

Letters from
Major James Lindsell
To his wife Curlie Lindsell

July 1 – December 3 1943



My very own darling,

I'm really on the job now darling and quite soon will be able to tell you all about it at any rate a part of it. When I came to take the job over with my Adj't we had a most desperate 48 hrs without any form of typewriter or paper, but now have settled down fairly well to it all and it's frightfully interesting even though it's been pretty hard work for the first few days. Now things are going well it will be much easier in every way and even more interesting. The Adj't is as I thought he might be really first rate on his paperwork and very keen as well in a quiet way which is a very great help and leaves me free to do the things I want to. I sleep in the same room as my work at present darling and have your photos in front of me on my desk all the time to give me strength in working out difficult problems. It seems years now since I left the ITD even though it is in reality such an extremely short time and at last darling I feel I am really doing something.

The first night here I suddenly woke up feeling as if I was being bitten all over my legs but put it down to imagination until I woke up the following morning and found to my horror that there appeared to be a red ants nest in the mattress at the bottom of my bed and that I had in fact really been bitten mildly!! It's alright now though darling as the mattress has been changed and we killed the nest with Keatings. Thank goodness it was the little ones though darling and not the big desert ones about ½ inch long!!

(..... personal)

We have a special mascot with us darling in the form of a goat (of neuter sex!) who answers to the name of Neville after Neville Chamberlain owing to an alleged likeness and possibly also his neutrality!! He loves everything red, cigarettes, paper and wood and apparently is extremely fond of gin. He is also very idle in that he has knelt down so much that he has grown pads on his knees which prevent him from walking properly. His colour is grey and he possesses an extremely baleful yellow eye and is rather fat. Altogether a most prepossessing character and very popular. His ideas on hygiene and sanitation could however be improved considerably.

Now 3 July darling with lots of things of interest happening and filling my mind and everything going pretty smoothly now we are settled down. I even managed to get in a game of bridge yesterday afternoon!

Have I ever told you darling that out here in the hot weather everybody is supposed to have a nap or relax between 14.00 and 17.00! In actual fact very few outside GHQ can manage it when they're really working, but most of the troops get it alright. Needless to say we make up for it by starting earlier.

(..... personal)

We had such a quaint little early service yesterday darling, the padre was a travelling one, and instead of a silver chalice he had a little aluminium thermos top! Still it was very pleasant darling and I could feel you kneeling beside me on my left all the time so very, very close. Darling what a wonderful thing it is being married to feel you so near to me all the time, and knowing that you are with me in all the things I do as I am with you, and loving each other and praying for each other in the way we do. If it were possible darling almost more after a year than ever before and knowing it will always be the same.

All my love through eternity darling,
Your own husband. J.

57088 Capt JC Lindsell, Herts Regt, No:1, ITD, MEF
July 4 (?) 1943

L/C 84

My very own darling wife,

I've just been watching what is I suppose only a minute amount of the enormous resources of the United Nations going about its duty. It's a most impressive sight darling and something one will always remember. It gives you the feeling of the relentless and irresistible pressure with which we are now waging the war which must spell disaster to the Axis quite soon. How I hope it is very soon darling, to my mind there is much to indicate that the Germans are becoming definitely short of 'planes and particularly bombers and might crack in a most unexpected way. Even the attack they've begun on Russia seems a bit phoney to me and I think is only a defensive offensive.

So whenever the end may be darling it just can't be too soon for us can it. How I long for that day to come darling when we know we are together to lead our own special life, to make our own home and bring up our own family in peace and security never to be parted again. (...*personal*)

Today we had some (*locals*) in to carry out a special job which involved a lot of hauling and they made us laugh a lot. Either they were all running about getting in each other's way and arguing and shouting at each other or alternately if they had to do any pulling they all got hold of the rope, a sort of band leader stood beside them, and began chanting, and they worked perfectly to a sort of special singsong of their own, the band leader keeping them going. As long as they were singing they worked harder than any Englishman but once they stopped complete confusion reigned once more!!

Darling I think that now there is no harm in letting you know what my 'job' is. I am O.C. Troops on a ship, at least that is my appointment, a purely temporary one for the time being. It is so exceedingly interesting darling at this stage of the war and not really very dangerous but sure to be exciting. (Now and July). Darling I didn't finish this before because at that stage I might have said too much already but now we are on our way to open the second front, which will open tomorrow. We actually arrive a few days later. This morning the full plan was explained to us all, it looks good and must I think succeed quite quickly. The troops are very fit and keen and have rehearsed their parts well before we started. I watched one of the rehearsals from another ship to which I was attached for a bit in order to learn the job. The preparations have been on a tremendous and vast scale and most frightfully impressive in their magnitude. Failure is quite impossible and Italy will have had enough of it quite soon.

So here I am now darling OC Troops on my ship which is very nice and clean trundling through the Mediterranean which today is looking a very deep blue and rather nice. Its rather cool too darling after Egypt's heat. You would simply love it as it is now darling, sun, sea, and wind. I have a cabin to myself and if we weren't a bit crowded would have two!!, a day cabin and a night cabin but as it is I've given up my night cabin to a CO of a unit on board but fully intend to use both later. The ships officers are very pleasant and easy to work with so that things go pretty smoothly. I have a conference of the unit commanders every night at six to receive any moans or issue rockets (*reprimands*) (usually a few minor ones of each!) and have a practice boat stations combined with a ships inspection at 10.20 every morning. ?Apart from that my job is pretty light now that all the preliminary spade work has been done. More to follow in 85.
All my love eternally darling, J.

My very own Sweet Wife,

We are still pounding along darling waiting perhaps a wee bit anxiously for the first news to come through on our special set, so far we know only of the BBC flash that it's started and is going according to plan. All the troops and crew are absolutely agog and frightfully keen and confident. We are going to run a special news bulletin for them as soon as we can find something really worth telling them and keeping a marked map with the latest positions on it every six hours. Tonight we will really know the true position, and thereafter every few hours. We are all slightly apprehensive as it is a bit rough today and there's a bit of a gale blowing which might have interfered slightly with the plans. However we are landing on a lee shore so it should be alright, though they may not be so lucky. It's quite rough where we are now and getting worse hourly and quite cold, so as I've got a slight cold I've put on my nice woolly waistcoat that you gave me, it is grand darling, and so beautifully soft and warm.

(Later). Evening now darling and a full gale blowing and we seem to be pitching a lot but great news, the first bulletin has come through and things really do seem to have started well, more or less according to plan, isn't it great darling. I prayed so hard last night that it would be a success. I would like to be able to see all the Papers at home tomorrow morning darling to see what they are telling you about it. We expect to hear some more about midnight so I am sitting up with some others playing bridge until then. I suppose you've guessed I was taking some part in this by now haven't you darling because I was so secretive in the first few letters about the job and since until #83. One can't help feeling it is a great adventure darling and being proud of being in it even in my own small part.

(Sunday). Last night's bulletin was even more encouraging and still more so the first bulletin this morning. Still darling I think it would be wrong to become too confident at the moment the outer crust was bound to be fairly easy to break through, and they must make a counter attack in a day or two which will really decide the first round. But it has begun well and should be alright. The wind's going down and it's much calmer this morning and its very comforting to see a permanent escort in the air. In fact darling today is ideal cruising weather and quite perfect. You'd simply love it darling, the sea so blue, a fresh breeze and a few cotton woolly clouds chasing each other across an even bluer sky.

We had a rather nice morning service this morning as well from a Lt/Col Padre usually they are only Capt's and he called it the eve of battle service as of course it really is for us. I've got a very pleasant bridge four now darling and we play every night after dinner. All of them like me are Majors and the standard is moderately high, they all play better than I do so I can learn a lot from them. The first night was a trifle expensive for me but subsequently I've finished either up or near enough up.

(Monday). Bulletins not quite so encouraging so far today darling, probably they have had to get thoroughly sorted out, and supplies are a little bit difficult temporarily as they must inevitably be in a show like this. But if not encouraging they certainly aren't discouraging. The men are still most terribly keen and agog for every bit of news possible. I hope some of the aerodromes have been captured by now. It will make an enormous difference. It's been rather busy today darling for my staff making all the last minute arrangements so that nothing can go wrong if it possibly can be avoided when we disembark. The real problem is will it be beside a jetty or will it be into lighters. I wish I knew now. The voyage continues completely and absolutely uneventful darling more like a pleasure trip than anything else, may it last through tonight (touch wood several times) it would be almost unbelievable if it did but the Navy and RAF seem to have prepared the way so well that it is quite possible.

Darling it's now nearly three weeks since I was last able to get hold of any mail, and my anniversary present still lies intact and intriguing in my little grip!! I've taken it out and tried to fathom its contents several times but having restrained myself so far, a few days more should be easy. I do miss not being able to get them so much darling and wonder when they will be able to catch me up, as we might fetch up absolutely anywhere after this and then perhaps not give time for anything to reach me before we're off again. You are with me all the time darling, and at times I feel you so completely beside me that it seems I can almost touch you, particularly in the evenings when I am praying for your safety and our success in this venture, before I hop into bed.

All my love eternally darling, J.

57088 Capt. JC. Lindsell, Herts Regt, No:1, ITD, MEF
July 14 1943

L/C 86

My very own darling wife,

(..... *personal*) On Monday night I played bridge with the four and talked until after midnight and then as things seemed pretty quiet went to bed for four hours and got up just after dawn.

It was a perfect morning with the sea like a mirror and a haze hanging all round the horizon. I went up to the bridge to find out if everything was alright and chatted with the Master and the Officer of the watch and found that absolutely nothing had happened during the night except that about 20 miles ahead of us they had seen some A/A fire. Whilst I was there the sun came up like a big red globe out of the haze and then in front of us on our portside land came in sight through the haze and at the same time ships of all shapes and sizes seemed to be everywhere along the coast.

I went down and had breakfast (a very special one for everybody as it would probably be their last hot meal for a day or two) and then went back to the bridge to see if they had any news about where we were going to disembark. It made so much difference you see darling because if it had been one place it would have meant putting everybody into lighters and being rather long and tedious, if the other an almost complete certainty that we would unload alongside a quay. I'd made all my arrangements for the latter optimistically in the hopes that it hadn't been demolished. Well at first I thought I was quite wrong as we headed straight for the beach where the lighters were and I was just about to alter the whole disembarkation when we turned up the coast once more and I was pretty certain we were alright. The Navy were everywhere: destroyers minesweepers and corvettes and torpedo boats buzzing around like flies. They've certainly done a marvellous job. The air was beginning to become a bit active by now plenty of planes flying very high with the sun shining silver on their wings, most of them "Spits" I'm glad to say but others and fewer hostile. A few bombs were dropped along the beaches but nothing near us. About ½ hour later we saw the almost perfect sight of three cruisers in line astern belting along flat out and letting off all the A/A they had as fast as they could so successfully that not even one bomb was dropped.

By now darling we could see our destination and shepherded in by the navy we went in one by one. It was a really lovely little port darling and a natural harbour but once inside we felt most horribly vulnerable to air attack. The front line was only a few kilometres away and all the time we could hear gunfire and bombs going off. However the disembarkation went beautifully smoothly and we had them all out very quickly. One slight diversion was caused by a minor booby trap on the quay going off but it did nobody any damage. In fact I think really it enabled the disembarkation to proceed even faster as they were so keen to get away from the ship

and harbour and into the country! The men were all in terrific form and very keen. I managed to give them all a cup of hot tea just before disembarking .

Then darling after we had finished what was really the worst time for us began with the job successfully done nothing left to think about except when are the bombs going to come. We had several alerts and let off our guns once or twice but remained fortunate and nothing whatever happened. To pass the time away before we moved the Adjt and I played the RSM and the RQMS at deck quoits and defeated them soundly. After that I studied the inhabitants that were visible through field glasses and they seemed quite cheerful, standing about gossiping or drawing water from a well and definitely being friendly with the one or two troops that were visible. Eventually we moved out again with considerable relief I must confess darling and lost the feeling of being a sitting target at once.

Then as darkness fell once more, the fun began again there seemed to be planes everywhere flying over us round us and even through us. My staff and I helped man the light A/A guns and everybody was continually letting fly, in all directions at a great deal more danger to each other than the planes as they were flying so low you had to be awfully careful not to hit a neighbour. The inexplicable thing was that not one of the planes appeared to commit a hostile act. I think the answer probably was that they were partly our own night fighters and partly enemy torpedo bombers. Whatever they were they gave us a lot of entertainment for a considerable time without the slightest ill effect to anybody. Eventually I went to bed soon after midnight and slept like a log until 8 o'clock this morning by which time of course we were well away from the danger area.

Its yet another perfect day as it always is here at this time of year and which really darling spoils the Mediteranean seaboard from being perfect except in the spring you see it dries up all the green stuff and particularly the grass so that instead of a nice restful green it is all pale and parched from soon after the spring until the rain comes again in the autumn. When we come here darling it must be in April or May when it's looking its best. Throughout the past two days darling, today and yesterday, at odd moments when things were quiet I stopped to think and compare them with the corresponding days last year. So very different darling and yet both of them days which will live with me forever one so sweet and idyllic and meaning so terribly much to us, the other so fierce and bitter and yet in its way grand as well. But how much rather darling would I be sitting on the sand dunes with you beside me looking out over the sea at Tenby or walking arm in arm down into the dell at Gurfreston and carrying you in my arms to stop your feet being stung. My darling I love you with all my heart and soul.

Your very own husband. J.

57088 Capt. J.C. Lindsell, Herts Regt, No:1, ITD, MEF
16 July 1943

L/C 87

My own darling bride of a year,
The great day of our anniversary at last sweetheart and it's just such another day as you'd love, with a stiff wind and sea and sky perfect. (..... personal)

Darling I do hope my little parcel for you today arrived in time, and that the cable (I had to leave it with someone to send for me!) and the flowers got to you alright. (..... personal). Dearest you made me happy beyond my wildest dreams of happiness and gave me something that will strengthen and encourage me and remain bright in my heart for however long we may be apart. But may we be together by this time next year, God willing, darling, or even sooner even just for a few hours or days.

With the war going as it is now absolutely anything might happen at any moment. Since writing that last bit I've heard the 6 o'clock news about the Churchill – Roosevelt call to the Italians to capitulate and Russia's advance on the E. Front. Even more do I say darling that anything may happen with a suddenness beyond our imagination and peace if not order emerge out of the chaos.

(..... personal) The MO is more than a bit seasick today and retired to his bunk after lunch. I have however darling managed to fix up a game of bridge with the ships officers and have had some very good games of quoits with the Adj't, my RQMS and one of the ships officers. I'm not up to my form of the voyage out here yet darling, but it was very difficult today because of the wind and the deck wobbling so much you could never be quite sure which way it would lean when your quoit actually fell to the deck.

Darling I don't think I've told you earlier that we have been sleeping fully clothed for some days now just in case anything happened but tonight it seems so safe (touch wood several times) that its worth it. I am keeping an Imprest a/c now darling and very tied up with the new form of 1531 (revised) not having my Brockenhurst notes with me and not having any bank entries whatsoever to deal with!! Made still more difficult by it being in two different currencies. Still darling I expect it's quite easy really if I get down to it properly. I'm wondering very much too darling whether your mail will have time to catch up with me in the next few days. I'm awfully afraid it won't you know darling, but it will be so lovely when it does, having three whole weeks of it to go through or probably more. I do miss it so much though darling not being able to know how you are and what you are doing.

You know darling I've just come to the conclusion that the day of our marriage was the turning point of the war in our favour!! As well as the biggest and finest thing in my life! After a year darling I love you and need you even more.

All my love eternally, J.

