
Dear Mom, Dad, and All,

It is foggy here most of the time and so we see very little sunshine. I even have to pray for myself once in a while. You get very jittery not knowing what may happen. You have only God to turn to for protection and guidance. Anything can happen and usually does. You die a thousand times and don't know it. Your mind wanders and you think of home, your folks, your girl. Will you ever see them again? Sure you will! "Nothing will happen to me," you say. "I'll watch my step." Yeah. You keep on walking, clinging to your rifle, finger itching on the trigger, waiting, waiting for something to move in the stinkin' jungle. Its dark as pitch. Its just a monkey or an elephant, or a jungle cat or a snake or one of your own men who got lost. Or maybe its the dirty, sneakin' enemy lying in wait, ready to make a bloody mess of you. You don't move.

Your Son,
George

Dearest Marge,

How does this letter find my little sis tonight? You were wondering what the name of my plane was. Its name (I should say her name) is "Shady Lady" and we have a large picture of a beautiful gal clothed scantily (but sufficiently) painted on the side of the nose by me. I'm going to get a picture taken of the crew beside it one of these days.

*Sincerely Yours,
George (Killed In Action)*

Dear Mom,

It seems so strange that I haven't heard anything from any of you since the middle of December, five months ago. We heard that food parcels can no longer be sent, too bad if true. It would be hard going if it weren't for the weekly Red Cross parcel. I know I'm a father by now but don't know whether I have a son or a daughter.

Your Son,
Laurence POW

Dear Marge,

You stated you had a good idea where I was or am. You haven't. I think I know where you think I am. I'm not! I could give you ten guesses and I'll bet you wouldn't come within a thousand miles of it. Anyway you needn't worry as I am in a much safer and better place than you thought I was. Perhaps soon I can tell you just where I am. Even after I tell you, you probably won't know where I'm located.

*Love,
Joe*

Dear Bill,

In just 21 days you will be 8 years old. Perhaps by the time you get this letter - if you ever do - and its extremely doubtful - you will be getting right alone towards 9 years. I wonder.

As I write this, I am in my "office" about 300 feet under the ground. Outside is the tunnel, which is hewn out of solid rock, I can hear the air rushing. I have just came back from a long trip all alone the front. I saw a few of my old friends. So many more are gone. They were brave men, fellow; the kind of guys I'd like you to be when you grow up. All of the troops have stood up in great style under the worst kind of punishment. We all, Americans and Filipinos alike, look to America for support. And we know that America won't let us down. Just as we haven't let her down. You see son, it means a lot to be an American. And I want you to be a good one. It will be a long, long time before I see you and your mother again. There is no more I can say. Be good, study hard, and don't forget me.

Happy Birthday Boy,
Dad POW - Killed In Action

Dear Mom,

We had a little tough luck last time. We took off to hit Tarawa. On our first bomb run, our bomb doors wouldn't open so we turned around to hit them again. We discovered we didn't have a full flight so, Boy! did all the Zeros flock to the kill. Twenty 20MM shells went into our ship plus uncountable 7.7 holes. All our engines were hit. Our controls were shot almost completely away. Our engineer wired up our rudder cable so we could fly the "Wake Island Sleeper." The elevator cable was so badly shot up he was afraid to try to fix it for fear it would snap the one remaining strand. Five of our crew were hlt.

When the old girl was kilt we started to lose altitude and it sure looked like our earthly days were over. We couldn't toss any guns overboard because the Zeroes, were really giving us hell. Our left inboard engine kept wind-milling along. We knew it had been hit bad. Finally, Warren sighted Nanumea. Andy told me to drop the wheels but our gear was shot up too bad. We decided to make a crash landing on a reef. It was during those hours that I realized what a fool I was to ignore a girl like Joan. I swore then that if God would spare us, I would ask her to marry me.

The right inboard engine had run for three hours without any oil. She was throwing red hot metal and sparks. Any minute now we would catch on fire. Andy did one of the bravest things I've ever seen. He went back to his seat and took over again. The autopilot wouldn't hold it. I got the courage to join him. The crew braced themselves. The ship started to ease down into the water. She began to grind and groan and screech as the coral cut out the ship's life. She finally stopped, like the queen she was. The old girl was through but she did a wonderful job.

