

Appendix 5
Letters From Anthony Guise to his wife Joan Guise nee Dibdin and his mother Mater
20th October 1943 to 22 July 1944
After leaving England for India

20/10/1943 REKOO 4685

From Tony **To** Joan

REKOO
APO 4685

[Date approx 20th Oct 1943]

Darling

Sorry I was unable to ring you, but things moved with a rush.

Had a very tiring journey.

You were terribly brave darling... I do hope you will keep it up and get a little used to the whole rotten business of being parted... still there are thousands like us and I was feeling such a frightful cad having the consolation of home for so long – when so many of the boys are fighting.

Am sure that if you can possible manage to travel round with the child... that seeing the odd aunts and so on will help to distract you – and after all it may not be very long before I come home again darling.

God bless you dear, you are in my thoughts always.

I love you.

Tony

Give my love to everybody.

01/11/1943 (19 11)

From Tony **To** Joan

Comment date?

To:- Mrs A. B. GUISE 81 STANTHORPE RD STREATHAM SW16 ENGLAND	Sender's Address:- 217042 Lt. A. B. GUISE RA REKOO (50) 1 BATTALION I.R.T.D. B.N.A.F.
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Date: 01 Nov 1943 [NOTE: the date on the stamp looks like 19 Nov 1943 to me – same as the next airgraph?]

God bless you darling.

[printed on airgraph] CHRISTMAS GREETINGS FROM 'THE
MEDITERRANEAN' from

[signed] Tony

19/11/1943 Airgraph -From REKOO (50)

From Tony To Joan

Comment The ship carrying Tony to India was sunk in the Med.
To find out about Airgraphs -- www.kg6gb.org/airgraphs.htm

19/11/1943 (19 11)

From Tony To Joan

Airgraph

Date: 19 Nov 1943

Darling,

When you answer this, write in duplicate. One copy to above and one to
A.P.O. 4685. I am not yet finally settled.

Have had a fairly comfortable journey: marvellous food and not a bit sick, tho'
many were too ready to die!

Have not space to describe wonder of the sunsets, African nights or quaintness
(horrible word) of the locale; but have wept at its bewildering beauty...

I am desolate my love & lost without you, the loveliness but thinly veils a
black horror of loneliness, & the alien charm tears by bowels with nostalgia...
Courage!! my soul, sooner, perhaps than we dare hope, I shall live again. And
you ma cheri! God keep you!!

Have been, once again, near death... a trifle... but yet another & further love
has been born...

Je t'adore Joan... God bless you and Raoul and keep you safe...

I love you.

Tony



19/11/1943 Africa

From Tony To Joan

Comment

05/12/1943 Airgraph -From REKOO A.P.O. 4685

From Tony To Joan

Comment After ship sunk ! To:- Mrs A. B. GUISE 81 STANTHORPE RD STREATHAM SW16 ENGLAND	Sender's Address:- 217042 A. B. GUISE RA REKOO A.P.O. 4685
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Date: 5 Dec 1943

Darling

Do not send any more letters to B.N.A.F. Am continuing voyage. Imagine this will be the 2nd letter you will receive – all the rest have been destroyed.

Had an interesting stay in N.A. The local wines were dear, but compared to present English prices not fabulous, about one shilling for a large glass of muscatel was the average. Food at times was good, at times bad, tho' varied English, French and Italian.

Went for many long walks over most beautiful hills, very like Scotland but the little straggly white villages were very colonial by contrast.

The local Arabs (really Berber types I believe) are very degenerate, very ragged and seemed diseased – they are extremely avaricious and are making lots of money selling oranges, lemons and eggs – one long hitchhike and walk of mine covered about 200 kilometres and I lived entirely on oranges, raw eggs and a bottle of wine – (shall have lots to tell you one day that censorship will not permit now).

Saw two French films but could only just understand the action. Tried to polish up my French by mixing with the colonials, and with the aid of a dictionary succeeded in buying food & wine but found the French rather patois. The French farmers were the nicest types and always ready for a chat over a bottle, they seem to be having a difficult time.

Gosh darling everything at times is so beautiful and wonderful that it hurts like hell not having you with me to share it. Nothing can be perfect or even fun without you.

Am going to wire you some money soon to put into my bank. You might look into it for me darling – have had a rather expensive time rekitting.

God bless you sweetheart.

I love you!! as ever.

Tony

09/12/1943

From Tony To Joan

Telegram Am fit and well

20/12/1943

From Tony To Joan

[Date is before Christmas 1943 ie about 20 Dec 1943]

[On board Ship]

217042 A. B. Guise RA

REKOO (G)

APO 4685

Darling

Our voyage is almost finished and I suppose we can look forward to a Christmas on terra firma... tho' it may be spent in a train!!

Eagerly awaiting arrival at A.P.O. 4685. There should be two months of mail... provided it has not been sunk. Mediterranean

There is so little to write about at sea that you must think my letters extremely dull... even for me??

A few flying fish, a lot of Seas ... Richard perpetually moans (you met him in the Captain's Cabin) and is continually saying that all he wants to do is to get home... HE doesn't want to fight etc, etc...

Bad in an officer and most dashed boring – I find everybody boring actually and have taken refuge in cheap novels... tho' I did have for a few days an idea that I might put my time to French or something.

However am looking extremely brown and should be well rested.

By the time you get Christmas well over, and you will have had a rather confusing Christmas Card from B.A. [British Africa], of course I am not there now.

I expect that long after it is too late to send you a word I shall remember your birthday... This will arrive just in time for it – if it does God bless you my darling a Happy new Year to you and a speedy reunion to us both.

Will you hand onto the family such information as you get from me from time to time and I will get them to read their letters to you.

How is the settlement of Peter's estate going?? Don't forget to rely on Neil for anything which may fox you.

Shall have a lot to tell you my darling when we land... Meanwhile God bless and keep you safe.

I love you as always.

Kiss Raoul for me. Tony

23/12/1943
From Tony To Joan



26/12/1943 India
From Tony To Joan
Comment Letter No. 1 from India

Dec 1943
A. B. Guise 217042 Lieut. RA
Reserve AA Regt. RA India Command
[received 11.1.1944]
Letter no.1 in India

My Darling

As you see from address... I seem to be in India!! More anon. Received all your letters (4) and Christmas cards (2) from family on Xmas day... Had not of course seen a letter for 9 weeks.

Was not allowed to date letters on board ship. The first letters I wrote I left on the ship when we were torpedoed!! = Between Philippeville and India I think I wrote about 7 letters and sent one cable = Philippeville is the place we stayed at in B.N.A. (British North Africa). Managed to get a little kit there to replace the lost articles but am taking great care not to amass any items of value... It broken my heart to leave behind my field boots and breeches and all those carefully selected pieces of kit, I did not think I could swim with field boots very well!! Anyway am not risking losing kit of any value again... Incidentally I was a lot luckier than any of the other lads... or more provident... because after we were hit I knew it would be some time before we had to abandon ship so I changed into S. dress and put my Sam Browne on (I was the only officer to save his belt and have been ragged mercilessly about it)... I then spent a nightmarish ten minutes trying to select articles of use that I thought I should be able to swim with... do you remember that awful BBC game "What records or books would you choose to have on a desert island, limited to 8 or something". Well my limit was weight.

My choice was the following:
Wallet, Penknife, Razor blades – 1 dozen. Cig. case, Watch, Whaving soap, Handkerchief, Pencil, Hair comb, 3 Toothbrushes, Toothpaste, Brandy flask, razor, 1/4 lb Baccy in a sealed tin and a pipe. I chose my favourite pair of shoes – Shetland socks and a new collar and tie and clean underwear – put all this on with my Sam Browne, S.O. Cap and Life belt... and was ready!!

And that is all I have left of my original kit... But I can still go on parade dressed as I would at Woolwich, in fact ½ hour after we were picked up I had had a bath, shaved found somebody to clean my buttons and belt and was asked by a Colonel if I was a bloody survivor, because I did not look like one!! A pretty compliment but oh!! for all that kit. Ah me!!

India is terribly expensive but I shall have to buy a few things – greatcoat and so on... Am now being paid by the Indian Government, so have made out a bankers draft to pay into Barclays £20 a month. My Indian bankers are Grindley and Co. Bombay and if ever my address is uncertain, you can write to me care of Grindleys. My inclusive pay is 600 rupees a month which leaves me minus income *** ** 290/- or £22 in English money – shall struggle along somehow... am pretty sure that I shall manage on that somehow. Feel much happier now that you say that Peter's affairs are sorting themselves out – all that business was a great worry to me darling... incidentally don't forget the insurance. Letters seem to be reasonably quick by airmail i.e. 3 weeks so I shall be able to help you out a bit. And you can always send a cable.

Before I start on the "Story of India and my Indian Experiences" etc, I had better give you some slang darling and the rates of exchange... am busily learning Hindustani which is what most English people say when they speak on URDU which is the proper name – there is another sort of dialect known as HINDI.

