

EPISODE XVI.

Active Service from a new angle
Duties with British
Airways.

I still wished to resume active work, and asked again for a special R.A.F. Medical Board , to get me passed fit for Service. However they did the reverse, and made it clear that for R.A.F. Service, my medical category made me now permanently unacceptable.

However before very long the excellent Bob Maxwell solved for me my temporary uncertainties. We had known one another since my first return to Egypt at the end of 1935, when he had been a comparatively junior official in the local civil aviation world, and was introduced to me by Group Captain Reggie Bone, my one time Calshot commanding officer, and then Director of Civil Aviation in Cairo. Now Bob Maxwell had become Regional Director, British Airways, Middle East Area, and a personality of no small importance. He made a most friendly proposal that I should join his staff in the Cairo Headquarters of the B.O.A.C. This offer I found most interesting, and of course accepted. On January 29th 1941, I became formally a member of the staff.

At first I was Personal Assistant to the Regional Director himself, and in that position was introduced to the Civil Aviation World. As Bob Maxwell's P.A., I experienced in due course all the multitudeness, aspects of the British Airways Organization, and took a modest part also in the various expansion schemes at that time being taken on both in Egypt and Eritrea. Then a special appointment was created for me personally, and I became Head of a Department, and was entitled Administration and Security Officer. This job involved a great deal of touring, and I re-visited most of my old resorts in the Middle East, and added to them also Turkey, Persia, Darfour, Eritrea, Uganda, and Kenya.

I always kept a semi-formal personal diary of those tours, and the following extracts are of interest to me as a record of my activities of those days. One travelled by British Airways Craft, and had all the facilities which British Airways provided, including excellent accommodation in hotels, car transports whenever necessary, and all travel formalities made ready in advance. My duties were full of variety. The atmosphere was similar to that of a Service setting, but usually included a good deal of additional material comfort, even though there was much responsibility and much hard work.

TOUR DIARY.

22nd May 1941. On arrival in Jerusalem at the King David Hotel, I found gathered there a number of personalities from Iraq including the following:

H.R.H. Prince Abdul Illah, Regent of Iraq
General Noury Pasha Es Said
Daoud Pasha Haidary
Jamil Bey Madfai and
Aly Bey Jowdat.

All these people were known to me personally. Noury Pasha presented me to H.R.H., and at this meeting the latter impressed me considerably. He appears to have matured a good deal, both in appearance and mentality. He spoke with assurance and dignity, and he has a quiet and gracious manner which is pleasant and not unimpressive.

He spoke briefly of recent events, and his wish to maintain as active a line as possible, and of his feeling that Rashid Aly has tricked the army, and that public opinion is not behind him in his attack upon the established government and the Washemite Royal family.

Noury Pasha seemed full of energy, much more so, in fact, than I have noted in my meetings with him for some considerable time past. Jamil Madfai showed more hesitancy than I had expected, and he did not appear altogether in agreement with Noury Pasha or the Prince; and Aly Bey Jowdat was complaining of his personal ill health, which was in fact fairly evident. I had a long personal talk with Daoud Pasha Haidary who spoke rather drastically of what he described as the unsympathetic attitude of certain British Representatives. He seemed to think there had been excessive leniency to the opposition and too little consideration for loyal supporters of the British-Iraq Treaty. He mentioned with affectionate admiration Sir Kinahan Cornwallis.

I obtained an impression from these various conversations of a somewhat unsatisfactory feeling of uncertainty. A more encouraging atmosphere however, developed on the morning of the 20th of May when news arrived of the capture of Falouja by British Forces.

In commenting upon the news of the attempted flight to Iraq from Cairo, of General Aziz Al Masri Pasha, the Iraqi representatives in Jerusalem appeared to be more amused than impressed. Mention however, was not omitted of Aziz Aly's personal courage, and his record as an old "Arab patriot". Having myself known Aziz Aly Al Masri Pasha, for some years, I agreed with what they said as to his courage and his gallant past record, and also his tendency now to wish to dramatise himself. The latter tendency has been possibly accentuated by an unsympathetic tendency in military quarters in Cairo to emphasize Aziz Aly's lack of the technical qualities of a modern General.