57088 Capt J.C. Lindsell, Herts Reg't, No:1, ITD, MEF
Undated but postmarked 6 August 1943

L/C 89

My own darling,

Every day that passes now brings fresh memories of what we were doing a year ago, the meeting of our families at the Hyde Park (*hotel*), Pirton, back to town again for the day I had to report to the Transit Camp, and today the move back to the Hyde Park once more a(..... *personal*) The awful moment when I had to report to the Transit Camp not knowing whether I'd come back or not on Sunday afternoon, and the joy of the moment when we knew we had at least a few more days together on my return.

On Sunday darling I was at last able to celebrate our anniversary in a small way. We were at Alex (*Alexandria*) and I went with our second officer, and the chief of another, racing in the afternoon. It was all very French darling, a lovely course with everything including the programme written in French. When we arrived at the course I was greeted by a DAPM at the gate with the words that he couldn't let me in unless I was wearing a tie! Awful nonsense don't you think darling as nobody out here ever wears a tie before six o'clock and then only if they haven't got a bush jacket. However I found a taxi driver with an immediate grasp of the situation and after offering me a variety of his own ties which were from his description all colours except khaki, he managed to find a place that was open about a mile away and we were back again in under ¼ hour, to find several more unfortunates also turned back for being tieless, so I just referred them to my taxi driver to go back to the same place. The DAPM was very apologetic about it when I went in again and promised that in future he'd arrange for ties to be on sale at the gate!!

The course was an oval of about $1\frac{3}{4}$ miles with a straight five furlong and better kept than even Heliopolis. The horses were nearly all Arabs except in one race for thoroughbreds. I lost on the first two races having missed the first owing to the tie episode, and then on the third race in which there were about 30 starters I thought the best thing to do was to pick out the ones I liked best and back them all! So after a careful study in the paddock I chose three and backed them all each way. None of them were the favourites and all had quite unpronounceable names. It was only a sprint race and after about 3 furlongs I could see one of mine in the lead on the far rails (blue and white stripes, red cap!) followed closely by the favourite (Royal blue!) with three others on the near side I couldn't distinguish well up. When they passed me there were four almost in line with my blue and white stripe still just leading and the favourite moving up very slowly but running as if he hated racing and one of my other two coming with a terrific run on the inside rails. It was most frightfully exciting darling and when they passed the post I thought my blue and white stripe had just about won but the judge wouldn't commit himself until a photo of the finish had been printed (they take one in every race in case of doubt for the judge to refer to). This took about 10 minutes of further suspense and then I found to my delight that my other one (pink, black hoops, red cap) had won by a short head from my first one. Wasn't it grand darling. The winner paid 9/1 for a win and $8\frac{1}{2}$ /1 for a place and my second $4\frac{1}{2}$ /1 for a place so I really did pretty well. I then lost on the next two races until the last one when I had rather a big bet on the favourite as he looked much better than the others and he duly won easily.

After that we dashed off to a pub called the Cecil to have a drink, a very nice pub looking out over the bay with an enormous crowd round it waiting to see Nahas Pasha the Egyptian Prime Minister who was apparently staying there. We met several officers we knew there and managed very luckily to book seats for "In Which we Serve", then had some dinner where we were joined by our own 'chief' and another O.C. Troops I know very well called Valentine and all went on together to the Cinema where we found ourselves installed in boxes! It's an awfully good film don't you think darling and second only to Mrs. Miniver of the ones I've seen this war. I wondered very much if Noel Coward got the idea from Lord Louis Mountbatten's exploits with his destroyer flotilla at the beginning of the war. He was certainly towed into port once and had another destroyer sunk under him called The Javelin.

Been frightfully busy from the early hours this morning until about lunch time, and then again rather busy after lunch. (Tuesday) Last night about seven o'clock the Master sent a note down "would the MO and I have a drink with him". So we popped up and drank a lot more than we should do for over $2\frac{1}{4}$ hours and didn't have dinner until 21:25! The Master is like that though darling and keeps pressing it on you again and again. He never touches a drop whilst on the job though and just ?? out in his idle moments. As a result darling I feel horribly liverish today. But how I wish darling we were going off to see "Blithe Spirit" together as we did a year ago after another chase round Harrods and lunch at that funny little bar on the top of it with iced coffee. We simply must have a Frigidaire darling so that we can make things like that and ices too! Can you make Crème Brulee darling, I've never yet met a decent one outside Cambridge and they are just about my favourite sweet. Of course they are frightfully extravagant and need about a quart of cream and quite impossible in war time.

After ships rounds today we had a great game of quoits once more. I just can't get back into my old form of 11 months ago. I feel sure darling you must have had some leave in the last month. I had a sort of feeling you might have gone down to Tenby for our anniversary or just before. How I wish I'd been there with you darling or wherever you went to while away long summer days with the sea and sun and picnics and forget all about the war, and dream dreams of the future and sleep in your arms all night. As you have already guessed darling the chance of the miracle occurring now are far less remote than ever before and it must remain a possibility for so long as this job lasts. How I hope it does darling and that our dreams of J.A. may be realised and the war

over at one and the same time. Still no time for the post to catch up darling, and I know there must be some sweet anniversary letter waiting for me when I can get them.

All my love eternally darling.

God keep you safe always,

Your own husband, James

57088 Capt. JC Lindsell, Herts Regt, N:1 ITD, MEF
Undated, postmark 6 August (1943)

LC 90

My own sweet darling wife,

(..... *personal*) Today darling is the anniversary of our little party at "Quag's" when you met Frank and I met Barbara Pocock and you were wearing that white satin (?silk?) dress and as we couldn't get a taxi we walked all the way back afterwards down past Green Park to the Hotel. And how you were by far the best dressed and most attractive girl in the room darling and you were wearing the watch for the first time and your eye used to wander from the ring on your finger to the watch on your wrist with such a sweet smile on your face.

(..... *personal*) How many things there are to remember darling to keep our love fresh and beautiful all the days we are apart. (.....) The thoughts strengthen me in times of danger and make me so incredibly happy darling because you are my wife and we have together in those wonderful days experienced just a few of the glories of married life.

We're approaching dangerous waters again darling but so far everything very quiet and peaceful touching wood several times. I've had a slight row with the Chief Steward as though the food is alright he doesn't always make a real effort with it so it gets a little monotonous for the troops. I will try to collect a few mementoes of my various trips darling to bring back to you so that we can keep them for JA and MM to look at in future years.

Isn't the invasion going splendidly darling, it can't last more than another week or two now. It was so particularly interesting knowing exactly what was planned and comparing it with what actually happened though the novelty has of course worn off by now and there's not the same feeling of anticipation and keyed-upness as last time. It's now just interesting routine instead of adventure.

(Thursday). For me darling this has become very nearly dull now as in this particular trip there is so very little to do. All the routine is taped and working smoothly and very few snags crop up now we know all the ropes and can anticipate most things. I'm only referring to the actual work though darling and am not tempting providence by saying that nothing of interest can happen as of course it may at any moment, quite apart from the essential underlying interest of it.

My daily routine now is get up at 7 breakfast 8.30, work at the paper side until 10.30, then ship's rounds and practise boat stations, in which we inspect every nook and cranny of the troops quarters, after that a game of quoits and then if there is no more paper work to be done, write to you until lunchtime. Nap in the afternoon! (really rather necessary darling as I often stay up late or get up early when we're in places that might be

dangerous), a cup of tea at 1600, bridge 16.30, 17.30 conference to clear up any moans anyone has, or to put across my own orders for any special thing. Then continue bridge until dinner at 19.30, then either more bridge or chess, with a final walk round when I feel like it and so to bed usually for no reason at all very tired. I think sea air makes us tired darling and I always sleep like a log both at night and for my afternoon nap.

(..... *personal*) ...the more we are apart darling, the more I love you and need you with each succeeding day that passes. It can never change darling.

All my love from your own husband,
James.

57088 Capt J.C. Lindsell, Herts Reg't, No:1, ITD, MEF
Undated

L/C 92

My own darling Wife,

How I long to hear one word from you my sweet, over five weeks now darling and it is still impossible to know when I'll be able to collect all the letters that are waiting for me. Still darling it is something to know that they will all be there when I can get them, and I'll be able to have a real orgy lasting hours reading and re-reading them!

At present darling I have the currencies of no less than seven different countries on me!! And I'm keeping little bits of each for our 'curiosity box'. Where we are now darling tucked away in a backwater for the time being and inactive, I can't even send you a cable to let you know I'm alright. I haven't completely given up hope of doing it yet but the normal method is no good. The slight congestion I had in my lung has gone completely and I got up for lunch yesterday and all day today and am feeling as fit as a fiddle once more. There is so little to do darling at present, so I am reading a lot, playing bridge, and intend going for short trips ashore, whenever I can manage it and also today started hopefully fishing with a hand line from the ship, so far with no success whatever. There appear to be lots of little fish which keep nibbling away at the bait but they refuse entirely to be caught!! However as long as they nibble its quite exciting as there's just the chance a big one may sometime nibble instead and get caught! The little ones must be so small that their mouths aren't big enough for the hook to get hold of them properly.

The place where we are looks very nice and ought to be interesting. It's built on the side of a hill which is almost a mountain with the houses in terraces all the way down it and is quite large as it stretches for miles. If we stay here long enough we are hoping to climb right up to the top of the hill at the back of it and take a picnic box with us so that we can lunch looking out to the sea with the town at our feet.

As I said in my 91 darling we are not very far from where George was and far nearer to you than I've ever been before since a year ago. I've just checked it with an atlas. Aldershot was marked darling and it was a mere finger span from where we are but at 500 miles to an inch darling what a horrible long way it is even though so much closer. Oh darling how I wish you were only a mere finger span away from me, more than ever are you in my thoughts every moment of these long idle days and darling when there is for the time being so little to do to occupy my mind and just the glorious sun and blue sea and breeze which you would love so much and the anticipation of exploring a new place and all its novelty together hand in hand which would make everything seem doubly attractive and beautiful. Nothing is the same without you with me darling.

(Later) Yesterday I went ashore with our Chief Officer and the Chief from another ship and it really is a most awfully attractive town darling though very much depleted by wartime shortages. On landing we made a bee line for the bank near the quay to get some of the local currency and then had to mount two long tiers of steps to arrive on the main sort of promenade just opposite a square which was filled with palm and eucalyptus trees in the shade of which were numerous fruit stalls selling grapes and tomatoes, and a lot of donkeys. There was a surprising amount of traffic about considering everything and crossing roads is always a hazardous occupation. Still that terrible continental system of traffic driving on the wrong side of the road for us, and even now after a year darling, as a pedestrian I invariably automatically look the wrong way before crossing a road! As we wanted to explore the town we did it by wandering down the main streets and then cutting through to the next one above it and wandering back again, you see darling as all the roads are parallel to the front as they have to be from the steepness of the ground, the side streets are either just poky little passages or steps. In this way we covered most of the main shopping centre but there was absolutely nothing worth buying in the shops at all. Not even a little souvenir for you darling. Most of them were completely bare of everything except absolute essentials and all luxury and semi luxury goods had disappeared completely. We went into several of them including what must be the local Woolworths and the local Harrods. All essentials were heavily rationed and could only be bought for points!

However we did have a little fun trying to buy some Bob Martin's dog powder for the ship's dog. We went into nearly every chemists shop we saw and as I was the only one who hadn't forgotten all his French I did the talking and always opened with "avez-vous des poudres pour les chiens?" to which the reply almost invariably was 'mais oui Monsieur, pour les puces (fleas)! To which I had to reply 'non, pas pour les puces, pour l'estomac'. Answer 'Ah, pour l'estomac!' and they then searched the shop and found they hadn't any and gave voluble explanations as to where they might be bought. But we never succeeded in finding any.

We then tried to buy seats for the 'Great Dictator' which was on in one of the cinemas but it was all booked up and instead saw a film whose name I forget which was all in French spoken very fast and just about unintelligible. John Barrymore was in it and a rather nice looking girl I hadn't seen before and it was really quite good. We then came out and tried a drink of the local wine (the only drink available) at one of the hotels which was full of the forces all doing the same thing and then walked back to the quay to catch the launch back to the ship in time for dinner. When we got back we found to our horror that the post office would only accept letter cards on the understanding that they went by sea and not by air. What an awful waste of stamps darling.

All my love eternally,
your own husband James.

57088 Capt JC Lindsell, Herts Reg't, No:1, ITD, MEF
(undated, postmarked 6th August)

L/C 93

My own sweet darling,

They now say that letter cards can be sent from here so I'm posting them all, but still no luck with cables. On re-reading darling I think in 91 I've said too much and am therefore scrapping it before the Censor does. The only thing of any interest to you apart from the piece that would be censored is that I have had a very mild go of pleurisy, absolutely nothing darling really just a very slight congestion in my left lung with a temperature for one day and then almost alright the next and completely alright the day after so actually I was only in bed just under 48 hours and am as fit as a fiddle again once more. I must say I was a bit nervous about it at first as I've never had anything wrong with my lungs before and the MO did nothing to reassure me by saying I ought to go to hospital at once. However he agreed to a 24 hour delay and by then I was alright. Going to hospital at this

stage darling would have been just about the last straw, and would have meant the automatic relinquishment of my majority and being out of a job.

Existence is extremely quiet at the moment darling hardly a thing to do except read and bathe, and go for walks in the town where the MO and I have now joined a club called the Allied Officers Club which has the supreme advantage of being full of the most up to date English Papers and also a certain amount of food so you can feed there instead of returning to the ship for all meals.

But oh darling how I long to get hold of my mail to know how you are and what you are doing. It may still be weeks before I can get hold of it, just like this time last year. But darling just the faintest opportunity may arise whereby I'd see you before I get the mail, not that it looks like it for a moment at present but so long as I am on this job it must be there, I pray so hard for it to happen every day darling.

The fish I've been trying to catch from the ship remain completely elusive so I've not done any for the last day or two, they must all be far too small. The fishermen with their nets seem to catch hundreds of sardine looking things which they try to sell to us at impossible prices. For the rest I've been reading a lot of the Ship's library books all very mixed varying from ordinary thrillers to Sabatini and a life of Queen Elizabeth which I am now on. I wish there had been more historical novels at the time I took my History Tripos I'm sure I'd have passed out far higher if there had been!! All the best ones seem to have come out in the last eight years. Perhaps they were there before and I didn't appreciate them properly because we were told to read them! It's worth remembering that darling for the benefit of JA if he reads history at the University or even if he doesn't it might help him with his school certificate history papers.

Now that the Derby is six weeks old (almost) and the St. Leger about the same distance ahead I'm beginning to wonder darling whether we ought to revert to our old love who redeemed himself so well in the Derby or still pin our faith in Merchant Navy. I'm still rather keen on him in spite of his Derby effort and after all he did run very well and was/is backward and is sure to improve a lot and stay.

Tonight darling it seems likely that we will have a bit of a party as yesterday our chief officer heard he was father of a son, today is his eighth wedding anniversary, and tomorrow his birthday! Such an accumulation of events deserves a party don't you think darling?

(..... *personal*)

I still can't find any decent present for you here darling though the shops do seem to have a wee bit more in them than when we first arrived. There are however masses of children's toys!

All my love through eternity darling, Your own husband James.

57088 Capt JC Lindsell, Herts Reg't, No:1, ITD, MEF
6 Aug 1943

L/C 94

My own darling wife,

Just for the time being it seems safe to put a date on once more as we have been sitting here so long now since our second visit and anyway the address gives nothing away does it? But how I wish darling I knew what we were going to do now so as to know where to have my mail sent on to ,and if we were going to be here long enough for it to catch up if it was forwarded now. My Adj't has actually received three L/C's but all dated at the beginning of June and earlier than the last one I picked up at the APO before we started!! However darling as an experiment could you send me just one L/C as soon as you get this c/o Movement and Transport, GHQ,

MEF giving my rank as Major or better still an EFM cable just saying how you are and anything else interesting that may have happened.

