

(Enclosure to H.M.S. GANGES' No. 870/22 of 16th February, 1954.)

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Friday August 21st 1953.

Mr. N.F. Wilson,  
9, Tong Road,  
LEEDS 12.

To: The Divisional Officer,  
or the Chaplain, H.M.S. GANGES.

Dear Sir,

I wish to write about my boy, John C. Wilson, Boy 1st Class who is at present on leave from your Establishment, H.M.S. Ganges, and I believe is due back on Tuesday August 25th. I am sorry to inform you but John has been very quiet - would not speak to me and his mother like he has done before on his previous leaves. I noticed a great change in him as though there was something on his mind. However, he confessed to me and his mother that he had had enough of the Royal Navy and was considering whether to return. He seemed very bitter and I asked him to tell me what was the matter. During a period a while back, John and a lot more boys were picked to go to Spithead to see the Naval Review, which he was very proud to be selected to see the ships on Review during the period of his training at H.M.S. Ganges. We have been proud of him, winning a medal and some trophies he brought home for swimming I believe he has been trying to lower the record at your swimming baths of fast swimming he has taken great interest of all your sports. Well Dear Sir, after getting back from the Review to Barracks I believe he and the other boys were ordered to write an essay on what they had seen. However, because John never done an essay he was punished by your system of No. 10. I believe he got 7 days No. 10, and the Petty Officer who was in charge of the Squad made the boys do the frog jump for one hour. Consisting of a pole under the knees and jumping. He said it was a terrible punishment and I believe him. However, Sir, I think and I am certain that those responsible for this treatment has broke my boy's spirit and the pride in had for the Royal Navy. I am myself an ex-Naval Man who served in World I and also in this was in the Merchant Navy and have served in all Theatres of War. I also have been punished when I was in the Royal Navy which I deserved. But I am still proud of my Royal Navy. I have had two sons serving during Hostilities in the Royal Navy but Sir, I am sorry to say this to you, the Nazis and Japs wouldn't do that to Boys. Men yes, they can take it. But Sir these Boys are as you are aware, are only babies. I am disgusted to think that these Boys were treated to that kind of punishment. However, Dear Sir, I spoke to John to go back which I hope he will and I would see into it for him. But when I came home the other day, he has left home. Where he says to his mother that he was going to visit a friend of his. His mother does hope and me also that he will return to Barracks. If he doesn't arrive on time as he should, I do hope you won't punish him. Until after the enquiry as I mean to contact my M.P. and tell him that they have killed the pride and joy my boy had. So forgive me Sir for being brunt. He said that all the officers were Gentlemen but I would like you to answer me please about this conduct. I do not want this to go to the Press if it can be helped.

I remain Yours Obedient,

(S.D.) MR. N.F. WILSON.

Ex R.N. and M.N.

( Enclosure to H.M.S. GANGES' No. 870/22 of 16th February, 1954. )

No. 870/22

H.M.S. GANGES,  
Ipswich,  
Suffolk.

24th August, 1953.

Dear Mr. Wilson,

Your son's Divisional Officer has drawn my attention to your letter of 21st August.

I would like to assure you that your son was punished only after he had been repeatedly instructed by his Divisional Officer and his Instructor to write an essay on his experiences. He in fact proceeded on local leave instead of carrying out this task. As 199 of the 200 boys attending the Review all handed in their essays, and considering that one page only was sufficient, I feel sure you will agree with me that his punishment was well deserved. The whole matter was fully investigated by myself. As regards the actual punishment; boys carry out an hours drill during which there are several rest periods. The drill is much easier than that carried out by men as broom sticks are carried in lieu of rifles. As an ex-Naval man you will appreciate that drill of this nature is not meant to be a pleasant experience, but there are no sadistic exercises carried out. Your son's punishment in no way broke his spirit.

His achievements in the swimming bath, and to a lesser extent, on the athletic track, are most commendable and I hope he keeps it up. I do consider though that your youngster has developed a swollen head, as he tends to think that he merits special treatment and privileges above the other boys.

His prospects in the Navy are good provided he makes a determined effort in all his duties. Naturally, he must return from his leave on time, and can only expect an investigation and punishment if he fails in this respect.

I consider that your son's sullen attitude when he arrived on leave had no connection with his punishment. You will be interested to hear that when mustered to go on leave, he appeared with an American type of haircut which he had inflicted on himself and which he knew well was not allowed. As he looked a disgrace to his uniform, he had to be kept back from his leave for two hours to have his hair cut properly.

Your son is in a happy Mess and has an excellent Instructor, so he has every opportunity to work hard for a fine Service, and I feel sure you will give him every encouragement.

Yours sincerely,

(Sgd.) H.W. FIRTH  
COMMANDER ROYAL NAVY

Mr. N.F. Wilson,  
9, Tong Road,  
LEEDS, 12,  
Yorkshire

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Thursday August 25th, 1953.

Mr. N.F. Wilson,  
9, Tong Road,  
LEEDS 12.

To: Commander H.W. Firth, R.N.  
H.M.S. GANGES.

In reply to letter of 870/22

Dear Sir,

I wish to thank you for your letter in reply to my own, also I wish to apologise now I have your report on John. And I see that he has been in a happy Mess and also goes my Best Regards towards his Instructors. Yes, I really must agree about my Boy's sullen and arrogant attitude. I have always and his mother especially his mother have been so kind to him. And myself to him and gave him good advice. Well Sir, my Boy John came back home from his friends on Monday morning. Unfortunately they had left the address, but he did keep his promise to his mother and arrived back on Monday August 24th. However, this morning when he got up, he made no attempt to get ready to return back to H.M.S. Ganges. We repeatedly and pleaded with him to return. I am sorry he has not took our advice whilst I am writing this letter. I can honestly say even on John's behalf I only hope he will be sensible and return. I received your telegrams and I have tried my best to act up to them.

However, Dear Sir, I will conclude this letter

Wishing you and all at the H.M.S. Ganges

The Best of Luck.