

**Appendix 7**  
**Letters of Condolence to Joan from War Office and Military Colleagues 1944-1945**

From Fr. Murray in Ceylon

**Ceylon Army Command**  
**S.E.A.C**

25 July 1944

**Dear Mrs Guise**

Last night I was filled with sadness when I stood by the graveside of you husband and gave the last blessing of the Church. I thought then of all the sorry and pain you would have to endure and could only ask God to grant you the grace to bear the sorrow with courage.

As I know you will want all the details that can be supplied, I have tried to discover as much as possible. It appears that being free on Sunday afternoon, he decided to have a bathe at Mount Lavinia. He had been surf-riding some time when someone happened to notice that he was further out than most and was lying on his back with one arm thrown out to surf board. His general appearance suggested that all was not well and several men immediately swam out towards him but before they could reach him he was swept out to sea, and it was nearly a quarter of an hour before he was brought to shore. He was rushed at once to the Hospital only about 200 yards away, and everything possible was done to bring him round. Oxygen was given and artificial respiration was kept up for over an hour without results: it seems probable he was already dead when he was first seen. It is now clear that the currents were particularly treacherous that afternoon, as quite a large number of people got into difficulties and two other men lost their lives.

I have heard one report that your husband assisted in one rescue just before he lost his own life but I cannot get any confirmation of this.

A Court of Enquiry is being held and fuller details may be known later.

There is no need for me to dwell on his character as you will know it better than anyone else but I think you would want to know how he appeared to others.

I have rarely seen so much genuine sorrow as that manifested by his fellow Officers and the men under him. One Officer said of him "He was a man you could not help but like"

A Major of Regiment said of him

"What a vital type of man he was, we can ill afford to lose such men". Part of his work was connected with the welfare of the men in the Regiment; he flung himself wholeheartedly into his work and the men knew it and greatly appreciated it. Perhaps the impression he created was best summed up by the Adjutant when I was talking to him this morning "He was a man full of life and a very happy disposition; he made friends everywhere; He was enthusiastic and inspired others with enthusiasm; deeply religious, he went to Mass each Sunday when possible, he was generous and understanding with them under him and now we have lost him".

He was buried with full Military Honours. The Brigade commander and representatives of various regiments were present and the eight or nine large and beautiful wreaths secured at short

notice bore witness to the esteem and love in which he was generally held. I simply cannot tell you how deeply I grieve for and sympathise with you. Would to God I had words that would ease the pain you must suffer. I can only commend you to God to comfort you as only he can. The Adjutant has asked me to tell you that he will be writing to you soon, and will be sending you some of his personal things he knows you would want. If I can do anything to help in anyway please grant me that privilege. In the meanwhile I can only pray for you both, that the love which limited you in life may not be broken by death; but may be a preparation to the love which will unite you in eternity.

Yours very sincerely  
J .W.Murray C.F. (CSSR)

**From the Matron in Ceylon**  
35<sup>th</sup> British General Hospital  
South East Asia Command.  
26/7/44

Dear Mrs Guise  
I know you will have all the particulars of your husband's accident.  
As it happened very near to us he was brought here, I regret too late.  
I know every effort had been made to save him.  
I feel you may find some comfort in these few words – a bunch of pink and white lilies out of our garden, we placed in his coffin with your love. He was seen by our RC Chaplain.

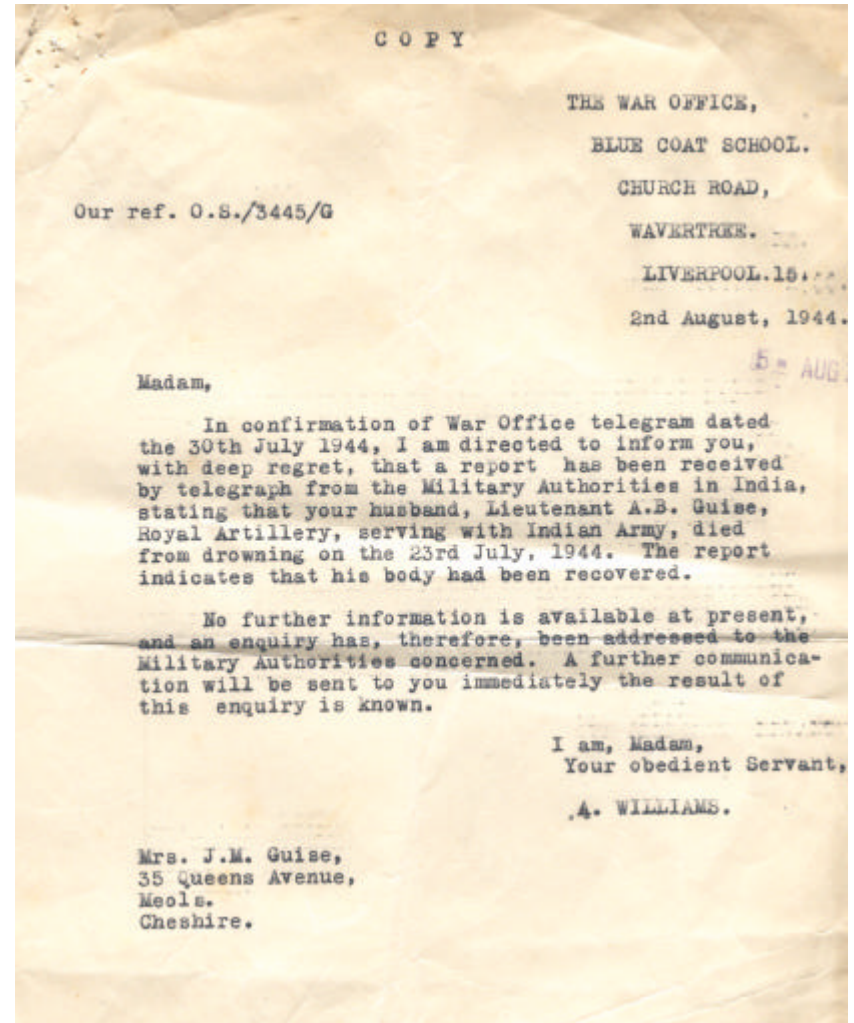
Please accept our sympathy - for sad loss  
Yours sincerely E Prentice Matron

### **From Joan to the Matron**

Dear Miss Prentice

Do please forgive me for not writing to you long ago in answer to your very kind words  
It was such a sweet thought to have placed the lilies in my husband's coffin, with my love – By that little action you have what I could not do in England, and you have brought me nearer to pay my last tribute.  
I know that you did all that was possible to save his life, and I do thank you so much for writing to me. I felt so helplessly in the dark when I first had the news from the War Office, and it was such a comfort to have a personal letter when I was so far away. I shall never forget your kindness  
I hope this will not be too late to convey my very best wishes to you for Christmas and the New Year  
Yours very sincerely

War Office Telegram and letter



*A Photocopy of the original is archived as well  
as a carbon of a typed copy by J.M Guise.*

From Captain Courteney

**From Captain**

**D.W.Courtenay**

13<sup>th</sup> India H.A.A. Regt I.A.  
South East Asia Command

7 Aug 1944

Dear Mrs Guise

I have not been able to write earlier owing to certain restrictions imposed upon us in such circumstances.. but my heart goes out to you in your tragic loss ... especially as not official information can be given until so long after the accident.

I am the Adjutant of this unit and as you know Tony was on our headquarter staff. Naturally living together in the same Mess etc. we were very friendly and Tony particularly endeared himself to us. He was always so bright and cheery ... nothing got him down and was a grand example of an officer making the best of a job of work out here. He often spoke about you when we used have our little chats after dinner and in fact I have four photographs before me now.

About the accident I cannot say much as I was on the Court of Inquiry. He was drowned in the sea.. at a popular bathing resort .. and the circumstances seem to suggest that he went to the rescue of another person in difficulties.

The time was about 17.15 hrs on Sunday 23 July 1944.

Everything possible was done after he was brought in from the water .. fortunately a doctor was actually on the beach .. they applied artificial respiration for over two hours and also gave him oxygen.

Unfortunately it was too late. We gave him a befitting military funeral. I have a photograph taken of the grave. Please let me know if you want it sent on to you.

I'm sorry that letter has had to be concise and if you should want to know further details please let me know. I hope to be getting some leave in the UK shortly and shall visit London... if possible I would very much like to call on you and tell you so much that cannot be told here.

Please accept our deepest sympathy .. we were all very fond of Tony and I should say that in the short time he was with us, he was one of the most popular officers.

If there is anything we can do for you please do let me or the Colonel know

Yours sincerely  
Don Courtenay

*This could be from a carbon of a  
typed copy by J.M Guise.*  
From Lt. Col. K.C.Sharpe R.A.

**Lt. Col. K.C.Sharpe R.A.**  
13<sup>th</sup> India H.A.A. Regt I.A.  
South East Asia Command

7 Aug 1944

Dear Mrs Guise

It is with a heavy heart that I write to you about Tony. I should have written two weeks ago but regulations do not permit us to do so before official channels are informed. As you know Tony was on my Headquarters here, and he had been since he arrived in March. He was such a cheery fellow, in fact I think that is a qualification that I want in my officers if they are going to live with me, we had a great deal of fun and I know that he was very happy in our Mess. Tony came to me from time to time about his work, but always I had the greatest confidence in him and he was a great worker. I think he showed up best in running one sideline of Welfare, he used to worry the authorities for wirelesses or footballs, whatever it was, so long as he got it for the troops, by which actions I was always very proud of him and he was extremely popular with both officers and men, and in particular the Indian troops, who knew a kind and understanding European. I expect Tony told you that we shared a small yacht, we had a lot of fun with it, with the intention of making it faster than Brigadier's. I have visited the boat recently but when I look at it, I like to remember Tony and the happy times we had together. I

have made a settlement of the amount Tony paid and Don Courtenay, my Adjutant, is settling that work. I do hope that this big shock has not been too heavy, I know how very upset you will be, I hope you have relations or friends nearby who can help, but do please let me know if there is any assistance I can give you. My Adjutant, Don Courtenay, has also written to you and told you that Tony was drowned in the sea while trying to rescue someone else, the Medical authorities tried respiration for two hours and did everything possible. Unfortunately, I was away on leave and could not get back in time for the funeral. I am told it was arranged very nicely and a large number of officers were present. One of my officers took a photo of the grave with all the flowers, and a print will be sent to you as soon as possible. I am afraid the loss of Tony has made a big gap in our Mess, but we carry on with the thoughts in our minds of his happy manner and cheerful laugh. I hope you will receive this letter without delay, everything is being looked after by Don Courtenay. I hope your youngster is well, I forget now whether it is a boy or a girl; my two girls (9 ½ and 6 ½) are growing fast, I don't know I shall know them it is three years since I saw them.

Yours v. sincerely  
K.C.Sharpe

*Letter from Mrs Makin whose husband organised the funeral arrangements*

3 Links Drive  
Totteridge  
London N 20.  
Aug 9<sup>th</sup> 1944

Dear Mrs Guise

I felt I would like to tell you how sorry I was to hear of the death of your husband, he was in the same regiment as my husband and John has told me that he did all the funeral arrangements for your husband. And what an awful shock it was to all over there, he was liked by all.

I do hope you will forgive me for writing but I do feel so very sorry for you, being so far away makes it even worse.

If there is anything you would like to know do please ask me and I will ask John to either tell me or write to you direct

Yours sincerely  
Jean Makin

*Copy of a reply from Joan*

**Dear Mrs Makin**

Can you ever forgive me for not writing to you before in answer to your letter.

'~tin~ to you before in answer to your very kind letter.

At the time of my husband's death, I sent cards to all those who wrote to me, but did not send one to you as I planned to write. The time seems to have passed without my realising it, and I must admit that I have rather put off letter- writing.

It was so sweet of you to write to me. I shall never forget all the kindness that has been shown to me at this time. I have had several letters from some of the officers of the Regt. and the Padre, and they have all been so terribly good. Captain Courtenay got in touch with me while he was on leave a short while ago, and we were able to have a chat together.

He brought me some photos that had been taken of the grave, and an odd snap of Tony.

It all shows me what grand men they must be, and what a lot they must have thought of Tony.

I am feeling a little better now. There is no doubt that time does heal if you allow it to. At first, I thought my whole being was smashed to atoms, and that I should never be able to hold my head up again. But I find that we have to go on living, and the only thing to do is to make the best of it. I have the advantage of many people in our little son, who grows more and more like his father as time goes on.

I do hope you hear good news of your husband, and may God bring him safely home to you.

Yours very sincerely.

## From Lieut. Richard Souray R.A

198874 Lieut. R.Souray R.A.  
37/13 Indian H.A.A.Rgt 1.A.  
South East Asia Command  
**13 August 1944**

### Dear Mrs Guise

I would like you to accept these few lines from me as an expression of my deepest sympathy in your great loss.

I am hoping that you will remember me, if I remind you of the occasion when I had a drink with you and Tony in the Capt's Cabin \* shortly before leaving England

Tony and I became good friends on our way out here, and, as you know we shared a variety of experiences. On our arrival in India, we applied to be posted together to an Indian Unit and our application was granted.

On joining this Regt., our ways divided slightly, as Tony was at RHQ, and I am in a Battery. Never the less, we did see each other frequently.

Tony immediately made many friends, and was liked and respected as an officer --- particularly in my Battery, by my O.C., and fellow officers.

His loss, Mrs Guise, was a great blow to us all. We miss him very, very much.