During the course of my visit to Jerusalem, I was invited to a luncheon at the house of Ragheb Bey El Nashashibi.

* Note:

British official treatment of Aziz al Masri Pasha, had been I think psychologically often unsound. As a personality of heroic record in the earliest Arab patriotic re-awakening, he had, and even yet has, much remantic prestige. His blunders as Inspector General in Egypt's Army, could have been tactfully prevented from being of any real harm. To expose him to ridicule made him much more dangerous, by giving him a sort of martyr's halo, and roused bitter resentment amongst emotional young Egyptians. Just possibly however Aziz Pasha's "manie-de-grandeur" had already become too aggressive for mere "tact" to be affective.

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TOUR DIAIRY 21.7.41.

On arrival in Baghdad from Habbaniya, I was called upon by Sabah El Said, son of Noury Pasha, and by Tahsin El Askary. Later I called upon Jamil Madfai, the Prime Minister, at his office, but found that he was in conference with the Council of Ministers. I then proceeded to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The following day I received a telephone call from the Premier asking me to see him that morning, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs also returned my call. During the talk with the Premier, Jamil Bey Madfai, he spoke of a policy of moderation being essential at the moment to avoid outbursts of partisan feeling. He made enquiries as to Noury's health and opinions. He spoke of the improved attitude of the Iraq Army, and of their honourable record which had entitled them to retain their arms under the recent armistice terms with the British Military authorities. Referring to the rioting in Baghdad, the Premier's comments were very reticent. Prior to this interview with the Prime Minister, I had received a message through the Emir Hussein that the Regent wished to grant me an audience. On arrival to the Palace, the Regent gave me a private audience in the same room in which I have had audiences with King Ghazi, the last one a month or so before he died. The Regent seemed cheerful and full of energy. He commented briefly on events in Baghdad and the rioting and looting which have occurred there. He seemed disturbed that stronger action had not yet been taken by His Government in investigating these matters, and in punishing persons involved.

In the course of general conversations with Iraqis in Baghdad, details were given me of the Jewish massacres, of the looting of British property, and the desecration of British graves. I was at first inclined to think that the stories were exaggerated. Later however, I visited the Baghdad British War Cemetery, and it was found that the story concerning the graves was correct.

We walked round the whole of the cemetery and found that General Morde's grave was amongst those desecrated, and also General Gilbert Clayton's; *for* the British Cemetery at Hanadi had also been attacked.

As to the Jewish massacres, the official figure of deaths is 250, though the popular version suggests as much higher figure. It was not, however, the number of deaths, but the nature of the outrages and the method of the organisation which was most deplorable. This was confirmed by a well-known American who passed in his car down a street when some of the worst incidents were taking place, and he saw gross attacks on Jewish women and children which were taking place in the open street.

A British friend of mine in Baghdad with whom I dined told me that his own house had been badly looted. Concerning local newspapers, there have been several articles in which anger is expressed towards the Mufti who is described as the Rasputin of Islam. This is a significant change of opinion.

In Basra I found myself again amongst friends dating from the time of my residence there, from 1928-29. I paid a call upon Sheikh Salah Bashayan, one of the leading citizens at his house in Asher. The disorders in Basra had been much less than in Baghdad, and there were no outrages or massacres. In Basra as well as in Baghdad certain christian residents have however, been taking an active part in anti-British propaganda.

