his charge alright, his case was dismissed. It looks as though I'm in for a sticky week, today I was put on coal fatigue and tomorrow night I'm on guard, so it looks a certainty that I shall cop for the church parade on Sunday. I hope Len can get home, if I can't. Well Darling it's very cold here but it keeps dry which is the main thing. I haven't been out anywhere tonight. I've been getting things ready for my guard tomorrow. Our group goes out on the 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb, so all I say is, roll on the end of Feb. Well little sweetheart, I shant be able to go out tomorrow afternoon, so will be going out Thursday to see about the eggs and rabbit. I think I shall be able to get a couple, anyway you can be sure that I shall try hard. I am expecting a letter from you tomorrow, believe me I shall be mad if I don't get one. If I don't, I shall start snapping my fingers and say that's how much you care about me, you're a funny little devil at times and I often don't know which way to take you, but I do care and love you an awful lot, more than you will ever know.

Well Darling, I guess this is all for now, so will close, hoping very much to see you this weekend, but it's very doubtful.

Cheerio sweetheart, all my love and best wishes.

Yours for always.

Your loving Husband Fred.

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**Date: 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1946 (Noon)**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: Mrs R. F. Watling, 123 Davenport Road, Catford, London,  
SE6

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a line hoping to find you keeping OK as it seems that you are not considering the amount of letters I haven't had this week. I've waited until dinner-time today to see if I got one, but it's still none.

The list of names went up this morning for the church-parade Sunday, I'm on it, so is Len and my mate with the motor-bike, so what I'm going to do this weekend, I don't know. I haven't been able to get out at all this week. We are going out this afternoon, but now I've just been told that myself and other fellow named Thompson are wanted by the C.S.M. at 2 o'clock, another job I suppose for me.

Well, if I don't get home this week, let me know if you get to Cornwall alright, that's if you can find time to write. We are not duty Coy this week, it's only this church parade that's messing things up. The following week we are duty Coy on the Sunday, so I am hoping to get one weekend out of the next two. There doesn't seem hardly any blokes left in the Company now, the 24 group went out this morning and a whole crowd for overseas again, fellows with group numbers above 32.

Well Darling, I guess this is all for now, it's not much use saying I hope to hear from you, I've forgotten what your writing is like. I'll expect one when I see it. I'm feeling pretty tired at present owing to the guard I was on last night, so will close now.

Cheerio, all my love and best wishes.

Yours for always

Your loving Husband Fred.

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P.S.

If I can't get home this week, don't forget to put your Sister's address when you write, you can write Sunday I hope and give it to me then.

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**Date: 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1946**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: Mrs R. F. Watling, 123 Davenport Road, Catford, London,  
SE6

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a few more lines hoping to find you OK, as I am myself at present. I wrote to you this morning dear and I'm afraid you will think me rather huffy when you read it, but I was annoyed not getting a letter from you. Anyway when I went to the office at 2 o/c there was a letter from you in there, it had not been sent to my hut. I am going to get Len to post this one for me in London tomorrow morning. He got leave for this weekend this morning. He went out and phoned Eileen up for her to send him a telegram. He got the telegram this afternoon and saw the Company Commander this evening. He asked Eileen to put (can you come home urgent), it worked and he goes tomorrow till Sunday night. My other mate with the bike also managed to get leave on grounds of two of his Brothers having just got home from abroad, he goes tomorrow. I suppose you are waiting to find out what I've done, well I haven't done so bad, but I don't get home till my usual time Saturday. I saw the orderly sergeant this morning and told him I wanted to go and see about that flat Sunday morning, so he crossed me off church parade. I'll be home about 5 o/c Saturday. Well Darling, we went out this afternoon, but most of our customers were out, we managed to get ½ dozen eggs each, tomorrow I'm on coal fatigue again, but will borrow a push-bike if I can and see what else I can get in the evening. My mate will be gone, I want to get you a rabbit if I can, but it doesn't look very promising, if I can get a few more eggs it will help.

Well sweetheart, it was a nice letter I received today. I am very glad to hear Doll has wrote to that lady, I feel as though we are going to have some luck with it. I am like you, I would like to get our own place before I get out of this.

I'm also glad to hear you heard from your friend Cath, you will have to pop over and see her again. I don't like to keep going to other people's places when you can't return the invitation, but never mind Darling perhaps before long we will be able to.

Well Darling, this will be another weekend I've managed to get home for, but it's very sticky here now for duties. There is only 53 men left in the Coy now, where there used to be 180, there's the groups going out and overseas draught and other fellows going away on jobs, soon there won't be any left hardly, roll on the 26 group demob. I shall be more than anxious to get out of it now as my weekends are very much in danger.

Well sweetheart, I guess this is all for now, in another 10 minutes I shall be in bed, so goodnight Darling see you Saturday.

All my love and best wishes.

Yours for always.

Your loving Husband Fred.

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## St Ives, Cornwall

**Date: 7<sup>th</sup> January 1946**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: Mrs F. Watling, 32 Wesley Place, St Ives, Cornwall

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a line hoping to find you arrived at your Sister's OK, as I myself was home in good time. What do you think of us again last night, I went clean off to sleep, after hearing the clock strike one, it was five to two when Len came up home, poor old Ma had to do the letting in again. I don't think I'll get that train anymore, I felt dead beat walking from Blackfriars Bridge to Liverpool St, so did Len and we had to hang around the Y.M.C.A. for nearly an hour to dodge the M.P.s. Anyway, we had a carriage all to ourselves and we stretched out on both sides. Well Darling, I told you about 14 of the boys being absent Saturday morning. Well they had 2 days pay stopped and no more leave for 4 weeks. I'm glad I came off the M.T. when I did. I should have been a cert to be absent with them. I dread spending one week in this place, let alone four. Well sweetheart, it's only about 1 o'clock now, so you are not far on your way yet, but I'm thinking of you all the time. I hope you have a nice time, although it will be a short one. If you would like to stay over next weekend, why don't you? You need not worry about me (or don't you trust me, you little bugger). I haven't forgot that and I'm not likely to, not until you go down on your knees and apologise. My mate with the motor bike who lives in Stratford went away this morning on the Romford Gas Works job, so I have got to always do my rounds in future on a push bike. My poor old backside will have corns on it before I am finished round this place, but by hook or by crook I'll get round somehow.