*Love,
Charles (Killed In Action)*

Mr. Elmerick,

Thanks so much for your letter. I know right where post 221 is located and plan to pay the post a visit when I return. It makes us all here very proud to have the support of all the vets. We now share something with all of you. We also know it is up to us now to carry on and live up to the standards set by you and your fellow veterans. We will not let you down.

We've heard about the war protesters in the U.S.. The only thing that bothers me about it is that none of them realize that at least they're in a place where they can protest. That's more than the Kuwaiti people can say.

Thanks Again!
M.W.M.

Hi Folks,

I suppose by this time the War Dept. has notified you about me. I am in a hospital in France it is a tent hospital. I was hurt quite badly and have lost my right leg, and also my little finger on my right hand, and my ring finger on my left hand. That is why the Red Cross is writing this for me. Please don't worry about me, for I am quite comfortable and getting good care, food and rest.

*Your Son and Brother,
Vic*

Dear Folks,

I stepped on a booby trap April 15. It sent a bullet through my left calf. It shattered the bone but I kept tellin the doc not to cut it off. He did a great job.

Yesterday a Captain and a SP/4 came in and presented me with the Purple Heart right in the ward. They pinned it on my pillow where everyone could see it. It brought a tear to my eye.

Take Care, Pray For Me.
Steve

Dear Darlene,

Yes, I've seen the Iraqi POWs. There just like normal people. Most were soldiers in their country by threat that if they didn't fight their families would be killed. Most surrendered. So when at first when we were returning them, they were killed. Its such a sad story. Then there are the babies that were in the wrong place at the wrong time. I can't wait to come home. Looks like May. Thank the Lord. I'm ready to get back to the great US of A.

*Love,
Shirley*

Dear Family,

Tell dad I have found the ideal thing for the farm. You have no doubt heard stories about the jeep. Well, that is not the half of it. I believe you could use them for anything. It is not true they will fly, but I have seen them do other things just as amazing. With one of them, we could make old Kate look sick. The jeep has a great future after this war. I am really sold on one.

Love,
Fred

My Dearest Joan,

Yesterday I was at a concentration camp. It so happened we captured a German supply train the night before. Four of us loaded up a truck with food and took it down there. I never want to see such a sight again. 14,000 starving, diseased, stinking people. It was terrible. Most of them were Jews Hitler had put away for safe keeping. Some of them had been in camps for 8 years. So help me, I cannot see how they stood it. No longer were most of them people but things that were once human beings.

As we pulled off the highway we had to shove them off the truck. They were dirty, walking skeletons, some too weak to walk. Some lay around dead where they had fallen. Others would fall as they tried to keep up with the truck. We stopped to unload the food and tried to keep them from crowding so we could unload but they were beyond reasoning. We had to start shoving them out of the road. They would just stand there, look right in your face and cry like a baby.

Finally, we took our guns and pointed them in their faces and they still stood there and bawled. We fired a few shots in the air and still we couldn't clear them. One woman could only cry and point at her mouth. Finally, we started to unload. We picked about 15 to help us. How those skinny fellows lifted

those boxes is beyond me. Any number of them came up and touched us if they couldn't believe that we were actually there. One fellow had nothing to give of value, so he gave me his little yellow star. I'll send it to you.

That SS man I captured later in the day never came so near in his life to dying, I pointed my pistol right against his heart but I couldn't shoot him in cold blood.

*Love,
Del*

Dear Sharon,

Ranger command sent me back to Pleiku. I was just there long enough for a clean uniform, a steak, a couple of beers and a nights sleep when I could close both eyes. Then they sent me to Ben Het.

I am back with Bob. It looks like our fearless colonel has managed to banish both of his prize 8-balls to the farthest corner of the realm. Like all other camps, we're not allowed to fly the American flag. They say its because it is Vietnamese camp and we're just advisors. If I'm gonna fight over here, I'd like to fight under my own flag. I've run up the Ohio flag I found at Duc Co.

What the hell, its got stars, its got stripes, its red, white and blue and it doesn't violate that idiot regulation. Besides its a bit of home.

I Love You Pretty Lady,
Mark

Dear Ruth,

This is my first opportunity to write since I have been liberated. I am now in Camp Lucky Strike near Le Havre, France. I am in fine health. I find it difficult to write as I haven't heard from you since before my capture, and so I naturally don't know whether I am yours or just nobody's. I am very hopeful that you have waited, as you promised. Well, its time to eat again, so I will say, so long until next time. You will just have to sweat it out, like I am. Be Good

*Just Like Always,
Milton*

My Dearest, Darling Judy,

Writing to you on this day is the best way I know how to celebrate. Being with you at the close of war in Europe would be the highest and most glorious thing I could hope for. Today is VE day and everyone is celebrating but me. I will spend it in church and, darling, my glory-making will be held when I am once again back with the one I love -You. That will be my victory day. I am on the western coast of England. As I look out across the ocean, I strain my eyes trying to see the states.