Once again, please accept my deepest sympathy

Yours Very Sincerely  
Richard Souray

\* The Captain's Cabin is at 4-7 Norris Street off the Haymarket.

## Reply from Joan

Dear Richard

Will you please forgive me for not writing to you long ago in answer to your kind letter. I cannot tell you how much I appreciated hearing from you, and I do remember you well – how could I ever forget those last few days that I spent with Tony, little knowing that they were indeed the last, and I was so glad to have met you knowing that you would be travelling together and perhaps be stationed together.

I have had several letters from the other officers of the Regt. And the matron of the Hospital where they took him, and realise how well Tony was liked and how terribly kind you have all been. Sometimes I cannot believe that it has happened and I cannot visualise the years ahead without Tony, our lives have been so complete in those years since we have known each other that now it seems like an empty shell – but, I think I shall never feel that he has quite gone.

I have often wondered about the details of your experience on your voyage to India.\*\* Tony couldn't, of course, tell me much about it, and I know I should have to wait to hear the full story. Perhaps one day you will be able to tell me more about it, when you get home to this country once more- I should so much like to meet you again.

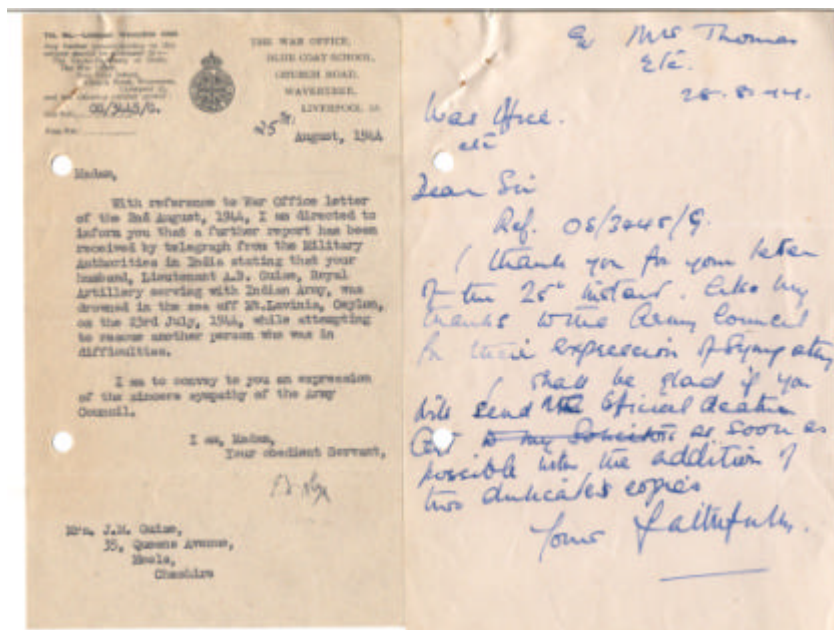
It will always be possible to contact me through my bank:  
Westminster Bank 26 High Street Sutton Surrey.

I do hope this letter will not be too late to wish you all the best for Christmas and the New Year

Yours very sincerely

\*\* Details of this can be seen in the main article

## Letter from War office and Joan's Reply



Reply to Fr Murray 27 Sept 1944

**Dear Father Murray**

I don't know how to express my appreciation of your letter, of your interest in my husband and of the kind way in which you gave me the news.

When your letter came I was still feeling rather dazed and hardly believing the truth of what I had read in the telegram from the war office.

I never thought that this could possibly happen. Just a year ago I lost my only brother, who also died though an accident while he was in the army, and when he went, I felt that surely Tony would be spared. My brother had more or less brought me up since our parents died in a plane crash in 1933, and it seemed that he lived

just long enough to see me happily married and settled with a son ---and then his job was done.

Now it is Tony, and I cannot keep back the awful fear that my last great tie to this world may be taken from me --- my son. And perhaps he too through accident. I am not naturally superstitious, yet I cannot help seeing the strangeness of it all.

Sometimes now I feel it is too hard, yet the memory of my husband, and the fine example he has set, will surely, help me through. And if I can bring up the youngster to be anything approaching the man his father was, I shall more than thankful that I was given the strength to do it.

I am not a Catholic though I have often wished that I could share in that religion which brought so much strength and solace to Tony. Yet somehow I was never able to change. But the boy is, of course, of the same religion as his father and perhaps I may learn through him something that I cannot now find or understand. My ambition is to send him to Downside as that was Tony's wish, and I believe is a very fine school, but I dread to think how I shall ever afford the fees.

You ask me if there is anything you can do to help me. Yes, Father, there is something – will you say a prayer that I may be given the chance to realise my hopes and ambitions for this boy, and the strength to carry it though. His future depends upon me now and I have to be both mother and father to him now and sister too.

Will you convey my thanks to all those who have shown their sympathy

both in word and deed paying the last tribute to my husband. Believe me, I appreciate this most deeply.

Yours very sincerely, Joan Guise



**Reply to LT Col. Sharpe** 1944-09-27

Dear Lieutenant Colonel

Thank you so very much for writing to me. I cannot tell you how grateful I was to here from one who was so close to Tony in his work and pleasure. ~

It came as a ghastly shock to me. I lost my only brother ten months before (when Tony was on embarkation leave) and somehow I felt so certain that he would come through all right, and, more particularly when I heard that he was in Ceylon. All that you write of him is so very true. Wherever he went he brought happiness, and to my knowledge, he hadn't an enemy in the world.

Ever since he was commissioned he has made a side-line of the welfare (of the men) and though he seldom spoke of work in the army, (in fact I really knew little of his army life from him) I always I knew something of what the Batteries must be like wherever he was stationed, just because he was there, and what a pleasure he brought into the sometimes tedious lives of the men and women under him.

The boy is just eighteen months now, and seems already to have inherited the same tenacity of spirit and sense of humour as his father. If I can develop his character and bring him up to be worthy of his father, I shall perhaps feel that it was worth carrying on, though sometimes, now, it seems too hard. But I shall always have the memory of Tony to help me on, and a fine example to follow.

My very best wishes to you, and I hope you will get home very soon to your family. Should you ever be in London and have the opportunity, do call and see me. The above address is only

temporary and I should be going home as soon as it is safe in London to take ~~the child~~ Raoul back there

Thank you once again for your kindness

Yours very sincerely,

**Reply to Adjutant to Captain Don Courtenay 28/9/44. .**

Dear Captain Courtenay,

I am so very grateful to you for writing to me. It is such a comfort to hear news that is not merely official when one is so far away, and to hear too from those who were so much with Tony in his daily life.

For days, a week or more, after I had received the telegram, until Father Murray's letter came, I felt so utterly dazed and helpless, and could not really believe the truth of it all.

Tony was such a very fine man and it seems so cruel that he should die when there was so much good and happiness that he might have brought to others in the future. He was always loved wherever he went and there are many who mourn him.

I am extremely grateful to you for all that you have done. It was a very kind thought to have had the grave photographed, and I should so like to have a print. It will somehow bring me nearer. One day, God willing, before I die, I shall have the chance to come out to Ceylon and see the grave myself perhaps my son also.

Yes, there is much that I want to know and I should be terribly pleased to see you if you do have the opportunity to call when you are in London. The above address is only temporary, and I shall be home again just as soon as it is safe in town to take Raoul back. There is one thing I do particularly want to know --- where exactly the grave is situated, and if I can arrange for it to be cared

for while I am so far away. I have heard from the Standing Committee of Adjustment in India asking me what I want done about all the kit; & I have told them that I would like everything except the tropical military kit sent home. I feel I would rather have it that way as there may be some things amongst them that I should like to keep for Raoul.,---such as the “Sam Browne”; and what I do not want, I can dispose of here. And now, once again, I do thank you .I do thank you so much for your goodness and I hope that we shall meet in the near future. My very best wishes to you and safe return.

Yours very sincerely,  
Joan Guise

From Don Courtenay

13<sup>th</sup> India H.A.A. Regt I.A.  
South East Asia Command  
12 Oct 1944

**Dear Mrs Guise**

Thanks you very much for you letter – I am glad to see you are such a brave woman.  
Time, perhaps, will heal the wound, and after all you do have the boy.  
I personally packed Tony’s effects you will be sure to receive the Sam Browne etc



**A Sam Browne**

There were also lots of little things which I sent and feel sure will be useful to your little boy in time to come. \*  
As I shall probably be in London about a month from now there is no use my saying any more about poor Tony now. I have your address in Streatham (81 Stanhope Road) and if between now and the time I arrive there is any change, please let me know c/o Lloyds Bank, 6 Pall Mall, I shall be glad to meet you, and being so closely connected with Tony, also the circumstances surrounding his death, ( Actually I was president of the Court of Enquiry held) will be in a position to tell you lots that you are unaware of at the moment.  
Meanwhile do bear up – I know how hard it must be – and if there is anything any of us can do for you, please don’t hesitate to let us know. The photographs etc I shall bring with me  
Until we meet

Yours Sincerely Don Courtenay

Note

\* As memory have it little of Tony's effects got back to Joan Guise. The was a tin box containing a few items and maybe the Sam Browne got back to England.

It was of some grief to Joan that these last points of contact with her husband of less than two years was denied her.

**Reply to Don Courtenay 27 Oct. 1944**

**Dear Captain Courtenay**

Thank you very much for your letter which I received on the 24th Oct.

I had rather hoped that we should be home again permanently by the time you arrived but I don't yet feel like taking Raoul back to London. However I have made arrangements to leave him here so that I can come to town on my own for a few days, I cannot quite gather from your letter how long you will be staying in London, but if you will let me know just as soon as you are there, I can come straight up. Perhaps you can let me know too, some address or phone number where I can get hold of you when I arrive.

I should like you to come over to the flat for tea one afternoon, but I cannot say what condition it is in ---- only that it is not completely demolished at the moment. I should like you to have seen Tony's home --- he was very proud of it, I know. Meols is between Liverpool and Chester, so that if, when you leave London, you happen to be anywhere near this part of the world, it may be possible for us to meet near here somewhere

I am very much looking forward to meeting you  
Yours very sincerely  
Joan Guise

**War Office Letter - ~India Command**

BY AIR MAIL No. 2746/11AG/ 46 /Comm.  
G.H.Q. O2E., 11 Army Group.  
India Command. 31. Oct 44.

To:-  
Mrs. J.M. Guise,  
81, Stanthorpe Road, Streatham,  
London, S.W. 16.

Subject:- Estate of the late Lieut. A.B. Guise.  
-----

Dear Madam,

With further reference to your letter of the 1st September, I have to inform you that all the assets and personal effects of the deceased are now in the hands of the Committee.

Your late husband left a balance of Rs. 6/4/- with his bank but a sum of Rs. 290/-/- odd was found in cash with his effects. A further sum of Rs. 154/1/-, refund of income tax has also been realised by the Committee. As against this there is a debtor balance of Rs. 1138/10/- with the Paymaster.

Considerable difficulty is experienced in disposing of Military Tropical Clothing, and the Committee have therefore decided to send all his effects home, and trust this will meet with your approval.

In regard to insurance, all Military equipment, uniform and kit are covered by the Government up to £100 and in view of the small intrinsic value of the remaining items, the Committee have decided that the further expense of insurance is unwarrantable and trust you will agree with this view.

All effects are being despatched to the M.F.O. Kirkby Depot Kirkby Nr. Liverpool during the course of the next few days, and I shall be glad if you will acknowledge receipt of them in due course.

Yours faithfully,

/JL.  
William Cape for  
President.  
Standing Committee of Adjustment.  
(L.J. STATIONERY)

**From Lt. Col. K.C.Sharpe R.A.**

Lt.Col. K.C.Sharpe R.A. \*

13<sup>th</sup> Ind H.A.A. Regt 1A

South East Asia Command 20<sup>th</sup> November 1944

Dear Mrs Guise

Thank you very much for your letter, and for telling me so much about Tony. Being married myself with a family I know how much you must be suffering. I can only say I hope that you have recovered from the heavy and terrible blow which you must have felt first. I wanted to write the same day as we lost Tony but we have very strict orders that we have to wait 2 weeks before private correspondence may be sent before the War Office take action. Padre Murray told me he had written but he did not know the rules. I have had such a lovely letter from Tony's mother she has asked me if Father Kelly could quote some of my letter in a small book he is dedicating to Tony on behalf of the Scout movement. I have just replied that I should be delighted and any other help I could give.

Have you any worries from the Army side that I could help you with? Have you heard from the Committee of Adjustment and about the articles that you wish to have sent. Please let me know and we will take action from here. As far as my office is concerned all Tony's belongings have been sent to 2<sup>nd</sup> Eihelm, his bank account and any little amounts have all been sent from here. My old adjutant Don Courtenay, should be turning up in the UK before long on his 2 months leave and one of his first things is to see you, and then you will be able to discuss many topics which are difficult to put into writing.

I still refer to my yacht as "our yacht" because Tony and I had such fun with it, we had great pleasure in "scrounging" and Tony was past master at that, and when we came up against a brick wall to get something for the boat, he would get me to go along and air my rank, usually is worked!! And so we produced a topping little boat and quite cheaply, every time we went out in her, we would argue over some alterations and strip her down and alter pieces just like a

wireless maniac who never listens to the set! \*\* But it was fun and when I lost Tony I paid his share of the purchase into the account and bought him out.

Since that day we have had two Regattas ( there are eight of us who compete) and the first I won and the second one I came in second which was quite nice. I hope it does not mean the 3<sup>rd</sup> Regatta I shall be third !! I must send you a snap- I hope to have some soon, you will then see the material being around which Tony and I centred our past-time and pleasure and so cemented our friendship. \*\*\* I hope you will write and let me know if there is anything I can do for you.