Well Darling, I received your other letter this morning, it was on my bed when I came in, a very nice little letter, you didn't seem to expect me home, but like all other times I found a way out. I hope my luck stays for about another seven weeks, but my luck I'm having at the dogs lately, I hope that doesn't stay. That cutlery Doll brought down last night, I was very pleased with it, if things keep going on like this, we won't have to buy anything. If we could only have a bit of luck and get

our own place, we could settle down in no time, still we will have to go on hoping for the best for a time. Well sweetheart, it's a lovely day here. I hope you are having it the same. I'm glad to know you haven't far to go when you get off the train and please remember me to all the family.

Well, I guess this is all for now Darling, we will say cheerio, hoping to hear from you soon, all my love and best wishes, yours forever.

Your loving Husband Fred.

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**Date: 8<sup>th</sup> January 1946**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: Mrs F. Watling, 32 Wesley Place, St Ives, Cornwall

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a line hoping to find you keeping well, as I am myself at present.

I suppose you got my other letter alright that I wrote yesterday, hope you arrived safe and found all in the best of health.

Well Darling, I received a registered letter this morning. I thought at first that you may have sent it (not likely) anyway sweetheart it was from Aunt Bet, she sent me a £1 for the chicken and said she was very pleased with it and received it on Saturday before Christmas. She also apologised for not writing sooner. She has had a very bad cold over the xmas. Her and Uncle Sid wish us all the best for the New Year.

Aunt Bet mentioned about Ma going down there next Tuesday, they are sorry Dad isn't coming with her, she says Uncle Sid would like to see him.

Well Darling, even in my old age, I'm going to have a game of football this afternoon. I bet I'll be played out after about 10 mins, but I'm all for a go at it again.

Yesterday afternoon I went to bed about 3 o/c and slept till 9, missed my tea and was too late for the NAAFI which closes at 9.15, I was back in bed by 10 o'clock.

I had to stop writing this letter and go and play my game of football. I have just got back, we won 10-2, not bad eh? I feel a bit stiff, but will

feel it more tomorrow morning, it always gets you like that when you play the first game after leaving it alone for a long time.

Well Darling, I think I will drop Ma a few lines tonight and let her know I've heard from Aunt Bet. I suppose you are going to look after Dad while Ma goes away for a few days. Perhaps I can get Doll to write me a letter next week saying I can go and look at that flat, then I can see the Company Commander about Thursday and get a long weekend. I may get away with a 48 hrs.

Well sweetheart, I guess this is all for now, so will close hoping to hear from you tomorrow, cheerio Darling, all my love.

Yours for always.

Your loving Husband Fred

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**Date: 9<sup>th</sup> January 1946**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O. Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: Mrs F. Watling, 32 Wesley Place, St Ives, Cornwall

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a few more lines hoping to find you keeping OK, as I am myself at present.

By the time you receive this letter you will I suppose be almost at the end of your few days holiday, unless you have decided to stay the weekend.

Well Darling, the weather has been nice here so far this week. I hope you have had it the same. It's our half day off today, so Len and I are going into Newmarket to the pictures, the film "Blood on the Sun" is on there.

Len was talking about Eileen making some mats this morning and I told him that's what you wanted to do, but can't get the canvas stuff for the job. He thinks Eileen could get you some from the hospital as they are given that sort of thing for the patients to do while they're in hospital, so perhaps you would like to see Eileen about it.

It is not quite 12 o/c yet and I'm wondering if I shall have a letter from you today. I am hoping for one anyway. I had that one from you

Monday when I got here, but it seems ages since I heard from you. Well sweetheart, I think it's almost certain that I shall be home on Sat, if you aren't home by seven I wonder if you will mind if I go to the usual, perhaps you will come over and meet me, anyway I will see what happens Sat-night. I guess you will let me know what time you arrive in London. I wrote a few lines to Ma last night telling her I had heard from Aunt Bet. I bet she is missing you this week. I usually wonder all the week how you two are getting on with one another, but last weekend I thought how well the pair of you seemed to be getting on.

Well Darling, I guess this is about all for this time. I don't think it's worth writing tomorrow because you will be on your way home before it arrives, so I'll say cheerio sweetheart until Saturday, all my love and best wishes, yours for always.

Your loving Husband Fred.

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**Date: 10<sup>th</sup> January 1946**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: Mrs F. Watling, 32 Wesley Place, St Ives, Cornwall

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a line to let you know I have received your first letter, it was here yesterday evening, but I did not get it until this morning. Glad to hear you arrived safe and found everybody in the best of health. I did not think you would get my letter so soon. I posted it off by 2 o/c post Monday afternoon, so it doesn't take long, that's why I thought I would drop you a line this morning, you should get it before you leave again. Well sweetheart, you said in this letter something I expected you to say and that was about me not seeming to want you home for the weekend. I knew as soon as I wrote about you staying for this weekend if you wanted to, I knew what my answer would be and I got it.

Well Darling, I went to Newmarket yesterday, it turned out very wet, but I enjoyed the picture (Blood on the Sun) the other one wasn't too bad it was called (Rogues Gallery).

Saturday, I am on a mess orderly fatigue, but it won't stop me getting home. I will wait until 7 o/c for you, if you aren't home then, I hope you will come and meet me about 9.15. I've got an idea you won't, but we will see. I shant be able to get a pass this week as I am on duty, so I will not be able to hang about round stations. It's much too risky these days, when I haven't a pass. I'm always glad to get out of Liverpool St. Well sweetheart Darling, I went with Len yesterday afternoon to a place where I had some eggs quite a long time ago and the old boy let me have 3 dozen, so we shared them. I am going to my regular places this afternoon. I hope I can get a couple of rabbits. I should have another 3 or 4 dozen eggs to bring home again. Well I guess this is about the lot I can think of to write, it won't be much longer now before you finish having letters from me and then you will have to put up with me around you all the time, you will wish then that I had never been born. Cheerio Darling until Saturday.

All my love and best wishes.

Yours forever.

Your loving Husband Fred.