Midnight, darling. I am staying with that family. I told you how swell they have been to me. The whole city is lit up. I overheard a little boy ask his mother, "mum what are all those lights?" She could not answer because her eyes were so full of tears. My thanks to you, my family, your family and especially to God.

Yours Always,
Ralph

My Darling,

After chow, we went back to the field and were told that we were to sleep there for the night. I laid me poncho in the very damp ground and put my sleeping bag on top of this and then spread the other half of the poncho over the bag. I wore my green pants, wool shirt, flannel dress shirt, field jacket, wool socks and my silver fox coat. Well, maybe it isn't silver fox but it is fur of some kind, probably field mice. I then climbed into the sleeping bag and zipped it up. The stars were really beautiful. I think I must have slept during the night because I dreamt of you. I probably would have frozen stiff if I hadn't.

*All My Love Forever,
Tom*

Darling,

Tonight is Christmas night. There is still no mail from you and I miss your letters very much. Letters have souls; they can speak; they have in them all the fires of our passions; they have all the tenderness, delicacy of speech and sometimes a boldness of expression beyond it.

All of my joys have nothing but the memory of the past. I still preserve the desire to be loved by you. My passion by right belongs to you, and you can in no way become disengaged. A love such as mine cannot be indifferent.

I recall your image in my mind. I incessantly seek for you. I shall still love you with all my soul till the last moment of my life. Goodnight, darling.

All my love,
Tommy

Dear Adrian,

Jerry can and does throw a lot of lead at night and whenever smoke blinds him. The SS troopers are true fanatics and there's no resting when they're around. It takes bayonets, guts and death to convince the Nazi that he'd better turn tail. The German matches you trick for trick and guts with guts. The man who said there are no atheists in foxholes had hit the nail on the head. When the sun goes down and darkness steals in, life to the infantryman becomes nothing more than a gust of wind. The nights are long, forgotten hours and cold and you are invariably dug in the middle of a big field, a grenade in one hand, more handy, and your other hand fingering your BAR - it's you and good old Mother Earth and God. To us, death is no distant unknown, God just a Sunday thought, and prayer a child's last daily must.

Albert, Jr.

Sallie Darling,

I can but realize the terrible ordeal you went through yesterday. I thanked God a thousand times one of those bombs did not hit the hospital. I was in the powder magazine in charge of an ammunition detail when the first bomb hit. My dear, you don't know how much I worried yesterday, not knowing if you were OK. I know you have to work without sleep and must be tired to death. I'm damned proud of you nurses. You are a real soldier and I'm trying to be one. I hear some planes roaring overhead but I think they're ours. Pray to God we get back home again. I love you.

Be careful, dear
Jerry

To the Reeses,

I was hoping to get glimpses of Saudi culture, but I've seen nothing yet except infinite expanses of desert. There is a constant wind blowing and the dust in the air makes visibility terrible. The wind blows little trails of sand across the dunes like spirits not at rest roaming the desert. It gives the illusion of a dream state. As a child, I learned about deserts. I'd never seen one except in movies and they don't even come within reach of the real thing. I feel like I've always been here. The place I sleep is my home. Ohio seems like a dream, intangible and far from my reach and I cling to it and memories of it because they are all I have. Memories can be trusted. The only other thing I trust is my M-16. I wonder how much I will change. I've seen what Nam did to men. I don't want to change. The hardest part of my life is coming.

*Love to the family,
Brad*

Dear Mom and Dad,

Sept. 22-44. Mission at Kassel, Germany. Went over target 2 times. Flak was plenty heavy, plenty holes in the planes. Some of the fellows had to land in Belgium because shot up too much (head navigator got us through the thick of the flak). Was off course. Then on again.

Sept. 22-44. Mission at Kassel, Germany. Went over railroad center. Plenty of flak, no fighters. I almost didn't get back today. My oxygen hose pulled loose and I passed out. The waist gunner saw me and got to me after about 5 min. God was with me. We fly again tomorrow. 5 1000 lbs. bombs.