I hope you and the boy have a Happy Christmas as possible, it is terribly hard when we lose our loved ones but by the Grace of God we carry on and only time heals our deep wounds

Yours sincerely Kenneth C. Sharpe.

**Notes:**

\* Major (Hon.Lt Col.) K.C.Sharpe was Decorated in 1954 - 2<sup>nd</sup> Clasp to the Territorial Efficiency Decoration Supplement to the London Gazette

\*\* For the benefit of those reading this in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, many people in the 1930's made their own radio sets from the components or had to spend time repairing them. Valves were the main components and often the radio needing two batteries, one about 90 volts and one a 2volt lead acid battery that needed charging. There was 30 to 40 years of development with valves before the transistor became readily available and later silicon chips.

\*\*\* It is worth noting, that without any knowledge of this story, Tony's son owned a 14 foot dinghy for a year or two and had much pleasure rebuilding and sailing it. The motivation for this will have come from his wife's father, Paul Rowntree, who most of his life.

**Burial notice and detail from War Office**

Victoria 1244. Form E.2.  
Tel. No.: ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~  
Any further correspondence on this subject should be addressed to:—  
THE DIRECTOR ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ THE WAR OFFICE.  
Graves Registration and Enquiries, 32, Grosvenor Gardens,  
The War Office (A.G.13), London, S.W.1.  
~~XXXXXXXXXX~~  
and the following number  
of ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~  
CEYLON/46-55/AG.13. 20th November, 1944.

Dear Madam,

I have to inform you that your husband,  
W/Lieutenant A.B. Guise, (217042) Royal  
Artillery, attached 13 Ind. Hy. A.A.R.I.A.  
is buried in Colombo (Livermantu) Cemetery, Ceylon.

Yours faithfully,  
*Countdown*  
DIRECTOR ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~  
GRAVES REGISTRATION AND ENQUIRIES.

Mrs. J.M. Guise.  
(25178) Wt.24521/6536 20,000 8/43 A.& E.W.Ltd. Gp.698 J.5882

**2<sup>nd</sup> letter from Fr Murray**

C/o SCF RC command HQ  
Ceylon army command  
S.E.A.C  
4 Dec 44

My dear Mrs Guise

I have hesitated about writing to you again as I did not want to intrude - knowing there was little I could do to help except offer my sincerest sympathy. And yet I felt compelled to write again because you have been constantly in my mind since your wonderful letter.

Since I thought it might be a little help to you to know that I remember you daily in the mass asking God to do what no human being can do, to bring peace, courage and contentment to you life and enable you to carry out the heavy burden, He has seen fit to allow you to bear. I was glad to hear you say you are not superstitious and will therefore not allow yourself be carried away by unreasoned fears for the boy. God knows you have some reason to fear after the series of tragedies, which has befallen you these last few years. No one on earth can explain why it is that some seem to have to bear most of the sorrows of life while others escape so lightly. This last week, for instance, I have received news that one of our chaplains has almost certainly lost his life in Holland. I had known this man so well we had been students together and I can honestly say that I have rarely known a finer character. He had the heart of a child and the maturity of an old man. I have never seen him depressed, never heard him speak harshly of anyone. He had a great joy in living and enjoyed his work with the commandos. He was just reaching the best of his powers as a {Chaplain} and yet he is taken while people like me are left behind. You are not a catholic but you believe

sincerely in God. You share with us the belief and knowledge that nothing happens without God permitting it and while we are groping blindly into the future, we cannot now understand God's plan and yet trust God to know best and we shall know that plan one day. This we do know that some divine force who chose suffering for himself and suffering for the one human being he loved best on earth. His own mother has told us that suffering will be a sign of this love and special affection. We also know because the seers told us that love and affection does not end with death but is made perfect by it. That is why I have little fear for you. Tony's love will guard and help you and the boy in whatever lies ahead. You ask me to help by my prayers. I can promise you that you will have my sincere prayers that your hopes for the boy will be fully realised. I know that as far as humanly possible the boy will never know what he has lost and that you will be father, mother and sister to him.

I know you will have seen Capt. Courtenay and that he will have told you all about Tony, giving all the details you would wish to cherish.

I would only like to add that your letter filled me with the greatest admiration. It was the letter of a valiant woman who will herself be capable of facing and overcoming the greatest hurts that life can offer.

May I offer you my sincerest greetings; and the hope and pray that the peace of Christmastide may flood your soul and with it a new store of courage for the coming year.

May god bless and be with you always

Yours sincerely Fr. Murray C.F.

**Letter from Don Courtenay 16th Dec 1944**

Vinehurst  
Frensham Surrey  
16 Dec 1944

**Dear Mrs Guise**

Many thanks for your letter of the 30<sup>th</sup> October – please do forgive me for not replying earlier, but we arrived late and of course I did not get you note until the first week of Dec. What with the excitement of getting here, the rush and strangeness of it all, I read your note most hurriedly and frankly forgot about it until I reached here on Monday. Actually I only read you letter a few days before.

I found London very strange and cold! So hastened up to my Aunt and have “settled down” here for the time being. Tomorrow I have to go up to Scotland to see my cousins there and do not expect to be back in this part of the world until early January.

Needless to say I am very anxious to met you and wonder what can be arranged ? I have to visit London again during the first week of January and perhaps something can be fixed for then. The trouble is that I don't know the date – however I had better let you know later on and we will see what can be done.

Sorry to have to have matters so fluid but I cannot see any way out at the moment.

I hope you and Raoul have a pleasant Christmas as circumstances permit and wish you all the best for 1945.

God bless you both and please forgive me for not writing earlier, but I have told the truth and know you will understand.

Yours very sincerely  
Don Courtenay.

### Reply from Joan to Don Courtenay

Dear Captain Courtenay,

Many thanks for your letter. I was beginning to think something might have happened to you as I had heard again from Col. Sharpe and Father Murray who both said that you had left Ceylon.

I am so glad you are safely home---it must have been a tremendous excitement---& for Christmas too !

I don't know what to suggest with regard to a meeting. I think the only possible chance is for me to try and make arrangements to leave Raoul, and come up to town for a day or two when you are back there unless it is possible for you to return to London via Liverpool and break your journey. I believe the trains come direct from Glasgow or Edinburgh via Carlisle, however do let me know what you think best, I don't want to put you out in any way-- your leave must seem short enough as it is, but I should very much like to see you.

I hope you have had a good time over Christmas, and very best wishes for 1945. You should have a grand time over Hogmanay in Scotland.

Yours very sincerely.

### From Don Courtenay

Hall of Tankerness  
Kirkwall  
23/1/1945

Dear Mrs Guise

Please accept my apologies for this awful delay – but I have wandered around the country with my relatives and your letter only recently arrived.

At the moment, I am in Kirkwall and had intended leaving earlier so as to have a few days in London and I was going to wire you when I got there. Now alas, this is not possible as I cannot get away from here until the weather gets better (I am flying back to the mainland) and goodness alone knows when that will be. Unfortunately my leave is up at the end of the month, so I have to get back to Frensham, pack and proceed to some place of which I am yet unaware.

It seems a pity that having come all this way, we are not able to meet. I did so much want to see you and tell you all the little things that you what to know. I want to see little Raoul too.

However I do hope that you will write to me for the information that you require and if there is anything which I could do at anytime, please don't hesitate to ask.

My very best wishes for 1945

Yours sincerely  
Don Courtenay.

## Reply from Joan

28<sup>th</sup> Jan 1945

To Don Courtenay

Many thanks for your letter. I am so sorry there has not been an opportunity for us to meet. There were many things I should liked to have talked to you about, and I was looking forward to meeting someone who was with Tony so recently before his death. But I can understand what a rush you must have had to fit in everything into your leave that you wanted to do. The time goes so quickly when you are on leave. I believe you said you were bringing some photos for me – perhaps you could send them to me now if you have them with you.

In one of your earlier letters you mentioned other circumstances concerning Tony's death which I was probably unaware of. Can you write me and tell me a little more about it now. I know only what you and Col. Sharpe were able to tell me, which was really only more enlarged from the War Office information.

I have felt all along that there is something more concerning his death that I do not know. As you can imagine I feel most terrible in the dark know only that he was drowned one Sunday afternoon while rescuing another person and that he was buried in Liveramentu Cemetery.

Sometimes I feel that at any time the postman might suddenly bring a letter from him — ~~It is like a dream that flits through the mind and then is gone,~~  
all you can remember is

It is like a fleeting dream that flashes through the mind and then is gone and you awaken with only a faint realisation and wonder what more there was. Although I have had your letters and the death certificate from the War Office I still cannot put aside the

thought that when peace comes and the men come home again for good – Tony will be amongst them.

It is just a niggling little thought that is there all the time and yet I am afraid it will cause more pain later when that time does come and Tony never returns.

It is terrible to realise that he will not.

Perhaps at some future time when you are home again we shall have the opportunity to meet.

Until then I wish you all the best wherever you may be sent and God speed on your Journey

Yours very sincerely

Joan

## Telegram from Don to say he is in London

Charges to pay \_\_\_\_\_ s. \_\_\_\_\_ d.  
RECEIVED

POST OFFICE  
TELEGRAM

No. 2  
OFFICE STAMP  
LIVERPOOL  
JAN 28 1945

Prefix. Time handed in. Office of Origin and Service Instructions. Words.  
34 3.18 SBF 29

From \_\_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_\_

MRS GUISE C/O THOMAS 35 QUEENS AVE  
NEOLS-CHEESHIRE =

STAYING AT OVERSEAS LEAGUE ST-JAMES LONDON  
TUESDAY AND WEDNESDAY WILL BE PLEASED TO SEE YOU IF  
YOU CAN COME DOWN = COURTENAY + SBF 35 = :

For free repetition of doubtful words telephone "TELEGRAMS ENQUIRY" or call, with this form at office of delivery. Other enquiries should be accompanied by this form, and, if possible, the envelope.



**Reply to Lt Col. Sharpe**

To Lieutenant Colonel Sharpe

Dear Lt Col.

Thank you so much for your letter. I feel very guilty for not replying long ago. I was so glad to hear from you again. It was so nice to hear from you again... I must congratulate you on your success with the yacht. But by now, perhaps you have had still more. I should love to see a photo of it. . Captain Courtenay and I managed to meet while he was on leave. He wired me from the Orkneys that he would be in London for two days, so I left the boy in the care of my Aunt, and took the night train up, I phoned him at his club when I arrived. He came down to Streatham for the afternoon and evening---I was staying with my Mother-in-law as our flat was uninhabitable at the time, so met all the family. Poor man, I could see, when he arrived, that he was terribly nervous!--more so than we were, I think -- except Mater, perhaps, who was rushing round in a flat spin trying to tidy herself up and the house at the same time, so as not to let Tony down, though neither of them needed it . since she had been up at 7.00 o'clock that morning doing the same thing for my benefit! Don stayed the night in the end and we spent a pleasant evening listening to his anecdotes of Tony. Really it might have been a thoroughly miserable ordeal -- nothing unusual in the Guise household, most people stay the night when they come— We all liked him so much, and I do so wish he had had the Mater's address when he was in town earlier, they would have been so glad to entertain him. Perhaps he will come back one day to visit us when times are, let us hope, more peaceful.

Don explained a lot of things to me, and I felt a little more settled---as if I was at last able to turn the page, and could start a new chapter with more faith and perhaps a little more courage. It is surprising how time does heal our wounds, if we let it. We have to go on living, whether we want to or not, and the only thing to do is to make the best of it.

Raoul keeps me fully occupied now and as he grows older, he will become more of a companion. He is a jolly little chap the same bright personality as his father.

I received a letter from the Staffing Committee of Adjustment dated 31<sup>st</sup> Oct in which they said all the effects were being dispatched during the next few days to Kirkby Depot Nr. Liverpool I have not heard any more but presume they haven't arrived yet. I suppose it will take quite a time to come through.

With all good wishes to you and I hope it will not be long before you are home with your wife and family again  
Yours very sincerely,

Joan Guise

**Reply from Joan to Fr Murray**

35 Queens Ave  
Meols

23.2.45

Dear Fr. Murray

Many thanks for your letter which I should have replied to long ago.

It was kind of you write to me again .....

**Not finished or sent**

## From Don Courtenay

38/13<sup>th</sup> Ind Hvy A.A. Regt 1A SEAC

My dear Joan

I never intended keeping you waiting for so long for a letter – I have really no excuse and can only say “sorry”

Well much water has passed underneath the bridge since we met – the most exciting part of course being peace in Europe. You must all be so relieved – no more bombs and things ! Hope you celebrated the occasion well, we out here had a good a time as circumstances would allow. Now we are racing ahead with eliminating the Jap, which I think will be accomplished by the end of the year. We hope so !

I am back in the same old place but now with a Battery as 2<sup>nd</sup> in command. We have quite a decent crowd of blokes in the outfit and all get on well together.

Went to Tony’s grave the other day – it is being cared for – after the war, of course, a permanent structure will be erected. It would be wise if you could come out and see it for yourself later on – and who knows you might.

I hope you and the youngster are keeping well – rather a pity I didn’t meet him when I was in London. However one of these days I shall be wandering back – rather depends on the end of the Jap war.

Hope you have taken my advice and NOT letting life get you down.

I myself have had quite a knock since my return – my former girl friend having decided she no longer cares for me. Of course it was better that this should have happened before we were married or it would have been too awful later.

But life is full of these little setbacks – not a quarter as bad as yours.