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**Date: 11<sup>th</sup> January 1946**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: Mrs F. Watling, 32 Wesley Place, St Ives, Cornwall

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a line hoping to find you keeping OK, as I am myself at present. I received your letter this morning and see you are not coming until Tuesday next week. I'm going to a C.R.U. for 4 ½ weeks. Where it is yet, I don't know, but I am not worried.

I understood from Aunt Bet that Dad is not going next week. Were you going to look after him for a few days while Ma is away or is Doll coming down home.

Well I've got a couple of rabbits to take home with me on Sat. I shall go to the usual and then find something to do with myself. I wish you had let me know in yesterday's letter. I was on duty this Sunday, but



found a fellow to do it for me last night for 10/-. Len is on tomorrow, but will be able to get away I think. If this C.R.U. stunt falls through and I don't go before next weekend, I've got my fingers crossed because we fall for Duty Company Sat and Sunday next week and we are now down to 47 men in the Company. Where I get my rabbits and eggs, I've told them I won't be calling next week. I don't want them to get them and I can't get home.

Well things are upside down here now and can't say now when I'll be seeing you again. Everybody's on their toes now, a few of the boys went away this morning, the C.S.M. got the wind of it and now we have all got to parade at 2 o/c, they will find out who's missing then, much more of this and I think we can say goodbye to all our weekends.

Well I guess this is all for now, will not write anymore to you just now.

So cheerio, all the best.

Your loving Husband Fred.

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P.S. What made you make your mind up so sudden, you didn't even say why the alteration was made.

## **The End Is So Near**

**Date: 14<sup>th</sup> January 1946**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: Mrs F. Watling, 123 Davenport Road, Catford, London, SE6

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a line hoping to find you arrived home safe and well, as I arrived back OK last night. I caught the 10 to 10 train, but Len didn't, he came back by the morning train. I hope Ma has gone away for a few days, it will do her good. The weather has turned cold again, but is dry which is the main thing.

Well Darling, I really missed your last weekend. I didn't know which way to turn, at first I was a little disappointed when I read your letter last Friday and found you weren't coming home, but after all a holiday isn't much if you don't have a week or more. I received a letter from you at dinner time today which you wrote Friday and posted Saturday. I wrote another letter Friday and I am wondering if you got it Saturday or today.

Well sweetheart, I took quite a bit of stuff home last weekend, 3 rabbits and 5 dozen eggs and a few carrots and also a scrubbing brush I got hold of. One of the rabbits went bad, but this one we had for dinner Sunday was very nice, but this weekend if I can get home I am not troubling to bring so much.

I went to the dogs Saturday and I didn't have any luck again or with the football. My luck is right out lately. I went to The Coach with John and again Sunday dinner time, in the afternoon I had a sleep till Geoff and Doll came to tea. Geoff and I played cards all the evening and I left at 20 to 9, went to the library and caught the bus, so I've been a good boy except for losing some more money.

Tomorrow, we are Duty Company and I'm not on anything worst luck. Len is on guard, I hoped to be put on something and then I would have stood a better chance of not being on anything next Sunday when we are Duty Coy again. I have got a dozen oranges for you and two bars of choc. I hope the oranges will keep alright, I got them today.

I haven't heard any more yet about the C.R.U. business Darling, in a way I hope I don't, because I don't fancy moving now the end is so near, but I can't see myself getting every weekend at home as things are now. I'm afraid the time is going to drag now.

I had another form sweetheart, sent to me from the town-hall. I filled it in Saturday-night and sent it back. It seems as though they are working it on a different basis now, they are giving points for service and also it seems a preference to people who have lived longest in the borough, so with both our service and me living in the borough all the time, perhaps we will have bit of luck sooner than we expect. I will tell you more about it when I see you again.

Well sweetheart Darling, they say absence makes the heart grow fonder. I believe that saying, I love you more than ever. You mentioned in one of your letters that you had a chat with your Sister and felt more satisfied, you didn't say why, and again in the other letter you didn't tell me why you suddenly decided to stay until Tuesday. I don't want to know everything, but I should like to know one or two things that happen to be going on.

Well Darling, if Ma has gone away, I guess you will be a little lonely this week on your own. I'm trying to get home Friday and don't expect me, may not even get home for the weekend. Well sweetheart, I guess this is all for now, will wait until I hear from you, cheerio all my love and best wishes, yours for always.

Your loving Husband Fred.

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**Date: 15<sup>th</sup> January 1946**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: Mrs F. Watling, 123 Davenport Road, Catford, London, SE6

My Own Darling Little Wife,

Just a line hoping to find you arrived home safe and well this evening. I have been thinking of you all day riding in the train, it's a long old journey and I bet you are glad when it's over. The time now is about 8 o/c, so I guess you are home and settled a bit by now. I wrote to you last night, but did not post it until this evening. Just when I came back from the post, I had your other letter you sent Monday. You seem to have had a nice time. I've very glad you did, you seem to think I was not very pleased about your staying a few more days. I didn't think my letter was as bad as all that, but I wonder if you would have stayed if I hadn't mentioned it in the first place when I wrote last week. I thought perhaps you did it to shake me up a bit sweetheart or maybe you had found a boyfriend who wanted to take you out Saturday night. (Now don't get mad).

You don't seem to know Darling what I meant by C.R.U. It is the Civvy Resettlement Unit, a lot of us put in for it and they have started sending some of them away. It is for 4 ½ weeks at a training depot for civvy work, but by all accounts the next batch don't go until the 31<sup>st</sup> Jan which takes them into March before they finish. I want to be out of it altogether before the end of Feb, so I shall refuse it now, that's if I can. The place they go to is at Tonbridge and you are allowed leave from Fri-morning until Monday morning every week, which is pretty good isn't it.

Darling, I can't say for sure what I will do when it comes along.

Well sweetheart, when I filled that form in Saturday-night, Doll and Geoff were sort of giving me a hand with some of the questions and one particular question made me sweat a bit and I'm sure I must have blushed, but I skipped it and went on with another. The question asked was; is your wife or any other member of the family you are at present living with expecting a child, "well" you can see I didn't know what to do, so I got past it quick. Doll and Geoff went just before seven, so I got it out again and put what I hope is right, for "gaud sake" don't tell me I've done it all wrong (what would you have done chum). When I

went down to the dogs, I posted it, here's hoping we soon hear something.