Conversations with Sir John Ward suggest that Jamail Madfai is in fact a sound leader of the Iraq Ministry, having qualities of steadiness and caution which are desirable at the present time. Noury Pasha, although a great man and a sound friend of ours, is also somewhat swayed by personal bias, which might tend to lead him into difficulties in the existing delicate situation. Aly Bey Fuad has now again been reinstated in his position at the Basra Airport. Aly Bey expressed particular

regret at the way in which the youth movement in Baghdad under German guidance had been allowed to develop from a harmless appeal to the "sense of theatre" in the average Iraqi young man into a sinister means for Nazi propaganda. This development had taken place, Aly Bey emphasized, under the very eyes of the British authorities.

I paid a personal call upon the G.O.C., Basra area, and had an interesting talk with him.

It is, I think, of interest to note that in spite of the disagreeable atmosphere created by the vindictive atrocities carried out in Baghdad, nevertheless I heard nothing detrimental concerning the Iraq Army as a whole, during the fighting between the Iraq Army and the British Forces. They appeared to have fought cleanly and with courage.

By chance in Jerusalem, I met George Antonius who was paying a brief visit from Beirut. He discussed events in Baghdad and suggested that all educated Iraqis were shocked at the excesses which had occurred there.

At the King David Hotel, H.R.H. Prince Mohamed Aly and His staff were also staying, and I had a number of conversations with the Prince, who appeared greatly interested in the Syrian situation. He spoke at length on the Syria-Transjordan-Iraq situation and the relationship of King Abdul Aziz to it. The Prince had been lunching with our High Commissioner and had visited the Emir Abdallah at Amman. He asked me to introduce him to Mr. Steven Runciman, which I did.

Princess Atrash was still at the King David Hotel.

TOUR DIAIRY - 19.9.41, Eritrea.

One of the most uncomfortable elements in the situation in Eritrea, is the financial situation. There appears to be a local British policy to devalue the Italian Lira to such an extent as to cause much despondancy.

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In ordinary daily communications with the Italians of Eritrea, there seems very little hostility towards the British Regime or British persons.

A particularly interesting visit was paid to a camp in which several hundred Italian merchant seamen had been concentrated. I was taken to this camp by ~~the~~ an Italian acquaintance of mine, a man of prominent position, who had himself organised and is controlling this camp. The camp is admirably situated and organised. I was well received in the Senior Officers Mess and was pressed to stay for lunch which turned out to be a good one, including a pleasant local wine. I interviewed inmates of the camp to offer them employment. No reluctance and in some cases considerable enthusiasm was shown in accepting this offer. I engaged my Italian friend in a frank discussion during the several hours' journey to and from this camp. He harped somewhat on alleged British betrayal of Italy after the war, but his manner was at all times courteous and he had nothing but good to say of British conduct of the war in Eritrea.

A prominent British official summed up the situation to me by saying that Eritrea has great potentialities for the successful setting up of a British Organisation which would be an effective means of increasing good will between Italians and British. These excellent possibilities, however, seemed to be jeopardised at the present time by some uncertainty of financial policy, and by a mistaken sympathy for prominent Fascist officials combined with a forgetfulness of the extremely vindictive policy which underlies Fascist-Gestapo methods. This sympathy, if extended only to the ordinary Italian population, would produce excellent results, but to extend it to the Fascist officials themselves, might ruin the very object which it is intended to promote.

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TOUR DIAIRY - 11.11.41. (In Palestine).

The atmosphere in Palestine seems on the whole quiet, though there have been attacks upon Jewish settlers, such having occurred, both near Tiberias and near Jerusalem, during my stay.

The assassination of Fakhry Bey Nashashibi has also caused a certain feeling of uneasiness. I happened to be in the house of Ragheb Nashashibi when the news of his nephew's assassination reached him. He seemed much agitated.