Please write when you have time and when next you see Tony’s mother or Yvonne please give them my love

Sincerely Don

### Reply to Don Courtenay from Joan

Back in London after end of blitz and War in Europe

Estimated date Sept 1945

It is a very long time since I received your letter and I feel very ashamed of myself for not keeping my promise to write to you before this. Your letter arrived soon after we had returned to London. It seemed weeks and weeks before I managed to get the flat anything like clean and presentable. Oh – the filth ! Shall I ever forget it. All the china and cutlery had to be washed before we could even eat – and the lounge floor and bedroom surrounds had to be restained as the white plaster had so eaten into the boards. I despaired of ever getting the bathroom clean and finely went out and bought some “eau de nil” paint and got down to it seriously. I am now finding that Raoul is too big for the flat and he does need a garden and poor little chap; there is really not a suitable place where he can play without being on top of me all the time. We are away in Devonshire at present – just for three weeks but when we go home again next week I will have to start seriously looking for a house. I am afraid I shall find it difficult because the situation is simply ghastly – and even here in North Devon near Barnstable people are having trouble to find a home.

It seems to me that life is more difficult all round since we had a Labour Government and there doesn’t seem to be much hope of improvement in the near future- Everything seems to be in such a muddle – and there is so much talk, talk, talk.

My mind is very unsettled at present – I have got to decide upon something to do with the future and it is rather a problem. My greatest desire is to return to the Academy and continue my studies for awhile with the hope of getting on to the concert platform – I feel that I could do it yet there is bound to be a certain risk to it and that may not be fair to Raoul. Yet I don’t think I could bear an “ordinary” job in business.

I suppose things will work themselves out - yet I still cannot prevent a little anxiety.

On the whole life is a little depressing now and the tremendous joy of winning the war has been rather over shadowed by so many

difficulties since. But between whiles things are not so bad – A little over a month ago one of Tony’s older friends came home from the Middle East on leave with another friend and we had a few wild parties at home and at Mater’s – ending with one at the flat on the Friday before VJ – ~~the day the Japs~~ - when we first put out the flags – which continued until dawn had broken.

I really think I needed this holiday after it all! It was the first time I had entertained on a large scale since Tony went away but I found myself doing things as he would have done and I really enjoyed it .  
When I get a house .....

*Rest of the letter is missing.*

*We are lucky to have this copy of the letter to Don Courtney. Although we do not have the exact date, it was obviously written after V.J. day 15<sup>th</sup> August 1945 when Japan capitulated.*

*It was written during the holiday at Croyde in Devon and records and photographs suggest that this was in Sept 1945.*

*The problem over decision making about her future with the piano must have exacerbated by answered in a letter from Max Pirani written on 26<sup>th</sup> Aug 1945 suggesting that it would be demanding. I note with interest that not only do I remember the green bathroom paint but also two aspect of the Devon holiday. I was 2½ years old.*

**From Don Courtenay**

***The war with Japan finished on 15<sup>th</sup> Aug 1944***

13<sup>th</sup> Ind.Field Regt R.I.A. ABPO 17 India command

16 Nov 45

My Dear Joan

Now it is my turn to apologies! Many thanks for your letter and in future please don’t bother to even mention delays – I quite understand.

Note the new address – we are now a Field Regt, and, my dear, The Royal Indian Artillery left Ceylon during Sept and have been here since, converting to Field as part of the Indian Army. This is quite a remote spot, miles from civilisation and no women!! A concert party came around some 2 weeks ago and you should have heard the noise when the “popsies” eventually came on – the actual remarks passed I cannot, of course, repeat !!

However it has its advantages – one is saving money and two a nice healthy life – we play a lot of games etc and I am beginning to like the jungle once again. All officers are fed up with the heat. Got our Deferment of Release – ?gps 23-26? - this also effect me and now I shan’t be out until about March/April – perhaps !  
Now what have you decided to do about yourself ? Are you still thinking things out ? I admit things are so topsy turvy these days – however let me know how you get on from time to time. I promise you that when I next get home, I shall come along and stay a while – possibly there will be Mrs too ! – really I have decided marriage would do me the world of good – next problem is to find the right girl. Meanwhile I’m getting more and more critical – bad thing isn’t it. I hope Raoul is fit and strong – must be getting quite a big boy now. Please remember me kindly to Tony’s mother and sister – by for now Joan – write when you can  
All the best Don

**From Don Courtenay**

***Christmas Greeting***

A Happy New Year From Don Courtenay

13<sup>th</sup> IND. FIELD REGT R.I.A.  
ABPO 17 India Command

29 Nov 45

Hello Joan

Love and greetings to you all – and by that I mean the whole Guise family. I do hope things will buck up soon and that, at last, you will have a Happy Christmas. We out here are doomed to a poor one as owing to the docker's strike our Xmas ration of drink will not arrive in time! However, we'll do the best we can – and personally I hope to go on leave to Calcutta.

The painting on the card is very like the place we are in, save that there are no jungles – we are in the heart of them. Very nice though and now that the weather has cooled down things are becoming more bearable.

Daily we are getting busier and busier – perhaps you have noticed we are now a Field Regt.. Part of the post war Indian Army – but most of us are “wartime soldiers just waiting for our respective groups to come up.

Once again my best wishes to you all.

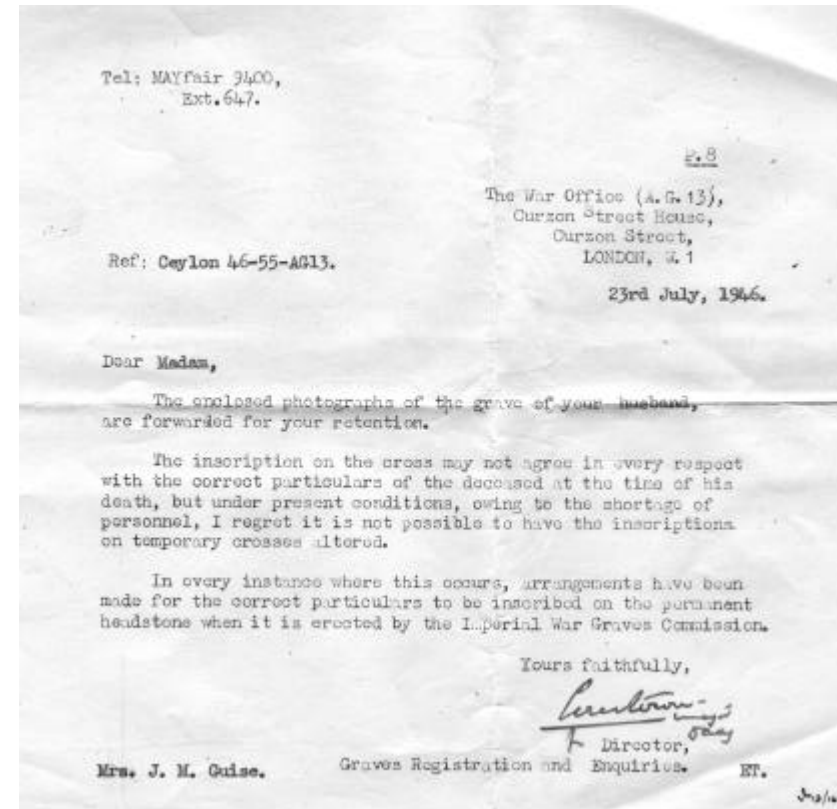
Yours very sincerely

Don

*The dockers in UK had been on strike during the war and the strike went on during the 1940's*



**Letter from War Office  
enclosing photograph of Tony's Grave**

**Dated 1946**



## Letter from War Graves Commission Dated 1957

PI

IMPERIAL WAR GRAVES COMMISSION,  
WOODBURN HOUSE,  
WOODBURN GREEN,  
HIGH WYCOMBE,  
BUCKS.  
22nd May 1957.

Dear Madam,

The permanent memorials have been erected on war graves in many parts of the world, and the memorial engraved with the personal inscription chosen by you is now in place. Although you may already know this, the Commission feel you will like to have this formal notification.

In an earlier letter, the Commission referred to the desire known to be felt by many relatives to contribute towards the cost of engraving the personal inscription and added that an opportunity to do so would be given to them later.

If you had thought of making a contribution would you kindly complete and detach the slip below and return in the enclosed envelope. You may send any sum up to £1, which is the average cost of engraving these inscriptions.

I would like, however, to make it clear that relatives are under no obligation to send a contribution unless they wish, and if the Commission do not hear further from you, the cost of engraving your inscription will be met from their funds.

Yours faithfully,

*W. J. Chalvers*  
SECRETARY.

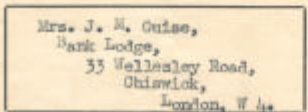
*Detach by tearing along the dotted line*

Personal inscription for the memorial for: Ident. A. B. Guise, Royal Artillery,  
Colombo (Livermenia) Cemetery, Ceylon.

In reply to your letter, I should like to contribute to the cost of engraving the personal inscription chosen by me for this memorial and I enclose

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

To:—  
IMPERIAL WAR GRAVES COMMISSION,  
P.I. DEPARTMENT,  
WOODBURN HOUSE,  
WOODBURN GREEN,  
HIGH WYCOMBE,  
BUCKS.

From:—  
  
Mrs. J. M. Guise,  
Bank Lodge,  
33 Wellesley Road,  
Chiswick,  
London, W 12

D4 1/7 WA P1322 20x 1-37 WFA Ltd Co 721

## Comment about these and other letters

During the period July 1944 to December 1945, Joan must have received in excess of **60** sympathy or related letters most or all of which she replied to. We are fortunate enough to have some copies of her replies although much of what she wrote in her letters is reflected back to us in the letters from those that embarked on long term correspondence with her such as Don Courtenay and John Sloan both who knew Tony quiet well. It is clear from these letters, the two that she wrote to Tony in Ceylon, just before he died, and the letter she wrote to him six months after he had died, how she was tackling life and how she was happy to discuss openly the grief and the issues confronting her.

It is interesting to look at the letters from and to various people over the same period of time.

It is no wonder that writing letters was always a bug-bear for her in later life. She was very skilled at writing letters and very conscientious about it but it was always quite a stress to settle down to actually down the job. She actually did once mention how the process brought back to her the memories of those grieving years.

For the reader who communicates via phone, email and social media in 2020, letter writing may be a strange occupation and the idea that one should sit down and write long and interesting letters as expressed by John Sloan while in Greece may be strange. For myself the problem was always what to write that would be of interest and then the mechanics of writing coherently and legibly. Telegrams, use time and again throughout the narrative in this book as a means of fast communications must seem very quaint.

R.G. May 2020

## **Appendix 8**

### **Letters of Condolence to Joan from family and friends 1944**

Letters from Family and Friends  
to and from Joan Guise after  
the Death of Tony Guise  
on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1944

**Based on letters this commentary gives a further insight into the significance of  
Tony's death not only to Joan but also to many other family members and friends.**

**Page**

#### **Introduction to those that wrote to Joan**

Letter from Mater to Joan 2<sup>nd</sup> Aug. 1944  
Letter from Yvonne  
Letter from Marie  
Letter from Neil Callow to Joan  
Reply from Joan to Neil Callow  
Letters from Margaret Perrier (Peggy ) and family Betty, Vera , John  
Letter from Johnnie Sloan  
Letter from Jiminy Frankland, maybe a nephew of Mater  
Reply from Joan to Cricket  
Letter from Paulos Frankland, maybe a nephew of Mater  
Reply from Joan to Paulos  
Letter from Geape – maybe Mary or Anne Frankland  
Letter from Joan to Mrs Priest in Shetland  
Letter from Mrs Priest to Joan  
Letter to Sheelagh Davis of birth of her son  
Letter from David Muir 19<sup>th</sup> August 1944  
Summary of other letters after Tony's Death

## **Introduction to Family and Friends Condolence Letters after Tony's Death**

Collecting together all the relevant material regarding Tony's death has been a mammoth task. New sources of information have kept appearing from different boxes and files as well as details from Joan's diaries.

It started with aural history passed down somewhat haphazardly over the last seventy years. Then a few years ago about 6 of Tony's letters home from India and Ceylon were found in the tin box returned from Ceylon. These gave some insight into the relationship between Tony and Joan, particularly when they were added to by some letters from Tony to his mother written during his time in the war. One letter was found, to Mater and Joan, at the time of Tony's death from his commanding officer and this gave further insights into the nature of his death and the respect the soldiers and officers had for him. Recently in another brief case a set of letters were found that directly followed Tony's death from the padre, senior officers and the matron in the hospital who tried to resuscitate Tony. Amongst these were copies of replies from Joan which give us considerable insight into her anguish at the time and her struggle to grow through the grief.

Since first writing the article – 3 Lives in WW2 – another batch of 35 sympathy letters have been found. Most of the letters were answered with an acknowledgement card but we have a few significant replies.

Poignant to find an airmail letter addressed to Tony from Joan just started –  
“My Darling”.... Then nothing more.

Included in the archive is the death notice to the Streatham News

Since the printing of the 1<sup>st</sup> edition a lot more information about the Guise and Fleuss Families has come to light, enabling many of the writers of letters to Joan be identified and so their comments in letters can be seen in context.

The caring and sympathetic expressed by the letter writers are now understood to be from people that more often than not had known Joan long enough to know about the tragedies in her life and probably had met Tony or were related to him and grown to love him.

Comments about the various people that have written are listed below and these are followed by summary comments selected from the letters, with a number of the letters shown in full.

