

Guam  
Sept 10, 1945

Dearest mother,

I received a letter today from both you and dad and was really happy to hear from both of you. I also got a letter from you several days ago with the pictures. The picture of you and dad out in front of the house is really good, and looks just like you both.

I also got the roll of film today in perfect shape and am tickled to have it. Just six days for a roll of film from the states seems incredible. I can use all that you send me as it's impossible to get here. That's a good way to send it in an envelope.

Dad seemed to think that I might move to Japan from here, but I doubt it as I think if we move at all it will be back to the states. The B-29 program is over and that's about all we are good for. We ~~were~~ flying quite a few supply missions into Japan, Formosa, and China. On VJ day we sent every plane that could fly over Tokyo for "show-Off" stuff. The flight crews really grumbled about that as they didn't want to risk their necks anymore than they had to after the war was over. There's a lot of water between here and Tokyo and no pilot cherishes the thought of having to ditch in the brink. Well the formations over Tokyo didn't please the "big bugs" so the crews have to practice formation flying for four hours every day so that they can go back over Tokyo and put on the dog. Well day before yesterday a plane crashed right by our shop area and exploded setting all their 100 octane gasoline on fire. Seven men were burnt to ashes with three not expected to live. This happened because they were out practicing formation flying ~~matrix~~ so that they could make a better show over Tokyo. The crews wouldn't ever get into another B-29 if they were given a choice to walk out. They'll do anything to keep their planes out of commission and keep them grounded for maintenance.

Being that censoring is no more, I can talk a little more about my trip over from the states. We left Grand Island Christmas Eve aboard a troop train. It was very cold and getting colder all the time. When we went through Montana and Wyoming there was snow everywhere as far as the eye could see. We had turkey that was baked in the kitchen car with cranberry sauce on Christmas Day. The Pullmans were nice and comfortable and were kept the right temperature. In between the cars it looked like the inside of a refrigerator with ice all over the walls. It was nice and green when we finally pulled into Yakima Valley. We detrained right near the bay and the water didn't look too good to anyone and someone broke out with "Oh Give Me Land". We taken to Fort Laughten in large moving vans and given barracks to stay in. We were being processed most of the time while at Laughten on, how to leave a sinking ship, mail censoring, shots, and etc. Let me tell you about the physical they gave us. Two doctors examined 2000 men in 19 minutes. We were herded into a large auditorium and told to remove all of our clothing and then run between both doctors on the run and an enlisted man with a rubber stamp, stamped us on the buttock as we ran out between both doctors. The longest part of it all was removing our clothes and then putting them on again. That was our physical.

We were fed well and could have all that we wanted to eat with ice cream, turkey, cranberry sauce, nuts and fruits. It seemed like fattening for the kill to me.

We pulled a lot of K.P. and guard duty after about four days there and on New Years Eve they let us go to town until 11 p.m. Well that gave the boys a chance for a last big fling before they had to get on the boat. I went to the Metropolitan Opera instead with a boy from Houston and saw Shakespeare's play "Othello". Seattle is something like El Paso with the streets going down steep grades. Fort Lawton itself reminded me of Ruidoso in the summer time. The weather was perfect with a drizzling rain most of the time. The Fort was located on a neck out into Lake Washington which ran out into Puget Sound. Everytime we

heard a boat whistle out in the sound it sent chills up and down our backs. The afternoon of New Years day we had a formation with full field equipment. I felt like I was really going to war now as I had on my field pack, steel helmet and carbine over my shoulder. A bunch of army trucks took us down to the pier and dumped us off. There were some of these red cross ladies there with coffee and doughnuts and an army band. I was surprised as I thought our shipment was secret and wondered how the Red Cross knew about troop shipments. We were given the order to march up the gang plank and the band broke out into a very patriotic march. My heart swelled up inside of me as I was going up that gang plank and grunting to get ~~in~~ my barracks bag up with all my field equipment on. Here I was actually at last going to war and the destination God only knew. We were herded down the hole of the ship three decks below the waterline, and crowded into little frame canvas cots that were stacked five deep. The aisle was so narrow that we had to walk sideways to get through. When everyone was in a bunk and the cursing and pushing had subsided we were told that we could come out on top. Again there was a mad rush for the stairs everyone trying to get out before the other. When I finally got out on deck the band was gone and the lights on the pier out. As quickly as the band had appeared it had disappeared. Some of the guys said that it was just a trick to get us on board. Half an hour later the pier started slipping away from us and we watched the lights of the city until we couldn't see them anymore. I went down below to my bunk and just lay there thinking - what you were doing at home - where I was going - when I would get back - Would I get back and etc. I finally fell asleep and was awakened shortly after when the boat began to rock as we left the Sound. I went down to the latrine and there were already some boys in there sick, sitting on one bowl and their heads over another.

The next morning I rushed out on deck and couldn't see land anywhere. There was a flock of seagulls following us eating the garbage thrown overboard.

