

17 November 1944

My dear Haze,

I had intended to write you to tell you that I have remarried. Until recently I didn't think I would, but after all I'm still young and I think John would have wished it. Of course there will never be anyone like John – you, of course realise that – but I think most people think it is a good thing, and I do hope you do. The man I've married is Bob Wallis from Auckland, and he is in the Merchant Navy – a grand chap and I feel sure John would have liked him, although maybe that is a strange thing to say. I haven't known him very long but feel sure we'll be happy, and I believe his people are very charming folk. His father went to sea with Val Duff many years ago, so Mr. Broughton was telling me the other day. He is the Marine Superintendent over here of the N.Z. Shipping Co. and he asked me if I knew Val Duff as they all went to sea together.

I was very glad to learn from your airgraph that Patricia has been such an easy child to manage – she certainly must be a happy wee soul. I'd love to see the kiddies – is Robert still like John in some ways? I always wanted a small son who looked like John.

I quite believe Bill has grown up into a fine chap – John always thought he would – and the experiences he has been through in the last few years has no doubt developed and strengthened his character a lot. I was up in Liverpool over the weekend and had hoped to call on Het and Rob, but didn't get an opportunity.

How is Eric? It looks as though he won't be called up at all now if he hasn't been so far – you have both been extremely fortunate Haze.

So glad that Quit's finance is back again – do they intend to marry soon? Certainly I should think they're both young enough to wait several years, but it doesn't seem to be the policy these days to wait very long. Rae I notice is still unattached, but I believe from all accounts she is having a very gay time in Auckland. Hope she is finding what she wants in life, and she will settle down some day. I gather she likes the Americans, and they're fine chaps, but now they tell me most of them have left the country. Marj was in Auckland working for the American Red Cross, but is now in Russell, the Bay of Islands. She seems a different girl now she has her divorce – or rather now it is under way – and I'm so glad she realised in the end that she had married the wrong man.

Everyone has hoped that this Xmas would see peace over this side, but it is not to be. We all hope we'll be back in N.Z. next Xmas though, and I for one will be very pleased to see N.Z. again. We've had a few shells over London and a certain number of flying bombs, but on the whole I don't think it has been nearly so terrifying as the blitz.

I'm sharing a flat just near the Club with Kitty Steffens, the Sec of the Forces Club, and really it is very convenient. Bob has now left for a trip to your side of the world, so I suppose he will be gone for four

months anyway. Kit has just got herself engaged to Scott Wilson, a Wilson of Wilson and Horton, the N.Z. Herald people... nice solid type he is and should make her a good husband.

Do you ever visit N.P. these days Haze? I guess you won't get much opportunity to do so even if you had the inclination, as two babies must make you fairly busy. I hope you're keeping fit? How I envy you all probably basking in the sunshine right now while we're frozen with red noses and cold feet! However, we do get heating and so far there isn't a coal shortage, so we're well off compared with the poor devils on the continent, as I believe the weather conditions are appalling, and our lads are having a lot to put up with.

We're kept very busy here at the Club with different lads coming and going all the time. Our premises are too small now for the numbers using the Club and for the uses to which it has to be put. However, they hope soon to start another one run by the military authorities and that should ease the position. The new one will have sleeping accommodation which will be a welcome addition, as hotel and hostel rooms are very hard to get these days.

I believe furniture is very hard to get in N.Z. these days – is that so? Over here it is very expensive and it seems that only second-hand stuff is available to most people, except newly marrieds etc. who get utility furniture. I should think we have a better choice of clothes though, from all accounts, as we can still get good stuff if we have the money and coupons. Food is pretty plentiful too, and seems to be becoming more so.

Well, Haze, my dear, I am nearing the end of the page. I can but wish you all a very happy Xmas and New Year, and hope I can see you one of these days.

Best of luck and much love, Joan [signed].