

Martha Burton Ward's uncle, Capt. Ed Land, joined the Royal Air Force in Britain at the beginning of World War II. An excerpt of one of his notes appears in "War Letters," but Ward, who lives in Corona del Mar, thought this unpublished letter - the last one Land wrote before he was shot down and killed on a bombing raid - was the more powerful. "I still can't read it without getting teary-eyed," she says.

Sept. 11, 1942.

*Dear Dad,*

London, England

... I got a cocacola this morning down at the American Eagle club, the first I've had in two months. They get a few here for us fellows who are far from home and miss them so much. You can't imagine how important those little things of life like that become until you are forced to do without them all. There is hardly anything left one can buy, for you must have ration cards, points, etc.

I will be going back to my squadron Monday and into the war again. For months and months I have been hoping and praying for the second front to open up and ease the load on us fellows' shoulders. You see as it is now the Air Force is carrying the whole load while the allied armies only stand by and

march and train. We get rather fed up at times with it all but I suppose we shouldn't. I guess they know when the time is ripe for invasion.

I am almost through with my tour of raids on Germany now, and should I go down on any one of these last ten I can die cheerfully. For I know I have done my share and done it well. I've been

through the worst they had to offer, fought and sweated with the rest.

... I've blasted Germany from the Danish Border at Flansburgh almost as far south as the Italian border at Mainz. I've laid mines in enemy waters flying as low as (censored) feet.

Through storms, rain, severe icing and the

blackest of nights I've carried my load into Germany. The last eighteen of my raids I made as captain of my giant four-engine bomber, a fact of which I'm proud.

... No quarter is asked when we go over there at night. None is given. We are going to win this war.

... So for now, the best of everything to you and tell mother hello. Perhaps I'll be seeing you soon.

With love to all,  
Ed



**WARD SAYS** she gets teary-eyed reading her uncle's letter.