

MAY 10th.1968

REDACTED
REDACTED did.

Commodore Ramsey., C.B.E., D.S.C., R.A.N.,
H.M.A.S. LEEUWIN.,
PERTH.W.A.

Sir,

Because my wife and I are most anxious to not endorse a seeming ingratitude for the degree to which you have bent over backwards to help our son CJA and to nullify our fears, and, because we so earnestly need your continued understanding, we feel it is vital to explain in great detail the build up of circumstances leading to what must appear to you as a complete reversal of our attitude to CJA 's career.

From an early age CJA declared his intention of following two elder brothers into the Services by joining the Navy as soon as his age would permit. My attitude was one of satisfaction; my wife on the other hand believed him so sensitive to family togetherness he would eventually change his mind.

In point of fact he persisted in his early decision and was so disappointed on failing selection originally, I urged him to try again and also I made a written appeal to Navy Authorities for his re-assessment.

For the first several weeks of his service at Leeuwin, CJA 's frequent letters comprised of normal healthy scuttlebutt punctuated by inferred contempt for unnamed bullies and the odd deserter.

Then one late evening my wife answered the telephone. Terribly upset she called me to speak to CJA , who, clearly distressed to tears, explained his situation and that the tone of his letters was in reality a 'front' he could no longer maintain.

He insisted himself to be the prime victim of the bullies and their 'gauntlet' treatment, also that his efforts to make friends - to 'fit in', or even to live and let live were continually frustrated -- that in fact he had reached the end of the road. He said to forgive him but he must ask for his discharge.

Throughout numerous extensions I spoke with CJA and pointed out a variety of reasons (which I then considered pertinent and valid but now consider otherwise) why he should persevere. He at last promised to do this.

Thereafter his every letter and constant calls alternated between distress and hope, between very real fear and the resolution to make good. I take full responsibility that as his unhappiness grew to submerge his ambitions, I very foolishly persisted in bolstering his immature courage by referring to the courage of the Saints of his Faith. I realise now I undermined the simple logic by which he discovered himself incompatible to Service life by heavily underscoring his strength of character and drawing insupportable parallels between it and the resourcefulness of certain Martyrs.

Thus I placed him in a dilemma of impossible obligations - obligations aggravated by his determination to not name 'names', by his inability to

2.

successfully communicate to the local Catholic Chaplain the depth of his confusion, and by his respect and admiration for his Officers, which in turn limited him to disciplined appeals that seemed to reveal a need for constant encouragement rather than the desperate need for final resolve.

I so insisted on his seeking strength through the Chaplain that during only one week I expended over thirty ~~thousand~~ dollars in telephone calls and telegrams requesting the Chaplain to telephone me on reverse charge so that I could appraise him of CJA 's problems and of my views on the matter. It is now unfortunately and abundantly clear I was again in error.

These exchanges occupied the period up to CJA 's Christmas leave, when I again underestimated the problems, or rather the effect upon CJA of the problems, and instead tried to fortify him by commissioning Mr. Snowy Hills, a trainer of Prizefighters, to give him a crash course in boxing.

This training seemingly bore fruit but inadequately.

In middle February 68, I disposed of my publishing business, and, feeling CJA was settling down, I travelled abroad on a long overdue holiday. It was my intention, that on my return, I would very much ease the pace of my life by buying and operating a taxi and plate which would return an income sufficient for our needs.

I returned home early in April and it soon became clear that CJA was far from settled -- that although his Officers in most sincere fashion convinced him that his efforts had earned him the first leg of his ambition -- E.M Training, his fears and his awareness of incompatibility remained the core of his disenchantment.

On the week-end of April 27th I at last became aware of what my son and my wife had been trying to get through to me. I at once wrote to CJA telling him that instead of buying a taxi I would buy a mixed-goods business in which he could share if he was absolutely certain he wanted to quit the Navy.

For my impertinent presumption of a discharge I can only offer the admittedly ~~unrealistic~~ unrealistic excuse of because I am still supporting (in pursuit of higher education) a son older than CJA, I veined in the same light CJA 's occupation, thus underestimating the true obligations.

As both you and I are now aware, before my letter could reach CJA, he had sought to resolve matters in his own way.

Your advice of his disappearance triggered rather disquieting turbulence in my wife and further sould searching on my part. On Tuesday May 7th, relieved in mind by your telegram of the 6th, and by then labouring under the delusion 's discharge would be, owing to his desertion, now more the natural outcome of Service policy than because of any wish expressed by CJA or me, I paid the deposit on a Mixed-goods business with the intent of ensuring CJA would be not only employed, but would soon recover a feeling of responsibility and of being needed. Only this morning, the Bank of NSW, my branch at 150 Adelaide Street, Brisbane, accepted a second mortgage on our home and advanced to me the extra cash I required to conclude the purchase. Said purchase was concluded at noon today. Copy of receipt is available if required.

3

I should state at this point that the physical energies demanded by ~~running~~ a busy store such as the one purchased, are quite beyond my capabilities. I am able to cope with the administration, accounting and purchasing of stock etc, but the legwork is beyond that my state of health will permit. I bitterly deplore this parading of my bodily shortcomings, but the fact remains that I am an asthmatic, that I am not able to stand for long periods owing to Heaven knows what, and I certainly suffer all the exhaustions normal to a man of my age who has done his level best to give a large number of children (8) reasonable security and education.

Finally, forgive me if I tend to reiteration in my anxiety, but while I fully recognise the correct and proper obligations imposed by CJA 's recruitment and my sanction of same, I am still at pains to clarify two most pertinent points.....

(1) CJA 's action in absenting himself, far from being a sudden whim or lack of character, resulted from his strength of character being overtested and frustrated by older minds continually giving well meant encouragement which merely confused an issue his every instinct had long since rejected as impossible of resolution other than by termination of his engagement. This encouragement and a mutual respect helped him always, but only very briefly, so that at the point of breaking, he knew that further discussion with me, or interviews with his superiors could only ~~possibly~~ offer more of the same - and for this reason he avoided advising me of his final decision -- he knew I would 'talk him out of it'.

(2) It is entirely my fault, but none-the-less real that a condition of hardship will very soon overtake this family unless ~~is~~ is released to assist me in the business which I am bound to operate as of Monday, May 13th. The income promises sufficient for the family provided I do not employ anyone outside a member of the family. With the full time assistance of ~~in~~ in the very near future (the previous owner will assist me for only two weeks) the business will be far too much for me to handle and will suffer as a result. I would certainly crack up in time and could easily lose my investment as well as income. The market is not such that I could dispose of the business easily, especially since any prospective buying with view with suspicion so short a tenure.

Therefore I make this most earnest representation to you that CJA be allowed to take his discharge on compassionate grounds if no other.

Obviously it would be impossible in a letter to completely cover the ramifications which make impossible help from any other member of the family. Those married have their own responsibilities, are in the services and are lining interstate. The remainder are still in primary school or University. Therefore we pray you will ensure this application for CJA 's return home is accorded all possible consideration and haste.

Please forgive a rather untidy letter, however its drafting has occupied much time and energy and consequently at this very late hour I am rather overtired.

Yours respectfully,

REDACTED

REDACTED