During this tour in Palestine, I had chance conversations with a number of Jewish immigrants. In every case, of course, they had tragic stories to tell concerning the past, but one was impressed by their energetic outlook and their apparent desire to be of service to the democratic cause. One sympathises very strongly with the Arab dislike of foreign intrusion into their country, and yet sometimes their opposition does seem to reach unreasonable extremes, and does not enough consider the world needs of humanity and human sympathy. However, the Arab truce in Palestine during this war period does seem to prove the possibility of reasonable restraint and augurs reasonably well for the hope of a settlement being achieved after the war through the medium of moderate elements on both sides. One is proud and thankful anyhow that England has the courage to face the settlement of this problem of conflicting rights, by humane methods, rather than by the easier method of ruthless repudiation of one side or the other.

TOUR DIAIRY , 26.9.41. - SYRIA

The recent manifestations of public approval in Damascus at the appointment of Tajjedine and his government seems to have been artificially stimulated by representatives of the party of the late Dr. Shahbandar, which party is now in disfavour of

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Syrian Nationalists of the extremest kind. Various opinions are discussed of a possibility of a king in Syria. A considerable body seems to favour a Prince of the Egyptian Royal House, and various rumours were current concerning H.R.H. Prince Mohamed Aly. Another party would like to see Transjordan and Palestine with the Emir Abdallah as King. This party however would have the bitter opposition of extreme nationalists. Nevertheless, the record of good order, common sense and progress which the Emir has to his credit in the many years of quiet organisation in his own state are certainly a practical demonstration in his favour. Yet others would like to see Baghdad and Damascus linked under the Royal House of Iraq; and a still further party, though not very numerous, speak of the Emir Faisal as the most suitable Syrian Ruler. Rather unexpectedly there seems also a certain backing, particularly amongst Palestinian nationalists, such as Awni Abdelhadi for a Prince of the ex-Imperial house of Turkey. This young man who is well known to me is energetic and ambitious, and seems to consider that he has definite support in Palestine. However, possibly the Syrians would really prefer a Republic; and this applies even more to the Lebanon.

TOUR DIARY 16.12.41. - TEHERAN.

On reaching Teheran, I made known my arrival at the British Legation. Shortly after I received an invitation for lunch at the Iraq Legation; and this was followed by an invitation to visit the Egyptian Embassy where the Chargé d'Affaires Said Bey, received me kindly and invited me to an informal supper at the Embassy the following evening for the purpose of being introduced to a number of Persian personalities. This supper party included a prominent member of Parliament, Monsieur Dashty, who has lately been coming to the fore, and is regarded as a future political leader. Amongst other things, Dashty advocates a more active pro-democratic policy than the present Premier (Faroughi)

is inclined to agree to. Cooperation with the British, Dashty however stated, would be much easier if it were not for the dislike and fear which most Iranians feel concerning the Russian allies of the British.

There also arose a discussion upon the imprisonment of the ex-chief of Police. This man had been notorious for carrying out in grim detail various punishments imposed by ^{his} ~~his~~ Royal Master. Nevertheless,

several persons present, including ladies spoke on his behalf. At the close of this informal party, Said Bey informed me that he was sending an invitation for me to attend a formal luncheon at the Embassy the following Sunday 20th December.

On Sunday I duly proceeded to the official luncheon at which there were about 24 people, including the newly arrived Turkish Ambassador Jamal Husni, the Iraqi Minister Daoud Pasha Haidary; and various other notables. After lunch, I had some conversation with the Turkish Ambassador who was cordial and friendly.

During the course of talks, it was suggested that I ought to call at the Royal Palace. In due course I acted on this advice, and the Officer of the Guard at the Palace Gate informed me that I was to be received by ^{HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY'S} ~~H.H.H.~~ Master of State, H.E. Monsierr Intizam, with whom I then had tea. Just before my departure, the Shah's special Book was brought ceremoniously in to the room and H.E. asked me to enter my name. He also requested that on my return to Egypt I should inform H.M. King Farouk's private secretary that H.M. Sister is well and wish^es to convey Her best greetings to Her Royal Brother.

