

Aerogramme: Examined by Base Censor, passed by Censor 4640
To: Mrs Bradshaw
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Australia

(Unlikely though it appears this is sufficient address, not 54 Area)
British Military Mission in Hungary
C.M.F.

14th May 1945.

My dear Margaret

It was grand to get your Air Letter of April 24th. It is very nice to feel that I can get a reply from you within 6 or 7 weeks. I shall look forward to the letter to Tehran which will no doubt turn up sometime.

Many thanks for the offer of baby clothes. I should think they would be invaluable. But I don't know what the situation is. I know Diana went to London recently and shopped with that in view. Anyway I am asking her to write you direct about it so as to save time. Yes, my mother died in Sept 1943. I feel sure I wrote to tell you but so many of our letters seems to have gone astray. As you can imagine it was a very great loss, and totally unexpected. Poor Mother, I don't think she ever recovered from the grim time she had in Singapore. As a result of that she got Sprue* and was ill for a long time in S. Africa - how ill I never knew. She got home in May. For that I am very thankful, because I know how much she was longing to get home and be with her friends and relations. Above all I am glad that she met Diana. But I gathered from people at home that she was very ill and wouldn't look after herself - she was so excited at being at home she rushed around seeing people - no easy matter these days, and would not give up. However much one feels it there are many things to be thankful for. She had a very interesting life and managed to do so much of what she wanted to do. I wish I had been with her though.

After long delay in Italy I got on to Debrecen. Flying is a damned silly method of travel: endless waits at dusty ugly aerodromes, a few hours of hideous noise and one is swept into an utterly different environment with no time to adjust one's perspective to the altered visual and political scene.

The Balkan mountains appeared as untidy shapeless snow drifts, the Danube at Belgrade as a spilling of muddy water on an untidy floor. The clouds are the only objects that retain their personality, I was in Debrecen for an uneventful though not unpleasant 2 ½ weeks - uneventful except for one stormy evening when, walking in the woods, I was held up by some soldiery and relieved of my watch and such money as I had on me. They contemplated removing my trousers too but thought better of it.

Budapest is a tragic sight. Did you know it? In one way I am glad I did not know it before. Its depressing enough to see the utter ruin of a great city without the added burden of sentimental feeling. It must have been very lovely before. I have always been puzzled about how people of a big city adjust themselves to sudden inflation. Seeing it happen had made me no wiser. On top of that there is the complete ruin of the town itself, and yet there are very

few signs of real destitution. Humanity is incredibly tough. I wonder how you celebrated V.E. Day? I wish I had been in England as I always do when big things happen. I too have no idea what I will do after the war. I am (so is D.) attracted by the idea of becoming a kind of peasant farmer in England. But no doubt that is not so idyllic or so easy as it sounds. On the face of it wandering in Central Asia would seem now to be over - but its useless to speculate. Yes, I'll take your bet but I won't be able to bag my share if you win. Please write again soon.

Yrs

Eric.

* Sprue is a tropical wasting disease, characterized by mouth ulcers and chronic enteritis.