So many of the letters contain such detail and demonstrate such a deep connection with the situation that it felt worth reproducing them in full.

Whereas some letters had been sent straight to Meols so those people knew that Joan had evacuated, many of the letters had been forwarded from 81 Stanthorpe Road or 4 Pinfold Road Streatham.

Below are details of the letters, the senders falling into about five specific groups.

## The Haycraft and Dibdin Family

The Dibdin and Haycraft Families would have been very supportive and will have watched Joan develop over the war period.

Gertie Davis nee Haycraft had two sons at war and had lost a third, Geoffrey, at sea a month before, leaving a widow Shelagh. Don had meet Tony while training and had been responsible for their introduction.

Letters from **Gertie, Lewis** and daughter in law **Sheelagh**. (recently bereaved) These are all the Davis family, Gertie nee Haycraft

**Don Haycraft** – convalescing from Glandular Fever in West Kilbride. Don had been very supportive of Joan before the war and was responsible for Joan meeting Tony.

**Lorna** and family Nottingham

The **Dibdin Family** was by now rather scattered. Rex was living in Forest Hill and did offer advice to Joan at times. Marian and her family had returned from Australia a few years before, after the death of her husband Paul Montford. No letter has yet been found from **Margaret Cowham** but one can imagine the gist of it, and Joan of course was living with Christine (Tine). The family must have be shattered for Joan having experienced the deaths of Lionel and Cecily ten years earlier and then the death of Peter the senior male member of the Dibdin Family. The continual reference to Raoul was in part because of his position as potential “head of the family” for two lines, the Guise and the Dibdin.

**Rex Dibdin**

**Marian and Bobbie Montford** – Peterborough – Telegram

**Mrs Midd** on 14 August 44 and 13 11 1944 really part of the family

Letter from **Joe Dibdin** re Peter’s death.

## The Guise and Fleuss Family

This group are all either Guise or Fleuss family or friends and neighbours.

**Mater** at 22 Station Road, Cambridge. – Mater’s Sister house probably.

Phyllis Fleuss **Mater’s sister in law Cambridge**

**Vera** - Royal Naval Air Station Easthaven Carnoustie Scotland

Vera Perrier – Mater’s great niece

**Marie Guise** from 4 Pinfold Road Tony’s Sister

**Yvonne Callow nee Guise** temporarily at 22 Station Road Cambridge

**Neil Callow**- husband to be of Yvonne Guise- Sierra Leone

**Betty** in Market Drayton Shropshire (could be **Betty nee Perrier**) great-niece of Mater

**Betty and Girls** Telegram and letter

**Auntie Audrey**... Mater’s Sister 32 Rusper Rd Horsham. She had married Charles Frankland and amongst her six children were Paulos Frankand and Jiminy (either John Charles or Oswald J) Frankland.

**Geape** of the same address Horsham Maybe a **Frankland** sibling

**Vincent J Poole** a friend of Tony from Art College who married Tony’s cousin **Therese Batt** daughter of Evangline nee Guise.

**Dr Jiminy Frankland** Aug. 44 and again = Jiminy Cricket No.1 Platoon 509 113 Coy RASC CMF

Jiminy Cricket was an important person in Joan life during the war period but as yet it is not clear how. His name was mentioned from time to time.

**Dr Paulos Frankland** 5501966 No. 1 MT Platoon 473 Coy RASC CMF =Paul Frankland be Vera Perrier, Mater’s niece Telegram. Paul married his cousin once removed ( Doreen Perrier.



**Anita** – 22 Station Rd Cambridge who may have been a member of the family but more likely a lodger with Mater who travelled up to Cambridge with Mater to stay with her brother's family in Station Road.

**Dinah** - 4 Pinfold Road

**Widdy** - 4 Pinfold Road

**Violet Anderson** – 94 Sternhold Ave Streatham.

**Johnnie Sloan** a friend of the family who wrote from Egypt

### **John G Sloan- a summary**

Known as Johnnie Sloan

The reader may be bewildered by the space allocated, later, to Johnnie Sloan, but it is through his letters during 1944 and 1945 to Joan that we not only get some insights into Tony as a person but also to life in Greece at the end of the war period.

Before the war, he must have become part of the Pinfold Road clan and a close friend of Tony and his attitude to his work and recreation in many ways reflected that of Tony, whom he respected greatly.

What we know of John Sloan is through a number of letters to Joan Guise during the War. Not only did he obviously know Tony and Joan well but also the two Frankland boys who were cousins of Tony and coincidentally ended up in Greece at the same time as Johnnie.

Johnnie wrote to Joan after Tony died, expressing his deepest sympathy and explaining how he had met Tony when he was about 16 ½ and was greatly impressed by him.

The reference to his mother, the London bombing and Pinfold Road in the same sentence suggests that he lived locally in the Streatham area and from the army records, he must have joined the gunners earlier in the war and then acquired the rank of Bombardier (BDR) which is the rank of corporal in the Royal Artillery.

In this first letter, written on 28<sup>th</sup> Sept 1944 he expresses beautifully how he felt about Tony as a person and subsequently his new family.

“I think I was sixteen and a half when I first met Tony – I had paid a visit to the Adams and was on the point of leaving when Tony walked it. We chatted about one thing and another until midnight and then he took me back to his den in Kirkstall Road where he made some of his famous coffee and continued our conversation. From this night I became a staunch admirer of Tony and was proud to think that he honoured me with his friendship. From then on I met several interesting people but none that would stick in my memory for evermore than Tony, except, of course, your dear brother and yourself.”

Having joined the Civil Affairs Group he thought he was going to France following the June D Day landings however much to his surprise his boat went to Egypt where he settled for a while. It was from here that he wrote and like Tony he wrote back about all the details of what he could buy in the NAAFI and how much items were.

He must have been about 23 years old at the time.

His next letter written two months later indicate that he is working again with the Civil Affairs group but in Greece just after the German force withdrew from the country in October 1944. His job as described in letters explains that he was involved with transport of food etc to the island in the Province of Preveza. Sadly by the time that the Allies moved into Greece, the Civil War had started making life exciting and a little difficult for our troops who were there to help with relief work

His letters which are in full in the Appendix 16. are important as his behaviour seems in some ways a reflection of Tony.

## Friends of Joan and others

These are less known about family or friends :

**Ginela...** 161 Grove End Gdns NW 8 St John's Wood friend from younger days probably from the Royal Academy.

**Jean Irvine** friend from Royal Academy and friend for life.

**Jane** also wrote to Joan from Leeds over the War period. – see “Three Lives”

Letter to **Mrs Priest** – Shetland. It is very likely that Tony must have met her while on duty in the Shetland Isles during a period of the War. Joan kept up correspondence with Mrs Priest for some years.

**Chris Redford** A neighbour of her parents

**Ella Rowe** A neighbour of her parents

**Constance Berridge** A neighbour of her parents

**David Muir** as mentioned elsewhere, was the son of Joan's immediate neighbour in Carshalton and saw himself as the boy next door.

There is still uncertainty about these people.

**Thelma** – from Symington

**Thelma** in Ayrshire

**John** - Class 40 FX Division H of S Scotia Ayr – maybe family Mater's great nephew – son of Margaret Wilson

**Peggy** - Hanwell

These were all local neighbours of Joan's parent in Carshalton who were always pleased to keep in touch with both Peter and

Joan was, in the years following, to be in touch with both Don Haycraft and David Muir for help and advice. Both visited 33 Wellesley Road from time to time.

There are, repeatedly, a few underlying themes within all the letters. Apart from the usual line that “words cannot express” there was often a complete disbelief that Tony could have died. In the light of the fact that most will not have known any details about Tony's activity at the time, it is amazing that so many considered him to have been immortal, at a time when anyone at war would expect to die at anytime. The fact that he died not actually on active service but of drowning during recreation is an irony only balanced by the report that he was saving someone else.

All who wrote were aware of Joan's other bereavements, and so felt and expressed a deep sympathy for the sadness she must be experiencing, added to that of the previous year when her brother died in an army accident and the loss of her parents in 1933. There was considerable reference to her son and to him being a reason for her to “keep going”. All passed encouraging remarks about Joan's strength of will and ability to overcome the grief and the odds against her, particularly for the sake of her son.

The fact that those four people nearest to her all died of accidents did not go unnoticed by Joan. One can imagine that an aura of fate or doom laid over her and this was referred to in one or two of her letters, as well as occasionally during the rest of her life.

Her feelings toward her son and her relationship with him must have been greatly influenced not just by the love for and promises made to his father Tony, but also by the fear that yet another one dear to her was “at risk”. It must be remembered that her second husband died in a lorry accident.

Joan was not overtly religious or spiritual. She had little time for church and clergy but was aware of a God, although she never discussed her relationship with him. Fate and predestination may