At a farewell visit at the Egyptian Embassy, I was asked to take a parcel of caviar as a personal gift to be delivered to Her Majesty Queen Nazli, the Queen Mother. I was also asked by Daoud Pasha Haidary to carry a similar package to Iraq, for H.R.H. Prince Abdul Illah. These missions I of course duly carried out.

An interesting person whom I met in Teheran in a rather different setting was Monsieur Massoudi, Editor in Chief of the

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"Ittela'at" and the "Journal de Teheran". He seemed an interesting and well informed person.

H.I.M. the young Shah has not yet achieved a very definite place in public estimation, but his prestige is increasing, and nearly all Iranians seem relieved at the departure of his despotic father; though the latter's personal achievements are still remembered with admiration.

In appearance, the Iranians impress one as an intelligent and virile looking race, in spite of implications which I had heard to the contrary.

Nevertheless, extremes of wealth and *poverty* with almost no abridgement of a medium class, tend at present to prevent social or political stability in Iran. Outwardly, Teheran has the appearance of a city of prosperous citizens, for the proportion of people well dressed in western fashion, is high. This well dressed appearance, however, is often merely a façade. The ex-Shah insisted upon (and enforced) a well dressed appearance amongst businessmen and official people of his capital, but this appearance, just like that of many of the handsome buildings and Boulevards which he constructed, hides much unsoundness. Teheran has automatic telephones, but no proper water supply; it has fine public buildings, but inadequate sanitation; it has splendid hospital premises, but many are unstaffed or badly organised. The late Shah even erected De Luxe hotels with elegant private villas around them; but the hotels were not self-supporting, and he usually did not allow anyone to inhabit the villas, apparently for fear of their neatness being spoiled! From this setting of despotic rule, in some ways of *noble* inspiration, yet grandiose and unsound in its exotic egoism, one can hardly expect the people of Iran immediately to emerge as a stable community. The transition stage must evidently be difficult, and a lead ~~must~~ *may* ~~come~~ *have to* first come from some well disposed authority outside Iran. In the absence of leadership, the situation in

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Iran might become a fertile breeding ground for damaging intrigue against democratic principles.

While in ^Tehran besides interesting talks with my good friend Christopher Lumbly of the "Times", whose wise and wide viewed outlook made discussion with him always of great interest, I also had long talks with a young American Diplomat, Mc Cargar. Jim Mc Cargar and I happened to share a room at our hotel, and we talked a great deal about local affairs and the ways of the world in general; here is now a letter of his^c which he later had sent to me from U.S.S.R.

Embassy of the
United States of America
Kuibyshev, U.S.S.R.
14th June 1942

Since our parting in Teheran I have entered an entirely different world. And a most interesting entrance it has been. We flew only as far as Baku, and from there we went by rail to Stalingrad, and from there by boat up the Volga to Kuibyshev. Since a note to you from here or from Moscow, where I shall be for several weeks, has an infinitely better chance of reaching you than from Vladivostok, I shall have to write in the atmosphere of great Russia and the German war, rather than in that of the Soviet Far East and a Japanese war. Notwithstanding that, the war seems fairly remote here. It is Spring, and as so many others have said, it seems impossible that only a few hundred miles away men are killing each other under the same blue sky, and on the same rich green earth. Or so it seems in Kuibyshev, for it is now one of the "foreign" cities, and diplomats live in a world of their own as a result thereof. There is almost no contact with Russians, and life seems to center in the Embassies, the Foreign Office, the theatre, the one hotel, and perhaps the circus.

My trip here, though, was not that way, for I had a week without surveillance, and exclusively in the company of great mobs of Russians, mostly soldiers returning from the front for leave. Without exception they were all friendly, helpful, kind, very curious, and most loquacious. The soldiers had an unbelievably calm, unworried, and thoroughly cheerful confidence. Many of them were Ukrainans, and had seen their homes and lives more or less demolished, but still they were unshaken. Excuse me if this sounds like an Intourist bulletin, but I saw these people and talked to them, and the confidence of the soldiers, though not so much of the civilians, was definitely the most striking fact in the experience.