Well sweetheart, I was going to try and get leave to come home Friday, but it certainly doesn't look so easy now as it used to be, some of the boys have been refused this week because they say we haven't hardly enough men to do the duties for this Sunday, it doesn't look very rosy but I'll have a go, you never can tell.

Well Darling, I had another game of football this afternoon, but we didn't do so well as last time, we lost 3-1. Len is on guard tonight, I think I'm a cert for it on Sunday night, that's if I don't get my leave. If I get home alright and it's cold Sat-night, we will go to the pictures, if it's warm the dogs and you have got to come with me and pick the winners out for me, I can't find one winner lately.

Well sweetheart, I'm longing to see you again and to hear what you have to say about your holiday. I love you more than ever, that's the only thing I'm certain of these days, coming home last week wasn't the same knowing that you wouldn't be there. I don't know what I would do if I had to go abroad again. Take you with me, I guess. Well Darling, I guess this all for now, will write again, so cheerio, all my love and best wishes, yours for always.

Your loving Husband Fred.

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**Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1946**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O. Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: Mrs F. Watling, 123 Davenport Road, Catford, London, SE6

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a line to let you know I arrived back OK. The train left at 8.25 only 3 mins late, but it was an hour late when it got to Cambridge. I got back here at 10 mins past 12, I got away with it alright.

Well Darling, our demob date came through yesterday, we go out on the 16<sup>th</sup> Feb, which is on a Saturday. I don't mind that, so long as I get home some time on the Sat-night. They haven't any oranges in the NAAFI at present, but if they have some, I will get them. It's not quite so cold today, but it's been pretty bad over the weekend. The roads have been like a sheet of glass, but they thawed out this morning, it may

turn cold again this evening. Well sweetheart, I'm glad I could manage after all to be home with you last weekend. I didn't do too bad after all for leave. I'm sure of next week and then there is only 2 more to worry about and the week after is our big day on the Saturday. Counting today, I have only 26 more days to do.

I got Ma's letter this morning.

Well Darling, have you mentioned anything to Ma yet about the other, but I'll leave it to you, perhaps you would like me to be there before you tell her.

Well I guess this is all for now, will write again tomorrow sweetheart, so cheerio, all my love and best wishes.

Yours for always, your loving Husband Fred.

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**Date: 23<sup>rd</sup> January 1946**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: Mrs F. Watling, 123 Davenport Road, Catford, London, SE6

Hello Darling,

Here I am once again with a few lines hoping to find you keeping well, also Ma and Dad, as I am myself at present. I received your letter this evening sweetheart and I also had a letter from Flo yesterday, she says she is feeling a lot better and will be glad of a few eggs, I hope she gets them alright.

Last night I went to the camp theatre and saw "Fanny by Gaslight". I expect you have seen it, I thought it was a good film.

I went out this afternoon and got 3 dozen eggs and I am getting my two rabbits on Friday. The old chap will kill them for me when I get there. I have got 3 grape-fruits for you and 4 bars of chocolate and a few sweets. I am on a fatigue Saturday, but is a job that I shall be finished around 10 o/c in the morning, so everything is OK for me to get home. Tomorrow, I am playing football again, my toe is OK now so I hope I can get a better pair of boots this time.

Well Darling, I am certainly counting the days now, just 3 more weekends to try and have at home and then no more worry about them.

I asked the old lady about the chicken for our Sunday dinner when I come out, but she is sorry she hasn't got one she can kill for me, all hers are young pullets now, anyway I will see what I can do. I'm glad to hear sweetheart that Doll was down on Tuesday. I suppose she will be there again on Thursday. I've been wondering if Geoff went to see about that radiogram, the sooner they have luck in getting one, the sooner we will have a wireless. Hope to either have theirs or get one soon after I get demobbed.

Well Darling, today was our half day, but neither Len or I fancied going out anywhere. I just made my trip on the bike to get the eggs and then stayed in for the evening. I was mess orderly again today, but finished about 2.30. I don't feel much like going out after doing that job.

When I got to the clock tower on the bus Monday-night, Les Gardner got on and came as far as Deptford Broadway with me. I almost gave him a bet to do for me at Catford Thursday night, but changed my mind, I was going to back number four in the first race.

Well sweetheart, I think this is all for now. Looking forward to seeing you again Saturday, cheerio Darling.

All my love and best wishes,

Yours for always.

Your loving Husband Fred.

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**Date: 24<sup>th</sup> January 1946**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: Mrs F. Watling, 123 Davenport Road, Catford, London, SE6

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a line once again hoping to find you keeping well, as I am myself at present. Also hoping that Ma and Dad are in the best of health.

I received your letter you wrote Weds at dinner time today. Glad to hear you and Doll are going to the pictures, I don't suppose Doll and Geoff have made up their minds yet whether they are staying this weekend, if Geoff is too busy they can leave it until the week I get demobbed.

Well Darling, I haven't done much today, except a game of football I had this afternoon. Len and I both played, we won 1-0 this time. Perhaps you already know, but in case you don't, Uncle Sid has got £22-16s to come for his football, "not bad eh", I wouldn't mind a little win like it. Tomorrow I go for my medical, so it's certainly getting near the end now sweetheart, the 25's go out tomorrow and then we are the next on the list, all I hope is that the next 3 weeks don't drag, I expect they will seem too.

Well Darling, I hope the train isn't late this week, so that I can get home in good time. Get your two bob ready for the last race, perhaps it won't be quite so cold this weekend. I hope you have got rid of that sickness you have been having, if you are supposed to have it for about 3 months, I guess it's about time you saw the last of it.

I think I will bring my mess tins home this week and leave them there, you said you would like them for frying in. It looks as though I'll have to bring my kit bag home this week, my haversack won't be quite big enough.

Well Darling, I can't think of anymore to write about, so will close now, cheerio, all my love and best wishes, yours for always.

Your loving Husband Fred

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**Date: 28<sup>th</sup> January 1946**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: Mrs F. Watling, 123 Davenport Road, Catford, London, SE6

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a line to let you know, I arrived back OK and in good time. I have been busy all the morning getting my kit ready for guard tonight. I shall be feeling tired tonight. I guess, as I never had any sleep last night, I shall certainly be in bed early tomorrow.