have grown into her being, particularly as in that era the term “everything happens for the best” was part of the culture. Strangely this acceptance of fate seemed to give hope. While Tony was in India, Joan and he had a dialogue in letters on the topic and we have his view that of a catholic with knowledge of the East. The alternative wording and perhaps approach “we make the best of everything that happens” was not used although often implied, especial in the sympathy letters to Joan. Despite the feeling of doom that she must have lived with, Joan was, at least in principle, prepared to allow her son to make his own way in life despite the risks. In a letter to her second husband, in about 1964, she makes it quite clear that her son was to be left to work through his risky ways in life and be allowed to develop to maturity in his own way. I wonder how often she feared another fatal accident whenever he went out in a car or lorry.

~~~~~

It should be noted that Joan took very seriously the business of writing letters back to those who had been in touch. Each envelope indicated when she had sent a card of thanks. I remember years later Joan mentioning the difficulty she had settling down to letter writing, because of the trauma of so much of it under such sad circumstances during the war. It is lucky that there are so many typed rough copies by Joan in that period.

There is a theme within Joan’s letters about her true love and life being finished “but my true life is finished, and my love has gone with Tony and so will always remain.”

She recognised that in time the wounds heal and that she would make a new life but it never would be the same.

This is probably truer than anyone realised. Joan, as a mother, was a responsible adult who planned carefully and, although she may have made mistakes, the aspect of her life that was directed towards the upbringing of her son was based on the fulfilment of her commitment to Tony.

As with most of us Joan had demonstrated with Tony, alongside her strong practical and artistic ways, a loving nature with no shortage of romanticism. She had, before the war and in the early years, striven to enter the theatrical world. After Tony’s death, Joan had to become totally in charge of situations and planned life as best she could to achieve set goals. Within certain limits she managed her second husband and he always took it that she was “The Governor”.

It is hard to judge, but it does seem that this dynamic also applied to her relationship with her son. Only on one occasion do I remember her behaving in a relaxed “childlike” manner. This was at a party when her cousin and childhood friend, Lorna, visited us and, for the first and only time, her behaviour was such that I had a glimpse of someone I “did not know”.

I wonder if Joan did loose or suppress an enormous chunk of her demonstrable loving self as a result of Tony dying, having given all of herself to him when they first met and married.

## Letters from Family and Friends

**Letter from Mater to Joan 2<sup>nd</sup> Aug. 1944**

22 Station Road Cambridge

My Darling Child

What can I say to you, how can I comfort you, for I too am broken hearted. Our beloved boy has gone away from us. The veil has been drawn and we can no longer see or hear him.

Only his spirit remains with us, a small, very small consolation.

The awful and tragic news was given to me by Archie Cory who is here on holiday, Mrs Wurley phoned the girls and they phoned Archie and he immediately flew to me. I heard Mrs Wurley posted you the wire, I did not know where you were, having been waiting a letter from you with an address, and until I knew you had received the awful news I would not write. Yvonne came to me yesterday and has given me your address. Nita who was in Minehead travelled here to be with me yesterday.

I cannot think or realise it is true, my first child and I loved him so.

The tragedy of it is beyond believing and you my poor poor child, the greatest of all your tragedies, I know how you loved him, now you only have his little son to comfort you.

God help you dear to hear the burden in the prayer of your loving Mother.

( Yvonne and Nita are here for a week and Marie comes on Friday. I feel then I shall return to London to be with them.)

**Yvonne Callow nee Guise Tony's sister**

**22 Station Road**

Cambridge

August 2<sup>nd</sup> 1944

My dear Joanna

You will think I have delayed writing this letter for a long time – I have because I was afraid to write until I knew you had received the Telegram.

I was quite heartbroken when I heard the ghastly news from Mrs Worley. Heartbroken as a sister and being a wife too I can understand what a ghastly abyss this will create in you life.

You know we were terribly proud of him and his achievements his memory will always live – everybody was fond of him and all his friends are deeply grieved that his departing should cause you yet another sorrow. Mater has received many sympathetic letters and all ask her to convey to you their deepest sympathy. They feel Raoul must be some consolation to you, someone to cling to in the future.

We have not heard from you yet and are anxious about you and any arrangements which you will make – perhaps the post in delayed.

One thing is certain – Tony is happy with our father, with Peter and all others dear to us who have passed over. The pain is largely for this left behind

Write soon if I can help at all

Love Yvonne.

**Letter from Marie**

4.Pinfold Rd. Streatham.S.W.16.

My dear Jo.

I feel that I too should have written to you, a long time ago, but as you say, what can be said on these occasions, words are very inadequate, and I think you know and understand, not only from the point of view that you've lost a husband, but having so recently lost a brother that you were equally as proud of as we were of ours. I wrote and told all the boys of course you've probably by now heard from them. Victor echoed my thoughts when he said that he always considered our family and gang were onlookers in this ghastly war, and that nothing could possibly happen to any of us. If it had been anybody else somehow it would have been vaguely understandable!, but not Tony, he was always so very alive and active, and such a real sort of person, that I just cant even now realise it. In one respect I almost dread the end of the war, everybody will no doubt go mad, but there will be such a majority of people who wont want to go mad, in the middle of it all thoughts will turn to the gallant boys who aren't coming back. As Tony's wife you must be terribly proud of him, as I was as his sister. Altho' Raoul won't remember him, he'll know what sort of a father he had and I'm sure will follow in his footsteps, with your guidance. I feel that Tony and Peter must both be together looking after you in a way that they could never have done even on earth, when one comes to sort things out it really is the spiritual things that count more than the earthly, altho' its damned hard to think that way.

Mater asked me to tell you that she is back from Cambridge, she just couldn't stand it any longer down there. She's looking forward tremendously to seeing you and Raoul, she also wants to know whether Raoul talks yet.

I do want you to know Jo, that you can always rely on both Yvonne and I, particularly myself as Yvonne probably wont be in this country much longer, to help you to look after yourself and in particular Raoul, you must feel so dreadfully helpless and hopeless at the moment. I'm not exactly a tower of strength myself, but two heads are always better than one.

Re the new job. I'm not surprised that you wondered about the feeble voice, that's the new bright little number that the Association have managed to procure. She's the wettest thing in years, but quite a sweet child. I'm now in the Ordnance Board, not the same as Mater, but a sort of general Board for all three services. Work isn't too bad, automatic etc., and quite interesting, but I much prefer it to the Association, not only is it a change not to have to think quite so much, but there's far more life, the girls really are extremely nice, actually we have great fun. I shall definitely not go back to the Association if I can possibly help it. The office is in Kensington, by the way, the journey isn't too bad, 49 bus all the way. takes about 1 hr. and we have to be in by 9, the hours are a bit thick really and the pay pretty lousy. 9-6 every day, 9-12.30 one Sat: and 9-5. the next, however I'm very lucky to have landed the job and not have to go into a factory or the forces.

Take care of yourself. It looks as if by the news that we should be seeing you soon.

**My love Marie**

I meant to tell you that mater had a rather nasty fall in the lounge, and hurt her back, at the present moment she's in bed, but will write to you as soon as she can.

### **Letter from Neil Callow to Joan**

Free Town Sierra Leone

My dear Joanna

I'm most terribly sorry – What use can I possibly say of something so crushing.? Words will only hurt you more., but in my brevity there's a world of deepest sympathy and condolence. I'll not burden you with more my dear – My hand is in yours in mute sympathy.

Please write if you want to talk with someone about it. Our loss is different, Joanna, but so great for both of us.

Be brave my dear

My love Neil.

### **Reply from Joan to Neil Callow**

My Dear Neil

I was so very glad to have your letter, and though I found it very hard to read it was very comforting

I have wanted to write to you for a long time but somehow could not do it. You will understand I know

I can still hardly realise what has happened... it didn't seem possible that Tony wouldn't come back, .. I never let that thought materialise in my mind, and coming safely through his experience on the outward voyage, it seemed as if he was destined to come safely home again.

For a long time I believed there must be some mistake.. but I have had several letters from his fellow officers, and from the Matron of the hospital where he was taken. He was buried in Liveramentu Cemetery, Colombo. Perhaps, one day, before I die, I shall have the opportunity to go out there myself....

They are all accidents, Neil, my parents, Peter and now Tony ..and I cannot help wondering sometimes if there is some curse upon me or through me on those who are dear to me, and I dread and fear for Raoul. He is my last tie to this earth now, and if a anything should happen to him. Tony used to say, before he went abroad, that he would always be with me in spirit. I feel that more now than I did before and it is a comfort; but it is so hard when I think of the years ahead without him beside me

I suppose the wound will heal in time... I shall probably make a new life and may even marry again, but my true life is finished, and my love has gone with Tony and so will always remain.

I used to be afraid sometimes of having too much happiness...now I know why those three years that we knew each other we must have lived a life-time of happiness, and perhaps I have had my share....and far rather would I have it so than to have lived on together for years and had our love grow thin. ..that I cannot think that that would ever have happened. But.. .oh it is hard, so hard.

I am sorry Neil, forgive my rambling I feel I must say these thing tho' I cannot speak them.

I hear that Yvonne is joining you very soon now. You must be very happy about it.

At last you can begin you lives together, and I wish you both every happiness.

I hope this is in time to wish you all the best for Christmas and the New Year you will be getting some leave in about eight months won't you? It will be good to see you again.

God bless you

with love, and Raoul's too

**From Margaret Sarah Beatrice Perrier nee Wilson**  
( AKA Peggy)

8 Highland Ave  
Hanwell W7  
Aug 1<sup>st</sup> 1944

My dear Joanna,

I have just heard the tragic news about poor Tony. You poor dear what dreadful sadness you're having in your young life. Words are so inadequate to express one's sympathy for you, all I can say is, I am truly sorry for you. Thank God you have little Raoul who well I am sure be a comfort to you in your terrible trouble. For goodness sake do not come back to London yet, it is far from safe. Every letter will only renew your wound so I will end – assuring you of my deepest sympathy. Ever yours affectionately  
Peggy

~~~~~

**From John Perrier**

Class 40  
FX Division  
H of S Scotia  
7 8 1944

My dear Joanna

I have just heard of the death of Tony and write to offer you my deepest sympathies. I sincerely pray that you will overcome your grievous loss which will be felt by all who knew him. One must resign themselves to the fact that it is the will of our lord that

Tony has departed from us. May he rest in peace. My deepest sympathies John

~~~~~

**From Betty Perrier**

Telegram OUR THOUGHTS AND DEEPEST SYMPATHY  
ARE WITH YOU LOVE BETTY AND GIRLS

Then letter

Pelham House  
Stoke Park  
Nr Market Drayton  
Shropshire  
3 8 44

Joanna my dearest

I feel so sad about four tell me that I do not know how to one had a sympathetic and soothing letter. I can guess how you feel about it knowing how much you long for his return.

Jo you're grand and I'll always say so because you've endured what none of us could go through and I know that you will bear this blow just as well.

How is baby Raoul ?

I expect by now he can almost walk on his own.

I'd pray and hope that no harm will come to any of you at Streatham and that this dreadful war will soon be over. I must write to Mater, so will say Goodnight and God bless you love  
Betty

~~~~~

**Letter from Vera Perrier Peggy's daughter**

and a granddaughter of **Katherine Fleuss**, Mater's sister

Telegram JOE MY DEEPEST  
SYMPATHY MAY GOD SEE YOU  
THROUGH AND HELP YOU  
ALWAYS .... VERA

Royal Naval Air Station  
Easthaven, Carnoustie  
Scotland  
3<sup>rd</sup> August 1944

Joanna

However wearisome letters are at a time  
like this please let me write to you to  
tell you just how sorry oh! So grieved I  
am about Tony. Poor darling Tony. It

came as a terrific shock yesterday still I can't believe it and dear  
Joe my heart is full for you in your latest and bitterest grief. One  
cannot say "be brave and bear up" when life suddenly loses all  
its meaning and sanity.

Dear Joe do try to believe that however empty your tummy feels  
now from this blow, it's beyond us to understand why it was to  
happen and we know very little. Keep your faith warm and your  
head high, you were such a source of admiration before. You  
know you can take even this Joe for Raoul's sake, for Mater oh!  
Jo dear sympathy must even be aggravation now but I think I  
know and understand, if only a fraction, what it is to mourn for  
Tony. But he won't ever really be dead, not in our memories ever  
Joe, he was too fine to die in all but name and God left a part of  
him for you in Raoul.

No more now to add to your burden. I am sorry Joe.

God be with you to help you through now and always. Vera.



Vera May 1944

**Letter from Jiminy Frankland, maybe a nephew of Mater**

{Dr ?} Jiminy Frankland Aug. 44 and again = Jiminy Cricket  
No.1 Platoon 509 113 Coy RASC CMF

My Dear Joe

I have not heard officially yet but got word through Paulos a  
couple of days ago of Tony's death.

It is a great shock and hit me terribly, I can only convey my  
heartfelt sympathy for you my dear, it is very awkward to write  
about but you must know how I feel. Tony was very dear to me  
and more dear to you, you must be brave and bear up as he alone  
would wish of you, a great man with a greater future.

Capable of soaring to great heights and with one of the best of  
wives he could wish for. We must pray for his soul and please  
God he is in a far happier place.

The baby thank God is young and cannot understand, take care of  
him and teach him to love the beautiful things in life as he alone  
would wish, a hard job but I know you can do it.

Remember my dear any help and advice I can possibly do for you  
I will.

You are so much younger and capable of bearing the strain so  
please do help his mother my darling Auntie a great woman  
beloved so much by one and all that know her.

Well God bless you Joanna, my prayers are for his deliverance,  
God rest his soul

Don't bother to reply until you have time and feel better. I know  
what it is

My Love as always Jiminy



### Reply from Joan to Cricket

My dear Cricket,

It was so sweet of you to write to me and I am so sorry to have kept you waiting such an age for a reply. You will understand I just felt I could not write before

There seems little for me to say now, but I did want you to get this for Christmas with my very best wishes.... and Raoul's too.

We are staying with one of my Aunts and have been since July. I didn't want Raoul in London during the raids, so I haven't seen any of the Family. I hear Yvonne is soon to leave to join Neil. Mater may be coming up here for a few days after Christmas...she is dying to see the boy, of course. Quite honestly I am not in any hurry to go home. Auntie has been so good to us, and I dread the idea even the thought of seeing Streatham and the flat again.

Oh, God Jiminy, sometimes I feel I just can't bear it. It didn't seem possible that Tony would not come back, and I cannot visualise how I shall manage to go on living without him. It might be years and years. Yet I shall have to.... others do, and then there is Raoul...he needs me, and I must see him through to manhood as Tony would wish. He is a big chap now, a mixture of Tony and Peter... not like me at all. He has definitely got Tony's vivacity and sense of humour....yet he is careful like Peter, and I think, may have Peter's build. I do hope he will be tall.

I won't write more now, Cricket, but lots of good wishes to you old thing for Christmas and the New Year

Look after yourself

With our love God bless....

### Letter from Paulos Frankland, maybe a nephew of Mater

{Dr ?} Paulos Frankland 5501966 No. 1 MT Platoon 473 Coy  
RASC CMF

My Dear Joey

Old thing – its with the deepest regret that I've just heard of your pathetic loss, it shocked me beyond measure. May I take this opportunity of offering my heartfelt sympathy. You've had so many wicked things happen to you in so short a space, that I think you are so brave a woman to carry your burden – Joey be brave darling, as I know you will and I look forward to the time when I can once again be home to met your son – he must be a Tony all over.

I won't bother you with idle talk now but will write again soon.

God bless and help you in the future.

Sincerely Paulos

Tony was my buddy. It hits me hard too!

## Reply from Joan to Paulos

My dear Paulos

It is a very long time since I received your letter -----I just haven't realised how the weeks and months have passed, and now it is almost Christmas and I may be too late to send you good wishes, I hope this gets to you in time.

I won't write much, Paulos because I just feel I can't. The wound is still so terribly sore, tho' in time it will heal, no doubt, there will always be a scar. Raoul will help— is helping, but gosh Paulos it is hard, I never thought it could possibly happen.... not to Tony, and I simply cannot visualise my life ahead without him.

I haven't been home since I had the news and haven't seen any of the family, You didn't see our flat, did you Paulos? I dread going back to it. It is so full of Tony and he was so very proud of .... and yet I cannot bear the thought of breaking it up and moving as I shall have to sometime.

Mater may come up here to stay for a few days after Christmas. Poor Mater, her family is dwindling gradually, I hear that Yvonne is about to leave to join Neil Well, Paulos, forgive this crappy letter I wont write more now, but very best wishes to you my dear from Raoul and I for Christmas and the new year....let us hope you will be home before it is out.

God bless you, with our love,

## From Geape ( Frankland)

**Maybe Mary or Anne Frankland  
Or possible Gertrude Eustace nee Fleuss**

32 Rusper Rd Horsham  
2 Aug 1944

Sent to 22 Station Road Cambridge and forwarded to Meols.

My poor dear Jo,  
how can I express to you my deep sorrow in your dreadful trouble my heart bleeds for you. It cannot be true that we shall never see our darling Tony again. How you have suffered in your short life – I can never express in words my sorrow for you in your loss. He was such a dear boy and so loved by all who knew him. I as you know loved him dearly – may God give you strength to bear your great sorrow- When you can will you write to me. Give little darling a big hug fro me.  
My fondest love Jo dear

Always your affection Geape

## Letter from David Muir

19<sup>th</sup> August 1944

My Dear Joanna

I was terribly shocked to learn the tragic news of Tony's death; it must be an almost unbearable blow to you. I am most awfully sorry for you, Joanna my dear. You have had to go through far more suffering in your short twenty four years than anyone expects to have to bear in a normal lifetime, and it certainly does not seem right. I feel however that your strength of character will not permit you to feel despondent. For neither is there any need to feel so. Tony has died in the service of his country, in order that his son and present and future generations shall have a more worthwhile existence, and it is your duty, and I am sure your wish, that Raoul should grow up in the likeness of his father, and be able to share in making a better world, the opportunity of which will be presented by winning of this war by the allies. Furthermore, life goes on, and one has got to keep looking upward and seeking the light even though the troubles through which one passes try at times to drag one down into darkness. Don't be downhearted. Remember Christian in Pilgrims Progress ?