£1 = 13 rupees and 5 annas

1 rupee = 16 annas

1 anna is about 1 1/8 pence

The purchasing power of one rupee is about 1 shilling, but even at that computation things are dashed expensive

Chitapeg = small whisky

Dhoby = laundry man

Char = tea

Wallah = boy

Charboy = sort of bed made of wood and string

Chattie = earthenware bowl or basin

Tiffin = luncheon

Par-tree = water

Bearer = House servant

As I learn more I will send them darling.

Believe we are going to get down to some intensive training – however life is quite easy – you can be shaved in bed, while almost still asleep. Tea is brought round the camp almost continually all day by the Char Wallah in a sort of run with hot coals to keep it hot and he starts the day at 6.30 by bringing you a cup of tea in bed. He sings out all the time "Char Wallah, Sahib, Char Wallah, Sahib". Have an abundance of eggs and oranges both in B.N.A. and here AND in India BANANAS – incidentally they taste just as always – remember them tasting!!

God bless you my darling – my love as always.

Tony

Hand on news to family and read theirs – I love you. Tony.

01/01/1944 From Africa or India

Pencil on ordinary paper

From Tony **To** Joan

Comment Arrived 23 Feb 1944

217042 A. B. Guise RA

REKOO A.P.O 4685

[Date assumed to be late Dec or early Jan because of REKOO address – it arrived to Joan on 23 Feb 1944]

Darling

Mail goes soon so must hurry.

Am laying about eating like a pig – and sun bathing, incredible to think of you in fog and cold and rain... while here it is hotter than an English Summer.

Have read dozens of awful novels and two or three good books of Africa which I devoured.

Inactivity is very pleasant but shall be glad to get down to work again. It's months now since I have commanded anything more than my own spare time and I feel that I am getting out of touch with things – suppose I shall have to start the war soon enough and shall probably look back on this slightly idyllic life with longing.

Almost nothing can I say in the way of news – am feeling very well, but my tummy resents the food occasionally and the lack of exercise.

Heat is making me a little tired but not unduly so. Chief difficulty seems to be colds which I have continuously but which never break – the heat drying them up as soon as they start.

You would love the incredible sea and sky and the soft purple night – but I

have said all that before.

We hear the news quite often on the radio – but have not seen a newspaper for two months – and haven't heard any music since England except Grace Moore singing "One Fine Day" on a lead record. And of course the inevitable dance music.

Most of my companions are absolute morons steeped in an acquired tradition that bridge is the only criterion of human effort... However I have found an ok soul or two to play chess with and for the rest I just read.

Gosh darling the jawing seems interminable and I only hope that when the day comes for me to return that I shall accomplish it somewhat more quickly – you seem to be getting further and further away.

God bless you sweetheart. Give my love to Raoul.

Have not had any of your letters yet but shall pick them up somewhere in a bunch I suppose.

Give my love to everybody at home and forgive the scrappy note have just heard post we could get one off.

I love you

God bless Tony

02/01/1944 India
From Tony **To** Mater

Lieut. A. B. Guise 217042 R.A.
A.A. Reserve Regt. R.A.
India Command
2 Jan 1944

Darling Mater and family

Thank you so much for your Xmas Greetings... did not arrive here until Xmas Eve so found all my letters waiting for me.

So grand to have news after 9 weeks without.

Joan tells me that you are having lots of troubles again – with you own health and money affairs – do hope that everything is alright by now. Events are stale by the time I hear of them. Am consoled by the thought that you usually "pull through" – poor Neil seems to be in trouble too!! DO think that he ought to have that operation. As you will see from the address I am in India... at the moment it is a very marvellous country. Imagine the nicest August day that you have ever seen in England, imagine the nicest hour of that day, a beautiful hazy day, a few puffs of white cloud, the birds are singing drowsily, the trees

just moving in a gentle breeze... Every day... day upon day... is like that here. The dawn is cold with a sharp invigorating tang in the air. The dusk is soft as silk and the evening breeze softly fans one – the sun disappears in a riot of red, the sky the palest of greens. A wonderful climate – in WINTER!! In the summer I believe it is hell!! Of course it is a very dusty day and deserty, but there are quite a lot of trees and in the shade of the bashas (local name for large huts made of matting with straw roofs) it is quite cool! Heavenly in fact. We are under canvas at the moment but quite comfortable... even though I have lost my camp kit... I am pretty adept at camping as you may remember – sleeping under a mosquito net alone is a wonderful experience. Richard hates even the slightest inconvenience, but I have always been a slightly adventurous soul, and snakes, jackals and white ants etc, etc. do not worry me in the least. Of course everything has to be protected from these pests – but that is all part of the game – and when you lie on you charpoy under a net you seem to be completely cut off from the rest of the world – just a tiny unit in a tiny house of white muslin surround by balmy Indian night breezes and gently night noises... at intervals pierced with the sharp cry of a jackal hunting!! and all the time rising and falling in beautiful cadence the whirl of the crickets... A deep sky powdered with stars of eye-hurting brightness and the moon!! Gosh one feels very near the infinite... and now I am just beginning to understand the "Digit of the Moon".

Remember... "Oh thou lovely incarnation of the nectar dropping moon" etc. Soon will come the summer and heat, and I expect disillusionment, probably by the time you get this card, meanwhile I am going to enjoy the winter, learn Urdu.

I have spent a few hours in Bombay – far too short a time in which to do anything, however I did manage to walk round the "Hanging Gardens", "The Gateway to India" and have luncheon... more of that. Quite a lot of one's attention is distracted by the "Beggars of the East"... thousands of them... many children and the bootblacks!! My God in B.N.A. or India if you are walking you just dare not stop, as soon as you stand still, a hoard of quarrelling fighting bootblacks descend upon your feet and start polishing your shoes – fortune tellers grab your hand and start to tell your fortune, vendors buy and sell you anything and everything from photographs of the Taj Mahal to their Daughters, Sisters, or even Mothers, much cheaper but plenty good!!

Except for the slums which are terrible – Bombay is a very clean city and the natives seem contented and smiling... the Ghanies are clean and the horses comparatively well fed. Ghanies and Taxis are very cheap – food is reasonable, some things are ridiculously expensive. Soap 9 Annas, toothpaste Rs3/8, Dettol Rs 4/8, ie Toothpaste in English about 5/- shillings and Dettol about 7/- shillings. Drinks in the mess are good and cheap... only Indian Drinks ie Gin and Whisky... but in the hotels, drink is exorbitant and bad, in the Taj Mahal Hotel one pays about 2/6 shilling for a gin and lime. But even if one avoids the more expensive things one still seems to spend a hell of a lot. I've spent so far about £20 in India – £16 in B.N. Africa and quite a lot on the ship. Even though it was dry – Ugh!! However, that is only £20 a month, therefore within my income and of course I have some kit to buy. However, India seems a dashed expensive country.

Oh yes the meal at the “Taj Mahal Hotel”

Fish liver Hors d'oeuvre

Soup – clear

Fish

Entrée Mutton and Potatoes

Indian Dish Curry

Salad

Sweet

Fruit, cheese and biscuit and coffee

All this at one of the most expensive hotels in the country and it cost less than 5/- ie in English money 7/6 but by buying power actually about 5/- shillings.

And yet, I bought 2 sixpenny tins of boot polish, a 3d tin of Silvo, a bottle of Dettol, a tube of toothpaste, and 12 razor blades and this lot cost me £1.0.0...

A fantastic Country... soon I am spending some leave time in Calcutta... will let you know what it is like.

God bless you all – all my love Tony.

03/01/1944 India

From Tony **To** Joan

Comment Letter no. 2

<p>To:- Mrs A. B. GUISE 81 STANTHORPE RD STREATHAM SW16 ENGLAND</p>	<p>Sender's full name and address:- 217042 A. B. Guise R.A. A.A. Reserve Regt. R.A. India Command Letter no. 2</p>
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Airgraph

Date: 3 Jan 1944

Darling

“Do you have bacon & eggs every morning??” ... “No!! We can't always get the bacon!!!” Gosh... eggs, oranges and very tough chicken... staple diet of the European. But really the food is good... However, I seem to be always talking of food.

30 miles or so away is I believe tiger country but have not had the time to get out there yet... However, the jungle mountains look absolutely marvellous... So long as this weather holds, I cannot find fault with the country.

Am going to Calcutta soon to buy a trinket or three – they will not arrive in time for your birthday... hope this letter does. “Many happy returns darling”. May there be many more when I return.