Sept. 22-44. Mission at Kassel, Germany. Went over target so we had to go again to hit it today. We did. And I saw plenty. 2 planes went down over the targets, both by flak. One parachute come out of each, open up at 24000 feet. Plenty of flak. One of the fellows, a radio man I know, was killed on this raid. You never know when you get it around here. If God would only give us the power to make them quit right now so it won't go on any longer. Fly again tomorrow.

Sept. 22-44. Mission at Kassel, Germany.
Went over target and we were on our own.
Enemy fighters were in the area. I flew with
another crew. Put me one raid ahead of my
crew. We lost 20 bombers to enemy fighters
and 7 from flak. Bad place Merseburg.

Jack
(Killed In Action)

My Dearest Joan,

As I was driving back from Suwon today, I saw a little girl about 5 or 6 lying in a ditch. She had a large cut on her leg that was still bleeding. The poor kid didn't have enough warm clothes, so I hopped out of the truck and put my battle jacket around her and stopped the bleeding. I took her to a house. Nobody knew she was hurt. Her parents were both killed.

It's not how many buildings get torn up - it's the kids that matter, hon. They haven't done anything to deserve what they're getting.

*Always,
Steve*

Dear Ettie,

A dream at last appears to be turning into reality. Tomorrow I am quite sure I shall be back in our homeland, the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. It is with deep sense of emotion that I think of setting foot on our soil again, and I know that it is a privilege and a blessing. Many have gone from our shores never to return. On Monday, as darkness came, it began to get rough again. The ship tossed and bobbed on the ocean like a toy. When the waves hit the ship broadside they drove against our vessel with terrific force. A trip like this should convince anyone that there is a Supreme Master, a God who governs this and all other things in nature. Now the ship rides very smoothly, almost as if she knows she is nearing her berth. Now I am going to bed and dream of home. Perhaps in the morning the land will be there to greet us.

All my love,
Ed

Dear Bevie,

Today I went to a man's funeral I didn't even know. As his body passed by with a draped flag over his casket, I had a lump in my throat and a certain pride that only a man in the Army feels when his fellow American and fellow soldier gives his life so that fellowship can survive.

As I raised my rifle to fire the 21 gun salute, a tear ran down my cheek. When taps was playing, both eyes had tears in them. I looked into the faces. Their faces asking, why? Being a soldier, I know why. And the man I didn't know lying in the flag-draped casket, he knew also and died for it. You're asking yourself why? Because it's America. As I was looking at the faces, one was looking at me. He saw the tears in my eyes. He smiled gently and nodded as if to tell me how he felt. Somehow, the red, white and blue seems to draw people together in times of despair. No matter who or what they are. We know, Bevie, because the Major we laid to rest was black.

*Love,
Your Richard*

Dear Georgia,

Today was a tough one. It was crawling under real machine gun fire and the bullets were only 20 inches over our heads. If one was to get up on his knees or elbows, it would have been too bad. I admit I was a little nervous at first but once I was out there it wasn't so bad. We had to creep and crawl 100 yards. When I was through I was wringing wet with sweat. The dust was about an inch thick. I don't know what they'll think of next. But in all, it can't be as bad as today.

Your loving husband,
Nick

Dear Mom and Dad,

Well the day for which the world has been waiting for these many dreary years is now here with startling suddenness. This evening two air raid sirens began wailing long and loud to proclaim that Japan had accepted the surrender terms. Almost at once, soldiers began streaming from their barracks shouting, smiling, laughing, dancing and slapping each other on the back.

And yet, despite the atmosphere of joy and gaiety, I could not help but notice the grim, unsmiling countenances of many overseas veterans. And I, too, felt rather sad. We could not help but think of the ones who will never know the joys of this day. These boys who sleep now in many foreign lands are the ones to whom the world should be eternally grateful. They too dreamed of their homes, their wives and sweethearts and longed for the day they could go back. I, for one, will never forget them. In my heart I will always see those rows and rows of little white crosses I saw so many times in Africa and Italy. It's up to you and me and the rest of us to remember how much was given. Personally, I feel rather humble.