I was so glad to know that you had managed to take Raoul away from the danger zone, and hope that he will not realize the dangers to which you were subjected until you were able to get away from Streatham. Don't be too hasty to come back, as we cannot yet tell whether the nuisance has been mastered.

I hope you are finding things where you are as comfortable as can be expected. I'm sure your aunt is pleased to have you both, and maybe your two cousins are at home sometimes. Anyhow, I gather that your friend Mary is staying not far from you, and you can probably meet her sometimes.

Winifred and Edward {Colville) returned to Ewell from Staffordshire where they have been staying for 4 or 5 weeks., but

I do not think it is wise. Francis has, however, now taken his holiday, so they have gone down to Cirencester for a fortnight; they had difficulty in finding a place to stay at, but they went to that town because Winifred has a friend there who was able to find them lodgings. Winifred is not unfortunately relieved of the shopping, though.

You may have heard that Bill was seriously wounded in Normandy about a week after the invasion started, but he was quickly returned to this country by plane and is now in hospital in Leicester where, thank goodness, he is making a very good recovery. He is expecting to go to a convalescence home next week. Marjorie and John have been able to stay up near him, so he has been seeing a lot of his wife and son.

Life is fairly normal for me throughout all the troubles of these times, but I shall be glad to get a rest from business at the end of next week when I am taking a fortnight off. If I can find a place to stay at, I will be going away with Kathleen, as we do feel that we could do with a change, but so far I have not been successful in fixing up although I have written to a number of seaside addresses. Still, if I cannot get fixed up, I will look forward to a really good holiday after the war.

I trust that it will not be very long now until the dangers of the South of England have passed, and I shall look forward to seeing you and Raoul when you come back to your home. Is it too much to expect that the war may even end in Europe before the year is out ? I am still reckoning on next year, but if it ends sooner, I shall be all the more pleased; and so will everyone.

Meanwhile my love to Raoul and yourself, in which the family joins me

Yours affectionately

David.

### Letter from Anita staying at Gerald Fleuss birth place

Anita (Nita) had been staying with Mater at Pinfold Road and travelled up from Minehead to Cambridge to be with her when the news broke.

C/o 22 Station Road  
Cambridge

My dear Jo

I just don't know how to write to you dear, it is quite impossible to put on paper what my heart is feeling. Why this terrible tragedy has happen again to you my poor sweet, is more than one can understand.

Your only comfort is that your beloved has gone to the great Creator who loaned him to us all for so short a while, there to find eternal peace and rest.

Tony was such a darling and will be sadly missed, to me he meant much more than my own brother.

Thank God you have a dear little son who grows more and more like his daddy. There you will find consolation in this great grief.

You are such a grand guy Jo and will take this cup of sorrow in the same brave way as you did the death of your dear brother.

We are all going to mass and communion on Sunday for our dear one and my prayers will be for his dear wife and wee son, for you both will be Tony ????? of that I am sure

God bless and comfort you dear

If I can do anything at anytime please call on me.

Much love to Raoul and yourself from Anita.

Gertie Davis nee Haycraft      Joan's aunt  
Morlock Lodge  
Bleadon Hill Nr Weston S Mare Somerset  
9<sup>th</sup> Aug.

My dearest Joan

We were so sorry to read this morning the sad news about Tony. What can I say dear to comfort you. I am afraid there is so little but I just want you to know how much I feel for you and little Raoul. You have had so much to bear and this last blow must seem almost too much.

Raoul will be your greatest comfort and will help you through.

I wrote to you at Streatham but I wonder if you ever got it as you had left for Nottingham, Uncle Stan said. I do hope that you will be able to get back before long. Uncle Bernard in his last letter said you were going up to Christine. As I do not know her address I must send this to Nottingham. Our house has been blasted by a bomb falling across the road, we are lucky as the opposite house is down but we cannot go back until we get windows in, at the moment. They have put the roof right and blacked out the windows but there is only one door that can be opened on to the staircase. We are remaining on here until we can see what is best to be done. Poor Sheelagh is having her babe in October and unless the bombs have stopped it will be impossible for her to go back to Reigate as things have been and are pretty bad at the moment.

You know dear that if there is anything Uncle and I can do to help you, we will and this address will find us. I want to write to your mother in law but I do not know where she lives at the moment. I will enclose it in yours and perhaps you will send it on for me.

With all my love and sympathy Joan dear and a big kiss to Raoul  
. From Auntie

PS Please give Christine my love.

**Lewis Davis**

**Joan's Uncle – a bank manager  
Bleadon Hill  
9 August 1944**

My dear Joan

I do not know how to write this letter for your grief must be so great and no words from me can be of any help but I do want you to know how much I sympathise with you in your sorrow. Tony was such a fine fellow and although I only saw him the once I could not but think how lucky you both were in your marriage. You have lost a great comrade but you have one alleviation in your sorrow and that is Raoul whom I am sure will more and more be a comfort to you in your life, and fill the void so you will not be so lonely.

I can say no more except to repeat how I sympathise with you in your sadness and to say that if I can at any time be of any help don't hesitate to let me know.

With love from your Uncle Lewis.

**Sheelagh Davis**

Daughter in law of Gertie. Husband Geoffrey, a naval Doctor, had drowned on the 15 Jun 1944

C/o Mrs Vowles  
Morlock Lodge

**Bleadon Hill**

Ne Weston Super Mare  
Somerset.  
Aug 9<sup>th</sup>

Dear Joan

We were so sad to see your news in the paper this morning and I feel I must write and offer my very sincere sympathy as I do know how you must be feeling.

There is very little one can do – or say – to help at a time like this – as it is really something one must fight ones self and you little boy will help you in that way – you must be so very thankful to have him. But I want you to know that if there is anything I could do I would.

I hope we shall meet one day soon

Yours affectionately  
Sheelagh.

**Letter from Joan to Sheelagh Davis,**

wife of Geoffrey Davis who had just died as a surgeon on a Royal Navy ship in June.

Geoffrey was the son of Gertie Davis nee Haycraft , brother of John and Pat Davis.

{Date about Nov 1944 Husband Geoffrey had died 15 Jun 1944  
My dear Sheelagh, }

Congratulations! and best wishes to you both. I have just heard that you have a fine baby boy. I am so pleased for you, and you must be very proud. He will be a great comfort and companion to you in the future.

It is a very long time since I received your letter, and I should have answered it long ago. DO please excuse the delay I have found it so hard to write letters, and there has been so much business which has had to be done by correspondence, it was very sweet of you to write.

I hope we shall meet before long. I shan't bring Raoul back to London until the raids are quite over, but when we do eventually get home will come over to Reigate for a day, that is if Auntie can cope, she must be very glad to have you with her.

Do give them both my love, I expect Auntie has had my letter by now.

Very best wishes to you and the wee man.  
Yours affectionately,

**Stanley Haycraft**

Gerties brother  
(see website for many letters to the Dibdin family in WW1)  
High Peak Hotel  
Forest Road  
Nottingham  
Nov 22<sup>nd</sup> 1944

My Dear Joan

I send you my deepest sympathy dear. You have indeed had a terrible lot to bear first with one going and then the other. It will be a comfort to you to be with Christine during these sad times. I wrote for your address, but in the moving up here I couldn't find it and now it has just turned up among some other papers. When we get back to Edgbaston after the war we will look forward to seeing you. At present we have no home and as you know our furniture is blitzed. We don't like Nottingham and we shall be glad of our next move. Pat and Percy { Stanley's nephews } are both in Holland and Belgium while John Davis is far away in Burma { more likely Malaya }. My own old Company is in Italy and I hear frequently from others on all fronts. I hope you are alright. Please give Christine my love. Auntie Jean sends much love and sympathy to you.

From your affectionate Uncle.

**Letter from Don Haycraft**, Joan's special cousin  
Through his encounter with Tony while training, Joan and he met the Guise family.

Paisley Convalescent Home  
West Kilbride  
Ayrshire

Sunday

My dear Joanna

It was a great shock to me that I heard of Tony's death in Ceylon. Mum wrote to tell me the sad news and at the time I was in Hospital with a high temperature and so could not write to you before.

As you know Tony and I were great friends during the early part of this war and a true and kinder friend I never had.

He was in every way an ideal companion and I am sure he must have been an ideal husband to you. It must be a great loss to you particularly as you have had so many intimate losses in your life. I am just recovering from 6 weeks in hospital, glandular fever being my downfall. Apparently it is an obscure complaint which results in high temperatures. The treatment is complete rest and under a perfect sky and strong sun I am carrying out the Doctors orders.

I hope this war will be over soon – I am heartily sick of the whole thing and my one aim is to return to civilian life and attempt to have a normal life.

Let me have a letter from you and don't forget to tell me how the infant is getting on. If there is anything I can do for you don't hesitate to let me know.

Your loving cousin

Don

**Letter from Vincent Poole**

Student friend of Tony. married his cousin Therese BATT

119 Palace Road  
SW2

My Dear Jo

Forgive me for not writing before but I really haven't known what to say and letters on this kind always seem to be so empty and superficial, but you know my Dear whatever sort of mess I make of this letter that I am most terribly upset over the news. It was the last thing I expected could happen. I think we all thought that Tony would have come out unscathed, but apparently the power that be decreed it otherwise although one cannot help wondering why out of the countless people it should be Tony. Terry wishes me to tell you that she hope to be in London quite soon and if there is anything either she or I can do you know we will only be pleased to do it.

Please don't bother to reply to this letter as you will no doubt have quite enough writing to do.

Le us know when you are coming back to London. Give my love to Raoul

Love Vincent (and Therese)

**Letter from Mrs Midd, (Mrs Middleton)**

who was a loyal friend to 3 generations on the Dibdin Family. She had lived as a sister to the children in WJ Dibdin's household until she married.

118 Victoria Street  
London SW1  
14 Aug 44

My darling Joan

Have just heard this very dreadful report of Tony. I just cannot think it is true – somehow it does not seem possible.

No wonder I have not heard from you -- needless to say you have our deepest sympathy - that seems a futile word dear – fee too dazed to think of /// words. Is it due to sea voyage or and accident – or what?

I pray God give strength and keep you to bear this further loss in your still very young life – it seems so impossible to happen to Tony- So full of the joy of life !

Again Dear you have our united love and very deep and sincere sympathy.

As always

N. Middleton

P.S. How glad I am you are with you Aunts who are able to give you and comfort

God Bless

The Aunt was Tine (Christine nee Dibdin) in Meols. Tine had lived in the household with her as a girl.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Letter from Mrs Midd, (Mrs Middleton)**

118 Victoria Street  
London SW1  
13. 11. 44.

My dear Joan

Thank you so much for your letter. You know we shall be pleased to see you anytime you care to call. Am simply longing to see Raoul. He must be a little man by this time.

Yes I am sure Auntie Christine has been a tower of strength to you. On thinking things over I think you were meant to be with you own people just when you most needed their sympathy and help. These things happen for the best but we don't always see it at the time.

Mac { her son}has been home and gone again, he came straight from Burma and doesn't want to go back. He says the Germans are babies compared with the Japs.!

He has had no news for three months and went straight off to the flat, got a shock when he knew Marjorie { his wife} was in Leeds with friends.

I am to give you their sympathy and kind thoughts both of them feel they just cannot write about it, Mac was very upset, we had other sad news for him.

This is their fifth wedding anniversary. I thought of you on your second {3rd Oct 1944} dear. Our united love and all the best for your future

My love and thoughts to Christine  
Always Mrs Midd.

**Rex Dibdin** Dibdin Uncle  
17 Wynell

**Forest Hill SE23**

Aug 14 1944

**My dear Joan**

I am very grieved over your sad loss, and all my sympathy goes out to you.

Your great consolation must be in developing the character of Tony's boy

My love to you and Raoul  
From Your loving Uncle Rex

**Auntie Audrey Frankland** nee Fleuss Mater's Sister  
Doreen nee Perrier was her daughter in law married to Paul Frankland, Doreen's cousin

32 Rusper Rd Horsham  
1.8.44

My Dear Johanna

I have just heard on the phone from Doreen telling me of he terrible news of poor little Tony. My dear I just can't believe it. It is too dreadful for words. How my heartaches for you and your dear little man. I loved Tony very much and he was always so sweet to me, it is a tragedy, you poor little soul have had so much grief, may you have the strength to bear it all, but it needs so much courage to bear so much, please write to me when you feel you can, God bless you dear and help you through this terrible time

With love from your broken hearted  
Auntie Audrey.



## Letter from Johnnie Sloan

Johnnie had been a friend of Tony's for about 7 years from the age of 16½. He met Tony at the Adam's household and visited Tony's "den" at 16 Kirkstall Road SW2. This must have been in 1937 when Tony was about 20 years old.

902780 SLOAN J.G.

No.4 Supply and Provision Depot (Balkans) MEF  
28<sup>th</sup> Sept 1944

Jo', my dear.

You will be more than surprised, I think, to receive a letter from one whom you no doubt thought had forgotten about you and all those dear to you.

After January, when I was last on leave, I was unfortunate enough to receive no more leave and in June I volunteered to go overseas in Civil Affairs, preferably in 21 AG (which is France).

On the first of August I received embarkation leave and it was not until my last night that I went over to 4 Pinfold Road – the Doodlebugs so scared mother that I did not wish to leave her.

On the last night- practically my last in England - I learnt of your grievous loss.

Believe me, Jo', when I say I cannot put into words on paper what I actually feel and that my most heartfelt sympathies go out to you in your bereavement.