How you would love the evenings & nights here... lying under a mosquito net... completely isolated from the rest of the world... alone in a sea of muslin, with the twittering of crickets, croaks of frogs & howls of jackals. The sky is too perfect at night... the stars & moon unimaginable. Gosh darling... as soon as the slightest chance offers itself you must come out here... you'd love it all; the funny little railways stations – with 3 restaurants each – one for whites, one for Muslims & one for Hindus, & the twin water fountains or jars marked MUSLIM...HINDU – they will not drink from each other's water jar. Or rather the Hindu will not drink water contaminated by Muslims!! At the stations you can always get a meal... the “boy” travels with the train if you are not finished – and tea! Ye gods... the boys will wake you in the middle of the night when you are travelling with their “Char-wallah Sahib” & “fruit wallah”, “cake wallah”, “paper wallah”. India is a nation of vendors and beggars – bootblacks & bazaar loungers – when they get the chance!!! Of course, the vast majority are very, very poor peasants... hard working rice growers, etc...

God bless you darling. More when I have been to Calcutta... I miss you very, very much – have not had any letters for a long time, s'pose there is a hold up. Please exchange news with family – I try not to duplicate.

I love you Tony.

09/01/1944 India
From Tony **To** Joan
Comment Typed Up

A. B. Guise 217042. R.A. Reserve
A.A. Regt. RA, India Command

9 Jan 1944 [received 26.1.1944]
Letter no. 3 from India

My darling

Two weeks since any news from you Dec.3rd was the last. ie. 4th letter – the copy came from BNA 2 days later. I expect there is some hold up of mail. Do hope you are receiving my scribbles.

Believe I forgot to tell you anything about our Christmas and New Year... well we had a duck!! and that was about all. Very quiet – Had a drink to every bodies' wives and families in the New Year and got quite drunk on poisonous hooch on 3rd Jan just before going to Calcutta... Am now definitely on the wagon. For a few months... can't afford it and the hangovers are ghastly... had one drink in Calcutta only. Did not do much shopping – am trying to “make do” on the minimum of kit.

“It is very difficult darling trying to answer your letters... the information will be 6 weeks old when you get it... however I will try and answer as intelligently as possible, and comment on your last 4 letters.

You ask if I am able to give any details of the voyage... the answer is no, all that will have to wait until we meet again...

Next darling you speak of the “Power on the Spirit”. I am sure that in no special sense am I very religious or even more so than you – when I say I shall always be with you “in spirit” – and I really AM. I think that this is really love... certainly a lot more love than religion – however I may be a little bit calmer about things in general because we believe in obedience to the divine will of God... explicitly! sort of Kismet!! I suppose – though there is no “fatalism” attached to the emotions – I should not worry too much about not being able to open up your heart to me. No woman has ever yet completely revealed herself to men. And it is because I know quite a lot about your search for religious expression and your general dissatisfaction with your present religious experience that in the past I have adopted such an uncompromising tone when we argue – you might as well get your dogma right from the very beginning!! You give yourself away terribly my darling – when you say quote

“I went to church on Sunday, to pray for you, and to try and get nearer to God and to you. But I really might as well not have gone or so it seems.” unquote. What a crushing indictment of your Church!! what a barren religion!! No comfort... unless you argue that you were probably not receptive or something – you went in the right mood – questioning – and NOTHING. The emptiness is within yourself darling. You are seeking as so many are, you like so many others have not yet found the answers. You know something is wrong and yet you cannot put your finger on it and with all you are a child of tradition and cannot break with that tradition... Ah me! One day darling – but no argument of mine will avail – one day you will find that TRUTH and faith which is so necessary to we poor mortals – an Anchor without which life is meaningless and much, much, too difficult.

Next... Reigate, so glad you went darling. It must have done both you and Raoul a lot of good – when he is a little older you could perhaps take him to Meols – though it's an awful place...

I have written to Neil.... Poor soul but soon I suppose he will be out of training.

About your teeth – please make quite sure that you have SOME left by the time I return.

Don't bother with presents darling they will probably be sunk anyway. Save then up for peace.

Re Income Tax... I will forward the necessary authority if you will let me have their letter – incidentally I have to pay tax this end too... about £3.0.0 a month, nuisance isn't it.

Note that you have bought the following... cot and mangle.

Expect that in every letter I shall continue to “note that you have bought the following”. However a mangle will be dashed useful. Gosh how you would like washing out here... I wash my own hankies, socks, and underwear... the dhoby ruins them... all you have to do is wash and rinse as usual and rinse and hang out to dry and in 10-15 minutes later take them in bone dry!! I washed my silk hanky the other day and it dries in 15 minutes. The air is wonderful and very dry. Incidentally the dhoby charges Rupees 1/12 a week and you can send as much as you like... and do I use that service!! K.D. does not look nice unless it is absolutely clean and starched... am so sorry that I lost your mother's camera – I am sure you would like a snap or two. The camera was locked in the orderly room so I could not get at it... in any case I thought that the ship would be saved and that I should have to go into the water – that is why I left the photographs behind darling... Can you do something about that... Send one of you and Raoul please (separate photos please).

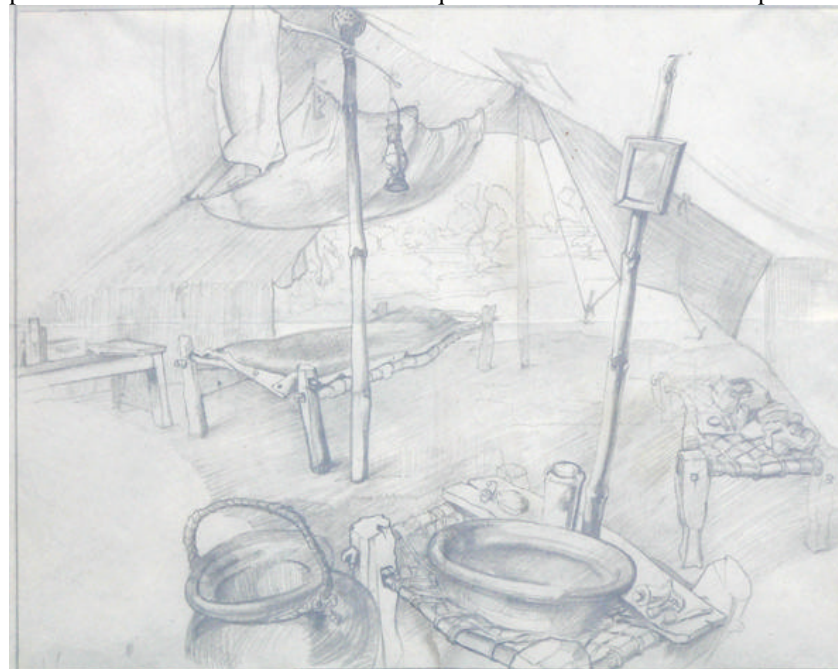
Have written to Doreen – I think that clears up all the points you have mentioned to date. Have sent you from Calcutta under separate cover the following items... you might check the items to see that they all arrive...

- 1 carved cigarette box
- 1 Benares brass cigarette box
- 1 Benares brass ash tray
- 2 Horn Storks
- 2 Ivory elephants
- 1 Ivory necklace
- 2 Ivory bracelets
- 1 money bracelet
- 1 small ivory figure

They are just little curios darling. nothing outstanding in workmanship or design... except the storks which are lovely even these sort of things are quite expensive... I cannot bother to bargain too much. I get so annoyed with the interminable bargaining that I state a fair price and if the vendors will not accept I walk out... to their annoyance and mine!! All the good stuff here is English or American and you pay the earth for it... the craftsmanship of the hills men and tribal people may be good – the Chinese certainly is – but on the whole the industrial revolution in India has killed craftsmanship and the appreciation of fine things. YOU know I am somewhat pernickety about quality – leather, metal, etc, etc. well the local produce is just damn shoddy – the leather is terrible the metal rough – the cotton and other material frightful – there seems to be no pride in craftsmanship. Am most disappointed – especially after seeing some of the things produced 100 or so years ago – However if or when I get up into the hills I may have reason to alter my opinion.

Just had rather an amusing experience. Showed the enclosed sketch to a man who dabbles a bit and fancies himself... he praised the drawing and started to give me some advice!! He is the merest dauber and I hate putting him “out of face”... so I told him as kindly as possible that I was a genius!! If you soak the enclosed in water and put it on a flat sheet of glass or something the creases should come out. The enclosed is not brilliant or even good but I have conceived the notion of sending to you little sketches of my life and so on; so you are a little more in the picture as it were and perhaps with practice... if I have the time... I shall get some of the old cunning back – it must be nearly 10 years since I ever so seriously put pencil to paper and of course pencil or crayon were not my forté... but of course the colours I brought with me are with the fish – incidentally I haven't got an India rubber and only two HB

pencils... not even a black one. However a word of explanation darling. And please don't be too critical of the technique or the lack of it – I shall improve.