Last night a fellow in the Navy asked me to make up a party for a dance with two other Navy a FANY and 2 WRNS at a restaurant in the town. They were all rather nice but I can't remember any of their names. I danced several times and we all got most terribly hot and took off ties and opened our collars, and later after the girls had gone home (they all had to be in by 11.00) stayed on for the Cabaret and got rather rowdy, and even warmer. It was a very pleasant relaxation after our period of idleness, and when we got back we serenaded the Chief Officer in his cabin as it was his birthday and presented him with two bunches of rather dilapidated carnations which he didn't seem to appreciate at their true worth at that hour of the morning!

The naval fellow who asked us is called Harrison and is apparently a cousin of the Harrisons who live near Hitchin. He is moving on today to a very good job as assistant to a local director of War Transport and has just presented me with a packet of razor blades (now almost unobtainable) some Yardley's shaving soap, a bottle of good hair cream, and a bottle of TCP as he says he has got so much to pack and no room for it !! They are all going to be most awfully useful. I've offered him some of these (*letter cards*) in exchange but he's got almost as many as I have! Trust the Navy to have everything!

(Later). I've just been shown over one of our battleships which is lying near us, they really are rather amazing darling we went absolutely everywhere we could, from the bridge and controls down to the depths of the engine room and boiler rooms (temp 120 degrees!) and right through one of the big gun turrets. Not being expert at going up and down steel ladders and squeezing through narrow trap doors I got absolutely filthy and covered with oil but it was well worth it. Everything is so intricate and to guard against accidents there are always alternate ways of doing everything if one breaks down so there are masses of tubes and wires everywhere. One of the Petty Officers saw my badge and asked me about Hertfordshire and it turned out that he too came from Hitchin (..... personal)

I've been amazed recently to see the amount of 'graft' that goes on amongst civilians of all nationalities who appear to regard it as all in the natural course of business and nothing to be ashamed of at all, also the taking of commission on the sly by employees when purchasing on behalf of employers. If the first isn't bribery and the second bare faced robbery I don't know what is. I must say darling my faith in human nature suffers a good many setbacks. For both of us darling we expect the best to come out in everybody until they've proved to the contrary, in business I'm afraid it's the other way round. Never trust anybody! Of course it's not nearly so bad in England as in some other places but it most certainly exists under the surface.

I wish Italy would make up her mind darling they are of course playing for time under German pressure and in the process are in danger of losing govt control of the country which is the last thing we want. The appointment of Badoglio bears a comparison with the French position in 1940 with Petain, but the eventual capitulation whenever it comes is going to be even more complete and far reaching in its effects than the fall of France. The Balkans will inevitably get completely out of hand as the Germans obviously can't spare troops to replace the Italian garrisons, and the sabotage that will go on behind their Russian front will make their position almost impossible unless they withdraw right back into Poland which at the moment it seems to me they must do before long.

All my love forever darling,
Your own husband, J.

L/C 95

8 August (1943)

My darling wife,

Still sitting here darling doing hardly anything and getting progressively more and more bored and longing for you with every fibre of my being throughout these long hot idle days. It's war all over isn't it darling, either doing something extremely interesting for a few days or doing hardly anything and feeling bored after about two days of it. Still darling the longer the job goes on the longer I keep my majority and the greater the chance of the miracle happening.

(..... *personal*)

I wonder how much I'd notice the difference in temperature at this time of year, probably a lot on any wet rainy days. We average about 84 degrees where we are now but even that seems comparatively cool after the ITD. So if it dropped to 64 degrees I'd probably shiver all day in a tweed coat and pullover!

Two things I've seen in the paper recently darling, the first is somebody stated definitely in Parliament that the Married Girls in the ATS would be demobbed first, then the engaged ones, and thirdly the ones whose homes were dependent on them. The other thing is that we both appear to be entitled to a medal, the 39-43 Star and the African Star respectively!! From the wording it appears I could get both but you are not allowed to have more than one!

I don't think I've told you have I darling about our ship's cats. There seem to be about twenty of them all female except one old ginger tom much in demand from the noises that go on after dark. They are all real back alley cats and flee at the sight of you except for two nice homely ones, one a kitten that never seems to grow any bigger called 'Delilah' or alternatively 'Figaro' because she is so like the Figaro in ??Pinocchio. She is black on top and tail with white underneath very much as if wearing tails, and is awfully sweet and playful with grey eyes and through too much petting behaves at times like a spoilt child yelling with rage at being thwarted in any of her designs. The other nice one is called Esmeralda usually Esme for short and is a nice sleepy old tabby very kind to Delilah with whom she plays and is tormented by endlessly and never treats her roughly however much provoked. They are nearly always together and I often play with them in the evenings before settling down to bridge.

After weeks of appalling cards the last two days I've been holding some lovely hands and actually won 9 rubbers straight off, six of them with the same partner, the ship's chief wireless operator. We don't play for money at all so tend to bid rather rashly. Instead a record of all rubbers played is kept and at present after 3 ½ weeks I'm +5 having just wiped off a deficit of nearly 50.

I'm feeling terribly rich at the moment darling because the local currency is all in huge paper notes the big ones like a tablecloth so my nice new notecase is stuffed to capacity although in actual fact it's only worth about 5 pounds. I've been told that the leather goods they produce here are worth getting so I'm going to have one final look at the shops to see if they can produce something worthwhile. Things have tended to grow a little bit more interesting since starting this so I'm hoping very much that we will move soon but no orders or even rumours have arrived yet. If ever you want a real headache darling try keeping an imprest in three different currencies. I've just been working one out.

All my love forever darling, your own husband, J.

57088 Capt JC Lindsell Herts Regt, No:1 ITD, MEF
13 August (1943)

L/C 96

My own Darling,

I've at last caught a fish! Just one rather small one weighing about 5 ozs. We kept it in a bucket for some time until Esmeralda the cat hooked it out and ate it with almost unbelievable enjoyment.

Yesterday afternoon the Chief Officer, the M.O., two of the ships cadet officers and myself took out one of the lifeboats which we can fix up for sailing and went right out to the end of a partially built break-water and then climbed onto it and spent just such an afternoon as we'll love to do in the future darling. We were all wearing bathing shorts and the sun was perfect and we bathed, sunbathed, paddled and potted about amongst the little pools for crabs and shrimps, and worms for me to use as bait. It was with one of those worms that I caught the fish, and altogether we behaved like a lot of small children only we probably enjoyed ourselves far more !!! Whilst I was fishing the sight of three grown men whose ages totalled some 120 yrs on hands and knees with buckets searching for baby crabs and pursuing them with yells of excitement did my heart good. I'd been doing the same myself a few minutes before! We had bought a couple of thermoses of tea with us as well so we really had a sort of picnic. Coming back the wind failed us and we had to row for about ½ mile to get in, lifeboats are heavy things! It's quite the best day I've spent in the past three months. How I wished it had been you and I with J.A. and M.M. darling during a summer holiday perhaps at Tenby or somewhere like that.

I sent you off a parcel of oddments yesterday darling hoping that you'll get them in time for your birthday and they should just about get to you in time from where we are now. I've also actually received a whole lot of official mail, all of it nearly two months out of date referring to the job we've been taking part in. It's nice to know they do at least know where we are, but if we'd done a job we were expecting to do, we'd have left here the day before it arrived and received it another two months later! It was rather tiresome that happened actually darling because when we arrived here knowing that our proposed stay was not sufficient for my mail to be forwarded and reach me in time I didn't write for it and now of course if I had it would almost certainly have reached me in a day or two. So now I must possess myself in patience for goodness knows how much longer.

I do hope you are alright darling and have been able to spend a leave somewhere right away by the sea at Tenby or an equally nice place and have also managed to fit in a weekend at Pirton. And I do so wonder darling if you are still at Cranbrook and whether you have been promoted yet, and whether you received my anniversary present alright. In many ways darling it's just like this time last year when you heard from me spasmodically and I got nothing until we arrived in the ME.

To my great delight I found a new Dornford Yates book the other day called Period Stuff and read it almost at a sitting. It was by no means one of his best but very refreshing in spite of it. My run of luck at bridge still continues and I'm now 51 points up over the past six weeks instead of the same amount down. My cards aren't quite so good but my partners are now getting the luck from which I am benefiting.

Since buying your present I haven't been into the town for the last three days. I'll probably pop in after finishing this to see whether there are any new English papers to be found anywhere. We've been listening to the last few Italian broadcasts in English and American and they're most illuminating and extremely funny. All on the lines we've thrown out Duce, why can't we have peace on our own terms, instead of yours. Some hope as they must realize very soon, but maybe it is still just playing for time for Germany to get out. Every idle day

here seems wasted darling because you are not with me, day after day of perfect sun and now perfect moonlit nights as well just made for you and I to enjoy together in a glorious holiday. It can't be long now though darling.

All my love for eternity, your own husband, J.

57088 Capt. JC Lindsell, Herts Reg't, No:1, ITD, MEF
15 Aug 1943

L/C 97

My very own darling wife,

Still here darling doing nearly nothing and just missing my post so much. If I don't have to do some work soon darling I'll forget how to. As it is, such is the evil of idleness, I find it far harder to get up when I'm called now than at a much earlier hour when there was something to do. In fact darling, if it wasn't for my nearly daily evening session of bridge, my brain would stagnate completely! The other thing I find I miss so much darling is somebody like George, Frank, or Teddy to go about with.

(..... personal)

We had another glorious day on the rocks yesterday afternoon swimming and bathing. The wind was quite strong when we sailed and we went out at a terrific pace and when we got there did much the same as last time. I caught one more small fish and once more it was eaten by Esmeralda the cat when we got back. I'm sure fresh fish will be very good for her prospective kittens don't you darling. The other thing that happened was that the wind dropped completely as we came home. I and one of the cadet officers rowed the boat all the rest of the way back rather slowly but very surely except for a spurt we put on when passing the battleship we looked over the other day. I found it had given me several blisters on my hands but it was very good exercise and I'm feeling much better for it. My back got rather sunburnt too but I think it is alright.

As I said the other day darling things are beginning to look more interesting and something should be happening soon to enable me to do a little bit towards earning a Major's pay! Incidentally darling if after this job is over I can get another job retaining my rank I estimate we can save over 400 pounds a year !!!

(Later) Did you see the eclipse of the moon this evening darling. I noticed it just after dinner and thought I must have gone mad because it should have been a full moon and instead was just about a quarter getting smaller every minute. It never completely disappeared and you could always see the vague outline of the rest of it behind the shadow. It's the first one I've ever seen. Whilst watching it I wondered if you were doing the same at home darling, and had noticed it as well.

It's maddening to think darling that you are now just a few hours away by plane and one hop would take me right back to you. So near and yet so far but still darling as long as we are on this job the chance of it (*leave*) happening remains a possibility which I pray every night comes true. I think it all depends on where we have our next crack at the continent if there is going to be another this year, and I think there must be. All the neutral countries are beginning to get so rude to Germany that they must realize the end is somewhere near.

Did I ever tell you darling that I consider our wedding day was roughly the day of the turning point of the war in our favour!! You think it out darling and see if you agree. I came to that conclusion about 3 months ago.

All my love forever darling God Bless you and keep you safe all the time. J.

57088 Capt JC Lindsell, Herts Regt, No.1: ITD, MEF
Aug 17 1943

L/C 98

My very own sweet wife,

The news of the end in Sicily is just through darling, isn't it grand. Just over a month to capture a place as big as Wales apparently strongly defended and yet involving casualties in men and material of far far less than the most optimistic estimates beforehand. If the 8th Army didn't appear to do much in comparison with the US 7th Army you must realize darling that the Catania Plain and approaches to Mt. Etna were far and away the toughest spot in the island and manned from the first by Germans and then when eventually through that, it had the worst possible country compared with definitely far easier country in the N. from Cape Orlando onwards to Messina. The big question is of course whither do we go now? I still think the Italians will give up within another month they have the choice now of making their country a battlefield and really damaging it irreparably or letting us in and being subject to air attacks from Germany which we would protect them from and which in any case would be directed at us and not nearly so severe as our own. I can't see how they can fail to give up. They want peace, their army and fleet, by the absence of any real resistance by the one, and complete absence of the other, can only be extremely unsettled with morale at its lowest possible ebb. And if the Sicilians can be judged as representative of the rest of Italy, they are definitely glad to see us or at any rate the Americans. Incidentally darling the local American daily rag nearly every day has a picture of some US Private greeting his parents or uncles and aunts in Sicily whom he'd left behind on migrating to the US and becoming naturalized there!

Yesterday evening the ship's officers threw a party with a gramophone dance and made me O.C. drinks. They wanted cocktails to start the evening off, so between tea and the commencement of the party I spent a pleasant hour surrounded by bottles and ice with a cocktail shaker and experimented on various mixtures until I'd got a satisfactory one and spent the first hour and a half of the party mixing them as hard as I could. They went down very well indeed and I'd have been mixing them for the whole of the party if the gin hadn't run out, such was the demand! I only had time to drink one myself! The final mixture was made up of Gin, Grand Marnier, a dash of French Vermouth, orange juice and heaps of ice, it tasted innocuous but was fairly potent underneath!! After that I danced a few times with various Wrens, names unknown, but all fairly recently out here and billeted in the town, where they swore the food was uneatable, and the house full of cockroaches. They certainly made short work of the buffet supper and the party broke up eventually about 22.30. I think they all enjoyed it very much and it was quite good fun. Our Captain amused me as he wandered in to the party about half an hour late, grabbed hold of the two prettiest girls in the room and monopolised them for the rest of the evening. This morning at breakfast he swore their names were Bee and Darling and said "there I was with a Bee on one side of me and Darling on the other, what more could I want!" But as he is part Irish I doubt the accuracy.

Aug 18

The chief officer and I were asked up to have a drink with the Captain last night darling and as usual talked war shop and came to the conclusion that whatever may come out in the next few months and whatever the Germans may have done in the past it is quite impossible for any English speaking race to stamp on an enemy once he's down; we just help them to their feet again!! It is a unique trait in the English character isn't it darling and one which I suppose has more than anything to do with our success as administrators of other's countries. Our love of animals is the same thing too really I suppose. Other countries look at it so very differently and I suppose in a way more practically. We will have to overcome it at the peace conference and we may say now that Hitler and co will be tried before an international court for the evils they've brought to

the world but I am prepared to bet that unless they are assassinated in the meantime, they'll be treated as Napoleon was and banished to an obscure spot. But I wouldn't have us otherwise would you darling! Life wouldn't be the same

Still no real indication of what the future has in store for us here darling, I'm getting so tired of sitting here with so little to do and not even knowing whether it's worth while sending for my mail or not. How I do miss them darling, your sweet letters, which make me so terribly happy and make every day that they come so special. Wherever it is eventually darling that we go I have at least the comfort of knowing that it must be either towards you for which I live in eternal hope, and if that cannot be then it must be towards my mail. I miss you so terribly during these idle days darling and they seem quite wasted without you being here to enjoy them with me.

All my love forever darling,
Your own husband James.

57088 Capt JC Lindsell, Herts Reg't, No:1, ITD, MEF
20 Aug 1943

L/C 99

My own darling,

This week seems to have developed into one succession of parties, the dance I told you about in 98 on Monday, then Tuesday just a minor one when the Chief Officer and I were with the Captain, Wednesday we had an impromptu visit from all the officers of a ship that goes everywhere with us (I know both their OC Troops and Adj'ts very well) and that lasted until well after midnight when we had to more or less force them to leave us, and then last night we made a return visit to them and this time we stayed on board there until nearly 01.30 this morning! Both the parties rather fun as we all know each other very well and the conversation always tends to run down each other's ship and personnel as far as possible as there is so much friendly rivalry between us. And tonight I'm dining in Movements HQ mess in the best hotel in the town with a fellow called Bernard Passingham of our regiment, whom I ran across most unexpectedly yesterday by seeing his name on a door in their office, and wandering in to see if it was him! He is doing a DAAG job and hasn't been with either of our Bns (*Battalions*) since early in 1940. When I first joined the TA in 1932 he was my Coy Com but went on to the reserves soon afterwards. He's quite a nice bloke extremely conscientious but invariably spends his life in one long succession of flaps. He used to live at a rather nice old Mill House between Hitchin and Pirton until he settled down as a Tutor in the big legal firm called Gibson & Weldon who make most of their money from coaching law student for the Intermediate and Final examinations. I went there myself for both exams! I think the last time I saw him was at camp at the beginning of Aug '39. We will certainly have lots to talk about and I'm very glad I've met him.