I forgot to close the window Darling, but I remembered it when I got down the bottom of the road. I expect you muttered something about me when you found I had forgotten about it. Hope you slept well and don't get much of that sickness this week. You didn't seem to be very happy last night, but I thought perhaps that it was because of you keep on being sick or maybe it was just my imagination.

Well sweetheart, if you go down to Lewisham this week, don't forget to get one of those brooches you like and I will give you the money Saturday and the torches if you can.

I am hoping to be able to get home again this week, but the church parade will mess things up perhaps, we are also Duty Coy Sat, but now I'm on guard tonight, there isn't anything that can stop me on Sat, I've only the church parade on Sunday to worry about.

Well Darling, I hope you all get in the Hipp alright and see a good show. Just 3 more weeks and then we will be able to go places together without wondering if we will have time. I will get some oranges for you if any come in the NAAFI, but I don't think there are any at present.

Well Darling, I can't think of anymore to write about at present, so will close, will write again tomorrow, cheerio sweetheart.

All my love and best wishes.

Yours for always.

Your loving Husband Fred.

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**Date: 29<sup>th</sup> January 1946**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: Mrs F. Watling, 123 Davenport Road, Catford, London, SE6

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a line to let you know, I have just received your letter. Glad to hear you are keeping OK, also Ma and Dad.

Thanks Darling for looking out for the torches for me and I'm pleased to hear you are booked up for the Hipp. Looks to me as though you have a busy week, Sydenham Weds and flicks on Thursday, you didn't say if you and Doll were going together, but I guess you will if she comes. Well sweetheart, I did my guard last night, it was a pretty rough night, very windy and rained hard. I am playing football again this afternoon and I may go to the camp picture house tonight, but it all depends on how I feel.

I will get all the oranges I can for you Darling if they get any in the NAAFI, but so far there aren't any. You mentioned about me getting home this week. I can't do much about it if they put me on church-parade, but I'm going to get my eggs just the same and chance it. I would like to get home for the next two weekends, so I can say I haven't missed a weekend at home since coming back in the army, but I can't grumble can I?

Well sweetheart, I think I told you that I gave Johnny a bet to do for me if a certain dog runs on Thursday, if it runs and wins I will give you half the winnings, the dogs name is BRU REGENT.

In about an hour's time, I will be going out to play football, the weather is fine but still a bit windy. I hope it doesn't rain, I'm a fine weather footballer, I don't like getting bowled over and get the seat of my pants wet.

Well Darling I guess this is about all for now, here's hoping once again that I shall be seeing you on Saturday, cheerio sweetheart, all my love and best wishes, yours for always.

Your loving Husband Fred.

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**Date: 30<sup>th</sup> January 1946**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: Mrs F. Watling, 123 Davenport Road, Catford, London, SE6

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a line hoping to find you keeping well as I am myself at present, also hoping to find Ma and Dad keeping OK.

I received your letter a few minutes ago, glad to hear all's well with you. I hope you all enjoyed the Hipp last night. I went to the pictures and saw an old film with Shirley Temple and Randolph Scott in (Susannah of the Mounties), Margaret Lockwood was the girl in it.

Well Darling, I went for my final medical yesterday evening, for the first time I was not passed A.1. The M.O. said I've got slight chronic bronchitis and will not pass my A.1. until he sees how I get on. I had to report sick again this morning and I've got to go 3 times a day for medicine, I hope I soon get rid of it. Well sweetheart, I am on church-parade Sunday and a Q.M.'s fatigue Saturday, the Saturday job won't stop me getting away because I finish that in the morning and I may be able to get someone to do the church-parade for me. I will let you know later how I get on about it. So far I haven't been able to get any oranges, but will get some if they come in. You need not have bothered about getting me any cigarettes, if they come in at the co-op you can get me a few, but if they don't, well don't worry about them, I will have to try and cut my smoking down while I got this complaint, he said I haven't got it very much to worry about. Well Darling, I've heard someone else say what a good show that "Perchance to Dream" is, so perhaps we can go and see that for a night out, that's if you and the others fancy seeing it, it's on at the Hippodrome near Charing X.

I may go out for some eggs this afternoon, but will see what the weather's like first, at present it's rather cloudy sweetheart, I don't want to go and get soaking wet.

Well, here's hoping Darling that I shall be home to see you Saturday, will write again tomorrow, cheerio Darling, all my love and best wishes.  
Yours for always.

Your loving Husband Fred.

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**Date: 31<sup>st</sup> January 1946**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: Mrs F. Watling, 123 Davenport Road, Catford, London, SE6

Hello Darling,

Here I am once again hoping to find you, Ma and Dad all keeping in the best of health, as I am myself at present. I waited until 12 o/c today to see if I had a letter from you before I wrote, but I did not get one, perhaps I shall by 5 o/c.

Well sweetheart, I didn't go out yesterday for the eggs, it turned out wet here and I shant be able to go today because I've been stung again for another fatigue, so I shall have a busy day tomorrow. Yesterday evening I went into Newmarket and went to the pictures to see "Perfect Strangers". I think you have seen it. I liked it very much, quite funny in places, made me think of you, but it doesn't take pictures to make me think about you, I'm always doing it.

Well Darling, I think I shall manage to get home on Saturday, anyway you can expect me home as usual. If I get home about 4 o/c, we will go up the Park, so try and find out what's on, I shall expect to see you ready to go. I haven't got chronic bronchitis after all, but it's slight bronchitis, a little wheezy on the old chest, I guess I will soon get rid of it.

Well sweetheart, it won't be much longer now, about 16 days to be correct, this week hasn't seemed too bad, in fact it's seemed to go pretty quick so far, getting all these different jobs I suppose has something to do with it. I guess you went over to Sydenham as you said you were, I hope you found them all keeping in the best of health and have you bought that brooch yet, if you haven't, I'll knock your block off and I mean it.

Well I guess this is all for this time Darling, looking forward to seeing you again Saturday, cheerio sweetheart.

All my love and best wishes.