The thing is the interior of my tent – on the extreme left is a form on which I keep books and a tin box of writing kit. Next is my charpoy or bed ready made for the night – above that a mosquito net tucked up out of the way – a towel and a hurricane lamp is hanging on the stick – my suits also hang there – out of sight. On the right is a small charpoy on which I keep my boots, hats, cleaning kit and clean change – in the foreground is “the bathroom” a chatti (bowl) resting on a very small charpoy, a chunk of wood and a mirror – the other chatti is for carrying water. These chattis are of red clay very lightly baked and very fragile... the first time I used one, I bought one about 20 inches across, filled it with water and stood in it – and it just disintegrated around my feet and the water soaked into the ground leaving me standing in the mud. How I long for my canvas bath – I manage pretty well by getting my bearer to pour water over me – oh! I forgot these chattis are so porous that they are perfect refrigerators, so the water is always ice cold. – the hotter it is the colder the water gets... lovely...but in the cold mornings brrrrh... it is cold. Afraid the landscape is not very interesting but hope to send you some more.

Incidentally the springs of the charpoy are ropes woven together which hold the whole bloody thing together!! Quite comfortable though.

And now I expect you want to know something of my three days in Calcutta – but it's 1830 – (1300hrs at home) and I must change for dinner... You will just be having luncheon and feeding the brat or perhaps you will be with the Mater... It is Sunday.

Have just come back from dinner... to my tent. The night is divine, the moon full and so powerful it is almost light enough to read and write. This is the perfect part of the day, the evening... about 1800 the sun is setting, the air cools, the birds sing and everything is touched with rose pink – it is then that I strip off, wash and shave and have buckets of icy water poured over me till one feels all the sweat and dirt and tiredness leaving one's body and one is getting colder and colder, then a brisk towelling and the shin glows... touch one's toes once or twice – powder all over – scalp massage and into clean clothes laid out. The sun has disappeared the night is cool and one is clean and vigorous. Gosh! It's terrific. Dinner though adequate is something of an anti-climax – Peace!! After dinner I usually go to the camp cinema – euphemism – still you see a film of sorts in an almost open air basha and it only costs RS 1/- . If I stayed in then I should have to drink – that's all there is to do – and I cannot stand the racket... But tonight instead of going to the films I tried out a new idea... managed to get a table and form from the “Q” SO have lighted my hurricane and returned to my tent to finish this letter. And its jolly pleasant... the crickets are chirping away and the Indians are singing down in the village. The lamp is casting a pleasant lovely glow over the tent – tomorrow I must try and get a tablecloth made by the tailor and a pot of flowers!! Oh yes we have a tailor (of sorts) even a bootmaker too – in fact its quite like a little village. Miles away from anywhere (except Indian villages which are too small to have shops)... the little shopping centre has a canteen, a hairdresser and masseuse, tailor and bootmaker and a “general shop”. All in tents and bashas with a little garden in the centre. I would love you to see it all as I see it – but I should think it is a wartime measure only – I am quite clever in making myself comfortable in a tent, I expect you will have to get used to the idea darling, when we roam about the world. If only I had some books; but dare not encumber myself with baggage – when we go into the jungle must have the absolute minimum... and I intend taking just one ant proof tin box – the white ants are an absolute pest as you will have noticed in my sketch – there is not one pair of boots on the floor... the ants would eat them in no time – everything has to be raised on bricks – but I have ant proofed the legs of my charpoys and put everything on these... Talking of proofing... I have indulged in a most useful extravagance... a jungle watch... I dare not take my fob watch into the

jungle as it not damp proof... so I bought while in Calcutta a waterproof, dustproof, shockproof, non-magnetic non-rusting watch – it also has several dozen jewel and a guarantee. – I would like you (just for fun) to enquire the price in London – it is a TISSOT AQUASPORT (best model) – I got it for 180/- Rs which is at the rate of exchange £13-10-0 and in actual buying value or power about £9- - In England I believe it would cost about £30 or more. I you could buy it. It is an absolute beauty and has up to now kept good time, (I believe – we never hear a radio) I know £13-10-0 sounds a lot of money for a steel case watch but really 180 chips is not a lot out here: you can pay 65 chips for a very inferior Parker fountain pen and the very cheapest costs 35 chips. I think I will keep Calcutta for another letter – it's not much of a town... except for the food... in the midst of a famine too. Ye Gods what food!! Shall write you a whole letter on food alone... and one on colossal great whopping cream buns!! And Dutch pastries!! and ice cream!! 'Fraid I shall make you very envious – gosh there goes the jackals – time for bed – I miss you my sweet terribly... All this experience is nothing but a most poignant reminder that you are not with me to share it all – its beauty and its ugliness – the soft balmy nights and the fierce days – what a country of lovers this must be... at the moment it is the wildest and most stirring weather... that moon!! Gosh darling you must come and see... it's... it's VIVID!!

I pray that we may not be separated too long... I fear some what. It would be only too natural if you tired of waiting, and yet I seem so near to you. When I censor the men's letters here I realise how lonely everybody is... and what trouble some of them have!! Fully 50% have faithless wives... a percentage with other men's children too – yet they are very forgiving – I suppose I should be in their place – IT must be a long wait for the women – curiously enough all the men I went to Calcutta with remained absolutely faithful. I found with something of a shock that there were many determined men like myself who were going to remain celibate... that was something of an eye opener and is I am sure quite a modern notion – in that state of unanimity – I always though that man regarded himself as polygamous. IT has taken war to prove it otherwise. Perhaps the world is a little more refined – less course – or more decadent!!!

God bless you my darling – Pray for me a little – Am sometimes very lonely, am with an alien – shall be glad to start work.

I love you sweetheart – most embarrassingly!! May God protect you.

All my love as always – now and forever.

Tony

15/01/1944 India
From Tony **To** Joan

A.A. Res. Regt. R.A. India Command
Sat 15th Jan 1944

Letter no.4 in India

Darling

The above address will I think be the best at the moment... If you are in doubt Grindleys Bank Bombay will always find me. Have had no word or news from you for 3 weeks.

The last I received was just before Xmas letter no.4 sent on 3 Dec. Everyone else has had stacks of mail... I suppose there is some hold up.

Have a smell (temporary I imagine) of command as OC a transit camp. IT looks quite fun though miles away from anywhere – however I have a 15 cwt Chevrolet as my personal transport and sufficient petrol... and my person needs a lot of transporting. Have lost of course my old British servant – and acquired an Indian bearer... we seem to be getting along very well together – somewhat hampered by the language difficulty.

I have only two blankets and he told me that I should be very cold at nights... I made several boastful gestures indicating that I was pretty tough... I have a very large tent to myself and the night breezes did fairly whistle around... so I took the truck out this morning and bought myself a warm mattress... my bearer fairly rocked with laughter when he unloaded the thing and I tried to tell him that I hoped he was happier now that the Sahib was more comfortable... I had to give up after ½ hour he just would not understand... It is very strange because the few things they do learn off by heart they speak absolutely perfectly... Its damned curious to have a man who comes and says in polite English “What time will you take tea in the morning Sahib?” and yet does not really understand a word you say in answer except “at 7.30” or something like that – I am going to get him to teach me Urdu.

I have here a sleeping tent an office – a dining tent an ante room or more tent and a bearers tent... all pretty well to myself – and a warrant officer to run the whole shoot!! Shall have to think of something to “justify my existence” – I usually can!! And there are always thousands of buttons I can amuse myself with instead of sending them to the tailor. It is amazing how many the Dhobi breaks.

Did I ask you, darling, to get an a/c from Barclays for me... I have claimed £100 kit allowance and am not sure whether it has gone to Barclays yet or

not... money is pretty meaningless out here, chaps get into debt to the Field cashier by thousands of rupees – nobody seems to mind... In fact I believe there must have been a scandal about keeping penniless officers short or something because they absolutely throw money at you!! Not that I’ve ever got any!!

However would like to know that you are ok at home... with the odd quid or two in my a/c to tide over here and there.

Am feeling absolutely fit tho’ I think I am slightly overeating... cannot take a good deep breath in my S.D. it creaks! Simply love the freedom of movement permitted by K.drill...

Shall send you a little sketch of my camp in a day or two – my day I imagine will be something like this...

7.30 hrs morning tea – shave bath – 8.00 hrs breakfast – 9.00 hrs shall probably every morning drive truck into rations because I like it... 11.30 office work!! 12.30 tiffin 13.30 hrs siesta until 16.00 hrs (reading sleeping studying etc) 16.00 hrs tea 16.15 hrs a walk around my camp – inspection etc – or maybe just a walk... I may even do some gardening or play a game or write some letters – 18.00 hrs bath and change for dinner – God only knows what I am going to do after dinner!! Don’t be dazzled by the bath... I have 4-gallon tins of water (non-returnables) which are icy cold and solemnly upset over me by my bearer – with some soaping in between.

I rigged up a beautiful shower at the reserve camp but did not use it much... Incidentally my bamboo washstand (for use in jungle warfare) is perfect and has set up a fashion in Caroc, Lococs, or what have you rustic ware.