He is also being very useful to me by interesting himself personally in the case of my RSM who is long overdue for repatriation on long service grounds, but as at the moment no one here knows much about ME procedure and were being most obstructive, it was difficult to get anywhere and he was of course able to put me on to the right person straight away. Prior to running into him the RSMO and I had spent a very warm morning trying every HQ we could think of and the records office with the minimum of success. We had our reward for our efforts though in reaching a place above the town with one of the most magnificent views I've seen (very similar to the one at Gumfreston looking out over the bay), the town spread out below us and stretching along the whole length of the bay, the houses looking like white doll houses and the ships in the bay like toys. From that moment our quest became successful as we first got a lift from there all the way back to the ship, and then our first visit after lunch to our best hope produced Bernard and then everything was easy! The Arabs

here seem to be quite different to the Egyptian ones and far more in the background, they have their own native quarter which is 'out of bounds' and are not nearly so insistent on the backsheesh. An awful lot of them are definitely half caste (I should think nearly 25%) and they dress differently being a sort of semi European-Egyptian style.

(.... *Personal*)

How I long for the day darling when we settle down together to our own life for year after year watching our dreams come true. Beside each other all the time in all things.

All my love eternally darling,

Your own husband J.

57088 Major JC Lindsell, Herts Regt, No:1, ITD, MEF
Aug 22, 1943

L/C 100

My own sweet darling,

My one hundredth L/C to you in the past 11 months since arriving in the ME! And darling as it is a centenary one I feel it ought to be an extra special one. But it's rather difficult because I don't know any of the thousand and one sweet things you must have said and written about in the letters I have yet to collect and by now darling there must be between 30 and 40 of them lying waiting for me. Particularly do I want to see the anniversary one darling and when eventually I get them (if I'm not with you before then, heavenly thought) that will be the first one I will open.

(..... *personal*). Every minute that we are kept apart darling I grudge and want to get back to you in the very shortest possible time so that we can start building our life together with nothing in the way to keep us so unwillingly apart. And whatever Winston may say darling about the whole might of the British Empire being flung against Japan once Nazism is overcome, it will take a very great deal of persuasion to get me East of Suez again! It will certainly need a lot of Navy and RAF (who get home every 2 ½ years anyway) but not nearly so much Army. The Japanese have bitten off a good deal more than they can chew.

We had a glorious sail yesterday with the first steady breeze we've had since we've here. I went out with a Navy bloke and two of the Ships junior officers and I believe we went into the area of one of the parts protecting minefields as a warning shot seemed to be put across our bows; we about turned pretty quickly and were expecting a terrific rocket when we got in. So far it has not materialised! I felt absolutely grand after it and it blew away completely the effects of the previous four days of parties. Afterwards we spent a nice quiet evening on board arguing racing with the chief Wireless Officer and early to bed!

(Evening). Bernard Passingham came and lunched with me today and we were hoping to go for another sail as there was a lovely breeze for it again, but none of the ship's officers could be persuaded to take the boat out and I'm not yet sufficiently competent to be allowed to take it out by myself, so we walked to the end of the breakwater instead, and had an excellent bathe in crystal clear water and sunbathed and watched a yacht race that was going on round the harbour and felt absolutely grant. It's hard to believe sea water can be so clear darling even at 30 ft you could see every rock and pebble on the bottom and hundreds of little fish swimming round amongst them and a few small jellyfish looking like pink parachutes. Incidentally darling the jellyfish can sting as Bernard swam straight into one and regretted it!

There was also some excellent news when we got back darling in that if I don't see George in the next week or two, he'll only be about 100 miles NE of us if he is still where he was!!?? It really looks darling as if the age of miracles may not yet be past.

(..... *personal*) ... rather delightful true story I heard about yesterday. An officer in the ME had a friend in the RAF who was flying to England and offered him a lift. Being employed in a job where his absence for a few days wouldn't be missed he accepted and went home, spent a couple of days, and came back again. Nine months later his wife produced a baby and when he put in his claim for the allowance his C.O. refused to countersign it saying he'd been in the ME 2 years and therefore his wife couldn't have had a baby, as he hadn't been home. He of course couldn't tell the CO he'd been absent without leave and had gone home without permission!! So there he was stuck by an unanswerable problem. Likewise his wife couldn't say that he'd been home for fear of giving his absence away, so she was stuck too in more ways than one! The problem is unanswerable and still no allowance!!

The whole of my love forever darling, Your own husband, J.

57088 Capt. J.C. Lindsell, Herts Reg't, No:1, ITD, MEF
Aug 25 1943

L/C 101

My Starry eyed darling,

You'd know exactly what I mean by that if we could hand in hand look at the Mediterranean sky together, the air is so clear darling and the sky such a very deep dark blue and the stars glitter and twinkle so brightly and kindly and attractively and yet look so soft and kind, just like yours always do and with the least little bit of mystery about them. One day we must see it together darling even if we have to save for years to do it, a month's cruise out here when all thoughts of war are gone far away and there is nothing to interfere with its peace and beauty any more.

We had another glorious bathe yesterday with the water even clearer than it was before and after that Bernard Passingham took me to a rather nice very oriental sort of bar where we drank 'aperitifs' and watched a floor show which consisted of a conjuror who was extremely clever with all sorts of things, a woman who sang very nicely in French and abominably in English, and two girls who danced, juggled, and did acrobatics. Bernard P. swears that no French woman can ever dance and as he has been here some time he ought to know. These two certainly couldn't but were very good at juggling and the acrobatic part, and easy to look at. It's so convenient darling being able to see a show like that and then be back in time for dinner at 20.00 hrs directly afterwards, much better than waiting until midnight as you have to in half the London cabaret shows particularly if you only go just for the cabaret. We also bought a small stock of varied and very miscellaneous wines to take on board and share between the ship's officers and my staff (that sounds grand doesn't it darling 'my staff' just an Adjutant and MO in actual fact!). Some of them are quite good and some untasted and untried may be first rate or perfectly foul. We estimate that the seven of us will together get through one bottle a day by having a glass and a half each at dinner time or just before.

20 Sept

Darling I've just found this beginning of a letter, which I thought I had lost about three weeks ago, in the middle of my blotting pad! I'll continue on my 106 darling.

We are comparatively idle awaiting events tucked away in a place where it takes so long to visit anywhere that it is not worth doing so. I've been able to spend as a result several hours every day fishing. There are simply masses of them varying in size from about 3 inches to 3 feet, feeding on the swill thrown into the water, but they have very soft mouths and are difficult to catch as they don't bite at the bait but just suck it in. I've averaged 3 a day for the past few days and give them to the boys who love them in spite of their oily taste and

(I) always keep the smallest one for Esme and the kittens. She simply adores them and runs to me from miles away every time she hears me call her, grabs them in a very fierce way quite unlike her normal self when eating ordinary food. It is more than Delilah's life is worth to go anywhere near her when she has got one!

For exercise in the evenings we've been throwing a medicine ball at each other, very heavy and rather hard and filled with rice instead of rag. Even the MO plays with extreme circumspection as he is so afraid of either breaking his fingers or nails on it. We've also been introduced to a new form of Rummy invented in Hollywood and now the rage in the US ! Very easy to play but the scoring is most complicated and quite incomprehensible except that whatever happens you always win or lose a quantity out of all proportion to the actual figures !!

I've bathed twice but the water is so oily that it is not much fun except as a temporary cooling measure and you come out of the sea covered in specks of oil. Very little happening otherwise darling except that the kittens are progressing beautifully and just beginning to reach the really nice playful stage but still very unsteady on their feet in their sense of balance. I'm still expecting events to happen elsewhere than in Italy, the time seems so very ripe for it, at this particular moment, and apart from that darling I'm very mystified as to why our heavy bombers haven't been out for a fortnight, and don't accept the weather as the answer.

Horribly hot today, darling with the Sirocco blowing and drying everything up.

All my love forever, your own husband J.

57088 Capt. J.C. Lindsell, Herts Reg't, No:1, ITD, MEF
26 August 1943

L/C 102

My own darling wife,

We moved our anchorage a few hundred yards three days ago and when we got to the new one found that most of the fish in the Mediterranean were accumulated round it so for the last two days I've been fishing hard from breakfast until dusk with a certain amount of success! All except one very small though darling, but very sweet when fried fresh. We used raw beef as bait which I am sure Lord Woolton would not approve of and the number of lines hanging over the side of the ship made us look like Eastbourne Pier at a Bank Holiday! However all that is over now and I'm expecting to see George tomorrow morning also I hope Gay Sheppard and Peter Foljambe. And as you know darling I'm filled with hopes of the future raised very high by the latest news.

About the fishing darling one of the things I so often think about and dream about is us fishing together in May or early June with every bit of country looking its most perfect spring self in one of the West of England streams on one of those days in which everything combined of sun, winds, birds, flowers and stream make the day so wonderful that one almost wants to weep with the sheer joy of it. Those sort of days have never seemed quite complete to me yet darling except our day at Bournemouth and now together as lovers we will really be able to enjoy them as they should be with all the beauties of the day made double with you being there to share them.

What could be more perfect darling than that, a bright rippling stream curling through green fields and woods rather steep on one side and flat water meadows on the other filled with Marsh Marigolds and Yellow Irises. The cuckoo chuckling in the distance and snipe drumming overhead. Lazy looking cows filling themselves with new grass and baby rabbits having their first look at the world from the edge of their burrows in the hedges.

And the stream itself flowing now fast over shallows and then slowly mysteriously into the deeper pools with the trout dimpling the surface as they rise. In the midst of it darling you and I now fishing not caring really whether we caught any fish, now admiring the view, and now sitting down to a picnic tea or lunch in the shade of some tree and perhaps dozing for a few minutes after lunch before continuing on our way upstream. We must try to get in a few days like that every year darling and take a holiday in May so that we can do it. Later we can take J.A. and M.M. with us for the picnics and I expect either or both will want to try to fish themselves and to manipulate the landing net when required, full of questions and getting very wet and rather grubby but enjoying themselves hugely in the process !!

It is grand being on the move again darling. I was getting very tired of the last place and idleness. Today is quite perfect and just as the Mediterranean always should be like, a calm flat very blue lake with just sufficient wind blowing through the ship to make it seem quite fresh and cool.

I saw in a paper darling that you've been having a heat wave at home with temperatures up to 85 degrees in the shade! Was it lovely darling or really too hot to be comfortable? Aldershot is such a warm dusty place if it wants to be and rather unbearable unless you can get away from it and up on top of some open place like the Hugo Back. Perhaps you did darling and I like to think of you leaving on your bike and going there to be cool. Or perhaps, having been promoted you are now somewhere quite else darling! How I wish I knew, and could get all my mail. It seems years since I heard darling and actually the latest one I got was the early middle of June. I feel you are alright though dearest something tells me so but I'm equally sure you've either been promoted or moved so we are still of equal rank and I won't have to salute you!

All my love always,
Your husband J.

57088 Major J.C. Lindsell, Herts Regt, No.1, ITD, MEF
Aug 31 1943

L/C 103

My own darling,

As always after an idle spell I'm more frantically busy once more, so busy that the two severe disappointments, the first as to the chances of the miracle (*leave*) happening and the second as to getting my mail, are almost impossible to think about. I also had the annoyance of being within a mile of George and quite unable to get to him or to let him know I was there for a period of three hours. However darling it's an ill wind etc and things are decidedly interesting to provide a recompense, if rather slight, for the disappointment. And of course as long as this job lasts the chance will still be there. I'm so sorry I raised your hopes though darling and I'm afraid you will be most awfully disappointed as I am. Anyway darling for the present news is very much restricted by censorship.

We just missed some unpleasantness the other day and got a little dose of it yesterday to the great excitement of everybody. Owing to circumstances I have taken to chewing gum to stop my teeth rattling and have been able to lay in a good supply of 'Camels' (*cigarettes*) !! I have seriously considered upgrading (*salary*) both myself and my Adj't temporarily and believe I can get away with it with the Paymaster under the authority of the Pay Warrant! I wish too darling that I could tell you of some of the impressive sights I've seen. One in particular was not only impressive but extremely picturesque and beautiful. I'd have liked to have taken some cine film of it all it was so very lovely and took place in such a grand setting. But as it is darling I'll have to wait until we are together again and have the supreme delight of telling you all about it with a map on our knees and my arms around you and your head on my shoulder. If only it could be like that this moment darling how lovely it would be sitting in a nice comfy sofa after dinner with a fire crackling in the hearth in front of us, and

wearing civilian clothes. Me in tweed coat and old grey flannel bags and you probably the other way round in tweed skirt and blouse.

The other day when miles away from anywhere hundreds of migrating birds appeared of every conceivable kind from tiny warblers to the large Hoopoes and turtle doves. Birds are sensible aren't they darling to spend the spring and summer at home and then to fly off to warm places as soon as Autumn begins to draw near but before it's really cold. Such a nice simple sort of existence and so easy for them to do. We also saw a large school of porpoises tumbling about around us, rather small ones but beautifully streamlined and you could follow them even in 30 ft of water it was so clear, and see every movement they made.

My M.O. had his birthday yesterday so we had a rather nice little party sitting in the third officer's cabin playing the gramophone and finishing up about midnight with beans on toast. We played all our favourite tunes and lots of the nicest classical ones. For the first time I was able to discover the name of a piece I've always loved - Beethoven's Pathetique. Do you know it darling? You'd simply love it. It sort of haunts me for days after each time I hear it played. We simply must have a radiogram darling and a carefully chosen selection of records of the things we love best to listen to on quiet evenings and surprise each other with occasional purchases of new records we like.

Darling this may arrive just around your birthday and as I may not be able to post my next one for a bit and it's most unlikely I'll be even able to send a cable for the right day as there are no facilities where we are now, think darling of the time when we have our birthdays together and imagine me waking you with a birthday kiss and a many happy returns, then bringing you breakfast in bed on a tray with your present tucked away underneath something on it and some flowers fresh from the garden with it, roses or carnations, and then afterwards planning how to spend our day together, whether gay in town or simply with JA and MM all having a picnic together somewhere or a terrific blackberrying forage somewhere round about. I do so hope we can do it by this time next year darling, in a world at peace. (..... *personal*)

All my love for always darling, and God keep you safe and well,
Your own husband, J.

57088 Major JC Lindsell, Herts Reg't, No1 I.T.D. MEF.
Sept 7 (1943)

L/C 104

My own sweet darling,
Whenever I tell you that I will cable, we always seem to finish up at a place where they won't let us do so and this is no exception. However darling I'm still absolutely fit and well if slightly under-exercised and things remain interesting if not exciting with plenty to do particularly of a liaison type. I'm still able to get a nice stock of chewing gum (you remember - to stop my teeth from chattering!) and Camel cigarettes.

The most important recent event was Esmerelda the ship's nicest cat's production of her family on Sunday. We guessed what was about to happen from her odd behaviour before lunch and prepared a proper accouchement for her on one of the beds complete with waterproof sheet from the M.I. room and a lot of old newspapers! She was perfectly sweet and quite determined to have somebody present at the event. If left alone she left her couch and came meowing after us until somebody went back with her to soothe her and stroke her and then she would be quite happy and contented purring but obviously feeling uncomfortable. It really was awfully touching the confidence she had in us and quite unique as they usually hide themselves right away.

