

Thursday . Please address your correspondence  
as follows : - Name of ship .  
c/o G.P.O London

Dearest Mother .

I am just beginning to realize what sort of a life a man is expected to endure in the navy & from what I have so far experienced I should say that the life of a dog is not in it when compared with the luxurious living which we get on board this wretched mine sweeper — !!!  
We left "P. Glasgow" last Saturday with the intention of sailing round by the North of Scotland to "Granton" which from all accounts is to be our base. However, on arriving somewhere near there on Monday morning we were ordered out to sea to go sweeping with one of the other boats & we have been out ever since. We expect to go into "Granton" tomorrow morning.

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For the last three days all the men on board have been short of grub for naturally we had only taken sufficient provisions to last us for the week-end thinking that we should be arriving in port sometime on Monday -

Fortunately we have been lying at anchor each night off a small Island where some of the crew were able to obtain a few eggs and some potatoes but I do think it is absolutely scandalous to keep these poor chaps without food & expect them to do their work - I am quite certain that there were many who could not get so much as a bite of bread during the whole of one day and then of course what we were able to get from the Island was only what the people there could spare - The sole inhabitants consisting of five families "the men of whom were employed on the light house etc" <sup>were</sup> only supplied with provisions every two weeks but

On Tuesday evening one of the men off the Island was kind enough to catch us some fish which I am sure was greatly appreciated by everyone - I myself was not so badly off as I had taken the precaution to buy myself a good supply of porridge - I had also a few eggs although the one which I had this morning was becoming a trifle lively - I must tell you that before leaving port "Glasgow" the two men with whom I am <sup>now</sup> messing found that the steward who had been catering for us was not acting altogether straight & so whilst I was away on leave, they had come to the conclusion that it was better to buy their own provisions - when I returned I considered it my best plan therefore to put my allowance of 10/- per week in together with theirs but I am thinking after this that I shall mess entirely on my own although of course it may be slightly

more expensive & there may be also  
serious complications about getting  
things cooked - However everything is  
in such a rotten condition that I have  
quite decided not to worry anymore -  
I have been seasick for three days so  
that I have not required so much food  
as I should have done under other  
circumstances - The weather has been  
better today & I fancy that I am  
becoming & more or less hardened to the  
job (resigned is perhaps a better word)  
I am sitting now with my life belt  
around my breast - Another boat has  
kindly bumped up against us and has  
made a mess of our bows where she  
is already beginning to leak - I expect  
this will mean a few days in dry dock -  
Do not forget to let me know when you  
are returning home as I would like you  
to send me a piece of bacon or a Round  
of Beef & I am wanting also a small  
pillow to put in my hammock.

per torn over

5 I received a card from Thecla  
& Elfrida but have not yet got  
any letter since the one you posted  
to me some time ago. I <sup>am</sup> hoping there  
will be one when we arrive in  
port. As we have not yet received  
any money of any kind (allowance <sup>or</sup> victuals  
or pay) except £1. which was paid  
some weeks ago as an advancement  
I should be glad if you could  
spare me a few pounds - when I  
was at home last, father gave  
me three pounds which is, of  
course gradually dwindling away -

I must now close this long epistle  
as I think there is nothing much more  
to tell you just now.

Trusting you are all quite well  
& that the change is doing you good

I am Ever your Loving Son  
Cymbert

P.S. Give my love to  
the girls & tell  
them to be good

Friday night -  
just received your  
letter dated 29th  
many thanks

We are now in dry dock at Leith - 1 mile from Granton