My bearer is patiently standing by those tins of water and I feel he will spill them over me as I write if I do make a move – God bless you sweetheart... I love you terribly and anxiously waiting a letter – not a line from a soul for weeks.

Give my love to Raoul and to everybody and pray for me a little.

Good night Sweetheart

Tony

23/01/1944 India
From Tony **To** Joan
Comment 5 Letter in India

A.B.Guise 217042
A.A. Reserve Regt RA India Command.

5th in India
Sunday 23rd Jan 44

Have been thinking of you, today darling!!
Hope you had a pleasant birthday. Am still in my small command... and with my usual genius for employing myself busily in the army have found plenty to do after all my programme lasted for about 3 days... then I started... was told I was going to have 1000 Indians and 100 British soldiers to look after... plus 20 officers – that's about 3 times as many as the camp will hold. Everything had to be done from the word go! Latrines dug – tentage kitchens. Gosh – and the water difficulty is immense – every drop of water is brought 20 miles and only had one 200-gallon truck. It has had to work, day and night, for the last week. No officers mess here and only a mess tent; so I cleared out a basha about 18 feet x 12 feet and converted that – spending about 120 chips on it. Had a wonderful time buying cretonne curtains, tablecloths, tables, chairs, lamps, drink, everything... Had the whole interior whitewashed and the floor with red cardinal polish and then painted murals on the walls. Very difficult as the walls are basketwork. Then I made an electric standard lamp out of a lemonade bottle and a car battery and for a lampshade I used cartridge paper soaked in dieselite (made a good shade too.) The whole thing with coolie labour took about 2 days and I had a lot of fun – the carpenter is building a bar for me and the bricklayers a sundial in my garden!
Don't suppose I shall stay here very long but when – so cannot hang about doing nothing.
Found my cook stealing eggs and selling them to the soldiers. So threatened him with my knife and kicked him hard – hate doing this but it is very difficult to make them understand that they must not steal. My Sergeant Major is leaving so I shall have a lot more work to do. Had a wonderful experience yesterday – laying on my charpoy in the afternoon I suddenly heard a pitta-pat on the tent roof... It was raining – absolutely lovely – and the divine smell of the ground as it drinks up the rain. And then everything seems to look a bit greener and a bit cooler... Though it is not yet uncomfortably warm – in fact it is winter – the breezes are beautiful too, just little gusts of fresh air that stir the

trees and the dust and then warm stillness again. Only the flies are a pest and am taking very strong measures about those monsters.
Manage to take a liberty run 2 or 3 times a week and go to the pictures at the club... If only I had some clubs here I could get a game of golf. And if I could play tennis there is every chance of a game.
Did I tell you that I had a badminton court built – the coolies only took two days over it and we get a very good game in the evening though our rackets are of very poor quality
Am now nearly 5 weeks without any mail from you my darling... have almost given up hope!
Had a narrowish squeak with my ghani and nearly killed a calf... they do wander about the road so... and the Hindu would much sooner you killed a man than a cow!! I felt a bit warm but with a terrific skid and effort I managed to miss it... Phew!! Plenty of dogs are run over, they do not matter and nobody troubles to pick them up... they are just left to rot in the road... it is rather queer... but you just could not persuade anybody to voluntarily take the effort to dig a hole and bury a mere dog. Of course if I asked the headman of the village to do it they would make some comment on the mad English and get on with the job... but they would not think much of me for worrying about a dog.
Have found something new to do. Saw a lot of mud and to my joy it turned out to be clay – so I put 6 coolies on mixing it with water and grinding it up, so that I can do some sculpture. They do not know what I want it for so – think I am mad making such a fuss about a lot of mud.
Had a game of golf last night – the Indian golf course is really extraordinary but quite fun though of course I was pretty awful – golf balls cost about RS 100/- a doz. i.e. 2 weeks' pay for me.
Gifar, my bearer, is a Muslim and very shocked with my pictures of dancing girls in the mess walls i.e. the murals – and my clay modelling depresses him no end... neither Hindu or Muslim ever expose their genitals and are very insulted if anybody does... this makes bathing quite difficult and a bit of a comedy...
Give my love to everybody darling. God bless you... write soon.
I love you, Tony.

05/02/1944 India

From Tony To Joan

Comment 6 Letter in India ---- date given as post mark

Guise 217042 224 I.A.O.D. India Command

[No Date but postmarked 5th Feb 1944]

Letter no.6 in India

Darling

Above is the address I have had for last two weeks. You might write one or two letters here but do not anticipate staying long.

Am writing in the early morning (sic!!) 09.00hrs and it is as cold as charity though towards midday it will warm up to about 70 deg or so... it does not exactly freeze at nights, but the drop in temperature is terrific. Am in a place where one Indian craft still survives i.e. the making of silver ornaments – they are quite crude and intended for the village people... but they are genuine and I am going to grab some for you – it's amazing how much money one can spend in these sort of things... If there was any chance of being here for months I would buy a horse... and have a lot of fun!

Have raised Cain about my mail and have discovered that there are three letters on the way – about time too – it is six weeks since I last heard – and am longing to hear what sort of Christmas you had and what you are both doing. Have just received your letters – (unnumbered) nos. 6 and 7 I guess of the 27th Dec and 1 Jan.

Great news Neil's discharge and getting job so quickly too!! Am glad you are exchanging letters. Cannot understand why my last letter is only 5th Dec. Of course I did not keep a count before coming to India but there should have been a cable from Suez and a letter from Aden: a Christmas card from B.N.A. besides the other letters, but of course by now you will be getting my mail from India, so everything should be ok.

Surprising but I don't seem to get an awful lot of time to write.

People are always asking me if I am lonely and bored with nothing to do... but I always find something. At the moment my camp is very rugged with lots of ditches and odd stuff so I have 60 coolies levelling it all out and planting grass and transplanting trees and shrubs – funny thing, wherever you go in India and find Englishmen there you will find some attempt to battle with the Indian sun and make some English greenness and an English garden.

Even I am, without any prompting, bitten with the bug – the sun is a sort of challenge – and one goes to extraordinary lengths to combat it. I am going to dig a well and have the lawn perpetually flooded with water and see if that won't make it lush. Then the sanitation and mosquito and fly war is quite fun –

in fact I probably find this life interesting because it is a continuous war... against flies, mosquitoes and the sun!!

My car broke down in the village yesterday and in a trice I had a Sepoy a Havildar a Sikh, a Jungle-wallah and a village boy all trying to put it right – within ½ hour they had my car in pieces all over the road. I did not think that they would be able to get it together again. However with repeated “Thie hari's” (That's ok) and much hitting with large hammers the whole thing was blown and cleared and shaken until it fell together again – then came the great moment “the Sahib will start the Gari” I got in very imperiously and of course nothing happened. The disappointment on their faces was pathetic, so mercilessly caning the starter I pushed and pulled and pumped everything... until with a hideous roar the thing broke into life – Gosh the smile and congratulations “Bahnet Achhahha” (very good) “Thie hari” and the whole works!! Then came the great moment “Bachsheesh” [Baksheesh = gratuity]. Giving pice [India coin] to the mob, I gave 4 annas to the Sepoy – but being a soldier he blushed and did not want to take it – 4 annas each to the village and jungle wallah who salaamed and 4 annas to the old Sikh. They consider themselves the elite of India and some are – but not usually above taking bachsheesh – however this one with very haughty gesture gave his pice to the village lad – gosh I did blush.

Goffer (my slave) was very naughty yesterday... he thought that my meals were very uninteresting I suppose and he thought he would enliven them a bit any way... last night I was horrified to see that I was eating duck... so I asked my Sgt. where he got it from... he disclaimed all knowledge but that Goffer had asked him if he might kill one of my ducks – of course he told Goffer to go to the Sahib + and the wretch had not asked me!! So I called him in “Bearer, this is a very nice duck where did you get it?”

“I found it and killed it Sahib.”

“Bearer where did you find it?”

“(He smiles and teeth!!) I found it in your duck pond, Sahib.”

“Goffer (sternly) you have killed one of my ducks, that is not good; Always you must ask first.”

Goffer just blushed and hung his head on one side – like a coy girl and looked so miserable that I had to dismiss him and roar with laughter.

It was a good duck but I had only just begun to fatten them and their eggs are beautiful... chickens I cannot keep but have several geese.

I hear my coolies in frightful argument – they think the job is impossible but with characteristic sang-froid are getting on with the job – after all they know all the English are mad so they might as well humour them.

God bless you sweet heart.

Tony.

07/02/1944 Transit Camp India
From Tony **To** Joan

7 Jan 1944 = 7th Feb 1944
Guise 217042 India Command

[the date of this letter must be 7 Feb 1944 as the post mark is 16 Feb. and it was received 15.3.1944]

Letter no.7 in India

Darling

Have just had two letters from you at the same time – no.7 in which you quote the i/tax muddle and no.8 in which you answer my first letter sent from India... it must have taken 16 days which is not too bad. I received yours of the 11th about 6th. But then of course it was re-addressed.