Yours for always

Your loving Husband Fred x

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**Date: 4<sup>th</sup> February 1946**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: Mrs F. Watling, 123 Davenport Road, Catford, London, SE6

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a line to let you know I arrived back here OK. We walked to Brockley Cross because there weren't any trains about, we had a cup of tea in the fellow's house and left about 12.30 and our first stop was at Bishops Stortford for a cup of tea and a sandwich, he dropped us at the lane which takes us down to the camp about 20 mins walk. I went to bed and did not get up until 9.30 this morning. We have not got anything to do today. Well Darling, I suppose you and Ma went straight to bed when I left. I hope you had a good night's sleep and got up nice and early this morning like I did, for the first two weeks of my leave, I'm going to spend in bed with all meals brought in to me. By the way sweetheart, don't forget the £7 I gave you to look after for me, remember now "no fiddling".

Well Darling, I'll bet you a £1 you never went to the doctors today, if you write and say you did, I shall collapse on the spot, if you did go today you can keep one £1 out of what I gave you.

Try and let me know about the torches, ask Doll if Geoff has heard anything about them, I'll mention it again in case you have forgotten. I want the case to fit a number 8 battery.

Well sweetheart, we are not Duty Company next weekend, so I shall be home for sure, unless I go and get myself into some other trouble, but I don't think I'll do that. Tomorrow I hand in my kit, I shant be sorry to see the back of it.

I had another sleep this afternoon, tonight I'm going to the pictures in the camp, it will make the evening go quick Darling.

Well Darling, I guess this is all for now, will write again soon, hoping to hear from you tomorrow, cheerio sweetheart, all my love and best wishes, yours for always.

Your loving Husband Fred.

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**Date: 5<sup>th</sup> February 1946**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: Mrs F. Watling, 123 Davenport Road, Catford, London, SE6

Hello Darling,

Here I am once again hoping to find you, Ma and Dad all in the best of health, as I am myself at present.

I hope your cold is a lot better sweetheart, mine seems to be going away gradually, nearly everybody seems to have a cold just lately. I guess it's the weather we are having, although it's a lovely day today, but a little windy.

Well Darling, I handed my kit in this morning. I'm sure glad to see the back of it. I've kept my slippers, they will come in handy for Dad or anyone who wants to wear them.

I did not go to the pictures after all last night, we are leaving it till this evening, they show the same programme Mondays and Tuesdays.

I have given Johnny another bet for Thursday, the dog's name is "Gills Oxo" you can look at the paper Friday and see how I got on. Well Darling, I wish it was this Saturday I was coming out, but it won't seem too long until Saturday week. I guess it's going to seem strange not having to back Sunday nights, but it's going to be a horrible thought having to get up in the mornings and go to work, the thought of it scares me stiff, alright for you.

Well sweetheart, I waited for the 12 o/c mail, but I haven't heard from you, perhaps tonight I will hear from you when the 5 o/c post comes in.

Are you going to the Hipp this week, I wouldn't mind seeing that picture up the Park next Saturday, but perhaps you don't like that kind of film, we'll see when Sat comes.

Well Darling, I guess this is all for now, will write again tomorrow, cheerio sweetheart, all my love and best wishes.

Yours for always, your loving Husband Fred.

P.S. I will get some rabbits this week if possible, it will be the last time.

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**Date: 6<sup>th</sup> February 1946**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: Mrs F. Watling, 123 Davenport Road, Catford, London, SE6

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a line to let you know I received your letter this morning (the first this week). Seems as though Dad isn't feeling so good with that cold of his. I hope yours is a lot better. I also received the torches just now from Doll and Geoff, they are just the size she wanted, pity they are not coloured, but they are very nice, there was no letter inside, so I don't know how much to tell her they are. One bulb was broken, but I'm going to Newmarket this afternoon, so I can get one there, I'm taking them up to her tomorrow.

Well Darling, you say you are not going to the Hipp this week, sounds as though the show isn't much good. I hope you go to the pictures Thursday. The film I saw in the camp last night wasn't much good, it was called "Kipps" with Michael Redgrave and Phyllis Calvert. I'm well browned off this week in camp, that's why I'm going out for the afternoon, but it's not a very nice day it's been raining all morning and is none too bright now.

Well sweetheart, I see I can't catch you for a £1, you didn't say much in the letter, never even told me if you went to the doctors or not, but I guess I need not have asked, the answer is bound to be "no", you seem to do everything just the opposite lately, I think I'll try telling you not to trouble to go and you're bound to go then.

Well I suppose you'll think I'm nagging you about it, but I wish you would get it over with, I don't see any sense in keep putting it off.

Well Darling, I see in the papers today that housewives have more to put with again, cutting the fat and bacon ration again, soon people won't need any ration books, there won't be any grub to get. I like the reasons they give for it, very funny indeed, the truth wouldn't hurt them for a change. If you get down to Lewisham this week, get that brooch you want, I keep threatening to knock your block off and I can see it happening very soon if you don't do what you're told more often, who's the guvnor? you or me.

Well guvnor, I think this is about all for this time, I may write tomorrow if I get a nice letter from you, if I don't baby, you've had it.

Cheerio sweetheart, see you Saturday, all my love and best wishes.

Yours for always.

Your loving Husband Fred.

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**Date: 7<sup>th</sup> February 1946**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: Mrs F. Watling, 123 Davenport Road, Catford, London, SE6

Hello Darling,

Here I am once again hoping to find you and all at home in the best of health, as I am OK at present. I just received your letter you sent yesterday. I am very sorry to hear about you having a bad spell of sickness again, but I won't believe it about you going to the doctors until I really know you have been. "Yes", I got the torches OK and I got a bulb in Newmarket yesterday for the one that was broke. I don't know how much they cost, but I saw something like them in Newmarket and they were 2/11, so that's what I'm telling the old lady they were.

Well Darling, I see you have almost made the arrangements for our trip to Cornwall, OK I'll leave it to you, I hope you are paying the fare, I won't pay mine because I'm not used to paying, I will have to bump the railway again. Well sweetheart, the letter you enclosed for me was from the C.R.U. at Tonbridge saying they had a vacancy for me on the 28<sup>th</sup> Feb. If I go it would not count against my leave, but I have refused it. I wouldn't have minded going if it had come up a few weeks ago, you get



every weekend at this place from Friday afternoons until Monday morning, but it's too late for me now.

Well Darling, I went to the pictures yesterday and saw "Keys of the Kingdom", it was a very good film, I enjoyed it. I'm going out this afternoon to see what I can get to bring home this week. The last time for a return ticket, will I be glad when next Saturday comes along. It's been a wet morning again, but has brightened up a bit now, but it's still very windy, still we will soon have the good weather here again, then we will be grumbling because it's too hot, never satisfied are we?