It was a little nippy out on deck but better than staying down in the stuffy hole.

The second day the salt spray was coming up on the deck and on the third day the water really got rough. What tickled me was these great big tough hombres that turned pale and fed the fish. The latrine was a mess with vomit an inch thick all over the floor. It made a guy sick just to go in it. The ship rolled so badly that we couldn't walk unless we were holding on to something. If you let go of whatever you were holding the roll of the ~~ship~~ ship would send you sliding against the wall of the boat. That's when everyone started getting sick and those that weren't sick thought they ought to be so they would get sick. The mess hall (galley) had about a foot of water in it that had come in through the ventilators from the waves. All the K.P.'s and cooks were sick and most of the men were on their bunks too weak to move and it was all they could do to roll over and vomit into their helmets. Over the loudspeaker system they called for volunteers that weren't sick to clean up the galley. I answered the call and found altogether 6 enlisted men and 2 officer who had also volunteered. The first half hour of trying to chase the water with buckets the officer got sick, and two hours later there were only three of us left. It was hard bailing with one hand and holding with the other. They only served two meals a day and that night three of us tried to feed those that were able to get to the galley. I saw, when the boat would lurch, men vomit into their neighbors mess kit or their own. I went out on deck as much as I could and tried to get all the fresh air that I could.

On the seventh day we all looked like monsters out of another world. No one had washed or shaved an account of the latrine and the blue dye in our life jackets that we wore all the time was fading out on ~~our~~ clothes and faces. Greenish blue monsters - that's what we looked like.

On the eighth day we pulled into Pearl Harbor. We sat there for three days

wishing we could get off and set our feet on land again. I knew that Harold was around there somewhere and I wanted to look him up, but it was no use because they wouldn't let anyone off of the boat. Another fellows wife was stationed there as a nurse and he hadn't seen her in 15 months and he couldn't even get off.

Everyone was in better spirits as we got a chance to clean up and almost everyone was over being seasick except one boy. He hadn't been out of his bunk since we started and hadn't eaten a thing. He couldn't even keep water on his stomach and had the dry heaves. He told the doctor on the 6th day to either stop the boat or throw him overboard one. Incidentally the sea gulls followed us for six days there were more albatros than anything else after the third day. The gulls were so hungry that the boys would hold up pieces of bread and the gulls would swoop down and pick it out of their hands. It was remarkable how long those seabirds could fly day after day and never roost.

On the eleventh day we left Pearl Harbor for the open sea again. Nobody knew where we were going and there were a lot of speculations. Some said we were going to New Guinea, others said Siapan or the Phillipines. Then someone said that he got it straight from the ole man that we were going to Austrialia, which made everyone very happy. We saw schools of flying fish all the rest of the trip. We were unescorted to Hawaii, but picked up a convoy of three ships out of Hawaii. We were on a Dutch owned shipped, manned by a Dutch crew and had the name of Sloterdike. The conditions aboard ship were stinking but the old tub had pretty good speed and had to slow down often to keep from running away from the rest of the convoy. The tub was converted from a freighter to a troop ship by jamm- ing a lot of canvas cots.

We changed our course every 12 minutes so that subs couldn't get their sights on us for very long until our course would be changed again. We were going through dangerous waters and were kept on the alert for subs.

About the 20th day we saw some Navy planes and B-29's flying overhead and it was really a sight for the eyes because we knew that land was somewhere near. Some one said that we passed near Ennewetok and Kwajalein.

On the 27 day at sea we pulled into Sumay harbor on Guam and told that this was to be our new home. Everyone was glad and anxious to get off of the boat. Everyone lost weight because the food was sorry and every thing was boiled. Boiled meat, fish, vegetables and etc. I got so hungry on the boat that one nite another boy and I went down to the galley and ~~stook~~ took a loaf of bread. We hid the loaf and ate nothing but bread for three days. The bread was baked on board and was really good. That was one thing that the Dutch cook could really make. I don't think that any of the boys will have much use for dutchmen on account of the boat ride on the dutch ship. Some the guys wrote letters all the way over and others read books all day long and others gambled all the way. Some of the boys won ~~1200~~ hundred dollars and other~~s~~ had nothing. I just couldn't do any of that so I started cutting hair just to pass the time when I wasn't practicing with the ship's orchestra.

There wasn't a catholic chaplin aboard but there were three protestant chaplins aboard. On Sundays all the Catholics gathered together and a Sgt read the mass and we repeated behind him. The Sgt was part of the permanent personnel on board and had rosary's and missels for everyone. I will tell you someday of the differences between the enlisted mens quarters and rations and the officers aboard ship.

Sumay harbor is almost on the southern tip of the island about 10 miles below Agana. We were taken ashore in a landing barge and there wasn't any harbor facilities at that time. We rode thirty miles from the docks to the northern end of the island which was to be our camp. We passed through Agana and saw nothing but shambles and wreckage everywhere we looked. The buildings and trees were leveled with gunfire. The natives were waving at us when we drove

through and I felt sorry for those people that had so much suffering under the Jap occupation. There were tanks and amphibys laying wrecked all over and some knocked out just behind the breakers turned over on their sides with the waves covering them as they came in.