Perhaps I should qualify the phrase, "most striking fact" so as to make space for the facts of Russian plumbing, sanitation, and municipal and domestic cleanliness. Most of the responsibility for the peculiar odor which hangs over all Russian cities and houses, and the absolute filth of their sanitation, can be ascribed to the fact, I believe, that someone forgot to explain to the Russians that proper etiquette demands that one sit down and not stand up when engaged in certain elemental human functions. The results of Russian practice in these matters are not merely demoralizing, they are chaotic and catastrophic, and resemble, as far as I can tell, the wake of a typhoon. It is only fitting that I know mention that I went to the Ballet and that it was marvelous, for it is in precisely that order and contrast that things appear here. One walks from a very muddy and dilapidated street into a quite presentable theatre and sees a performance that for sheer grace and beauty cannot be equaled anywhere. The music, costumes, effects, choreography and individual dancing were all superb. I first saw "Swan Lake", and tonight I am to see "Don Quixote". The company is from the Moscow Bolshoy Theatre, and so is naturally the best in the Soviet Union. I am sorry that you chose to continue in your present occupation rather than come along here as an unpaid clerk. You would enjoy it, that is, if you could ever get in. And I know that as I sit in Vladivostok some months from now, I shall have an ever increasing need for some more of our very pleasant conversations, heartening as they were. Until we meet again, however, on your estate, or my ranch, or in some God-forsaken part of the world, I wish you the very best of everything, and I hope sincerely that our next meeting is not too far in the future. Our last I regard as one of the very great compensations in this type of life, and I am only too happy to let you know it. If possible, let me hear from you, and best of luck.

With warmest regards
 Jim Mc. Cargar.

The following are further extracts from another letter from Jim.

Embassy of the
 United States of America.
Moscow, U.S.S.R. 24 Jul.'42

.....I am leaving here next Tuesday, the 28th for Vladivostok

and heaven knows what fate. I have been temporarily detailed here since the 19th of June; and though Moscow is not now the city it once was, it has been a thoroughly enjoyable and fascinating stay. Congenial souls are few here, among the foreign colony, except for my old college roommate, with whom I stayed for about three weeks before moving into the Embassy. However, the city has a great silent and subtle charm, which exerts itself to great advantage once one has become accustomed to the drab appearance peculiar to all these cities. I must say your colleagues here make no bones about their intense disapproval of almost all aspects of Russian life, but since that is an almost universal characteristic of the "foreigners" in the capitals, (Moscow and Kuibyshev), it passes unnoticed in the general complaining.

I have accumulated much material for thought and experience for discussion in the future, along the lines we previously pursued, during my brief stay here. At the moment, however, I am digesting and maintaining silence, until I am on firmer ground, and have obtained to a slightly more respectable age.

In the meantime, best wishes to you, and thanks again for forwarding the photograph to my wife.

Your friend as always.

Jim. Mc Cargar.

26.12.41. On arrival for the night in Habbaniyeh on my return journey to Cairo from Teheran, I found awaiting me there a package from H.R.H. the Regent, containing a personal memento. This memento proved to be a signed portrait of H.R.H. Prince Abdul Illah, the Regent, and portraits also of King Hussain and King Faisal (copies of oil paintings which hang in the Palace in Baghdad), and an excellent photograph of H.M. King Ghazi in the uniform of the Royal Iraq Air Force. This presentation is a charming and kindly thought which I deeply appreciate, and these portraits are of course a treasured reminder of friendship which dates back many years.