We had a sweep on how many there would be, all our guesses varying between 2 and 5 as it was her first family!! However, after-events proved us very wrong. We also agreed a roster to act as Midwives and keep her happy. The first one was born at 13.50 and the seventh and last at 17.30. There was a big gap after the fourth (a huge tabby tom) and we thought that would be all but an hour later No.5 appeared followed quite soon by 6 & 7. She had a stream of visitors during the afternoon full of inquiries. It really was rather marvellous darling to watch instinct in both mother and children. She licked them dry as each was born and then within 20 mins. the kitten was able to scrabble along sufficiently to start feeding. At the end she lay very proudly purring letting them feed and every 20 minutes giving them a very thorough licking all over to which like small children being washed they objected by tiny meows of rage

Then to enable to second officer to be able to sleep in his bed we moved the lot into a big drawer underneath it and there they are growing bigger every moment with the big tabby No.4 very much the most active but all of them average size and doing very well indeed with no weaklings. We now are looking forward to the time their eyes open and they can use their legs properly. In spite of being blind and weak in the legs even now they are just capable of fighting each other !! And as for Esme she is so proud of them she nearly purrs her throat out and loves her offspring!!

Little Delilah the half-grown kitten is incredibly mystified by the family and after a preliminary peep after which she fled has not dared go near them but is very sweet to Esme when she comes out to feed and they lick each other on meeting.

I've been playing quite a lot of chess at odd moments with a very nice U.S. Lt. Colonel. He is very good and always wins but I think it is teaching me quite a bit and I improve a little bit daily.

Incidentally darling I was very amused the other day to find a Times of 14 July giving the allied communique saying nothing, then underneath a very full and remarkably accurate account of what we ourselves actually did, taken from the German news broadcast by General Ditmar and repeated in the Times! Also in an Illustrated London news of the 31 July a photo in which we are visible in the background.

All recent events make me long so much for my post Darling nearly 3 months now since I've had any. It seems like 3 years. Those who arranged to have theirs readdressed have at least one or two but in the long run I know they'll lose and have post chasing them all over the Mediterranean for months. I have a theory darling that the length of Churchill's present stay in the U.S. can only mean that Italy has put forward a definite peace proposal why else should he still be there after they have concluded all their main meetings at Quebec. I wouldn't be the least bit surprised to hear of it before you get this, I just feel that something really big is about to happen.

Darling I wonder how many thousands of sweet things there must be to be answered in your letters, it will need a week's leave to answer them all!

The news darling about Italy has just this moment come through via my adjutant and he's just going off to confirm it. So it really is true, darling, isn't it wonderful somehow I wasn't expecting it for a week or two and apparently it was all settled on Sept 3rd!! – Germany will have all her work cut out to last this winter, if she can last until then.

Somehow darling partly because I was expecting it I don't seem nearly as delighted about it as I should be. I just think of it darling as bringing the time we will be together again infinitely closer, but until that time really arrives, I can never be completely delighted and overjoyed about anything just very pleased because it will

bring the day much closer. Oh darling how I hope it is sooner than we dare think, it may well be so now with the Germans crumbling so rapidly.

All my love forever darling and God bless you and keep you always.
Your own husband. J.

Major JC Lindsell, Herts Regt, No:1, ITD, MEF
Sept 9 1943

L/C 105

My darling,

Still rather busy with a lot of minor details, all still fairly interesting but slow. The downfall of Italy and our new landings near Naples with all the possible implications are so wonderful aren't they darling. I celebrated the fall with some Americans on Coca Cola which tastes foul and in a very short time our main topic of conversation was the food we would like to be eating when we got home?! Of course my ideas were slightly different to theirs which were even simpler sort of food than mine. Things like Ice Cream Sodas and Blackberry Pie and Beans on toast were what they longed for. In fact darling an awful lot of nonsense has been talked about how well they feed their army compared with ours. In actual fact it is little, if anything, better than ours out here.

(Later). Darling I'm so terribly happy your L/C 69 has found me, the one addressed to me c/o Movement and Transport, GHQ, MEF. It came in late last night and was so perfect. I just lay and read it and re-read it again first thing this morning when I woke up. (.... *Personal*) I love you so terribly my sweet, and the letter just filled me to the brim with the yearning to see you, to hear your voice and see your sweet smile whether we were out picnicking together on a glorious summer day, walking in the moonlight arm in arm, or you were pressed close to me all night through. Darling I am so terribly happy and proud that you are my wife and your letter brought back all our days together which are always in my thoughts so strongly that my heart could burst with joy and the yearning to see you and hold you in my arms again. ... I want to be back with you at the very earliest possible minute darling even if it is for just a few days or even hours, ... so that even if we are parted for a short time again we will have a few more wonderful hours to look back on and remember and to give us an additional great memory to give us courage and strengthen us all the days we may still have to be apart. I too pray so hard that the miracle will come true darling every single night and that God will keep you safe always. (... *personal*)

So you are at Dorking dearest, and have been there since the end of June. I don't think I've ever been there except once darling for a few hours at some Weapons Training School. I remember the country being very lovely and hilly with a lot of little beechwoods and pines on the slopes of the hills. I feel like writing to Mrs. Knox insisting on your promotion darling. You deserve it and merit it before anybody.

.... Yes darling my promotion was confirmed w.e.f. 20 June and the only reason I was a bit doubtful about putting it in my address was the fear of the PO thinking Major Lindsell was a different person!!

How grand about the Income Tax repayment darling, can you remember whether it was on a/c of post war credit or an actual cash repayment which would mean that the pay office had acted on my instructions reference the splitting up of our joint liability for income tax between us. I'm sorry Red Gables is by no means our ideal darling I rather feared it might be so from Mummy's somewhat cautious comment and its apparent location but I'm thinking of you in those days at Pirton doing those things you told me about. I'm simply longing to see my pullover and new pyjamas darling (the last very urgently needed) as two of my present pairs are falling to bits and the pullover especially because you made it all yourself.

How grand about Straight Deal and the sweep dearest it puts us about all square on the two races! I'm longing to get your special letters of the 14th, 15th and 16th darling and they will be the first ones I'll open when I get them. I'm so glad you liked your Jerusalem compact too darling. No more room!
I love you so much darling, God keep you safe always .
Your own husband James.

57088 Major JC Lindsell, Herts Reg't, No:1, I.T.D., M.E.F.
12 Sept 1943

L/C 106A

My own darling wife,
On the job again leaving at midnight in a perfect silver moonlit sea so light you could almost read in it and quite unbelievably lovely. One of those nights darling in which we would simply adore to be walking hand in hand through the fields together, on warm summer evenings.

Now that you say your Coy is so scattered it makes me wonder if you have a staff car to take you everywhere in great pomp or do you still have to rely on the old trike! Incidentally darling if the Income Tax people have paid you 23 pounds in cash it would be a grand opportunity for you to buy a new one if you can find one or at least a good second hand one.

Darling that was such a wonderful letter you wrote me (No 69) that arrived the other day and I've read it and reread it so many times and it's made me so wonderfully happy. Knowing that you really are alright after nearly 3 months and where you were was such a great relief to me, knowing too that you had been able to have a good leave after working so hard for so long without it. How I wish I'd been there to have it with you darling, nine whole precious days together in the summer sun with warm long summer evenings in which to walk through the country.

Darling I wasn't able to attend early service this month as the only padre was a Methodist. I went to his service though and thought and prayed very hard for your safety and repeated the essential parts of the M.C. to myself during it. And I prayed too darling as I do every night for us to be together in the shortest possible time and that J.A. and M.M. become true.

Ernest Bevin has definitely stated that those with the longest service will be the first to be demobbed and nobody can have longer service than the T.A. except Regulars who of course don't count, and the first batch of conscripts whose numbers are probably minute anyway.

It seems ages since Sept '39 doesn't it darling but now that you can't pick up a paper or listen to a news without hearing of advances on at least three fronts and other trouble elsewhere for Hitler it all seems very well worth it to have the satisfaction of seeing it after a whole 3.5 years of reverse and a sort of feeling that though the struggle is so bitter we are living in great times such as can never be visualized again before or since. Things look a trifle sticky at Salerno don't they darling and until the 8th get up on their right flank will remain so in my opinion. I think perhaps we may have slightly underestimated the number of planes they had available for use against us.

The big event of today here darling is that Esme's eldest kitten named Deadeye because of his one black and one white colouring round his eyes has actually opened one of them and half the other! By tomorrow the whole lot should be open. My special one No4 "Butch" has distinguished himself by being the only one to have hair along his underneath! The remainder are still quite naked. Present assessments of their sex is 4

boys and 3 girls but remains subject to revision! Esme herself is still extremely proud of them and very hungry and looks after them all extremely well except for occasionally sitting on one of them by mistake.

Tonight I've been invited to the birthday party of a U.S. Colonel and I fear it will be very much of a party too. We have managed to have a birthday cake made for him. But the alcohol they have darling whether rum or gin is 100% and about three times as strong as anything dreamt of at home! The only time I had any of it, just one tot after the news about Italy, it had the effect of about six whiskeys. So darling I am going to proceed with the very greatest caution! Owing to present circumstances in spite of being quite full now we've settled down, my job is very much lighter than usual but at the same time more tricky in other ways.

Did I tell you darling that a rather nice old RN Captain took me and some others for a delightful bathe in a lovely land-locked sandy bay three days ago. It was simply heavenly but we could only give ourselves exactly 35 minutes for it as it took so long getting there so we had no time to sunbathe and were in the water the whole time available before hurrying back to the ship once more. It made yet one more place I'd like to take you to sometime darling. You'd simply love it.

Must stop darling as the post is going off in half a minute.

All my love forever your own husband, James

57088 Major JC Lindsell, Herts Regt, No1 I.T.D. MEF
Sept 16 (1943)

L/C 106B

My darling birthday girl,
(.... *Personal*). I spent much of the day fishing with a line over the side and caught three beautiful Mullet al about 1 ½ lbs in weight. I had the biggest one cooked for dinner and it was perfectly foul, lovely firm flesh but impossibly tainted with fuel oil so I had to send it away almost untouched after trying it on one or two others as well! Such a pity darling as they are lovely fish normally. The crew all love them though so if I catch any more I'll give them away keeping one back for Esme and the kittens.

There was a real tragedy over the kittens as "Deadeye" the second nicest appeared to eat some Keatings Powder we sprinkled them all with to check the spread of fleas, and upset his tummy so badly that he died 36 hours later. At least that is what we think it was because he was so fat and healthy until then. Isn't it a pity darling. The others are still grand though and will be quite enough for Esme to manage when they get a little bigger.

Fishing I may say darling was quite the last thing I expected to be doing today, I expected to be somewhere very different amid considerable excitement. As things have turned out its not very surprising really I suppose? Though the news has a nice confident ring about it again today after being so very depressing and preparing us for the worst.

I duly went to the birthday party I told you I was going to darling, and the drink was sheer dynamite though fortunately there wasn't a great deal of it. We discovered later that it was 100% medicinal alcohol diluted in tinned pineapple or orange juice. One small one seemed to equal at least three whiskeys in its effect! I only had two. The birthday cake was very good indeed and extremely filling. We had it for dinner as a sweet and afterwards had a sing song in the Captain's cabin during which with the help of the gramophone we taught everybody the words of 'Waltzing Matilda' with the Captain singing the words and the rest of us joining in the chorus. As you probably know darling, it's an Australian song and the captain is Irish Australian so that is why

it was so very popular. We also played a lot of Charlie Kunz solo on the gramophone but we were making so much noise we couldn't really listen to it properly.

One more notable event occurred in that it actually rained yesterday for five minutes which is the first I've seen since the early days of March. I'd give anything for a really good downpour darling in which to leap into a pair of bathing shorts and have a really good natural shower or bath like we did on our way out a year ago.

Did I tell you darling that Teddy Worrall actually is back here again having got wounded once more in Sicily. So he has done just exactly what he said he'd do, M.C. D.S.O and back again within the year. I wish I'd seen him in the interval. Perhaps you'll run across him yourself somewhere.

I'm feeling most awfully lonely and sort of dissatisfied tonight darling, it just comes on me at times when things are moving so slowly and I'm thinking of you all the time and how soon it will be before we are together again and fills me so full of my love for you that there is nothing else that can interest me at all. Do you know that feeling darling; a sort of intense longing to be with you, with underneath a feeling of why must Hitler stand between us so that we are so far away from each other for so long, and the futility of war which keeps us apart when we should be together always. It can't be too long now darling and miracles do happen sometimes. Oh darling how I long to see you again in the very shortest possible time.

All my love forever, your own husband. J.

57088 Major JC Lindsell, Herts Regt, No:1, ITD, MEF
23 Sept 1943

L/C 108

My own sweet wife,

Still sitting waiting darling for things to happen in a place where there's not the slightest chance of getting any mail or even anything very much worth seeing. It has started me off doing a most peculiar thing to help fill up the time and that is writing a number of short stories about sport in wartime under the heading of "Days stolen for sport in Wartime" of a type that the Field or Country Life often publish!! I can't think why darling the desire for something to occupy my mind was so great that that was the result. So far I've written one about duck shooting in the early morning of the winter in Suffolk where I had one most successful morning right at the end of 1941. I rather like that one darling and another about two days racing at Newbury in 1941 when George and I saw on succeeding days two very good races with first class horses running of which I can remember the details quite vividly. When I've finished them darling I'll send them on to you and if anybody who has read them thinks they are alright we might try it on and send them up as an experiment. I think there will be another one about the day I dashed off from Brackenbank to Salisbury and one more about another day's shooting early on in the war.

And of course darling I must too write the rest of our own story, it got sort of stuck when I was working so hard earlier on. I can't do a fishing one as I've had no good days at all during the war except the odd fish I've caught recently which isn't really fishing at all as the hooks are the only part of the line which isn't makeshift! I might try one other on the glorious walks Frank and I used to have in Devonshire when we went in his car to the edge of Dartmoor and used to walk for miles and see lots of birds and watch the trout in the tiny moorland streams and see some marvellous scenery. However darling, soon I will be probably so busy again that all thoughts of doing these things will vanish for the time being.

For the rest of the time the last few days the kittens have been an unfailing source of pleasure to me, they really are perfectly sweet now that their eyes are open and they are beginning to be playful. One of them a female who is going to be called either Venus, Diana, or Juno, is now strong enough to crawl back into the

drawer in which they live from the outside. She does it very simply, she clambers up until her body is poised on the top and then rocks gently backwards and forwards until she gets sufficient weight in front to enable her to nose dive the rest of the way down the other side. As the landing is on a bolster she never hurts herself! The others haven't quite reached her standard yet and can't do it without being shoved. The boys will be called Jupiter, Apollo and Adonis!

Whenever I watch them darling I can't help thinking how marvellous it will be when our very own J.A. and M.M. are growing up in that same way and how eagerly we will be watching them for their first signs of crawling, walking, and talking and watching their minds and bodies develop with each succeeding year. And the terrific talks we will have over them and about their futures and how quickly or slowly they are progressing. It will be so grand darling won't it day in day out watching every little sign of progress they make. How I do long for those days to come darling, to be with you again building our home up to what we mean it to be, for all our lives in the very shortest possible time realising all our dreams eventually and watching our hopes come true. It's all I live and fight for darling that we can enjoy our lives together just as soon as this wretched war is over. I want to go to sleep in your arms every night darling and wake up every new day and kiss you good morning (..... *personal*) I want to see you in the evenings when I come back from work with J.A. in your arms framed in the doorway of our house. You are every little thing to me for always darling.