When we arrived at our site in the jungle there were Bulldozers manned by the Army Engineers clearing a spot for our camp. I just pitched my pup tent behind the bulldozer when it started to rain. A pup tent is not much to keep out water so everything we had got soaking wet and we were muddy with no water to wash with. Thats why my stationery was covered with red mud when you received my first letters from home.

I've told you about most of the hardships we encountered when we first landed but I never did get to tell you what our objective was. We went to work immediately putting up our living quarters and the Army Engineers went to building two huge runways in the jungle. We got our shops set up and when the first B-29's came in for a landing we were all there to greet them. After a brief rest the planes started immediately on missions for Tokyo. Do you remember the big fire raid on Tokyo? That was the mission everyone really worked on trying to get everyone of the p lanes into the air. We only took off time to eat and went right back to work trying to make every minute count. We had a lot of battle damage for the first three months and the planes came in with big holes all over them. I never will forget one plane that came in with most of it's tail shot ~~off~~ off. It got a direct hit with an antiaircraft shell right in the tail. That ship came all the way back. They had to carry the tail gunner out in a barracks bag and the tail gunners compartment was in a terrible mess. We took that tail off and had a new one on in record time and that plane took off on another mission two days latter. The army engineers deserve a lot of credit because they can do anything with a bulldozer and seem to make an airfield overnite. The Seabees get a lot credit that should go to the army engineering battalions.

I can truthfully say that ~~xxxxxxx~~ everyone did a good job with the B-29 program and I attribute that more than anything else to knocking Japan out of the war. Our job is over and that's why I say I don't believe we will get in on the army of occupation.

There were still around 1500 Japs loose in the jungles when we first arrived and it was dangerous to go out into the jungle alone or any other time. Anyone caught in the jungle was punished, because several men disappeared fooling around in the jungle. A lot of Japs came in and tried to give themselves up when we first set our mess hall up and started serving hot food instead of "K" and "C" rations, but they were shot on the spot. There were Jap bodies laying all around in the jungle where some Marine patrol happened to catch some Japs. I saw all kinds of skulls and pelvic bones, knee bones, collar bones and thought I ought to become a student of anatomy. There were leg bones ~~xxxx~~ with shoes still tied around them and even some bodies that still had flesh on them and rotting to high heaven. The first nite I pulled guard they doubled it because they were expecting a banzi attack. My tour was from 2 a.m. until 4 a.m. out on the perimeter next to the jungle. I was never more alert in my life and kept my finger on the trigger of my carbine the whole time. The island is full of huge rats and when one ran ~~xxx~~ across my leg I just knew that some Jap had slipped up on me and I was a gonner. Everything that seemed to move looked like a Jap. I kept watching one thing in particular as I could swear I saw it move when I wasn't looking. When daylight came I saw it was an old tree stump. When we came off guard we would relate our experiences with one another and laugh at the silly things we did, which didn't seem so funny to us at the time. One boy thought he saw something move and emptied his carbine into it. The next morning it turned out to be our field kitchen range still crated in the shipping box.

After that we were given strict orders not to kill anymore Japs but to take them prisoners if they were willing to be taken as prisoners. About five

boys slipped in the jungle and caught 3 Japs sunning on the beach. They killed two of them and brought the other back as a prisoner. They were reduced in rank and court-martialed for Jap hunting. The island authorities were wanting to try another type of warfare, using kindness instead of brutality, which worked out better in the long run. They used Jap prisoners to go out and get other Japs to surrender. They got one Jap Colonel and 73 men to surrender after the Jap Colonel visited the Prisoner of War stockade and saw that the prisoners ~~were~~ were well treated instead of being tortured.

That map of Guam that dad drew for me was pretty good and an excellent idea to get by the censors. We are camped almost on Pt. Pati on the northern tip of the island. The two runways end right over the bluff going off the north end of the island. There is a high bluff all the way around the northern end about 500 feet high and it's hard to get down to the beach even though we aren't allowed to go down to it through the jungle. I was back over in that part of the jungle when I found my Jap rifle.

I guess there is no other soldier like the American for hunting souvenirs. There is the joke about the Jap in the dugout with a dozen American soldiers on the outside trying to get him out. He called out "Come on and get me you Yankee souvenir hunting sons of \_\_\_\_\_."

Charles is really getting big now isn't he? I can't hardly imagine him playing football and being 5' 7". I guess he will be the biggest one of the family. Jimmie isn't doing bad either. Tell my old pal that I hope it isn't too long before I can get back home.

I was glad to know that The Association of Former Students of ASM have my address. I never have received a newspaper from them yet, and I would like to get it as I would like to read up on the rest of my school mates.

Well folks I guess this is enough for tonite so I will close.

Love, your son,