As you will see I am still at my little job at the transit camp. NO word of any posting yet, but I suppose it will come some time. Now some business:

1. You promised to send me the income tax people's letter and reference no. and have been waiting that... However enclosed letter to Llandudno which you can address and send on. The money can go into Barclays.
2. In no circumstances put money into Barclays for me darling I do not need it and you do.
3. Am glad Martin is clearing up the whole issue at last!! I think that property will be so valuable after the war that I should hang onto those Whittaker Road houses like grim death.
4. Uncle Rex sounds quite an interesting old cove. Is he a Catholic by the way – hope I meet him sometime.

I think that is the end of letter 7. Incidentally you are not numbering them now. Now for letter 8:

1. My financial position is always rocky... but really not more than usual. Your figure of £2 per month is all rubbish. Actually it is £20 or so but out of that one has to save for leave which costs £100's and £20 is worth about £14 spending power.
2. Actually in sending home £20 per month there should be a small balance of £25 per year plus any monies I send home from time to time. So please do not worry about me.
3. I did not forget toilet rolls! Did I not tell you I was assigned to a raft and that means swimming!! Soap would soon melt – the raft was like those heavy things you saw in the Noel Coward film "In which we serve" – fortunately at the last moment a boat came and took us off but it had no

oars or anything – the propeller choked with wreckage – so we just drifted until a little 14 footer came and fetched us – actually that was one of the exciting moments jumping across several feet of deep, deep sea from a 20 foot life boat to a 14 footer, the swell was so terrific that the relative movement of the boats was about 10 feet – one being so much smaller than the other. So we waited until the lifeboat was on top then jumped down – almost as easy as that!! What wasn't so easy was jumping from a 14 foot boat on to a 23000 tonner of course the little craft was at times nearly under the keel of the ship and the next moment 20 foot above up to the port holes. When it came to my turn to jump, I just managed the bottom rung of the iron ladder... a poor do. Several men were lost by being crushed between the boats and the ship.

But enough of this – am wasting paper. Damn my nose is bleeding again and my blood is much too rich for this climate and my nose is always bleeding also I am coming out in heat bumps!! Similar to ones I had as a child... and I am feeling really irritable – the night is so close we are in for a storm and more rain – the clouds are frightfully lowering.

Gosh even as I write the cold night wind has just come... Rain any moment now!!

Your new coat sound very nice darling... always said that severe clothes and cut and style suit you very well.

Expect it will be worn out by the time I see you next. What is this terrific propaganda about the war finishing by Christmas 1944... When we entered Italy I said it would take at least a year to drive the Germans out of Italy... am sure it will and then what about the Japs we have not even started yet. However let us hope and pray.

Great work Neil being out of the army. I must write and congratulate him.

Glad the Cufforths are returning... remember me to them.

Although at the moment I am liking India immensely yet I have had two I suppose typically Indian experiences more or less unpleasant. What I have seen of India there is no damn question of the mystery of the East or any such nonsense... but sometimes (like the other night) the bright moon, hot night and hovering clouds threatening rain produced a curious electric tension in the air to which I am very susceptible – driving my Ghani back from the pictures I was subconsciously noticing all the landmarks and sign posts and so on... when suddenly I found I was driving through completely strange country – mind you quite a straight road with no turnings. Now I admit I was doing a steady and monotonous 30-35 mph which is very soporific and my attention was distracted by some business I was thinking about... but!! I am damn sure I did not pass my camp... However after driving for some miles I decided to turn round and go back and after some time retracing my way I eventually arrived

at the camp – whether or not I fell asleep at the wheel I shall never know. All I know is that I was feeling curiously nervy and as far as I was concerned had not passed the camp the first time – Curious eh!

Secondly I have a slight cold and catarrh, have had since I left England, but suddenly last Sunday without any reason I can think of I was smitten by a cold – the real thing – like any other cold but a thousand, nay tens of thousands times magnified – it bowled me completely over – knocked me out!! but because it was so like an ordinary cold I refused to go to bed... and the next morning I was much better – but it has left me with a nasty cough that will go (I hope) with the warm weather (of course it's not cold now 80 deg. or so... but it is very changeable and with a cold wind will drop to 20 or 30 deg. [Fahrenheit] in ½ hour.

All of which oddities darling I expect you will find difficult to understand – but when I return with thin blood and a good line in irritable temper and a liking for my curries hot, I guess you will “Ken” it all.

Incidentally I am trying hard to learn something of the people and think I am succeeding though I must speak the language fluently first. Think after many enquiries, rebuffs and odd stories I have got as near the truth of the Bengal famine as is possible. And my God it is not a pretty story and I should be censored if I told you all the truth – it is a horrible indictment of the corrupt type of Indian merchant and his general greed and the horrible muddle on the part of the Bengal Government.

Have many a lengthy political argument with Hindu, and Muslim and Sikh ... have had in the mess an absolute rarity, a degenerate (my adjective) Sikh... i.e. he shaves and cuts his hair – he is very modern, progressive and one of the Indian intelligentsia – Ugh!

God bless you My darling... and keep you safe. All my love Tony.

Darling read letter to i/tax possible Peters income will add to yours – address and send with any notes – not forgetting 44-45 Peter's income.

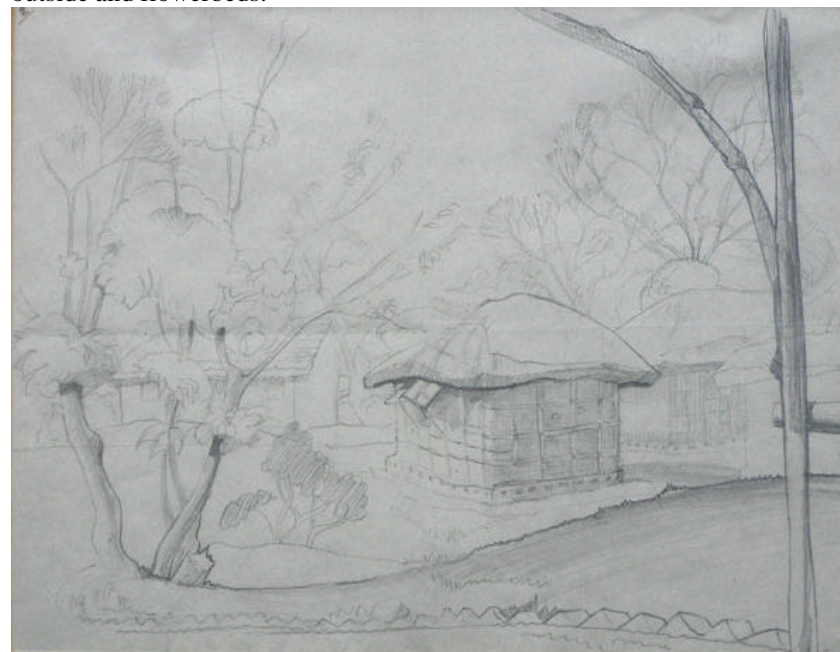
21/02/1944 India
From Tony To Joan

A.B. Guise Lieut R.A.
A.A. Reserve Regt. R.A. India Command
Letter No.9
21 Feb 1944
[This is postmarked 25 Feb so was probably written 21 Feb.]

Darling

Your letters come in terrific spurts and I am now going to try to answer Nos. 9, 10, 11.

Afraid I have missed a few days as have been quite busy (relatively). Have been personally directing the coolies in a number of camp improvements – gardening and such like – and building myself a bungalow. Sketch No.1 is the bungalow!! made out of an I.P. tent about 16 feet x 14 feet with a veranda outside and flowerbeds.



But it has been a terrific effort. 1st of all I chose the site between two clumps of trees, hope for a bungalow but the ground once was a hill and very irregular... however that was the site I wanted so the coolies cut the top off the hill and filled in the holes so that I had a nice little mound on which to perch the house!! Each corner of the foundation was originally on different levels... and I had to do the whole thing by eye!! However the coolies worked very well and in a few days we had a level floor concreted over and mosaiced with coloured elements (real Indian village Art).

[These coloured elements may have been woven sisal or reed mats]. I have all my life wanted a sunken bath... so we built a sunken bath and a lavatory and then built the veranda and put the tent roof and fly sheet over it and partitioned the whole thing off into lavatory, bathroom, bearers' cleaning room and my

bedroom and sitting room – it looks very nice. The ground presented some difficulties but I transported tons of good soil and turf and completely turfed the hill except the flower beds and we cleared all the undergrowth from the copse and tented that as well so that I have a shaving spot in the open. This is the first time that anyone at the transit camp has done anything like this and the servants are thrilled to death – shall have to leave it all when I get my posting of course and shall be very sorry. All my servants and coolies now call me “The Rajah Sahib” and I certainly feel that I have a bit more Raj as I sit on the veranda at 4 or 5 o’clock and drink my tea before playing badminton and survey the more pleasant part of my camp which you see in Sketch 2 framed by the veranda.