As the months went by war conditions in Cairo became increasingly formidable, and with the fall of France there were threats of invasion from outside and a background of uneasiness and uncertainty within Egypt itself. During my constant touring, my Mother was of course alone; and this became a cause of serious anxiety to me, though she herself remained as usual completely unafraid. However, after exchanging various letters with my brother in Uganda, we decided that it would be wiser for Mother to proceed to Uganda and to become his guest at the pleasant official residence which he occupied as a District Commissioner there. In spite of the distance of the journey, the prospect of being for a while with her younger son, decided my Mother to agree to our suggestion. She said goodbye to her friends. These included H.R.H. Prince Mohamed Aly, and her farewell visit to him was duly recorded in the local press as follows:

"Mrs.H.R. James had the honour on Monday afternoon of being received by H.R.H. Prince Mohamed Aly at his Palace at Manial Roda. Mrs. James leaves Cairo today by British Airways flying-boat for Kampala to visit her younger son who is District Commissioner there."

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On Wednesday, October 1st, Mother set off by British Airways flying-boat from Rode El Farag, bound for Kampala, with myself as her escort. We spent the first night at the pleasant Grand Hotel at Khartoum, but the weather was extremely hot and exhausting. At dawn, next day, we departed for Juba, and there alas, I had to leave my little Mother for I was myself on a duty tour with work to carry out at this British Airways station. Mother departed alone; and we were rather sad. As luck would have it however, by the course of my duties combined with the chance meeting with a friend of mine, Christo Michaelitsianos who was about to motor by road to Kampala, I found myself proceeding with him to that place by road instead of by air. It was a most interesting run of about 500 miles. The road was good, but passed through primitive elephant country which yet had a curious Park-like appearance. When on the second evening, we reached Kampala, and I arrived unexpected and unannounced at the District Commissioner's house, my brother, and his newly arrived Lady guest, were of course most astonished. It was a very happy meeting, and we three were able to pass a few delightful days together before I rejoined British Airways flying-boat at Port Bell on Lake Victoria, and returned Southward again.

Letter to M.E.J., from Grand Hotel Khartoum, 10th October 1941.

It seemed very odd to be back in the scenes we had so recently shared together on our way to Juba and Kampala. My journey back was easy, and we passed via Kisumu and Malakal, missing out Juba altogether.

It is excellent to be able to picture you with my brother Bob. When you come to Cairo again, I hope conditions will be less restless. We may not be able to provide you with just the setting you would wish, but the best I can do will be ready for you. Thank you dear Mother for your companionship, your sympathy, and your help. What pleasant times and odd adventures we have had together; times of happiness and times less happy, but all a worthwhile memory which we can treasure.

To M.E.J., from Turf Club Cairo, 31.10.41.

On last saturday, I spent the afternoon in Guezira Club with our dear Rupert Short. We had tea together in that corner which you and I and he have always preferred. He sends you his best greetings.

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* Note:Rupert Short died not long afterwards, within a few weeks of his return to England. He had for long been in poor health, but refused to admit it. He died certainly in the service of his country, his courageous spirit never vanquished; a great yet unassuming patriot, a gentle warrior, a kindly Christian gentleman.

The new Iraqi Minister, Tahsin Bey Askari, has ~~now~~ arrived to replace Noury Pasha, who is now again Premier of Iraq.

Tomorrow evening I am to be a guest to dinner with Shazli Pasha at Mena House Hotel. I expect you remember him; he was at one time Governor of Cairo.

To M.E.J., from Turf Club Cairo, 12.12.41.

Here I am back again from Baghdad. My visit to Iraq has been particularly memorable, both as regards my duties for British Airways, and from other aspects.

Noury Pasha, the Prime Minister, and the Royal Party were actually at Basra when I arrived, accompanying H.R.H. the Emir of Transjordan on his official tour of Iraq. As soon as they arrived back in Baghdad however, I was invited to meet the Premier at the Ministry of Defense. There he welcomed me, and informed me that I was to proceed with him to the Royal Palace, to meet the assembled personalities there.

