

I
H.M.S. Kempton.

30th 7 - 16.

Dearest Mother,

We have now been out sweeping in the north sea for four days & four nights but have not yet been so fortunate or unfortunate as to even see anything in the shape of a mine - I am very much hoping that we will soon return to Granton as I am rather in need of getting a good sleep, you see, there is only just myself & another chap keeping w/T guard & of course I have never been accustomed to keeping the four & four watch (i.e. four on & four off) needless to say we are compelled to adopt these hours on account of getting called with the other men ^(when asleep) & also to fit in with the meals!

We are usually pretty busy & get plenty of messages, all of which we have to code or decode ourselves - This is by no means a swift job, although I am becoming slightly more experienced in it now - The messing part of this performance I think, is just about the worst arrangement I have ever known & seems to put one to no end of worry & trouble although of course, like everything else, it is just typical of the navy - It is one of their chief factors to make everything as complicated as they can !! At the present time I am messing partly on my own & partly with the other two animals belonging to my mess - I am beginning to wonder if I am still a human being myself, at least, I am sure that I am no longer civilized - I cannot say that I have made many friends aboard

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for the simple reason that I am down
on my luck & I do not understand them
& they perhaps do not understand me but
some of the nicest men on board are the
old fishermen - They at least have a warm
heart, but as for the others I cannot say
much, I only know that most of them hate
me like poison, why it is I cannot tell &
I feel quite guiltless of ever having injured
their delicate feelings! I suppose I have
been brought up in a different way to them!
but you will understand best what I mean
I am afraid this is a queer sort of letter
but it is no use me writing a lot of lies &
saying that I am having such a lovely time
on board this old mine sweeper, I should
like to know who could but after all it is
war time & I do not suppose anyone with
reason could quite anticipate a picnic -
However it is not the life I mind
so much as the extreme loneliness
- then again I am so utterly wretched.

because I am no longer able to see my wife & baby girl, so that on this account I have at last decided to have them up in Granton, where at least I shall be able to see them sometimes -

I thought perhaps it would be best to tell you, but I should like you to remember mother please, before you say it is foolish, that it is the only thing which can make me happy. I have been at a lot of trouble to find some suitable rooms although I did find a country house being the first which I tryed in Granton, that would have suited me down to the ground with the most moderate terms that one could ever expect - They were such a nice family & I made all arrangements, & then a few days later the lady was taken ill & I had to give it up, since then I have had no luck

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I have found another place now
but it ^{is} not nearly so good -
Anyhow I expect we shall be able
to manage somehow - I do wish
this war was only at an end but
there seem to be no hopes - I am
anxious to know if father made
any inquiries when he was in London
about getting me a warrant -!
I do wish he could - How is Albin
getting on now? I have sent a
lot of my dirty clothes to a laundry
in Granton, which I am hoping to
get back when we arrive in port -
We are still getting paid in a very
irregular way - I shall be glad
if you could send me some more
money - It seems a long time since
I heard from home!

Trusting you are all quite well

My fondest love to all

Ever your affec son
Lym.

Please turn over :-

p.s. please
write
soon

P.S. Granton Harbour

1-8-16

I have received your parcel
containing pressed beef & Senco
& I thank you very much - I regret
to say that it is already nearly
finished - In all probability we
are going out again on Sunday
or Monday & I am hoping you
will write to me again before
then - Will you please send me
Alban's address - I should
like to know how he is
getting on -

Love to all

Cym