

10, Freemasons Road,  
East Croydon,  
Surrey.

16. 12. 41.

Dear Mr and Mrs McLean,

I felt that I must write and express my sympathy in your great anxiety over your son Jock.

I intended to write earlier, but I have only just been informed of your address. You will probably wonder why I am writing, as I do not expect you have heard about me - you see, I only met your son once, when he visited me at Croydon, on his way to Manston airport.

He was kind enough to give me all the news he could, of Jim Hunter ('Ginger'), who is now a Prisoner of War in Germany - you have doubtless heard of him, as until July, he was Jock's room-mate at St Eval.

He wrote to me several times, and sent me some small photographs of the Waterbeach Hotel, and the surroundings, as he thought I would be interested to have some snapshots of Jim's billets.

H.A.C. Ball, who travelled with Jock, from Brixen, told me that he was one of the most

(2)

popular officers in 217 squadron, and also one of their best flyers. I can well believe that, as I was particularly impressed with his kindness and sincerity.

F/O Jack Gibson also told me that Jock had done everything he could in the way of helping Jim's family, by personally packing Jim's belongings, and sending them to the Depository at Slough. He answered all the enquiries concerning Pilot Offr Hunter, and he did many things for him, that he himself never mentioned to anyone.

I am afraid that I do not know LAC A. Ball's official number, but I think he was servicing the plane 'F for Freddie', and if you wish, I think it is possible to get in touch with him, through Wing Commander Bower. I thought perhaps you would like to hear from him, as I know how the time drags when there is no news at all, and maybe he could help you.

The Air Ministry is always very dilatory in giving news, and I can fully realise how anxious you must be, to hear from them.

May I say, on behalf of myself, and my family, that I hope very sincerely that there may be some possibility of your hearing good news.

(3)

I should be very grateful if you could let me know when you receive any fresh news. I hope that you will excuse the liberty I am taking in writing to you, but I thought you might like to know how much I appreciate everything you did.

Assuring you once again of my sympathy,

I am,

Yours very sincerely,

Thelma D.M. Chambers (Miss).

Innisfree 123 Winifred Rd  
Surrey

20-12-41

Dear Mr & Mrs McLean.

I hope you wont mind me writing to you, May I convey my deepest sympathy to you both, a few days ago Flying Officer Jack Gibson a friend of your son came to see me and told me the sad news that your son has been missing since Nov 15<sup>th</sup> my son and yours shared the same room when they were stationed at Waterbeach Hotel Padstow it was while your son was on his last leave home my son W. J. Hunter was reported missing he is now Prisoner Of war ~~in~~ in Germany. Jack as Jim always called him came to see me on his way from Chivenor to Manston Kent and was to have come again to spent the night on his way to you on the 16<sup>th</sup> Nov I think he was due for 7 dys leave then. I wondered why I had heard nothing more from him, it came as a shock to me when I knew what had happened would it be asking too much of you to please let me know if you have any news of him, my Boy will be sorry to hear the news as they were very great friends. I shall remember you in my prayers and pray that you will have had news that your son

is safe. I know that God will give you strength  
to go through the weary days of waiting  
our lives are in God's hands to use and do  
with them as He thinks best. although we  
cannot see now why all this sorrow and  
suffering is sent to us we shall all know if we  
trust Him in His own good time so for now  
I will leave you in God's safe keeping as He  
alone can help us and I know if we ask  
him He will help you bear your terrible loss.

Yours very sincerely

(Mrs) F. Hunter

10, Freemasons Road,  
East Croydon,  
Surrey.  
30.12.41.

My Dear Effie,

Thank you so much for your kindness in replying to my letter so quickly - I was pleased to hear that you had intended writing to me, in any case, as I wondered whether perhaps you would think I had taken too great a liberty, when I wrote - but I wanted to so much, and it just didn't seem the time for convention.

It is difficult for me to express my feelings, in a letter - but I do want you to understand that I share your anxiety wholeheartedly: I only wish that I could help you all, in some way; there is so little that anyone can do.

