

Letter

NZ5990  
C T Christensen A/B  
5 Mess  
HMS Zealous  
C/- GPO London  
1 April 1945

With permission of the Christensen family

NZ 5990 G. J. Christensen A/B,  
5 Mebb,  
H. M. S. Zealows,  
G. S. P. O. London.  
1/4/45.

Dear Mum,

Well I told you I would write a longer letter & this is it if my ability at writing is all I desire<sup>it</sup> to be.

I wrote to you yesterday in an air-letter so you should receive<sup>it</sup> three or four weeks earlier than this. In it I apologised for not having written earlier but when I tell you that we have lately done a North Russian Convoy and a rescue raid on the Norwegian coast it will perhaps in some small measure help to confirm the explanation.

On the 19<sup>th</sup> of March

the London dailies published the account of how four destroyers, three R.N. & one R.C.N., ("Zambesi", "Zealous", "Zest" & the R.C.N. destroyer "Sioux") made a daylight raid on the island of Boröy in West Finmark off the North coast of Norway and rescued 525 Norwegians - refugees from the Germans, who were still on the island.

To rescue these people we had to steam up a fiord for eight miles. As we proceeded up the fiord, & we were closed up at the guns, all we could see was the snow covered rock ahead and on the both sides, with not a soul in sight. Then a

small boat was seen and a man stood up in it and fired the prearranged signal. The boats were then lowered and sent to bring the refugees aboard.

It was a marvellous sight, one unforgettable, when they began to come down the slopes on their skins. Even the kiddies had little skins of their own.

Then they began to come aboard. There were men, women & children of all ages - the youngest ten days old - the oldest I couldn't guess.

On their backs some of them carried sheepskins stitched together, with the wool inside, in which they carried babies in the manner of Indian squaws.

Most of them were shod with handmade shoes very well made. Their clothing had been well cared for and was very suitable for the climate & hard in which they lived. Several of the girls had slacks strapped in at the ankle similar to the mens attire with a tidy jacket to go with them.

Several of them wore knitted white woollen balacavas with the Norwegian flag sewn on them.

When the Russians drove the Germans out of the North coast of Norway, the Germans had rounded up the Norwegians and sent them to German labour camps but these had escaped. They

had hidden in caves from the Germans, who had burnt their homes, and who still made periodic attacks on ~~the~~ them.

We brought them at <sup>high</sup> ~~high~~ speed back to a British port. There were ~~ger~~ German minesweepers and small craft in a nearby fjord but it would <sup>not</sup> have been discrete to risk combat, with "our human cargo." They came back in our messdecks.

Last night in the news and in a commentary on the news called "the world goes by" it was told how a convoy had just been through to N. Russia.

They said it had the worst attacks by torpedo bombers

and U-boats since 1942 and met the worst gale ever encountered on the N. Russian run, a run notorious for its bad weather.

The wind recorded was a hundred M.P.H. and the instrument only records up to 100 M.P.H. while the needle was hard pressed against the stops. An officer aboard the "Campagna" the flagship said last night in "The world gesty" that his ship a 16,000 tonner developed a roll of some times  $80^{\circ}$  that is  $40^{\circ}$  each way so he felt sorry for the men on the destroyers and corvettes.

It was also announced that the Zarlows had shot down one of the attacking planes (a torpedo bomber Ju 88) so we are

quite pleased about it.

I have told you all this to give you some indication of how I'm getting along as it is not often we get the chance of telling you what is happening and I thought that it might not be in the papers at home.

It's about the longest letter I've written but usually there is not much I can write about, as by the time you would receive a reply to letters you write to me, Mum, you would have forgotten what I was writing about. Some of the airletters take only a fortnight or so though and I'm always glad to get them as I'm always wondering how things are at home and round about. I'm



glad to know that Laurie has at long last achieved his goal and wonder if he likes the life. Doesn't he feel a bit short on paydays now or is he beginning to save. He should come over here & learn to save the hard way.

Dad's pullets seem to be a bit of alright. Tell him to save a few eggs. The first day I'm home I'll scramble about six eggs and for dinner I'll eat a hunk of mutton & plenty of vegetables, green fresh. For a drink a pint of milk will do.

Well then I seem to have exhausted the supply of news so I better soon end this letter. Everything is alright with me & I hope you are all well at home. Give my love to Dad, Mary & Gordon, Laurie  
P.T.O.

Ron, Bruce & "Herzibah" and  
Brian and if "Herzibah" hasn't  
arrived yet give it to her  
when she is late will you  
please.

I remain

your loving son,  
Colin

P.S. Tell Mom I will be in for  
a pint one of these days.

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