Part of the badminton court you see on the left in sketch 1. Everything is fairly green because I have a lot of water put down each day. It has been a lot of fun and I shall miss it like hell.

Had a spot of bother with my geese. The Chocia who looks after them came and told me that all the food had gone so I asked him what he had done with the rupee I gave him each week for the food and he told me he thought I was giving him 2 rupees wages... instead of one rupee food and one rupee wages... and that he had given it all to his mother... I was furious thinking of my poor

geese – so I dismissed him. And was then faced with the problem of food... so going along to the stores I found some lentils, split peas and odds and ends which I gave to Goffor telling him to see if the geese would eat it...

Half an hour later I was convulsed seeing an extraordinary very solemn procession – 1st my 3 geese. Goose first (very small) followed in stately measure by 2 ganders (quite large), next came a sweeper with a stick gently helping the geese along – he was followed by a Goffor who was carrying one bowl of disdained food on one of my best trays straight out in front of him. Next my Sepoy bearer, looking very dignified and finally 2 or 3 coolies in single file and last of all the very small and very penitent Chocia who was the cause of all the trouble.

This dignified and purposeful column was making straight for me and I was quite convinced that Goffor had brought the geese, food and Chocia along to make a formal complaint and for me to interrogate... Happily however this had not occurred to him and the procession filed passed in slow time... I was fascinated and drawn irresistibly after them... wonder where on earth they were going and having a gnawing fear that Goffor was going to slaughter them and that I should be powerless to stop such a horrible deed... However we all processed about ¼ mile and to my amazement the geese were showed into the village duck pond... My lovely lovely geese cohabiting with jungly village ducks – however the coolies blessed the whole proceedings and assured me that the geese would come to no harm.

Two hours later a delegation headed by the village headman with his wand of office came and made a formal complaint – that my nasty big geese were fouling his pond!! My God I’ve had enough of geese... and I expect you have too so here’s some answers to your questions.

Please please don’t sent me anything for my birthday darling – I never know where I am going to be and anyway it may get lost.

DO go and see Aunt Frida in Nottingham – I should think it will do you a lot of good.

NO darling nobody drinks during the day when the sun is up... it has the most awful effect on one, but when the sun is going done and you have bathed and changed... that’s the time when a gin and lime tastes better than anywhere else in the world and at any other time.

The letter you no. 1 is really no.10. Yes I lost the camera am so sorry. Am sorry that the girls did not come round or the Mater but you really must try and realise how really extraordinarily homey the family are – they will go to almost any lengths to get people into the house... but just won’t take the trouble to go out... and in fact they know hardly anybody to go out to. There seems to be two kinds of hospitality in people – i.e. there are the people who entertain and the people who enjoy being entertained. The whole family

belongs to the former group and don't really enjoy going anywhere out of their own little home. It is a strange trait but as you know we are terribly insular.

Letter no.11

So glad one Doc is taking an interest in the brat – always think it's a good idea to have one man who knows the ins and outs to look after one. You seem to have had some wonderful Jan. weather – here it has just been hot rainy and stormy during Feb. anyway – incidentally I did not get the copies you made of the income tax letters however my previous letters should clear that up.

Have not seen any really beautiful women in India – you ask if they are beautiful – I believe somewhere most of the high caste women are I believe to be found in the towns or their country houses or stay in Purdah and with the exception of Bombay and Calcutta, I have been most of the time in small villages on the plains.

But I suppose that if one got to know the high caste people in Bombay and the hill stations and say Jaypore and Hyderabad... you would find many, many beauties... of course the carriage of the women is superb and the finest of all is that of the village women who perpetually carry things on their head... and they have a way of slightly swaying at the hips!! The children are fascinating and when growing, very beautiful – but the food, vice and work soon ruin them.

God bless you my darling – sorry this is a bit overdue... Must write to the family again soon – I love you.

Tony

02/03/1944 India
From Tony **To** Joan

Lieut. A.B.Guise R.A.(1) 217042
13 I.H.A.A Regt. I.A.
Ceylon Command

11th in India
2 March 44
My Darling

I don't think I shall write just now because I am in the middle of moving – trains and whatnots – all very harassing!!
UP to the moment am having the devil's own luck... good and bad. 1st of all, my modest efforts at my transit camp received the approbation of the Colonel and he asked me to transfer into the ordinance with the rank of Captain and my Majority in six months!! I spent a whole sleepless day puzzling out that one...

It went terribly against the grain to leave the gunners and though I thought I should probably take the offer I felt a frightful cad... However with corps pay etc, I should be getting as a Major about £120 a month and that was a great temptation.

I could have sent you so much more money –

However my conscience was saved... wammitt!! Because the next day I was told my posting had come through from reserve A. A. Regt. – “I was that annoyed”!! but not a little pleased at the same time... I was still a Gunner. When I found my posting was as above was more than happy... and in the Indian Army which is what I wanted – and Ceylon counts as overseas service in the Indian Army so I shall get separation allowance plus overseas allowance... shall probably need it in Ceylon. I believe it is very expensive.

Have bought one or two more things for you darling – 2 pairs of slippers, another brass vase (!!) and some more earrings, all from Madras... I have been looking around there – it is a very clean town quite large and quite fun.

When I have sufficient things together I will send them over to you.

Have just had to pay 7 chips for a very inferior fountain pen... but have a marvellous suitcase for 92 chips... on the way back home. God willing!! I shall bring enough suitcases for both of us in our travels. These are excellent value. Went to a concert in Madras at Government House. The Madras Guard Orchestra... Quite good... The Jupiter Symphony and other bits and pieces, with the usual sop to the public – good old Strauss!! Everybody dressed except the few soldiers (who had free admission) and that was fun after so much khaki. Imperious moment when the orchestra struck up “The King” and H.E. and Lady wife walked in. He looks more than slightly alcoholic. On the whole Madras is a wonderful state, clean and well cultivated and they grow all sorts of fruit and veg in addition to the eternal rice of the C.P. U.P. and Bengal and of course since we have held undisputed sway here for so long everything is very English.

The odd thing about the dress is that here the men dress in the Calcutta style i.e. white slacks and black cummerbund and jacket and it looks odd and cumbersome compared with Bombay black trousers and white mess jacket. Sorry this is such a measly letter darling but it is raining like hell and am feeling rather depressed

God bless you darling

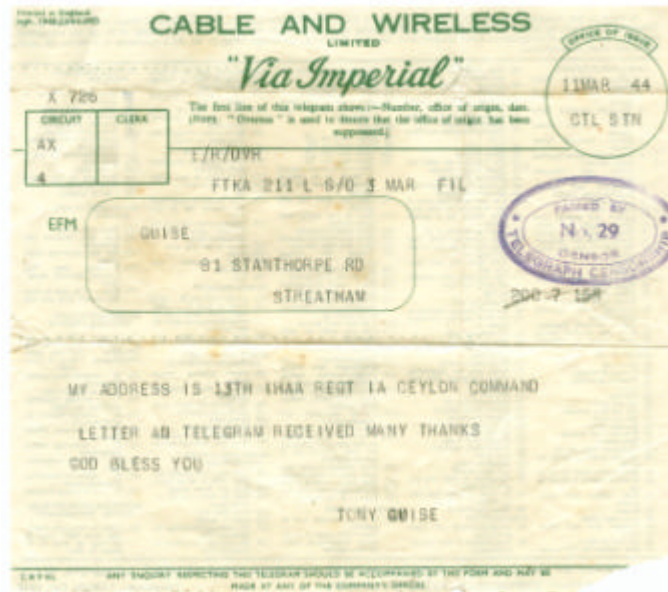
I love you very much... Oh that you could see all this with me.

After the war you must certainly come here with me... it really is all rather wonderful.

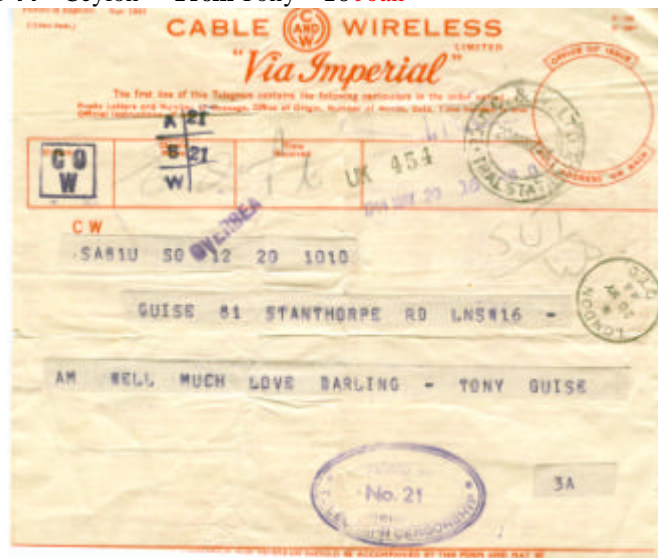
Good night sweetheart – May God take care of you.

