

PO/MM M Varrin

In Hospital (HMCS Niobe)

Glasgow C.2, Scotland

6th Mar 1945

Dear "Sister and Family"

Well here's that lucky brother of yours again – too bad to die.

I'm in hospital in Scotland now. First of all I escaped death valentines day and was a survivor. I got bruised up a bit and had a shock so they put me in hospital on the continent. It is the horriest sight I've ever saw and never want to be in it or see it again. I was listed as missing for a day and a half but I was safe in the hospital. I learned to swim in two seconds flat with shells and explosions whistling all around my ears. Some of the boys weren't as lucky as me the poor buggers. The first couple of nights I couldn't sleep because when I tried I could hear screams and explosions and thought I'd go nuts.

As soon as I got over here they slapped me back in the hospital with psoriasis which was caused by the water and oil. I still don't know whether the water was cold or not but I imagine it was. I've been here in the hospital in Niobe for two weeks. There are two of us here of our gang and we are like heroes or tin gods. I'm on a soft diet and I get turkey or chicken once a day besides a round egg every morning – it sure is great to be alive.

They let us out for awhile yesterday to get our new gear. We lost all the gear we had on board that's why I'm using pencil. I came over to this country in an army uniform. I sure looked a cute soldier with my beard on and everybody was stopping and gaping at me.

I expect I'll be coming home anytime now.

I heard they want volunteers out of our gang for our other flotilla of MTB's over here but here's one guy who won't volunteer and if they send me I'll go adrift. I've had my fill of those gas buggies to last me, ha ha. I'll sure be able to spin Jack some salty dips now. He got some sea time in my back pocket that day ha ha. If he knew that he'd probably boast about it and say he was there eh.

How are you all doing? Are the kids doing okay at school yet? I guess Bruce is still earning his spending money by winning the ribbon eh. Is he still going with his Carol ha ha. I'm still going with mine as far as I know – I've had a few letters from her since I came in here. I guess I'll get married when I get back and settle down before I get this foolish head of mine blown off.

Well folks I guess I'll sign off for now. Give my best to Nip and all the kids. Be home soon (I hope). Lots of love and kisses

Your Brother "Murray"

Addendum:

29th Flotilla - Disaster at Ostend – Valentine’s Day 14th Feb 1945

Wren boots - At Ostend, when in the water, Tib had trouble getting rid of the rubber boots he was wearing. The boots had been obtained from a Naval Wren because Tib had found that the male issued boots were too loose and not conducive to moving rapidly about within the confines of an MTB. As a result, he endured severe burns to his lower legs as a result of fuel congregating within the boots he was unable to jettison while learning to swim.

Hospital (Niobe) Discharge – Monday 16th Apr 1945

European War’s End – Wednesday 2nd May 1945

VE Day – Tues 8th May 1945

Married Carol Etta DeWolfe Eldershaw of Eastern Passage in Dartmouth NS – Sat 12th May 1945

Left RCN – 20th Sep 1945

Employed on Naval Dockyard vessels Halifax – watch keeping

Joined RCAF – 25th Nov 1947