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LONDON
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Dear Marie,

I've just returned to a new unit after finishing a very enjoyable fortnight's leave. I'm afraid my mail will take a little while to catch up but I have your lengthy air mail letter & a 3 page airgrap which one of the chaps managed to pick up somewhere.

I'm sorry I can't let you know how your parcels are treated en route for as yet none have come to hand, apart from Eileen's 2 packages which were quite in order. However I'll be looking forward to them now as I'll explain soon. As you know I've let my mail go to blazes

Of course, like all aircrew when not flying we had our share of grog - you needn't worry we don't get too badly under - It is much more tasty beer up there + of course the whisky is as advertised. It is very hard to understand what the old blokes are muttering about - usually trying to bite you for something so it doesn't really matter if you can't understand them. The women of Scotland (particularly the younger ones of course) have a very fascinating accent I always reckon. The majority are much prettier too than their southern sisters, although for too many don't seem to pay much care to their teeth. We had a wonderful trip from Glasgow to Loch Lomond. At the bottom of the lake we boarded a paddle steamer which crossed from one side to the other, making frequent calls at the various towns on the banks as it went north. I'd had it on the way up for in

to commence a P.T. + Commando course which will probably ruin me after this leave, but should be good fun.

Contary to my other previous quiet leaves, this was much more hectic. I started off with the first week down South, mostly in Sussex. From there I went to Edenburgh where I picked up Shelton + Johnson + had quite a time. We started in pretty posh circumstances at one of the leading pubs. Saw a fair amount of the city + surrounds, soon tired of looking at castles + boring places of historical interest. The bridge over the Firth is, of course, a masterpiece but to look at is exactly the same as the thousands of photos I've seen of it. We saw several shows by day, + invariably ended up at a dance by night.

pub there so forgot about Leeds. There is not
6) much to see in ~~Leeds~~ Sheffield, on the surface
anyway. It is down in a valley which
is always shrouded in a very heavy
pall of smoke. Hence everything is very
dirty & even Birmingham is clean
compared to Sheffield. However it has a
couple of nice theatres, & one of the best
dance halls I've ever been in. Moreover there
seems to be an absence of Yanks & Australians
were such a novelty that people were stopping us
showering all sorts of invitations upon us.
Dirty & all as it is, methinks I may visit
Sheffield again one of these days, particularly
as I'm now stationed in North East of
England. Of course I spent more money
that I really should have but can't
let that worry me as I had a wonderful
time. Sorry I couldn't get any postcards
on the trip, although must admit I didn't
try very hard. Shelton arranged a trip for
us through Edinburgh's largest brewerys. It
was very interesting following it through all
processes, but of course we ended up with
the manager in the sample room.

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was very wet & miserable & there was no visability at all. However coming back it was vastly different & is all they sing about. It was really beautiful. It had been raining all day & as soon as it stopped, the sun came out, the mist lifted & amongst the greenery of all the hills the clear white of the thousands of small waterfalls was really enchanting. Loch Lomond will I hope, always be vivid in my memory. You can see my point when I say that in such comparisons, I hate the filthy stench of drab of castles & ruins reeking with unessential historical references & traditions. Had several other interesting trips into the hills along the Firth & out to the coast. Accommodation always is the greatest trouble. Of course, one can usually get into one of the service hostels, but I always reckon the extra comforts & conveniences of a decent hotel are well worth the cost on leave. We usually slept in fairly late although I did manage to get round to St Mary's Cathedral a couple of times.

I intended to spend the last day or so in Leeds, we had to change trains at Sheffield, managed to get into a luxurious

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but henceforth I should catch up on it. I'm the first place I seemed to have created the impression that I was a bit fed up. Actually I was very weary for quite a while + bit strained from all the work - However this leave has made up for it, believe me.

It is funny you know how ~~when leaving~~ it doesn't even occur to flying personnel that anything could happen to them but it is amazing to note the number of chaps, with whom I trained + came across ~~with~~, + who are 6 feet under. Don't think I'm getting cold feet or anything for I'm actually very sorry to have to admit that we don't look like flying again for a couple of months. At present we are about

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