Well little sweetheart, I may be on guard tomorrow so don't expect a letter from me Sat, but I'll be home, cheerio Darling, all my love and best wishes.

Yours for always.

Your loving Husband Fred.

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**Date: 11<sup>th</sup> February 1946**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: Mrs F. Watling, 123 Davenport Road, Catford, London, SE6

Hello Darling,

Here I am once again hoping to find you feeling a lot better, as I am at present. I got back OK this morning and managed to have a sleep until dinner time. I am not on anything today, so I shall have an easy time. I had quite a sore throat last night and still had it this morning, but it cleared off when I was sleeping for a few hours, it must have been through smoking too much over the weekend.

Well Darling, I hope you had a goodnight's sleep last night, did you hear me tap on the window when I went out, if you didn't you must have gone off to sleep pretty quick after I had said goodnight to you.

I have got my chocolate ration in the camp today sweetheart, 4 bars of choc, and 2 ozs of boiled sweets, the sweets are very sticky so I'll eat them, I suppose I shall get one or two week's ration at the demob centre on Saturday. I hope I can manage to get away quick and be home fairly early, for the last race "eh", I may as well while my luck seems pretty

good. I meant to have a bet on Thursday but forgot all about it, if John or George should come up home will you give them 8/- and ask them to put 4/- each way on Market Bar on Thursday, you can let me know if you see either of them, but don't worry about it, Dad may go.

Well sweetheart, I've got an idea that this week is going to pass by quick, so it won't seem long before I am with you again and no more goodbyes. I think I told you that Len had one of those housing forms that I got while you were away, "well" he didn't fill his in till after me and he has an answer acknowledging that they received it back off him and have given him a serial number. We haven't heard any more yet, so if you can spare a few minutes any day this week while you are at Catford, could you call round Canadian Avenue and ask them if they have got our form alright, it doesn't take them more than a few seconds to look through their files.

Well Darling, I enjoyed my last dodgy weekend at home, I guess it's going to seem funny to get into civvies again and not have to worry anymore about whether I shall be able to get home for the weekend, all that is finished with now and it's not come too soon for me. Well sweetheart, I guess this is all for now, so will close, cheerio Darling until next time, all my love and best wishes.

Your for always.

Your loving Husband Fred.

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**Date: 13<sup>th</sup> February 1946**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: Mrs F. Watling, 123 Davenport Road, Catford, London, SE6

My Own Darling Wife,

Just a line to let you know I received your letter today, so glad to hear you are a lot better now and also that you got fixed up OK about the extra rations.

Well Darling, I see you were expecting Doll and Anne when you wrote, I hope they turned up, it's a dead cert that Doll did. I see you managed to book up alright for the Hipp, hope it's a good show. Len tells me he has tickets for the 2<sup>nd</sup> house Saturday night. I wonder if he or us will get home in time. He has also heard from Eileen that she is in bed again with flu. Well Darling, the time is getting near now, it is our half day off today and I'm going into Cambridge for the afternoon. It's the first time I've been since I've come to this camp, the last time I was that way was in 1940 when I was stationed only 6 miles from it.

Well sweetheart, I'm sorry I did not write yesterday, there wasn't a thing I could think of to say, the NAAFI didn't have any stamps, so hope you didn't mind missing one day, will write again tomorrow and then I guess that is the last time for me in the army. I hope I'm not too late getting home Sat. I have bought another pair of boots and slippers, I gave a £1 for the two, will come in very handy, but I may sell the boots, I don't know yet, all depends what sort of job I get.

Well Darling, I guess I can't think of anymore to say at present except that I love you more than ever, cheerio sweetheart until tomorrow, all my love and best wishes.

Yours for always.

Your loving Husband Fred.

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**Date: 14<sup>th</sup> February 1946**

Sent From: 6848122 RFN Watling, A Coy 8<sup>th</sup> K.R.R.C, c/o G.P.O.  
Newmarket, Suffolk

Sent To: Mrs F. Watling, 123 Davenport Road, Catford, London, SE6

Hello Darling,

Here I am once again hoping to find you keeping well, as I am myself at present.

I received your letter dinner time, sorry to hear Ma has got a cold, I hope your cough is a lot better now.

Glad to hear you saw a good show at the Empire, the pair of you are certainly getting about this week. I went to Cambridge yesterday and saw two good films there "92<sup>nd</sup> Street" and "Sun Valley Serenade". Tonight we have got a concert on in the camp, it's a farewell show to group 26, just one more whole day after this and then homeward bound. Well sweetheart, you didn't say if you got my letters alright this week. I expected you to mention to me about the bet I told you about, but you haven't said a word in yesterday's letter. I'm not worrying if it's put on or not, but would have liked to know if there was any chance of it being put on, never mind the dog may not be running.

Well Darling, it certainly looks as though I shall be well loaded for my trip to Northampton, those tins take up nearly all the room in the case. I tried to get a fair sized cardboard box to send those boots and slippers home, but could not get one, anyway I shall manage somehow. We leave Newmarket Station on Sat about 9 o/c, so I don't see any reason why I shouldn't be home in the evening Darling, I hear the train service from Northampton to London is pretty frequent, I hope so anyway.

Well sweetheart, thanks for going to see about the form, if they don't soon let us know, I shant waste much time before going up there myself. I hope they were polite about it when you asked, I know what some of them are in those sort of places.

I suppose Dad has been to work again this week, it's been nice weather all the week until today, but is very nasty today raining and misty all the time, just because I wanted to go round on the bike and get my calls finished with, so far I've got 3 dozen.

Well Darling, I guess this the last letter from me in the army, it's going to seem strange not writing to you anymore, but it's going to be much nicer to be with you all the time or don't you think so? Will you get fed up with me always hanging around, anyway we will soon see won't we sweetheart. Cheerio Darling, until Sat.

All my love and best wishes.

Yours for always.

Your loving Husband Fred.

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## **How Does The Story End?**

On Fred's release from the Army, Fred and Dorothy continued to live, for some time, with Fred's parents in the downstairs flat at 123 Davenport Road.