I have thought these last few weeks - when I was cut off from all communication with the outside world – so much of you and it hurt more than I can explain that God had dealt you two such severe blows within twelve months.

I was more than proud to call Tony a friend, as indeed a great friend he had proved to me during the seven years that he harboured me with his friendship. It would be impossible for me

to forget Tony for his qualities were such that they will be indelibly imprinted upon my memory.

I think I was sixteen and a half when I first met Tony – I had paid a visit to the Adam's and was on the point of leaving when Tony walked in. We chatted about one thing and another until midnight and then he took me back to his den in Kirkstall Road where he made some of his famous coffee and continued our conversation. From this night I became a staunch admirer of Tony and was proud to think that he honoured me with his friendship. From then on I met several interesting people but none that would stick in my memory for evermore than Tony, except, of course, your dear brother and yourself.

If only I had known earlier of Tony I would have paid a visit to you on my leave for I cannot possibly make this pen put on paper what I really wish to say. All I can really say is that I am more than sorry and that I am only waiting for the day that I land in England in order that I may express myself properly.

When I saw Yvonne and Marie I was convinced I was going to France because I had been told so when my posting came through. You can imagine my surprise, therefore, when I saw the size of the boat on which I was to embark. I then thought that perhaps I should be going to the South of France but after a few days at sea I realised that I should not see France on the trip.

I was not really surprised therefore when I found myself in Egypt. It would have been an experience to go through France from one end to the other – not that I wish it for I have already seen enough, although I have not walked through a town or village but have merely passed through them on a train. Even so, Cairo, was a great shock to me. Perhaps one day I shall be able to spend more time in that town and it would be interesting to see then how one part of the world lives. I will tell you a lot more about Egypt in my future letters but suffice it to say that during my short stay in this country I have formed the opinion that our

slums, compared with an Egyptian village, would be regarded as palaces.

Not having been outside the two camps that I have been stationed in I can give you very little idea of the price of goods etc.

although have been given to understand that genuine champagne can be bought in a first class restaurant for approximately £3-16-0. South African Brands which are fairly dear in England being priced at 3/6 a measure sell for between 2½ d and 1/0½ according to the type of restaurant or bar visited.

The NAAFI's are very good and cater for all ranks. American cigarettes such as Chesterfield and Lucky Strike sell for seven pence halfpenny and Senior Service Greys 333' are priced at ten pence. All prices are for 20 cigarettes.

The Players and Gold flake sold are made in Egypt and they are only 10d for 20. Toilet articles in the NAAFI besides being more or less unlimited – as are the cigarettes ( if you want 200 you can have them ) are on the whole cheaper than in England.

5 Gillette razor blades cost 1/0½ as compared with 1/3 in England; Dettol 11¼ d Lux, Palmolive, Lifebuoy and other popular brands of soap 3¾ d Colgate and Macclean's toothpastes 11¼ d and so on.

Beer is a bit of a snag – the only kind being sold in the NAAFI or anywhere else for that matter being a Lager brewed in Egypt which in that excellent institution the NAAFI costs the enormous sum of 10d for a bottle containing a pint and an third.

I will certainly write to you again before many days pass,  
All my Love to Rhoal {Raoul} and yourself

Johnnie.

**Jean Irvine** Close friend of Joan  
5 Beverley Court  
Chiswick W4 presumed 1944

Darling Dibby

Your letter arrived with you dreadful news, and my dear, I just don't know what to say, and I'm not going to try to say all the usual sympathetic things because on paper they seem such a hollow mockery. If you don't mind my dear I would rather wait until I see you, you know what I mean. All I can say here is that after the loss of Peter, for Tony to go too, and even the manner of his going is too cruel for words, though it was a worth one and so typical of Tony, that he should die saving someone else.

What are your plans my dear, though I don't suppose for a moment you can bring yourself to think of such things yet, but please Dibby if I can be of any assistance in any way at all, do please let me know, also the moment you get back to London, tell me for I should like to see you so very much and also Raoul.

I have one or two odds and ends that might be useful to him, nothing much, but with coupons even socks are a help. Would you like me to send them up to you or wait until you get home? I have written to Jock and told him, but I haven't had a letter for a fortnight so I'll send you his sympathy which I know he will ask me to do, a little ahead of his letter.

Take care of yourself my dear for Raoul's sake, and go on being the brave lass I've always know, difficult though it may be, God bless darling  
All my love  
Jean

Jock was Jeans Husband. By this date Jean had a son, John, who would have been about 3 years old.  
About 2 years later Joan moved into a house in Chiswick 500 yards from Jean

### **Letter from Violet Anderson**

94 Sternhold Ave  
Streatham Hill  
SW2  
Aug 1<sup>st</sup> 1944

My dear Johanna

I have just heard the sad news of Tony, Joe dear I feel so desperately sorry for you and Raoul, please accept Ian's Mother's and my sympathy. One says so little at these times but I know how you must be suffering. I can only pray that you will be given strength to carry on and that little Raoul will grow up a good son and man and help to dry your tears. You have had more than your share of sadness. You know that Tony has gone on a little ahead to a higher life and he and your parents and Peter will be beside you in Spirit and helping you to bear the pain.

Now dear I will leave you in His loving care and trust you will be comforted.

With love and a kiss to Raoul

Yours affectionately  
Violet Anderson.

### **Letter from Ginela**

May have been a friend from her days at college because of the use of the name Dibby and reference to Jean Irvine

161 Grove End Gardens  
N.W.8  
10<sup>th</sup> Aug (1944)

Dear Dibby

With real sympathy I write to say how much I felt for you when I saw the sad announcement in the Telegraph yesterday.

What a cruel blow my dear, and how misfortune has added to misfortune for you.

I am truly so very sorry, and I do hope that Raoul will be the greatest comfort to you.

I haven't seen Jean for simply ages, three dates fell through and then the doodle bugs have come to make life even more restricted than it was before. I know Streatham has had it badly and hope you are both alright.

When times are more normal and work less exacting, you and Jean and I must meet again.

Mummie joins me in many thoughts of you at this sad time

Yours affectionately  
Ginela

Written to Stanthorpe Road so she did not realise Joan had evacuated a few months before.

## Letter from Helen Priest in Shetland

Mailland  
Baltasound  
Lewick  
Shetland

19-12-44

My dear Mrs Guise

What am I to say, I am too shocked to say anything. Your husband was such a bright boy so jolly so lovable so delighted when he told me your name. Such a wonderful girl he said. I was looking forward to seeing him here again with you and the darling wee boy. It just seems Mrs Guise as if our father needed him in the home above. O poor you, Mrs Guise, I just can't find words to express my sympathy properly but you will know I'm so awfully sorry for you both, your brother gone and now your dear man. O but life is hard. But then Mrs Guise there is something else, he is safe for evermore, just gone into the next room to wait for you, such a fine lad the world is a poorer place without him. Why does such things have to be we often wonder. No wonder they all liked him, he was always so jolly and if his son grows up like him he will be a very real kindly hearted man. May God bless you both and comfort you.

Were you bombed in London, I wonder. I have so often thought about you there and wondered how you were getting on and Mrs Guise I ask if you will get a pension. I don't like to think of you having to go and work and leave the little love. Please forgive my asking but knowing your husband, (just seemed like a lad of my own when he came running in, my son is 23 you see) I just love his wife and baby too, our son is not married but works this Farm with my husband. I am 55 yrs and my dear man 59 so we are getting on. My dear, good night and write when you can, but I am so sad for you and for us too.

For we have lost a very dear kind friend,  
Yours sincerely Helen Priest

## Letter from Joan to Mrs Priest in Shetland

My dear Mrs. Priest,

I was so pleased to get your letter, and I'm afraid I have rather delayed in replying, -but..... I have bad news, and I know you will be sorry.....Tony was drowned out in Ceylon on 23rd July. It was a ghastly shock as you can imagine, the more so perhaps as he was not actually in a fighting zone at the time. I only know that he died whilst attempting to rescue another person from the same fate, he was seen from the shore just afterwards lying across his surfing raft and they went out to him immediately and brought him in to the hospital close by but it was too late. They worked on him for hours trying to bring him round, with respiration and oxygen

I have received several letter a from his fellow officers and from the matron of the hospital.. They have all been so kind.

I shall always feel proud that he should die so but he was so young and had so much to look forward to in life, he always brought joy and laughter wherever he went and was liked by everyone. I believe he was very much loved in the Regiment by officers and men alike, and the natives under his command.

I am so thankful to have the boy....he is my one consolation, and he is a very fine lad... very like Tony in many ways. I think Raoul will have his spirit.

I will not write more now, but just to send you the very best wishes for Christmas and the New Year from us both,

## Summary of other letters written at the time to Joan

**Marion and Bobby Montford** - Dibdin aunt and cousin  
In Sutton : Adrian was at Monte Christo  
Telegram

**Lorna Haycraft**  
2 Brunel Terrace  
Derby Road

### **Notts - Joan's Cousin**

Sympathy from Mother Di and Lorna  
And they are glad she is with Christine.

**John** maybe a Perrier cousin of Tony  
Class HQ  
FX Division H of Scotia Ayr Scotland  
7.8 .44

### **Sympathy and we have to resign ourselves to the will of God.**

**Widely (Widdy)**  
Living at 4 Pinfold Rd  
2/8/44

Sympathy and may God give Joan peace.  
Offers of help.

**Dinah**  
4 Pinfold Rd –  
Rather a belated note of sympathy. Dinah is pregnant and remembers that Joan may have some literature about “these things”.  
Bombing raid so going to the basement.

**Betty and Girls** probably Betty Wilson nee Perrier  
**Stoke Park Nr Market Drayton Shropshire**

3/8/44  
Telegram and letter  
Deepest Sympathy – know that you longed for his return.  
“you’re grand and I’ll always say so because you’ve endured what none of us could go through and I know that you will bear this blow just as well . How is baby Raoul?”

**Winifred {Colman}**  
16.1.45 living in Ewell - Dibdin family Friend  
Thanks for the Christmas card and sympathy from her and Edward. Look for to seeing Joan when the V bombs stop.

Gladys  
61 The Chase Edgware  
21/8/44  
We were all shocked and sorry not to write before but needed to get Joan’s address from Mater. Remember Joan in their prayers and hope that sweet little son will give you comfort

**Thelma**

Thistle Cottage Symington Ayrshire

16/8/44

Shocked to hear of husband's death and her and her sister feel deeply for Joan

**Chris Redford**

77 Grosvenor Ave Carshalton Dibdin family friend

August 28<sup>th</sup> 1944

Heard about Tony from Gertie. Sympathy and hope the news is false. She has just been to Weymouth and glad that the family is away from the bombing.

**Ella Rowe**

106 Grosvenor Ave Carshalton

Aug 15<sup>th</sup> 1944

Dibdin family friend

Saw death in Telegraph. Sends sympathy.

"It seems only a short time ago I saw and spoke to him, at dear Peter's funeral. It is so dreadful, all these young lives gone. May we be worthy of their sacrifices"

**Constance Berridge**

105 Grovenor Rd Carshalton

Aug 10<sup>th</sup> 44

"I see in the Telegraph the death of your husband."

Sympathy and God bless and help.

**Peggy** maybe Rex's housekeeper or more likely Margaret

Wilson or her daughter Margaret Perrier.

8 Highland Avenue Hanwell

Aug 1<sup>st</sup> 1944

Just heard the news – what dreadful sadness in your life.

Sympathy and for goodness sake don't come back to London yet.

**Appendix 9**  
**Letters of condolence to Mater**

**Letter to Mater from Vera her great-niece**

Her mother was one of the 5 girls of Katherine Edith nee Fleuss

Vera was about 21 year old at this time.

Royal Naval Air Station

Easthaven

Scotland

3<sup>rd</sup> August 1944

Mater Darling

At a time like this letters are often more wearisome than helpful but you've got to know how sorry ( oh! such an empty word to express death) terribly sorry I was to hear about Tony when

Mummy wired me today .

Oh! Poppet not all the sympathy and kindness of friends just now will do very much to help you in this grief only you and your faith in God will pull you through. I want right now to be with you holding your noble head up and pressing your hand, cos you need it now and Joe {Joan} will too poor darling.

Don't grieve yourself ill Vera you know Tony wouldn't have it, bless him he's happy and however big a hole it's cut into your heart try to keep yer pecker up because he's all right and he's the one you've always wanted for, not yourself.

Oh! Mater it was an awful shock to get the telegram today, I still don't know any details but I believe in whatever circumstances he went down he would be bearing up and praying to God.

Believe that, it will help you. If he was the only son he didn't died before leaving Raoul to whom you must now turn, poor little mite with such a brave mother. When you have a Mass or Masses said

for Tony please include me, he meant very much to me and I'm heartbroken.

I can't say more at thistime Mater, I know too well how you fell but bear up and help Joe to believe there is still is a God and some meaning in life for Raoul's sake. Of course you will, you can take even this knock however hard it isnow. In time you will understand why the bruise was meant if you can't see sense now.

All for now darling

Keep that chin firm and that head high. He above understands fully

Always in deepest sympathy

Vera.

**Letter to Mater from Charles and Toby**

5 Appach Rd

SW2 {Brixton}

2-8-44

My Dear Vera

We are so grieved at the news of the loss of your dear boy, that I cannot find words to express our sympathy.

My heart is aching for you, as I know too well what you must feel like.

Try to be brave for the sake of your dear Girls and may his baby son by his sweetness and love bring comfort to you and Johanna who is also in our thoughts.

With deepest sympathy to you all in your great sorrow

With love

Yours sincerely

Charles and Toby.