I was surprised, and deeply touched, to hear that Jock had mentioned me to you - he is indeed a lovely boy, and I can honestly say that I have never before been so favorably impressed with anyone - at the first meeting.

You must excuse me when I speak of him as Jock - because that is the name I knew him by, and with which he introduced himself, so it is hard for me to call him by his real name.

I have written to SAC Ball, at Thorney Island, but as I did not know his official number, I had to send the letter c/o the CO - but I am almost

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positive that he will receive it - and I have no doubt that he will write to your parents very soon.

I think it helps somehow - if you can hear from people who knew Jock, and valued his friendship.

Jock spoke often about his home, to me - he is so very proud of you all - but I did not know that he is the eldest boy - as he would scarcely talk about himself. And because of his entirely unselfish attitude toward everything - I liked him all the more.

I understand how far away from everything you must all feel - and how helpless to do anything. Please do let me know if there is any way in which I might be able to help you - I would do anything I am able - if it would ease your minds at all.

Perhaps, if you care to send me his official number - I could make a direct enquiry to the Red Cross Society - as sometimes they receive small scraps of information about the airmen.

Since I heard the news - I have been trying desperately to think of some way that I might help - there is so much I want to do - so little I am able.

Naturally, we were all pleased to hear of Jim's safety - you see, our families have been firm friends for years - and I am afraid that many people had a rather exaggerated impression of our friendship - as I wrote many letters for Mrs Hunter at the time. We are great friends, and I am glad really, that

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I was able to help his Mother - it was rather strange that I should meet jock in that way - I had heard so much about him - and what a 'grand fellow' all the officers knew him to be.

You say that you wish you could see me - somehow I feel that way as well - it is almost so much easier to talk things over, than to write them - and theres's so much I am aching to say.

Perhaps it would be possible for me to come up for a short while, during my summer holidays in 1942 - if you could suggest some small place where I could stay - it is a long way ahead yet, but I really should like to meet you all.

I have a weeks leave starting from January 10th - but the days would be so short - and the journey very difficult under blackout conditions, as I have never made such a long journey alone, before. In any case - I hardly think that you would want to meet fresh people just at the moment.

Please remember me to your Mother and Father, and my family also wish me to send their kindest regards.

Thank you once again for your exceptionally nice letter - I shall look forward to hearing from you again, whenever you feel like writing.

Yours very sincerely,

Thelma

P.S. I'm afraid LAC Ball was not servicing jocks' plane - that, I think, was 'f' for Johnnie. f.

10, Freemasons Road,  
East Grinstead,  
Surrey.

19.1.42.

My Dear Effie,

I hope you are not too surprised to hear from me again so soon, but I have just had my letter to LAE Ball, returned as undelivered from Thorney Island - and I expect you are beginning to wonder why he has not written to you.

I wrote to him, as I promised, over three weeks ago - in the hope that he would contact you, but of course as I did not have his official number, I had to chance that it would be delivered.

It was returned this morning, marked 'unknown', and therefore I concluded that he is still at Manston - so I have redirected the letter there, and I do hope that it will eventually reach him.

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I know that there is nothing really that he will be able to do for you - but somehow I feel that it helps a little if you can hear from anyone, because there is such a feeling of helplessness when there is no news at all, from any quarter.

I had hoped that long before now, you would have heard good news - two months is such a long time to wait - and it seems to me that it is just at this time that the Air Ministry are inclined to forget you. There are so many letters at first, that it is bewildering to know how to deal with them all - and then suddenly everything stops abruptly, and for a long while you receive nothing.

It has always puzzled me as to why this should be so - there seems to be nothing at all that one can do about it.

I do hope that I have not bothered you too much by writing again - but I do want you to know that I am trying to contact

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Mac Ball, because I feel sure that when he receives my letter, he will write to your Mother and Father almost immediately.

If the letter is again returned from Marston, I can try Chivenor, because he may possibly be there again.

Please give my very kindest regards to your Mother and Father, and I hope that you will be able to write and tell me any news you receive - I do so hope it may be good news.

Very sincerely Yours,

Phelma