With all my love, your own husband, James

57088 Major JC Lindsell, Herts Regt, No:1 ITD, MEF
26 September (1943)

L/C 109A

My own sweet darling Wife,

Since my last letter I've been in to have a look around a place much contested in the spring. It was very disappointing and so desolate as to be nearly depressing. Hardly a house standing which did not show some sort of wear and tear and bricks, rubble, and glass everywhere. All the civil population had departed for which I do not blame them! So there was no sign of any normal life at all. Some of the gardens running wild were a perfect mass of colour and the only bright spots in the place together with the swarms of butterflies which were in them. Rather lovely ones too darling called Fritillaries which are most awfully rare at home but here as common as our 'white' one which you see in cabbage fields. If the wind is blowing in the right direction they get blown right out to us.

The other big event is that since our little shower the other day we've had some lovely thunder storms in the evenings accompanied by very heavy rain. The lightning was magnificent and we stood watching it for hours in the darkness. As a result it's got very much cooler and I've been wearing that nice woolly waistcoat you gave me. It is so very useful darling and quite the warmest thing for its size that there could be, and everybody admires it. I ought really to have slits made in the shoulders of it so that I can wear badges of rank on them but it is too nice to mar by doing that, unless I'm ordered to do so by higher authority which is most unlikely in the next few months! And then soon we will be changing back into our winter clothing once more and I will be able to wear it underneath my battle dress blouse.

I've got a rather nice little Major with me temporarily, who lives in an enormous show piece house near Faringdon in either Gloucestershire or Berkshire and on top of that has another little cottage in Kent which you and I would simply love.We have some very good laughs too over a course we'd both been on in Carlisle. It was a P.A.D. school in an old castle where the last thing anyone did was work, including the Instructors. Since then he has become a sort of P.A.D. king and one of his first jobs was to close the place down and open a new

one elsewhere! I think you'd like him darling as he is so very unassuming and quiet. I lend him my fishing line a lot but though keen he doesn't catch many! Still so long as he doesn't lose any of my hooks I don't mind that!

Oh darling how I long to be back with you. The chances of the miracle happening in the near future are nil but will improve with the passage of time after I've had a chance to catch up all my mail which I hope will happen in about a fortnight's time. And anyway darling, with the Soviet in Smolensk and beyond I can't see the European war lasting beyond next May, June at the latest.

God bless you and keep you safe always darling, and bring us together very, very soon.
All my love forever, James

57088 Major JC Lindsell, Herts Regt, No:1 ITD, MEF
29 Sept 1943

L/C 109B

My own darling,

At last things are speeding up a bit and getting a bit more interesting after looking more stagnant than ever. It was preceded by a most glorious day of muddle and counter orders but the final result was promising in the extreme. I must say darling, I won't be sorry when this particular job is over. If it hadn't been for the nice little Major I told you about in my last letter the perpetual US drawl would have been a severe test of my powers of endurance however nice some of them may be. Particularly my opposite number with whom I play chess, bridge, or rummy almost daily. He always beats me at chess and I always beat him at Rummy without fail. At bridge we do best when playing together which is as it should be!

The kittens are now quite perfect, particularly the three girls, who are now in and out of their drawer whenever they feel like it, and always very much more playful than the three boys who though bigger seem to eat and sleep far more and be less inquisitive. Though if properly roused by being sufficiently scratched in the eyes, they can put the girls in their places and make them yell for mercy but being real little gentlemen they only do it when tormented beyond endurance! Which again is as it should be!

I think I am getting rather fat darling through too much wholesome food and not really enough exercise, and if it's not fat then I am getting soft which is worse ... But in spite of it I feel very well always unless I have a nap in the afternoon which makes me feel awful for the rest of the day! Therefore darling two things that should never be done in the day are to sleep in the afternoon and secondly to drink even one glass of alcohol before six. If you do the second, the desire for the first is so great that it is impossible to work properly anyway! We've been right out of all alcohol for a fortnight now, which is quite a good thing but I do wish we had some lime juice left and some soda, to drink when it is unbearably hot. Water doesn't seem to make any difference at all.

Which reminds me darling we will have to get Margaret's recipe for home made lemonade which is absolutely grand and all I ever used to drink when at home all the year round, and was grand for tennis parties as well. I very much doubt if I'll be able to post this at once darling, it will probably have to wait several days and go in with my next ones which should be very much more interesting as lots should happen by then. I hope not too violent but just nicely interesting.

My cabin boy is furious with me because although he has had nearly all my fish, the biggest one of all whose fame ran round, I gave to somebody else! However he's nearly forgiven me now, though still rather grumpy about it. I've succeeded in spending less than 7 pounds this month darling which is not (bad) at all is it?

All my love forever and always your own husband, James.

Major JC Lindsell Herts Regt No:1, ITD, MEF
3 Oct 1943

L/C 110

My darling,

How I do so wish you had been with me over the past few days and were with me now to see the most lovely scenes imaginable. Imagine darling a very blue sky with a few white wispy clouds in it, a warm sun, a sea of the deepest blue, slightly rippled and flecked here and there with the white of broken water and in the distance a constantly changing, steep rugged coast with big points and little islands sticking out of it and in between what looked like the loveliest little sandy bays. Behind them again little clusters of white houses shining in the sun, often perched on the sides or at the top of the steepest hills with olive trees and vineyards around them on terraces on the sides of the hills. For the greater part of two whole days darling did we see it and then towards the end of the second passed between a great headland sticking out and a beauty spot famous in song to see in front of us the white buildings of a largish town spread over gentle slopes in the lap of a volcano, which towered above it. All this darling with only one minor alarm and excursion to disturb it. At night early on it was equally lovely with a new moon and phosphorescence like fireflies playing around us and later still just the purple night and the stars shining above us.

It just made me simply long for you to be with me darling so that we could share it all between us. It was hard to realise there could be a war on throughout the whole period, it all seemed so quiet and peaceful except for one severe thunderstorm and the things we saw around us. We've simply got to see it together at some time in the future darling, it was so lonely without you being there beside me, that with you it would be complete and utter bliss every moment of it.

With it all darling there was of course a certain amount of work to be done which kept me pretty well occupied but I couldn't resist popping up with my field glasses every few minutes to see something fresh. Of course we were perhaps lucky in the weather and it probably would look very different at other times at this time of year. In the spring it must be even lovelier which as you know darling is the time we must make our trip when we eventually do do it. But do it we must.

How I long to be with you darling, all the time and every day, it is the only thing I live for, to be back with you in England building up our home into all the things we want it to be, but above all darling to be with you once more so that we are never apart again. I pray for your safety every night darling, for God to bring us back to each other in the very shortest possible time and I lie and dream of our wonderful days together last July and of the even more wonderful days when we are together again once more. All the little things we've done and said together live on top of my heart all the time, strengthen me and make me so terribly happy in their memory and because you sweetheart are my wife. You are everything in my life darling from the top of your head to the tips of your toes, I love you, for your smile, the light in your eyes, your gentleness and charm, and everything that makes you what you are. May it be very very soon now darling, they can't last much longer at this pace and we can at least think in months instead of years. Take care of yourself darling, you're the only wife I've got and it worries me a little when I read about raids in S.E. England.

All my love forever, your own very proud husband, J.

57088 Major J.C. Lindsell, Herts Reg't, No.1, ITD, MEF
6 October 1943

L/C 111

My own darling wife,

Today we've passed some even lovelier sights than ever in still quite utterly perfect weather with a stiffish breeze blowing so it all feels beautifully fresh and more like April than October. The thing that has struck me more than anything though darling is our luck. It's been almost incredible. Four times have we left a place a few hours before a lot of unpleasantness began, in one case having been there a month less a day and then finally in the past few days when we had every reason for expecting unpleasantness and asking for it, we got away with it completely. I'm sure your prayers for my safety have something to do with it darling, and it's such a beautiful and comforting thought that you pray for me every night. Once more darling I had not the remotest chance of attending an early service the first Sunday this month, it was quite the busiest day since July. So I had to content myself as last month with thinking of you going and repeating the service to myself and the hope that the opportunity will come later.

Have you ever heard the old story in I think Greek Mythology of the Siren on the rock who tempted ships to their destruction? I've had a very good look at it through my glasses recently though couldn't find the whirlpool which was supposed to go with it.

The kittens have now started to eat for themselves with numerous accompanying disasters all over the place though I must say they do usually use the door mat! Esme's attempts at training them in this direction being quite negligible so far and to get to the right place they have to negotiate a step which only about two of them can manage properly. The girls are still the worst offenders in all respects and behaving more like squirrels than kittens. But their very innocent china blue baby eyes are what now amuse me most particularly when they are lying on their backs vaguely pawing at the air, fat tummies sticking out and looking as if butter wouldn't melt in their mouths, whereas in actual fact they are either contemplating an attack on one of the others or yourself.

My room has had a spring cleaning without my authority but everything was put back exactly where it came from so I've forgiven them, but remember darling when you start doing similar things, that my shirts being put where my pants were, and collars where my socks were, are grounds for instant divorce for mental cruelty!!

Did I tell you darling that a kind Naval Commander has bequeathed 6 bottles of excellent local wine to me which had been entirely grown and bottled by some monks. It's far better than any of the other stuff and I produce a bottle every other night at dinner to make it last as long as possible.

I'm getting a bit worried about your Xmas present darling as alas we are going away from my mail and anywhere where I can get you something decent. It all rather depends on how long the sea mail takes now. If it's all going the short way next month will be alright, but if not I'll miss Xmas by weeks. And still darling the faint chance remains that we might get the finest Xmas present of the lot by being together. If only we could darling.

All my love forever,
Your own husband, J.

(date not visible, between 6 and 12 October 1943)

L/C 112

My glorious darling,

We are still getting further and further from any hope of getting our mail in the near future but on the other hand the possibility of the miracle happening looms up once more, rather faintly though I'm afraid darling.

Yesterday afternoon I was reading and then about 15.30 something made me look outside. There was a thick cloud hanging low over us and fine drizzle like spring rain coming down and while I looked the sun suddenly came through and a rainbow began to take shape with its nearest end apparently a yard from where I was watching it. Anyway darling I was certainly nearer the rainbow's end than ever before and suddenly thought of the similarity in many respects with the end of the story of Noah's Ark!! The connection suddenly made peace in Europe seem very near. The contrast so suddenly between the dark shadow of the cloud overhanging us like the War and then suddenly the sun coming through bright again played so vividly on my imagination that it seemed that something big and very pleasant must happen. It lasted about ¼ hr and then finally the rainbow went and the sun shone clear out of its blue sky once more. What it is darling to have such vivid imaginations as we have both got, so that out of such natural phenomena we can build up such thoughts making them doubly beautiful to us.

Otherwise darling the past three days have been most uneventful. I've been able to go on with the short stories I told you about once more, played a little bridge and chess, admired the kittens and read a novel by Dornford Yates. The stories I find very absorbing darling but can only do them when the urge comes on me and then the time goes by like a flash. I spend so much time searching in my memory for what were the actual details of the day in question, with the exception of course of the 'fairy story' when everything we did remains as vividly in my mind as if it was yesterday. But the other days, so unimportant by comparison, I have to try to pinpoint the details by thinking of all the people and things and places surrounding them to get them right!

One minor problem I've got is what to do with my poor RSM who is due for repatriation from the ME and must have already missed at least two chances of getting back as he's been out nearly 8 years and must be right at the top of the roster but I can get no one to take responsibility of ordering it in the places we've been, though Bernard Passingham nearly pulled it off. The poor man is nearly half witted about it so now I am going to take the law into my own hands and have him sent back by fair means or foul in the hopes that a letter I wrote to ME about it has a reply authorizing the move waiting for me somewhere. If not, I will probably collect an imperial ticking off!! But I think it's justified, don't you darling. He should never have been sent on the job to start off with! And by now it amounts very nearly to a compassionate case.

But how I wish darling I had the same certainty of getting back to you so soon as he has to his family.
All my love forever darling,
Your own husband, J.

57088 Major JC Lindsell, Herts Regt, '8' Ship's Staff, MEF,
15 Oct 1943

L/C 115

My own darling,

Such a glorious surprise awaiting me here, your A/G 46, so surprising darling because we are at a new place, and so glorious because it's the second letter from you to reach me and was so completely unexpected. I was quite sure we would have to wait several days before any mail caught us up and it was here already. How clever of you darling to have thought of sending me another one to the same address. The way things look

now darling I think it would be best if you send everything to the address I've given above. I'm writing to have all the others waiting for me to be readdressed as well in the hopes that they catch me in the next few weeks.

Yes darling, I am now completely fit and well in every way and there hasn't been the faintest sign of any more congestion since then even though it's now quite cold, down to 70 degrees and less, which after the 80 degrees seems almost freezing. If I get back in the winter I'll want at least two blankets round me all the time as well as normal clothes!

You sound as if you were working too hard once more darling but I'm so glad you can get out a certain amount in your travels round the Coy and enjoy the sun and fresh air in the 'comings and goings' but once more darling promise me you won't overdo it particularly during the coming cold months with fog and frost everywhere and not enough fuel to keep you properly warm.

We will be a pair when we meet again won't we darling with both of us rather damp eyed, so if it's compatible with seeing each other at the very first possible moment it had better be at a hotel or Ma G's flat don't you think darling, but if it is in public darling, like a railway station or a dock, then I expect those around us will sympathize and share our joy and understand and probably be doing the same themselves.

We're in quite an interesting and picturesque sort of place at present darling with what should be some glorious walks in prospect over terrific hills if I can manage to persuade anyone to come with me, probably the MO and the second officer. The town itself is rather dirty but not quite so bad as some of the others we've been to, and the centre part is really rather nice with big white buildings and quite a lot of little parks and open spaces with palm trees and funny brightly coloured flowers in them, shops very empty except for one place where I've bought a pair a rather nice red slippers embroidered with a sort of silver braid which were quite the nicest thing I saw anywhere. I'll send them to you darling and if you don't want to keep them as they are a wee bit large you could send them to somebody for Xmas. I've just had another look at them darling and think that perhaps after all they aren't quite as big as I thought and you could use them for pottering round your bedroom. They're very broad in the beam though darling and would come off very easily. They hadn't got anything smaller unfortunately. The other shops were just empty or had a few very obvious common sort of souvenirs with the name of the place on them and much loved by our allies. There seem to be masses of fish here too darling so if we have an idle time ahead and it rather looks like it, I'll have plenty to do, particularly if we can take a boat out and look at some of the lovely little bays round about with very steep cliffs coming right down to the water's edge, and here and there a little beach amidst the rocks only accessible from the sea. More to follow.

All my love forever darling,
James

57088 Major JC Lindsell, Herts Regt, No 8 Ship, MEF
18 October

L/C 115

My precious,

Such a very malignant rumour came to us the other day and for nearly twenty-four hours my heart was singing with joy, my thoughts filled with the sweet desire and anticipation of seeing you very soon and being able to hold you tight in my arms once more and my mind full of plans to fit all possible eventualities of the happening of the miracle. And then only to find that the whole thing had been started by a fellow officer holding the

same appointment as myself as a practical joke done so thoroughly that even the captain believed it. Terribly cruel of him wasn't it darling and in the circumstances so very unnecessary too; if he wished to see how quickly a rumour could spread surely he could have thought of something else.

Yesterday our signals officer, the second officer, and myself went on a little fishing jaunt to fish in a tiny little bay where the rocks around it are so steep that the deep water comes right up to them. It was quite a job scrambling down to a nice big flat-topped rock we had selected. The water was very clear and there were simply masses of small fish and quite a few big ones as well visible. Our total bag was two very medium sized ones as the result of nearly five hours effort!! I caught them both actually darling just as it was beginning to get rather dark. What amused us though were two local Frenchmen doing the same as us but looking so very typical of their race. A sort of blue dungaree suit, a clay pipe and impossible to mistake for anything except what they were, workmen enjoying an afternoon off. They caught lots of little ones by a variety of most low methods but none as big as mine, so honour was satisfied. This morning in an hour and a half I managed to catch four very nice fish streamlined like mackerel but with a beautiful smooth mother of pearl skin, so I think they must be baby tunny. I'm having them cooked for breakfast tomorrow morning. The boys will be furious with me for not giving them the fish but they had quite enough when we were elsewhere, all big ones too!