Dorothy's pregnancy was confirmed by the birth of Margaret Anne Watling on the 31<sup>st</sup> of July 1946.

Fred found work with Geoff as a gardener and often applied his skills to his own garden and those of his children.

On the 15<sup>th</sup> of June 1947, Fred's dad, George Henry Watling, died aged 75 of cardiac failure. Fred's older brother, also George Henry Watling, arranged a grave in Hither Green Cemetery for the burial. During the war years, Fred always worried about returning home in time to see his parents, due to their age. Thankfully, on his return, Fred was able to spend a couple of years enjoying time with his Dad.

On the one year anniversary of George's death, on the 17<sup>th</sup> of June 1948, Fred's wish for a son came true when Frederick Russell Watling was welcomed into the world.

121 Davenport Road became available and Fred and Dorothy moved next door with their children.

Back in September 1945, Fred had written to Dorothy sharing a scene he had imagined of a cosy and happy family life, where he dreamt of a snowy winter, him sitting next to a big fire in his armchair, smoking his pipe and picking out the winners from the paper, whilst Dorothy played on the carpet with their twins (which she had mentioned she didn't mind having!). 8 years later, on the 15<sup>th</sup> of September 1953, the twins (Constance Elizabeth Watling and Charles William Watling) joined the family.

They continued to live at 121 Davenport Road, although as a family of 6 the living conditions were cramped.

On the 16<sup>th</sup> of April 1956, at the age of 57 years, Fred's sister, Florrie, passed away from ovarian cancer and was laid to rest with her father at Hither Green. Florrie's estate was split between her living brothers and sisters, including those of her late husband. Fred was left a substantial amount of money to enable him to purchase 5 Arngask Road in Catford. This enabled them to bring up their family in a bigger house and one which his children would always recall had a bathroom including a toilet inside the house!

The house was fondly remembered by their children and their grandchildren. Fred could be found sitting at the kitchen table, often eating his dinner, whilst Dorothy appeared from the kitchen wearing her apron. The front room was always kept for special occasions when the Watling family would come together and celebrate.

Fred continued attending Catford Greyhound Stadium, which remained a love of his and has also given the family much joy over the years. Fred even had a stint as a bookie with his brother George.

Fred worked for many years as a milkman for United Dairies and often took his children on the milk rounds with him. Margaret, Fred, Connie & Charlie all gained fond memories of travelling to Brockley and then helping their dad deliver the milk. Often after a morning's work, Fred would then go and help Geoff with his landscaping jobs.

Dorothy spent her life dedicated to her family, but once the children started to grow older, she undertook work as a cleaner. She worked in a house on Canadian Avenue and the twins recall being taken there whilst Dorothy cleaned, causing chaos in the house.

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of November 1965, Fred's mum, Anna Watling, passed away from pneumonia and joined her husband and daughter Florrie in the grave at Hither Green.

123 Davenport Road remained a rented property within the family and became home to both Margaret and Ernie and also Dennis and Jean.

Fred and Dorothy became grandparents for the first time in 1967 when Margaret's first child, Lara, was born. They went on to have 9 grandchildren. Their grand-children have many fond memories of time spent with them at Arngask Road, going to the pantomime, the fun-fair, the beach and, of course, the little white packets of sweets that would be sitting on the kitchen table – usually containing toffee bon bons.

On the 13<sup>th</sup> of September 1982, at the age of 64, Fred sadly passed away of a heart attack. He was also buried in Hither Green Cemetery just a small distance from his parents' grave.

After Fred's death, Dorothy went on to spend much time with her children and grand-children enjoying many occasions, which also included Doll. The family also ensured that Dorothy kept in touch with her sister, Louie, in Cornwall. Dorothy moved into a maisonette in Mottingham, which brought her closer to where the family lived. She suffered much of her life with ulcerated legs, due to a fall, and at the age of 82 had one of her legs amputated. This didn't stop Dorothy and due to her sheer determination, she learnt to use a wheelchair and continued to live independently in her maisonette, which the family helped to adapt to her needs.

In December 2004, Dorothy met her first great-grandchild, Dylan Watling. One month after, on the 27<sup>th</sup> of January 2005, at the age of 87, Dorothy passed away and was finally together again with her loving husband Fred.

So, how does the story end? Well it doesn't! The Watling family today are still going strong. We all remain closer than most families could ever wish to be, including those that joined through marriage and those that have had the luck to be born into such a wonderful family.

At the time of writing, Fred and Dorothy now have 12 great grandchildren – 8 boys and 4 girls.

If only Fred could have foreseen during those years that he was away from home what he would later create with Dorothy.

He said, "I won't let you down" and he didn't.

Produced and written in 2020  
By Nyree Louise Wilkie (nee Watling)



## Glossary

Airgraph	A system devised in WWII in which letters were photographed in miniature and sent by airmail.
ATS	Auxiliary Territorial Service
Battalion	An army unit consisting of a headquarters and three or more Companies.
Billet	Living quarters where soldiers are assigned to sleep.
C.R.U.	Civvy Resettlement Unit
Caeserwitch	Horse race run annually over two miles at Newmarket.
CB	Confined to barracks.
Civvy Street	Ordinary life that is not connected to the Armed Forces.
Company/Coy	A military unit comprising of several Platoons.
C.S.M.	Company Sergeant Major
Demob	Discharging a person from the Armed Forces.
Duty Company	Company being on Duty e.g. being on guard.
ENSA	Entertainment National Service Association – provided entertainment for troops during WWII.
Hipp	Hippodrome (a theatre or concert hall).
Infantry	A specialization that engages in combat on foot.
Jerry	German Soldiers
K.R.R.C.	King's Royal Rifle Corps
Liberation	The act or process of freeing someone or something from another's control.
LNER	London North Eastern Railway
M.O.	Medical Officer
M.P.	Military Police
Mess Orderly Fatigue	Working in the area where the military personnel eat and socialise.
NAAFI	The Navy, Army and Air Force Institute runs recreational establishments to sell goods to servicemen and their families.
Platoon	A sub-division of a Company comprising of soldiers.
Q.M.S. Fatigue	Duties for the Quartermaster Sergeant (in charge of supplies).
Red Caps	A member of the Military Police.
Tommy	British Soldiers
Yanks	American Soldiers