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1789198 HAC BISCOE AL

PAPAW

40 H Q.

We came aboard yesterday (5th Jan)
at about 11 o'clock.

R.C.A.F.

OTTAWA

CANADA

(2nd Day on the Boat.) (Tues)

Wear cloisce, (sorry & mean these)

We've been on board ship
a day now, although we haven't left
port yet. There are 105 of us in a
room about 8 feet high and about half
the size of our church. In this room, we
eat, sleep, play, and do everything, talk
about a crush. We sleep in hammocks
and those who ~~can't~~ haven't got a
hammed. sleep on the floor, (sorry - deck)
- the grub's lousy, uncooked, spuds
not peeled, - the hammocks are
uncomfortable, and wire all screwed off.
The boat is a Dutch one of about
15 or 16 thousand tons, and is rather old
& should think it's certainly not the
"Queen Mary" anyway. But still, why
grumble. We shall have something to
mean about when we get out, to see
and the tub starts talking, up to now
there's been no motion at all, just

like being ashore

Well this letter won't get posted until the end of the journey, so I'll leave it open, and write pieces when I feel like it.

I don't expect this letter'll get through the censors, but I'll try to get it through in a parcel, so keep every thing that's in it under your hat, or you may get me into trouble for telling.

(31st Day) (Wed)

We left Annapolis (Port of Annapolis) this morning, and we are now anchored just off of Battery, waiting for a conveyance (or maybe an escort) tomorrow. We are a bit stayed, the boys in my mess have to go on guard again tonight (they were on on Monday) they shouldn't be on until tomorrow, so they're not very pleased, I don't have to do guard, as I'm "Mess Cook" these are the of us, and we have to go to the galley ~~there~~ four times a day to get the

21
I had to get the rest of the boys. then we
have to die it up, and get hat
notes, and wash up after, and as we
have to queue up for as much as
an hour (and more) in a stinking
hot galley, with echoverdes and
steam bottles running up, and damn the
mail in hundreds you can tell we're
not very happy either.

Howard & I queued up (in
relays) at the canteen today, for
about two hours, and managed to
get 2 day 2½ bats chocolate, 1 day 1½
bats of chocolate (Ration) 1 day Pantrees
Wine Gums, 1½ day packets biscuits, 1 day packets
of biscuits for myself, and some for Howard
we shall probably live on that, the grub
not much good, today's grub wasn't as bad
as before, but still rotten. I only wish I
could get some of this chocolate home to
you, but we can't, we can get as much
as we like here, (if we queue for them)
I hope to make this last the voyage.

Well, I'll close for now, as I'm not feeling
too happy either, still we hope to be going
by tomorrow.

Now comes a rather long break in my narrative. It is now Friday Jan 16th which means that I've missed 9 days without writing, so the best thing to do is to copy the ~~logs~~ ^{entries} from my diary (which I've kept through the hardships) and scrape on them from memory, so here goes! -

4th Day (Sats)

Left Harty at 17 o'clock this morning with another whaler, under escort, starting off, and anchored at Milford in the mouth of the river. There are about 3 weeks worth of small boats, and some seem to think they were sunk on purpose to mark shallows and reefs. Didn't stay long but got under way making good speed steering off N.W. estimate that we are going north of Iceland, with the possibility of touching at Iceland. The boat really started to roll now.

5th Day (Sunday)

Woke up to find that we're now going South Westward, must be going south of Iceland. Iceland visible now six times a few times, and feel rather a really heavy sea running, waves 20 feet or more high, boat rolling heavily. everything creaking

③ and groaning as if in its death agonies
6th Day (SAT)

Sea's a bit calmer today, one of our destroyers escort (we had two) was badly damaged in the night, and has had to put back. Met one of my night school chums (the one that took my photo for the Evening News) he's in the Fleet Air Arm, perhaps you remember Eileen speaking about him one tea time he had just been sent to base - remembers? - we had a chat, he's also going across for flying training (told Eileen that it's Molly Heath's fellow - Bill something, his name is - still knows who Eileen. Popular rumour is that we reach Halifax (New Scotia) where we disembark, on Thursday or Friday, sooner the better.