As you can gather darling there is little enough to do at present. We managed to dispose of my R.S.M. successfully with the minimum of trouble much to my surprise. I hope to hear from him eventually to discover if he gets back alright complete with wife and family.

The rest of my working time is mainly occupied with persuading the local canteen to part with as many items as possible particularly cigarettes, beer, chocolate, soap and razorblades. The rationing is terribly strict here though darling, far worse than when I left home as they've worked out everything to fractions per person per week in a completely unworkable manner.

The kittens, now they have coordinated their eyes with their movements and then legs, are much stronger and behave more than ever like squirrels and are quite uncontrollable but very sweet. Their house manners are improving too, very gradually, and their greed increases particularly the boys. I do wish you could see them darling.

I'm very intrigued by recent events on the Russian Front and in Germany itself but fear it's all wishful thinking.

All my love eternally darling,
Your own husband, J.

57088 Major JC Lindsell, Herts Regt, '8' Ship, MEF
21 October 1943

L/C 116

My darling,
Events continue to move at a very slow tempo and look as if they will continue to do so for some time to come, but apart from that the possibility of the miracle happening remains slightly brighter and that alone will make up for days of boredom.

The place itself is so very dull, with the only decent officers' club closed down, so after my two mornings in it I now intend to avoid going there at all unless duty calls, and just concentrate on the sea which is always quite lovely, and a few walks over the hills which are full of boulders and rather heathery so you can almost think

that you are in Scotland. So far I've missed the best walks as they have been at a time when the fish are biting very hard! So my MO and the Chief Officer have gone without me making rude remarks both as to my fishing ability and the size of the fish I have caught, and comparing my brain to the fish to the advantage of the fish! However darling when the tides get later and the fish don't bite between tea and dinner I'll be with them and I'll make them walk faster than they want to too!

As usual when in port we spend a considerable time cursing the mail authorities when in reality it is very clever of them that we have any mail at all. But since that first lot there's been none in so we grumble!

The cats between them nearly drove me to murder this morning, first one of them ate all my bait when I was watching my line and there was no more obtainable, and then when I put aside a small fish to use as a substitute for it, Esme appeared from nowhere and disappeared with that too! So there I was left baitless and fishless raging against all cats and Esme in particular. They're overfed too so it can't be accepted as an excuse that they were starving.

We are playing more poker than bridge in the evenings now for francs (1 ¼ d), and so far I've been very lucky. There's one officer who plays who never takes a stroke of exercise, never walks a yard if he can help it and wild horses wouldn't drag him off to step ashore. On top of that he is terribly cautious with his money and simply hates losing, even a few francs, so it is our great ambition always to see him go down. Recently with a great deal of success too and as he loses he grumbles more and more filling the rest of us with silent laughter as we watch him struggling with his hatred of losing a few francs against the urge to try to win it back again.

It really is the cheapest possible existence darling this life and there's just nothing to spend money on and our savings must be leaping. On top of that my command pay is I suppose accumulating at my bank in Egypt where my allowances are paid, so that when I get back there, if ever, there should be sufficient to last me for two months without touching my pay at all! Ignoring the 11 pounds paid to J/Ac monthly there should be another 30 pounds a month accumulating as well to make up the quarterly payments. It is rather thrilling watching it grow isn't it darling, thinking of the things it is going to provide for in the future – furniture, prams! etc and give us a sort of substantial background. I expect we will need it all every penny of it too to make things as we want them to be. How I do long for those days to come darling and bring love eternally.

God bless you and keep you safe always, J.

57088 Major JC Lindsell, Herts Regt, 8 Ship, MEF
24 Oct 1943

My sweet one,

During the past 24 hours I've been very much involved making of all things artificial minnows to spin for bigger and better fish with the Chief Wireless Operator. Inspired in our efforts by the sight of some fish which must weigh at least 5 lbs, both yesterday morning and this morning, with the help of a biscuit tin, some solder, a blue bead, and some bits of wire we've managed to make two beauties which spin like a dream and I'm sure the fish will love the sight of them. It now remains for us to catch one. We tried them out to get our water dynamics right in the bath filled to the brim with sea water. All the time we were making them darling, I was thinking of 'Quiet Week End' when Father and the other fellow sat talking fish and looking at flies, and trying out rods for a whole scene.

I am afraid you may have quite a lot of that in the future darling particularly if Gilbert Ransom comes back to Hertfordshire after the war. He and I used to dash off on fishing holidays whenever we could and since his wife has gone a cropper I should think it is quite on the cards that he will come home rather than stay out there and bring his child with him. He's got plenty to live on and hasn't seen his family for at least seven years.

One other thing darling I made a mental note while we were doing this job was how useful a thing like a soldering iron set would be in the home. It's very easy to work and we'd be able to repair, ourselves, lots of minor damages to things which would otherwise have to be thrown away or sent to an ironmonger to be repaired. Particularly in the dominion over which you will reign darling will it be useful, for pots and pans and other things round the house. And on top of that it would probably be equally good at repairing the toys of JA and MM particularly if we've broken them ourselves as we probably will !!

Still no sign of the main bulk of the mail darling. I'm just longing for it to come and when it does I will be reading letters and writing to you probably twice a day to answer them all and getting up to date with any business stuff that may be amongst them as well. You see darling I'm a Trustee of several people and since the war my interest in the trusts has been very small. But I expect Daddy can cope for most of them as my attorney. It's the one thing I forgot to get tied up in our great and glorious rush of our last few days together.

Above all darling do I long to read your rather 'special ones' which you wrote on our anniversary to answer all the sweet things in them at once before I open any others. Once more darling I wonder how did I ever exist before you came into my life. You mean every little thing to me darling and all my life is yours in this wonderful existence we have started together and will soon continue together. In all my thoughts and actions you are with me darling as I think of you with two steady brown eyes and glorious hair and sweet gentle face just as I first saw you at B.

God bless you and keep you always darling,
All my love. J.

Major JC Lindsell, Herts Regt, '8' Ship, MEF
27 Oct 1943

L/C 118

My own darling,
Still in the same place in comparative inactivity with very little happening.

The big event of the past few days has been the splitting up of the Kitten family and two, one boy and one girl, have gone out into the wide wide world together but in surroundings which will be familiar to them. There was a tremendous amount of heart-burning over it, because everyone had their special favourite who simply couldn't go! Eventually two)were sent and latest reports say they have settled down nicely and are quite happy. Esme, whose more intimate motherly duties have been very light for some time, didn't seem to miss them a bit and is finding the four now left quite a handful particularly if she tries to wash them which they are now fairly capable of carrying out themselves. They are now liable to appear anywhere at top speed but prefer to spend their sleeping hours curled up together in a wicker waste paper basket lying on its side in the cabin in which they were born.

Our public enemy No.1, the ship's steward, is to our immense joy leaving; the new one may be worse but we will at least be able to intimidate him from the very start and have the advantage of knowing most of the low tricks they use to make money out of the troops and to underfeed people by not giving them a proper ration and overcharging for cigarettes and drinks etc. Believe me darling, it is a hard job particularly when the man

you have to deal with cannot speak English very fluently. To keep the last one in control as far as possible, we used to have a row with him about once a fortnight! Did I tell you darling that he more or less tried to bribe me when I came on board? I suspected his evil ways almost at once as a result, accepted the bribes of a bottle of brandy and box of very special Turkish delight in the spirit in which they were given, i.e. if you and I get on well together, I give you lots more like it, and had my first minor row with him two days later on the subject of prices! Realising then that he wouldn't corrupt me and further gifts would be throwing good money after bad, we've been on terms of armed neutrality with frequent incidents ever since! The MO is my fellow sparring partner in dealing with him, and at times we got him pretty scared. Of course when we carried our allies the fights with him over prices were frequent and we managed to keep them more or less level.

I tried my artificial minnow I told you about (see 117) in action yesterday without success but with plenty of excitement. It works even better than I expected it would. I'm getting very worried as to my opportunity for getting Xmas presents in time, it looks as if they'll all arrive rather late unless the chance to buy them comes soon. Chances of the miracle still about the same in fact but in my own mind very much brighter. How wonderful darling if we spent Xmas together at home.

All my love for always,
Your own husband, J.

57088 Major JC Lindsell, Herts Regt, No 8 Ship, MEF
30 Oct (1943)

L/C 119

My very own darling,

Still very quiet and uneventful with lots of speculation as to the future, which I regard with a hopeful eye but tinged with a certain amount of common sense. To my mind everything points to the best possible but there are so many possible slips between the cup and the lip that I daren't be too optimistic. And the thing I am most afraid of is the termination of the appointment before the best could happen.

There has been a fluttering of female hearts in the cat world since the arrival from a neighbour alongside us of a very large and handsome tom who is very male (so much so that he can't sit down for nuts!) and at the same time extremely stupid. Esme I regret to say has fallen for him with a crash but at the same time given him some very good slaps with her paws if he makes improper suggestions and still manages to spare time to look after her kittens. The other feminine cats, about six, regard him with the greatest awe and run a mile if appears near them and are being most coy. They are however not averse to snooping at him around corners from a safe distance with a gleam of adoration in their eyes.

I was very much amused last night darling to hear on the wireless that the Married Women's Association backed by Dr Edith Summerskill has brought a test case in the Courts as to the rights of married women to the money they can save out of their housekeeping allowances! I was pleased to hear that it was decided that the husband was still the owner on the grounds that if a husband knew his money would belong legally to his wife as soon as he gave it her, then he wouldn't give her anything at all and she would have to beg for every single penny from him!! Apparently only female barristers and solicitors were employed on the case. I wish I could have been in Court with you darling listening to it. Edith Summerskill is definitely barking up the wrong tree there. Even if she takes the case to the House of Lords she won't get any change out of them! Altogether darling I regard it as a case of very faulty finance judgement and logic. If they want to kick up a fuss it would be far better to try to get a bill passed which gives the right to the wife to compel her husband to pay her adequate housekeeping allowance. She certainly won't get it if that appeal is allowed.

Al my love forever darling, your own husband. J.

57088 Major J.C. Lindsell, Herts Reg't, '8' ship, MEF
2 Nov 1943

L/C 120

My own darling brown eyes,

The second most wonderful thing that could happen has happened. Yesterday evening about five o'clock my clerk came in and said there are a few letters for you!! Actually darling it turned out to be every bit of my back mail (I'll put the numbers on the back) about 85 of them in all !! So I rushed through them very quickly darling sorting out the wheat (all yours) from the chaff (everybody else's), opened the cable at once (anniversary one darling) – *the anniversary was on July 16* - and then arranged them all by No's and type on my bed. I was so excited darling that it was like a wonderful dream after all these months. Then darling starting with your "not to be opened until 16 July" one and the special anniversary ones, I started directly after dinner with the rest from the beginning and finished at 02:00 hrs this morning!

Darling I feel so full of love and proud that you are my wife that I could burst with joy. I just want to stretch out my arms to you and find you suddenly and miraculously in them And once you are there darling I want to never let go again ever until I've told you all the things I want to tell you about how perfect you are and we've made up these useless wasted months of separation. Dearest never will I ever be able to put in mumbled words how wonderful a wife you are.

(..... *personal*)

As you say darling nobody could have been more deliciously happy in our days and nights together from the time we made our 'date' on the sound sands to the moment we had to part in London. Marriage was far far more wonderful than either of us dreamed darling and each day that passed when we got to know each other better and better in mind, soul and body seemed even more wonderful than the last. What days we have to look forward to darling, days when we can begin to realize our hopes of the future and nights when we can lie once more in each other's arms without thoughts of being parted ever again.

Spring days in the country, hot summer days beside the sea, with you beside me all the time and perhaps J.A. and M.M. with us. Darling I am so terribly glad we married when we did, in the way we did, life wouldn't be a bit the same without the heaven of our days together always in my heart. Darling I must pass on to 121 now to deal with the pressing problems of watch and policy re our house. I have so much to say darling that I can write you a love letter and a more mundane letter for days to come.

All my love eternally, J.

57088 Major JC Lindsell, Herts Regt, S.S. ROHNA, c/o GPO London, Fleet Mail Office
Nov 4 (1943)

L/C 124

My most lovable darling,

We've just been told to use this new address, while deeply suspicious of its efficacy or the speed they will take with that address, I regard it as a favourable sign for the future and the chance of the miracle. It's the address all the ships officers use, and it seems to me that the ME have more or less disowned us by telling us to use it. So dearest you now know the name of my ship and that it is spelt ROHNA and not RHONA!

Nothing much doing the last few days darling which for me have been one long delight because of the mail having caught up. I went ashore for just one visit to buy a new and very expensive fishing line (12/6d) which christened itself very successfully this morning. Fourteen apart from the little ones I gave to the cats.

To hark back to the address for a moment darling, only send quick stuff i.e. L/Cs and A.G.s to it, Air Mails, parcels etc. and anything by sea mail don't send at all until you hear further from me, because the way I look at it now is that either the miracle will occur or the job will finish which would mean a short period at the ITD again followed by a land based job and anything by slow mail addressed here would probably take about a year to find me !!

Dearest I'm so glad that the silk and sweets arrived safely and also the handbag (apparently less its souvenirs!) and that you like them so much. Whatever you've made the silk up into darling, I'm simply longing for the day when I can see you really wearing whatever you have decided to make from it. (.... *personal*)

And here I am now darling with Xmas almost on top of us and nothing nice for you at all because there's nowhere to get anything!! Except the slippers which I think you'll like darling but I'm sure will be too big or you. I've just looked at them yet again and they really are rather nice. (.... *Personal*)

God bless you and keep you always darling,
Your own husband. J.

57088 Major JC Lindsell, Herts Regt, S.S. ROHNA, c/o GPO London, Fleet Mail Office
Undated, between 4-7 November 1943

L/C 127

My own most glorious darling,

I was just thinking with envy this morning of Garry and Edmund and Jane so nicely tucked away in Canada with so little rationing, so remote from the war, and being able to carry on a normal family life even if it is away from home, and wishing that we were doing the same thing ourselves in a perhaps slightly warmer place with a little house of our own from which we went to do our war work every day until the arrival of JA or MM ! And then me only ! Making a little bit of England for ourselves out of some alien country with special attention to the garden.

It would be such a splendid way of whiling away the war wouldn't it darling, but just too perfect I'm afraid to every come true and besides we'd miss something by doing it, that can only be got by going through it and seeing the war through to the end at close quarters. And being filled with the spirit to fight against any possibility of such horrors occurring again. All these long, lonely months apart darling with all our hopes and fears for each other's safety, serve to strengthen us and give us something extra so that we can face them with such utter faith in the knowledge that the coming together again will be a thousand times sweeter and more perfect because of it. As you say darling in spite of us being so many miles apart we are still mentally growing closer and closer in so many little ways. Courage, gaiety and faith darling, especially the last, is such a splendid way of putting it. I wish I'd heard that address with you darling. It must have been most inspiring and comforting. I will pray for it too.

I don't agree at all darling with the person who said that a long separation tends to draw people apart; in peacetime perhaps but certainly not in war, and certainly not when we can write to each other so very often, with all our hopes and fears shared in just the same way as if we were together. Knowing always what we are

each doing and having such a perfect bond of sympathy and trust between us in everything, knowing too that we are with each other in all our doings and thinking the same thoughts about each other all the time.

Darling you ask me to try for a shore job when this one is over, and I promise faithfully dearest that I will do so, and try for something of a similar nature to my last. I've searched my conscience so much darling on whether I was right to throw up my other job in order to try to get a closer view of things, knowing the anxiety it would cause you. Well darling I've got such a feeling of contempt for those people who would do anything rather than see a shot fired in anger and I've seen so much of it in my last job, that darling, and the knowledge that something big was about to come off in which I would play no part if I stayed where I was, and the desire to promotion al played their part. Above al Idarling I think it boiled down to 'what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, if he lose his soul'. I'd have always felt uncomfortable about it darling if I hadn't seen a clear view of things, which is now satisfied. The rumour mongers are very rampant once more darling and I am constantly hearing the most fantastic tales.