As this was Noury Pasha's first public appearance since his return to Baghdad, a considerable crowd was waiting outside the Defense Ministry to see him, and as the Prime Minister (with my humble self by his side) descended the steps, the crowd all surged forward to greet the Pasha. It was quite a stirring moment. I accompanied Noury Pasha in his car, with my own car, fortunately a smart looking one, following behind, off we set to the Palace. There I was presented to each of the assembled Royal persons in turn..... (There goes our air raid warning, so I must stop writing and see that arrangements at British Airways Office are all in order.)..... The raid is over and was only a mild one. Now I can continue. Each of the Princes H.R.H. the Emir of Transjordan, H.R.H. Prince Zeid, and H.R.H. the Regent of Iraq, were occupying separate reception rooms, and I was taken by the Prime Minister to each in turn, and had about 20 minutes informal talk with each. H.R.H. Prince Abdul Illah, the Regent, I saw last; he seemed in excellent spirits and was charming and quite informal.

While I was in Baghdad, many Iraqi notables and Ministers

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I am indeed very grateful both to H.R.H. and to Yourself for the trouble you have taken in despatching this gift to me and for your kind thought in allowing me the privilege of possessing these portraits.

With my warm thanks again, believe me,

Most cordially Yours,

H.H.J.

TOUR DIARY - 6.1.42 - Cairo.

I dined informally yesterday, at the house of a well known Egyptian Pasha. During dinner a "good story" was told as follows:

At the recent conference between Mr. Eden and the Russian Leaders, it was stated that the war would be ~~won~~ only through Material, Men and Patience. Mr. Eden was asked who would supply the Material, and he replied "of course, America", asked who would supply the men, he said "of course, our gallant Russian allies", asked what Great Britain would supply, Mr. Eden replied "Great Britain would supply the Patience". The above story was not I think told in any malicious spirit, but nevertheless it is typical of a good deal of the sort of comment going on amongst official Egyptians, and perhaps does not very much help the democratic cause in Cairo.

OFFICE OF THE MINISTER OF STATE
CAIRO.

1st January, 1942.

Dear Squadron Leader Hindle James,

Sir Walter Monckton asks me to thank you for your letter of the 29th December and for sending the notes of your visit to Tehran, which are most useful. He also asks me to return the paper you left with him on your last visit and which he has read with interest.

With kind regards and all good wishes for the New Year

Yours sincerely,
Anthony Greenwood
Private Secretary

During these latter months, in the intervals of work, I did whatever I could within my modest range to give hospitality and homely cheer to such of our troops as I had the opportunity of meeting personally. This led to agreeable friendships, and the following is one of the enheartening letters I later received. This letter is from the mother of one of these soldier lads who were friends of mine.

Box 100
Kokstad.
E. Gr^oqualand.
South Africa.
17th Oct '42.

Dear Mr. James.

Bobs wrote and told me how very kind you had been to him, ___ Said "it was the nearest to home he had had since he left Durban, 2 years ago " I wished that he had given me your address so that I could thank you, and then later on your letter came ___ Thank you so very much for writing and telling me about my boy and thank you too for being so kind to him, he appreciated it a lot and so do we ever so much. I am sorry not to have written before this, but when your letter came we were on a holiday at our camp on (what we call), the wild coast of Pondoland and it is difficult to get letters sent off from this part of the world. Bob's letter to me was full of all you had done for him and your great kindness to him. I do not know if he has written to you but I do know that he thought a great deal about it all and writes of you as "a fine scout"! Life in the desert must be very dreary and a break, such as you helped to give my boy, must make all the difference in the world to these lads. I do not know where my son is except that he is in the desert somewhere. He writes regularly and his letters are always cheerful. He had got quite a collection of photographs and presents which he was sending to us, but he lost all these at Sidi Rezegh with all his kit.

Perhaps I hope that your little mother is well and that the day is not far off when you will have her back again with you. Perhaps Someday you may be visiting this part of the world and if you do I hope that we shall meet. Again our most grateful thanks for your kindness to my boy.

Our very best regards.
Yours most sincerely.
Amy D. Behr.