7th Day (Sun)

Still feeling rotten. went to see the M.O. this morning, he told me it is "just sea sickness - we can't do anything to help you" - but he gave me a dose of "Number Nine" and told me to see him again tomorrow. Not much like a Sunday you seem to have all week of days on

this tide

8th Day (Mon)

Still feeling lousy. MO say "rest" wish he'd get the boat to rest a bit. Nothing startling happened today

9th Day (Tues)

Went to MO again today, feeling quite a bit better, learned that we have had to make a large detour owing to Churchill returning to England. His escort have orders to shoot at anything on sight: - Hope they don't see us. We've been right down by the shores which means another week before we reach port.

10th Day (Wed.)

Would have felt OK today but are now in a REAL heavy sea. Everything has been loaded down, life lines have been run out over the decks, (to grab hold of otherwise you'd be washed overboard) making no headway, just facing the storm. Ship is rolling and lurching, shivering and shuddering every now and then there are crashes of broken crockery, and ~~st~~ stuff falling about (to say nothing of blocks) when the

(4) ship first starts to roll you're frightened
she'll sink, then you're so seasick
that you're frightened she won't - (Hatter)
Hammocks lumpy and banging &
together all night.

11th Day (THURS)

Nothing much to write of today
so perhaps I'll relate a couple of exciting
incidents that have happened. One night
six Merchant Navy blokes started a row
with some RA's boys. Along comes the
Ship's Warrant Officer with a few blokes
he'd talked, and away they go - bottles
- knives - brooms - any old thing. The result
was the M.N. bloke got to the clinic and
the RA's boys were being patched up at
the hospital up to 2% in the morning, some
slit open, tazed, gashed, blood everywhere.

The only other thrilling thing was the
CO. and an Canadian Army Captain were
both a bit miffed, something was said
and the Army Captain hit our CO on the
nut, that's all we know, but there's
going to be a Court-Martial over it
- and that's all the thrills we've
had

12th Day (Fri)

Feeling in the pink today, ate all my meals, and didn't lose any. First day for ages. - grub not too bad. spent most of the day playing cards and most of the evening writing up this narrative (I hope it doesn't bore you - but it gives me something to do) We have to give in our English currency tomorrow, when we leave the boat we'll be given \$10 (I think that's right) which is worth about £2.10.0 to start off with, and we'll be able to draw on the amount we pay in when we get to our station. Estimate at the moment give Monday as Tuesday as the day we reach port.

13th Day (SAT)

The weather has changed greatly through the night, yesterday it was quite warm. I spent quite a long time on deck in the sunshine with only a scarf on (I mean besides my uniform) no greatcoat no gloves, and I didn't feel at all cold - but today - boy oh boy this morning

we⁵ ran ~~in~~ in to another storm which
was only abated a bit this evening
I went along the deck this afternoon
they were deserted, it was blowing a
gale, snowing, and bitter cold, you
had to grab hold of the rail all
the time, and only manage to keep
on board at all by sheer will power.
We picked up a destroyer ~~except~~ this
afternoon and everything points to the
fact that we should reach port ~~to~~
tomorrow or Monday, so have hoping
Well the boys have dealt me a
hand of cards for which (Solo)
so I'll leave this story for tonight.
That's all I've done for a fortnight,
play cards, chess, sleep, moan, and feel
ill, still never mind, "It won't be long
now" (I hope)

Well I'll finish off this little
account of my journey from my diary
the last day of the trip (Sunday) was spent
much the same as the others, we were laid
order to land in our blankets & blankets
tenders, and that's all that happened

15th Day (Monday) Handed in all our
leading etc. this morning, we reached dad
at dinner time, and the rest you know

and thus passed a rather tough
uncomfortable miserable journey and now
we're in jolly old Canada, and liking
it. I'll get this letter
across to you somehow.

So that's that. It doesn't
make very pretty reading does it, but
it passed the time away.

Bye bye for now
Sweet dreams

Your very bestest

John