I've just thought darling that our ideal way of spending the war from now on would be for us both to be working at the same place at home !! We would still be in it !
All my love forever darling. God bless you and keep you always.
Your own very proud husband, James

57088 Major JC Lindsell, Herts Regt, S.S/. ROHNA, c/o GPO London, Fleet Mail Office
8 Nov 1943

L/C 128

My graceful darling,

(.... Personal)

Yesterday we were soundly defeated at football by our greatest friends and rivals and all the barracking we could do wouldn't change the result a bit. It was played on a mud field and as it had just finished raining it really was mud - very sticky like glue - and they could hardly kick the ball a yard it got so heavy. I wasn't playing darling as I don't like the game and anyway think it's a game which has done a lot in the past to help undermine the national character by the failure of professionals to follow the normal rules of fair play and to take the rough with the smooth without moaning as they do in the most abominable way, to be imitated by all the schoolboys who watch them. However it was great fun to watch and a pleasant change. On to 129.

All my love eternally darling,
Your own husband, J.

57088 Major JC Lindsell, Herts Regt, S.S. ROHNA, c/o GPO London, Fleet Mail Office
10 Nov 1943

L/C 130

My slim and graceful darling,

Still very little of excitement happening but the last few days have in other ways been rather interesting and I've seen something being done that I hadn't seen before so it was a very nice change to watch it all happening and comparing it with the impressions of what I thought happened!

The kittens remain in fine fettle and in spite of their original name selections are now known as Mittens and Master Mittens (the two tabbys) and 'Champ' and Miss Champ (the two tortoiseshells); of the two the Mitten pair are the most playful, but the Champ pair very much more beautiful and with sweeter natures!

(.... *Personal*)

It's getting really cold for some reason darling in the early mornings and evenings but there's still a very nice warm sun at midday and the air is like champagne, particularly in the evenings when there's a moon and the smell of frost in the air. These last few days I've been wearing B.D (*battle dress?*) and pullover most of the time and have increased my blankets by two!!

I've just got hold of a lot of ME Xmas Airgraphs which I don't like a bit but will have to do. They show an Englishman, an American and a Frenchman in conversation outside a thing that looks like a Sheik's palace all looking as if they are trying to see who can tell the biggest story!!

I've just been re-reading John Buchan's 'Mr. Standfast' about the last war darling and in it there is such a terrible lot of the things we so often think and dream about in the future and the way in which the hero and heroine meet. You must read it if you can get hold of a copy darling. I'm sure you'll love it. Buchan will be very good reading for JA from the age of about 10 upwards too.

(.... *Personal*)

All my love forever, your own husband J.

57088 Major JC Lindsell c/o Movement and Transport, GHQ, MEF
11 Nov

L/C 131

My sweet darling,

I am writing under extreme difficulty as Esme has decided she is hungry and is walking all over my desk rubbing her cheek against my pen and writing hand, purring like a steam roller.

Darling as in several letters you have said you wondered so much where I was and what I was doing, I think it is now quite safe to let you know up to two months ago. First darling, last June after my interview with GHQ, I went on board another ship to learn the job and watched the dress rehearsal for the Sicily landings from it at a place in the Red Sea not far from Suez in the most terrific heat. There are so many different types of landing craft darling for different purposes and carrying different numbers, that they take some time to get used to and everybody was trained in loading and unloading them, besides that I had to get to know the interior *economy?* of a ship and all the special forms they like for each trip. After that I disembarked for a week and lived in a transit camp in some discomfort waiting for my ship to arrive which it did on the 26th June.

I joined it on the 27th complete with staff which includes an MO and 8 Medical Orderlies. The next two days were nearly all spent in taking on supplies and attending conferences and collecting more and more orders, some of which were sealed and marked 'not to be opened until after leaving the last port of call'. Also thousands of maps in sealed bags which had to be placed in strong rooms and not touched until the same time as the sealed orders. The security was absolutely superb and I hadn't the faintest idea whether we were going to Sardinia, Italy, Sicily, or Crete, but felt it must be one of them from the way the bombing was going. Suez really was an amazing sight darling with all these big troopships all over it.

On the 30th we moved up to the mouth of the Canal and embarked all our troops by 11am without any fuss or bother and the following morning early (1st July) passed through the canal to anchor for the night at Port Said. The next morning early we left there and arrived at Alexandria about 11 am the following day, where we disembarked all the troops again (except for a few remaining as guards) and they went to a transit camp for fresh air and exercise!! It was awfully efficient as the trucks were already waiting on the quayside to take them away immediately we berthed complete with Traffic Control Police and everything to make it go smoothly. On the 8th July we reembarked them all once more and sailed the following morning and then at long last knew where we were going and that we would either disembark on one of the beaches or at Syracuse on the 12th. Actually darling it was Syracuse left almost undamaged but with the only quay soaked in petrol and burning gently. We managed to get alongside alright though and left the same evening much to our relief as planes were everywhere and we had quite a bit of excitement that night as it was. We went straight back to Alex. and did the same trip once more arriving at Syracuse on the 24th for the second time when the MO and I nearly got left behind after a walk ashore!

Again we left the same evening and passed on to Algiers where we stayed for one whole boring month doing nothing except acting as a hotel for the Navy until we left for Casablanca on the 26th Aug. We arrived there after a very short pause at Gib on the 29th Aug, embarked US troops on 30th left on the 31st, arriving at Algiers once more on 3rd Sept. The night of the 2nd we had a little excitement from the air but entirely harmless and quite spectacular. There we embarked a few more troops and on the 11th left for Bizerte where we arrived on the 13th.

No more room darling, all my love forever. J.

57088 Major J.C. Lindsell, Herts Reg't, S.S. ROHNA c/o GPO London, Fleet Mail Office
13 Nov 1943

L/C 132

My darling,

Now the colder weather is with us we've succeeded in making up the music room into a rather nice little snuggery for after dinner. It's just the right size and has proper curtains and one of those electric fires which are made to look like a real one and six comfortable chairs and a sofa. About eight of us always foregather there directly after dinner to read and write or play bridge or poker. Anyway darling the room is the nearest possible approach to an English room you could get and very nice and restful and peaceful. Of course when we are full we can't use it only for ourselves but it's grand just at present. We always have hot tea or coffee brought into us at 10.30 and then go to bed. Esme and Miss Champ (now getting rather independent) and Sir William the big tom, all arrive with the tea or a bit before and get their share of the milk.

(.... Personal)

Doc and I have had rather fun the last day or two pretending we know what the future holds in store as everybody was being so mysterious about it. The upshot was really quite amusing and nearly caused a row and finished up by the Old Man asking us up for a drink to pump us to see if we knew more than he did!! The funniest part of it was that we didn't even start a rumour ourselves, but the upshot of our own mysteriousness was that two rumours started! Which we've now put right.

I live in eternal hope darling and pray so hard for it each night and at the same time try to curb my hopes from being too optimistic. But all the time darling my thoughts are full of it. I've not mentioned it in my last few L/C's as I don't want to raise your hopes too much either darling. It would be cruel if I did. I just hope that our own great faith and prayers will bring it about.

All my love forever darling.
God keep you safe always,
Your own husband, James

57088 Major JC Lindsell, Herts Regt, SS ROHNA c/o GPO London, Fleet Mail Office
Nov 16? 1943

L/C 133

My poor darling,
How perfectly foul for you having a fatal accident in the Coy with all the accompanying inquests, courts of inquiry and funeral etc, and on top of that having a heavy cold. How I wish I could have been beside you all the time darling to do all the beastly side of it for you. It would just happen that it should be a person whose next of kin you could not trace.
(... *personal*)

As you can probably gather darling I've just received your L/C 83 and 84, your S.M. 1 with the Bible Notes, and A.G. dated 1st Oct. All so nice darling especially with these enormous gaps there are inevitably between the times I get mail. It makes each day there is any very special and each day sort of stands out in my memory
(.... *Personal*)

The Wright family sound a very attractive lot of people darling, I do so like knowing that you have friends near you that you can get away to occasionally to have a really good gossip about old times. I've been dying to be able to do that for the past year now darling, and except for a fellow called John Mann, for a few days, there's really been nobody at all. My present MO and I get on very well together and I like him more and more daily,; he was at Cambridge the same time as me so we do have some pretty good gossips about it. And he too is married darling and has his JA which he is very proud of and talks about incessantly and makes me yearn for the time even more darling when we have our own JA and MM to talk about and be proud of and show off to other people. May it be far far sooner than we dare think darling.

All my love eternally,
Your own husband,
James

57088 Major JC Lindsell, Herts Regt, SS ROHNA, c/o GPO London, Fleet Mail Office
Nov 17 1943

L/C 134

My radiant darling,
I am writing this in the little Music Room I told you about in 132, sitting in an arm chair by the electric fire as it's very cold and using a copy of 'Life' as a rest for the L/C. The MO is sitting opposite me reading and if only it was you sitting there darling instead of him, it would be beautifully homely and snug, just like so many evenings we will spend together in the future.
(..... *personal*)

Darling the uncertainty of my own immediate future has got me very restless and unsettled for the last week or two, particularly that I've now found that wherever we may go it is most unlikely that we will be relieved of the present job for some time. Another fellow tried to and failed so it looks as if this may go on for some time

and only in the event of the miracle would there be any chance of ending it. Not that I dislike the job in the least darling as it is always interesting except in the long delays, but we may fetch up absolutely anywhere before the job finally ends. Still darling as I've said before so long as the job lasts the chances of the miracle remains a possibility which really repays all doesn't it? So dearest I suppose the real reason why I feel so restless is the strong possibility of being further away from you than ever after a really good chance of the miracle coming true. How near it was dearest I will have to tell you in a later letter with the events surrounding it, and now only the very faintest hope remains at the present time which I cling to with all the faith I possess. At times like this darling I do feel you so very near to me all the time, knowing that you are longing for the same thing and that we are both praying so hard for it, and because I feel you so near darling I can keep quite calm outwardly however much I may be seething underneath.

(..... *personal*)

All my love forever darling, Your own husband. J.

57088 Major JC Lindsell, Herts Regt, S.S. ROHNA, c/o GPO London, Fleet Mail Office
19 Nov (1943)

L/C 135

My very own darling wife,

I've just been for a walk along the coast. It was so lovely darling as it was one (of) those days you only get in the autumn, when the sun is still warm but there is a sort of hint in the air of the cold weather to come, a real 'Indian Summer' sort of day. The sea very blue and calm, and no wind so it was just ideal for it.

The M.O. and I sat down half way through it to enjoy it all with the sea washing the cliff below in a little inlet where one or two Arabs were fishing from the rocks and up above us out on the sides of the hill which are very rocky were two shepherds with their dogs and an enormous flock of those funny very active goats that you only see out here. The shepherds had guns with them in the way that one always heard they do in these parts but which I'd never seen before. I suppose to scare off marauding animals and thieves.

When I looked back over the sea darling my mind ran back immediately to two very special scenes. I thought how beautiful it was to think that two of our most momentous days were looking out over the same blue sea. (..... *personal*). Never darling will I forget the magic of those moments, so sweet and full of a feeling of such a happiness as I never dreamed could be.

I thought ahead darling and wondered if our third great moment would be beside the sea as well, on my homecoming and that you would somehow be able to be there already waiting for me.

Darling I'm afraid there may be quite a long gap before you hear from me again and similarly I'm afraid I will have a gap too, which will be even longer. If at any stage it is possible to cable you I'll do it at once and as I am expecting to see some familiar places I don't think there will be any restrictions to prevent me sending them as there are here, if we pause for even a short while. So darling, throughout those long days when you don't hear from me remember that I will be thinking of you and with you in spirit all the time and praying each night for your safety. I love you so much my darling and I live only for the moment when we will be together once more, be it for a few hours or the rest of our lives and I hope so much it will be the second. (... *personal*)

All my love forever darling, Your own husband, James

57088 Major JC Lindsell, Herts Regt, S.S. RHONA(!) c/o GPO London Fleet Mail Office
23 November

My darling,

I had such a pleasant surprise yesterday. I was rather busy early on in the morning and at 12.30 thought I'd just try to see if I could catch a fish before lunch, and had been doing so for about 10 minutes with tremendous concentration when in a dream I heard a well-known voice behind me say 'hello James'.

I turned round and to my delight found both George and Gay Sheppard looking most frightfully fit and well beaming all over their faces. For a minute I couldn't really believe it was true. Wasn't it amazing darling, George had received my letter about a week ago and knew the name of the ship but had of course no idea where I really was and was visiting Gay who was doing some special training with his Coy about 10 miles away. Quite by chance they overheard we were here and immediately shot down to the quay to see if they could find me.

Such a meeting called for a great celebration darling, so I pulled out my one bottle of whisky and one bottle of gin I was keeping for Xmas and we drank first darling a toast to you at their request, which was very sweet of them don't you think darling, and I ducked down to my cabin to get all the photos of you to show them which they loved. Then we drank another toast to Gay's 3rd a week old and to be christened Kiara Penelope and then to all absent friends and gossiped for hours before going in to lunch very late.

They are such grand people and I know you'll love both of them very much. George still remains to be married off and as the only remaining bachelor of the old members of the reg't it is high time he did. They are both very fed up with their present inactivity and are prepared to go to all lengths to be moved somewhere more interesting. After lunch we gossiped further until teatime with me having to keep on dashing out to do odd jobs and then we hitch-hiked into the town and concluded the celebration first in an American Bar and then in the U.S. Officers' Club finishing early at 07.30 as they had to get back by 9.

George is going to send you a cable from a place where it can be done when he flies back tomorrow, telling you he has seen me. The strange thing is darling that in letters to George I always said that we'd meet somewhere in just the region where we are, so dearest I'm hoping all the much bigger things we hope for and write about so often will become equally true with such a certainty and equally quickly. They are both coming again today if they can manage it. It's just like a breath of fresh air darling after months of stuffiness to be able to talk about things past we've enjoyed together and to people with identical interests, hearing all the regimental and home gossip. And altogether darling it is a most unexpected though small compensation for the other far greater disappointment I've told you about.

Gay's wife Eve and George's married sisters are amongst the very first people I will want you to meet darling and we will probably see a tremendous amount of them in the future. His eldest sister Enid in particular is very nice and Joanna's great friend. She has a pair of enormous twins.

Must stop darling, I've just been told that George is on board and waiting to see me in the music room again, and this will definitely be the last chance of getting a L/C to you for a bit provided its posted at once!

All my love eternally darling, Your own husband James.

James is now under orders not to mention anything about the Rohna sinking. LC 146, the first letter Curlie received after the event, doesn't mention anything unusual having happened at all. Perhaps his "feeling most awfully fit right now" was meant to reassure her that whatever the reason for the gap in the numbered letters, he was OK. The only part of any relevance is as follows:

57088 Major JC Lindsell, Herts Regt, c/o GPO London Fleet Mail Office
3 Dec

L/C 146

My dearest darling,

.....

I'm feeling most awfully fit just now darling in spite of the colder weather. My blood has got so thin in the hot weather that now I need nearly all the clothes I have to keep warm with a temperature at round about 50 degrees. Fortunately I was able to scrounge some long pants and a thick vest off my CQM, rather prickly but very warm indeed. If you remember darling I left all my thick underclothes behind when I originally came out here and now wish very much that I hadn't! And on top of that most of my shirts have been ruined by too much rough dhobying with the wrong kinds of soap, so I really must make an effort to renew my wardrobe at the very first opportunity. Still I suppose I will have really plenty of time to do it in.

.....

All my love eternally, your own husband
J.