

Last letter from John Wm Mathews written to his Aunt and Uncle Marjorie & Hamilton Mathews
Written at sea

31 Mess H.M.A.S. Sydney
C/o G.P.O.
1.11.41

Dear Auntie & Uncle,

Hello there. I received your loving letter several days ago and thanks so much for the clippings. 'Sir Guy certainly made a stiring speech didn't he'. When we were in the East Med (Mediterranean) he commanded the 'Ark Royal' in the Western Fleet, as we know 'Captain John' will soon be a Rear Admiral to C in C Singapore.

You are right there Auntie I will never be sentimental about rings again, my finger is just about right now.

I am glad to hear that the book arrived intact, its good isn't it. I even get thrilled reading it. By the way, if you look on the loose cover of the book, you will see a sketch of our anti aircraft gun deck, the gun in the foreground is actually my gun. The sketch was taken off an old photo of a gun crew in battle dress that I found. I am #2 which is on the breech and safety mechanism.

I don't think we will be away from Sydney too long, still one never knows. Could I ask this lady I know in Sydney to collect it for me, I mean would the lost property office allow her to collect it in my name. She could take my letter along as reference, couldn't she.

Do you mean to say that Jimmy hasn't joined the AIF as he appeared to be doing when I left home. He told me definitely that he would enlist for sure and that I should tell all our friends so. People I met while in Melbourne believe that he is in the army so I left it that way for his sake. My thinking he would be in it soon. I told him to think the three services over hard and civil employment, but he said he had made up his mind and would go back into the army. [Jimmy brother of John joined underage and joined up again late 1941 - turned 18 March 1942]. The way that I look at it now, it looks very bad on his part and I am certainly wondering what I will say to people next time I meet them. You know what people are like regarding that especially soldiers Mothers, which nearly all my friends down home are. Our family can't be like that they won't be either if I have anything to do with it.

I am glad you like my description of Shirley. "She is all that too." I will ask her if she does know Thelma Leak, it will be grad if she does. Don't worry dear Auntie, I won't go springing any surprise on you, I will let you know in plenty of time. Still it wouldn't matter much because you always have a nice tea or supper, never the less I will let you know in plenty of time. I intend to write to Dell soon if you write please tell her that and tell her that I am very sorry myself, matter of fact I am a bit behind owing to my darn finger. Give all my love to. [cousin Adel in Sydney]

My word the young Misses, Erica and Beth are certainly growing up aren't they. [cousin Erica and sister Beth]. I am very proud of them both, they will be very refined and pretty girls. Well they should be anyway, they have had a good old fashioned bringing up. On the quiet I think there is a certain amount of good natured competition between Beth and Erica for the 'Miss Pretty ambition'. Agree. That bank job is certainly worth going for. She [Beth] will be set then. My word funny you both having to travel by train. Things aren't so good, are they.

Thanks for the books they will be alright, they will never be wasted don't worry about that. The extra One Pound will be payable to Mary [Aunt] from the Elsternwick East Post Office on the 15th November. If she wants it payable from any other Post Office, she can arrange that with the Post

Office herself, as she draws the other allotment under her name I had to make this one out to the same. Please inform her though I am sure Navy Board will too.

Would you mind doing some shopping for me please Auntie. I will tell you what I want because we can't get it here. If you go to Myer's in town I would like you to order a gold Good Conduct Badge (Navy) and a gold QRB's badge (quarters rating) a Gunners badge it is the same as my red one only gold instead. You will have to go to the Naval Counter or Department or the Department where they make public school badges etc. Tell them what you require (for me) and if they have none in stock they will take your order and get the two badges made. They should cost about 14/- [fourteen shillings] in all. Naturally I will pay you. Be sure and order the single gun with Q underneath. My word I do hope I don't put you to any trouble and I do hope you won't mind paying for it till I see you. They may take several days to make the badges. My word, that sounds like a tall order doesn't it, you shouldn't have any trouble getting it. They will know exactly what you want.

You certainly have more than enough worrying you at present Uncle. I do hope business bucks up to what it is, that's the trouble with Australia at present it doesn't take advantage of its big out put enough. Business and trade is kept down too much, instead of swelling.

I certainly will write to Jimmy and give him a blast. You will like Shirley I know.

Well my dear people I better close now, give my deepest love to dearest Gran and all, gee I am glad to hear Granny and all are keeping good health. Closing I wish you both, dearest Grandma and all the family and Mrs Mac all the best of health and happiness and I send my fondest love to you all.
[Mrs Mac – Mrs. McChesney mother of Morjorie]

I remain your loving Nephew, Johnny xx
For dearest Grand and the family love John xx