Love Tony

11/03/1944 Ceylon From Tony To Joan



20/03/1944 Ceylon From Tony To Joan



09/05/1944 from Ceylon From Tony To Joan Comment Letter No. 6

13 Ind. H.A.A. Regt 1A South East Asia Command

Written 9th May 1944 [arrived 25.5.1944] Letter no.6

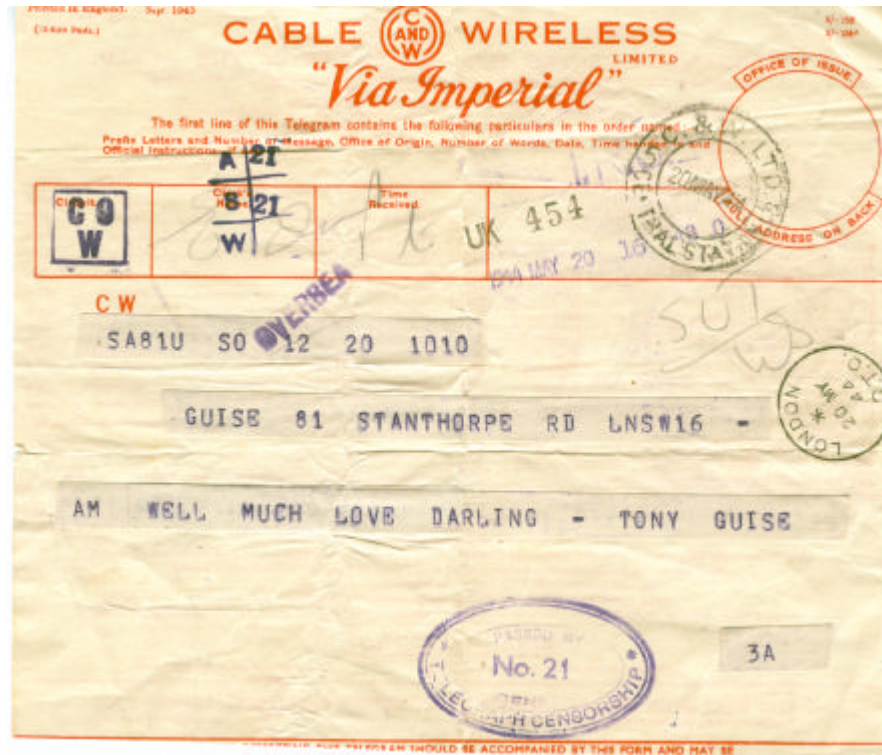
Darling

A most frightful thing has happened... I am writing this in terrific haste – have just found two of my letters to you – will send them off No. 4 and 5. Masses of your letters arrived from India not long ago – it filled up the gap of 4 or 5 weeks. Most of the news is very old now. Am receiving your letters here very well. Raoul seems to be growing up very quickly, it makes me very lonely at times, I seem so very far away – however there is always work... and I am doing masses of that. Am terribly busy – usually getting up about 7 in the morning ½ hr for tiffin, 2 hours Urdu in the evening and then I have just about had it... am suffering with my tummy again, prickly heat and slight heat exhaustion. I don't think people should work so hard in this very tiring climate – anyway the civvies don't – but you know how naively active I am in the army – always have been... and Indians require more care than a mixed battery. Please God the monsoon will break soon... one sweats so much that I drink about a gallon of water a day and an ounce of salt to make it up and a pint of beer in the evening to tone me up. When the day's work is over at 7.30 I am quite finished. Have smacked my bearer hard for tucking away my letters to you. Sometimes swim a little in the evenings about once a fortnight. You would love it – waves 15 feet high that fling you up the beach again and again. Guess I am just browned off... am feeling rotten about those chitties [small notes] have been having your letters so regularly. God bless you my darling and keep you and Raoul safe... Time absolutely flies... until I think of home!! Then Hell!! All my love sweetheart Tony.

20/05/1944

From Tony To Joan

Comment Telegram



05/06/1944 From Ceylon

From Tony To Joan

Comment Letter No. 12

13 Ind. H.A.A. Regt 1A
South East Asia Command

Written June 1944
[arrived 19.6.1944]

Darling

Your letters arriving on colossal splurges... from India via everywhere. Heard from Neil yesterday – letter sent in March!!

Heat, rain, moisture and everything persists here... and just PERSISTS.

Temperature never (even at night) seems to drop below 85 deg. Consequently life is either desperately hard working and dull or desperately hard working and gay(ish!!)

Actually about 6.30 in the evening I am finished and absolutely nothing amuses me except a drink and then another.

Have been suffering a bit from “prickly heat” which makes me very tired and irritable and of course my tummy was never very strong.

However Ceylon is really a glorious country... one day I hope to see quite a lot of it. The humid climate produces a sort of interior greenness. The shrubs, palms and flowers are marvellous.

Everything (except man) seems to have grown. The flowers are the most vivid I have ever seen and the largest... The scent at night is glorious. The sun is bright the colour dazzling... Everything is much, much bigger or much, much smaller than anything else in the world – or so it seems – little birds are not much larger than bees and enormous butterflies as large as a starling. The clothes of the people are interesting and I am getting masses of ideas for your clothes after the war – Oh darling if you were only here to see it all... But you must come and see it in a holiday mood. Think of the hottest and most humid August day at home – and the brightest... it goes on like that forever – except when it rains!!

There is not much to tell you actually or perhaps I am getting blasé as far as the last is concerned... Nothing amusing has happened much in the army... and outside... well there are processions and funerals and odds and ends to look at but nothing much.

Once one has got used to shopping in funny little holes in the wall (that novelty soon wears off) things seem but little stranger than home... One gets terribly used to hearing a language of which you cannot speak a word – sometimes even I find myself walking or riding along without even taking much notice of the beauty... or squalor as the case may be... around one! Will try to write you a long, long descriptive letter darling... but the longer I leave it... the longer it takes to write. God bless you my sweetheart.

You are always in my thoughts. Tony

22/07/1944 to Mrs Bull the Hollies Rushwick Worcs. & on to Culforth 31
Cable Road Hoylake

From Tony To Joan

13 India HAA Regt. RA SEA Command

[Post Marked Advanced Base 22 July 1944, arrived 3.8.44]

To Mrs A. B. Guise c/o Mrs Bull The Hollies Rushwick Worcester
Onto c/o Mrs Culforth 31 Cable Road Hoylake

Darling

Of course I would choose a morning when my prickly heat is giving me hell to write... However so glad you have moved out of town. I was getting desperately worried about you. I felt by the time they let us know any details the worst was apparently over.

Maurice Callow told me about some of the calamities to his friends at home... it is simply appalling, the number of private houses that have been demolished. Life is quiet here... more or less the same old daily round – though I still seem to have a glut for keeping infernally busy... It makes the time go quickly too – do you realise darling that it was 11 months ago... nearly a year that I had my embarkation leave???

Weather is a little cooler but not much – I have become reconciled to the state of continuous sweat... so long as I am in Ceylon.

Afraid that the atmosphere is so devitalising and the wonders around are with one night and day that I am becoming blasé.

Do you remember “passion fruit” “avocado pear” “pau pau” “li-chi” “mangosteen” as well as all the usual fruits. Well the whole bally shoot grows almost wild.

I am sending you home a little jungle book which is quite amusing.

Thank you so much darling for the photographs. As I opened your letter the envelope released a tiny puff of your scent and I nearly cried – the photographs and the scent and suddenly you were here!! I felt terribly lonely – life is such a hell at times – it is now nine months.

I do not know what to advise about the Theodolite – it might be dashed useful after the war if we ever go surveying or if Raoul decides to become an architect – I rather think he will. Both his Grandfathers were sufficiently clever too. I think he will be quite a good engineer or architect. Your music and painting will almost certainly not bear fruition... though even in the music he may be influenced by both his grandmothers.

Oh I almost forgot. My yacht is finished at last. She is a trim little craft and I have quite a lot of relaxation rigging her and so on... Have not raced her yet as I am having trouble with the luff of the jib. It's been an awful scrounge getting

sale cloth etc. and so many of the fittings have to be improvised. However I am pretty sure that she will be as fit as any of the other in her class. When I can borrow a camera I will send you some photographs.

I think you would quite like Ceylon dear, though you would probably get very fat. Most of the white women here either dry up completely or run to frightful fat...

We are roughly in the same parallel of latitude as Neil... though I think his is a nicer climate.

You know how fond of golf I am – well after immense difficulty I managed to get some clubs and balls... the club is 2 miles up the road... BUT during a period of 4 months I have not mustered sufficient energy to achieve the target of walking up for a game!! That's Ceylon.

Good bless you sweetheart.

I love you so much Tony

23/07/1944

Comment TONY DIED