*Your son,
Ralph*

Greetings, Bellefontaine:

Personal thoughts aside, the bottom line is that the President ordered us here. I took an oath. It's my job to obey orders and get the mission accomplished. After all, it's what you - the public - pay me for. We are very fortunate to receive your local support like that of the majority of average Americans. I can remember growing up in the 60s and 70s, supporting the war effort with a sense of pride for our troops in Southeast Asia. It wasn't the popular thing to do back then, but at our house, we were taught a sense of respect for country. As long as one U.S. fighting man or woman was there in harm's way, we felt it our civic duty to respect and support them. I was truly embarrassed for the way a vast majority of my "fellow countrymen/women" behaved during those turbulent years.

P.A.

To My Journal:

The terrain here is beautiful. The ocean is right close, spacious rice paddies, towering mountain ranges and green jungle. The sunsets and sunrises are a work of art by God's hand. Even though the enemy is near, there is a very peaceful feeling here. Yesterday on recon we walked through part of a hamlet I'd not been in before. It was like Alice's Wonderland: Villagers in rice paddies planting shoots, irrigating, some cutting and bundling new rice shoots to be transported to the watery paddies. A section of paddy was set aside to grow purple orchids that were beautiful. In the trees, the trails were like walking through a fantasy forest.

D.A.G.

My Darling Blue Eyes,

Here's your old man again. I hope everything is OK with you and our little champ. I'll bet the little rascal really keeps you busy. I enjoyed the V-Mail Valentine. It's things like that, that makes a guy love and adore a sweetheart like you. Oh, it's impossible to express my feelings on paper. I would take you in my arms, look into your blue eyes and tell you everything so easy. No one could ever come so close to me. You're the blood in my veins, the food I eat, the one I dream of, oh, just life itself built around you. You make me tingle all over and feel like I am sleeping on blue clouds of love.

Love,
Daddy

Dear Adnelle,

It is a quiet evening in France. As night settles over our camp, the drowsy mooing of cattle and other familiar farmyard sounds mingle with the occasional distant boom of artillery - a strange contrast. The farming countryside is very pretty. The trees are if anything more luxurious than in England and flowers plentiful. This evening I talked for quite a while with some French people who live nearby and had a lot of fun. Ils sont blanchet mon chemise et mon culottes. Comprenez vous? They seemed to enjoy hearing the words from us too. The people are very friendly and the children (les enfants) especially are frequent visitors.

Darling, I am trying to imagine in this beautiful countryside you and I are watching the fading sunset together. It is a pleasant thought, dearest, and one which I am determined to fulfill.

*Avec tout mon amour,
Virgil*

Dear Eileen,

I was appointed squad leader position today, which means my hard work is being noticed. Everything I learn here will help me later in life. 1. Never assume anything. 2. No matter how bad you don't want to do something, see it through and make the best of it. 3. Home is where you make it. 4. Make things happen for yourself. Take charge of your life. 5. Don't take little things in life for granted. 6. If you really love someone, they're always with you no matter where you are. 7. Teamwork. 8. Friends are invaluable. 9. Trust in yourself and your first instinct. 10. Don't lose touch with your Creator.

Love,
Dave (Killed In Action)

Hi Everybody,

I'm a company runner now, a good job because it's a lot safer. I wish you all wouldn't worry so much about me. Sometimes we're just on the move and they cannot mail our letters.

We have been in combat 16 straight days. Slowly we are reaching the 38th parallel again. We are fighting the Chinese now and they are harder to fight. They are smart people. They have tunnels going through all these mountains. Hill 930 was about 3000 feet, but 930 means 930 meters. Every hill we have to attack is named by height. Some of our objectives before 930 was 260, 303, 390, 430, 720, 869, down again to 315, up to 930. Hill 303 we had a lot of trouble on. It took 2 ½ days & nights to take it. But we foxed them. We set fire to the whole mountain & boy did they run. We got about 95 prisoners. Say hello to everyone.

*Your loving son,
Walter (Killed In Action)*

Dear Folks,

My first time on night guard. I saw men moving up on us. I saw one man pointing a gun at me. Then it came, artillery in close, coming closer. The man pointing the gun never went down. I found out the next day it was a fence post with a board nailed on. That was the night I learned how to tell by the sound of a shell how and where it will land. With artillery shells you have plenty of time to take cover. Mortar is heard a split sec. before it hits. Many a man was killed by mortar for that reason. But during an attack, both mortar and artillery is falling. All you can do is ask God for guidance and keep moving ahead. That way, most falls to your rear. In battle, a man is an ostrich, I once hid behind a little bush and felt as safe as I do now. A bush means as much to an 88 as a grape being crushed between your fingers.

Love,
Bud

DEAR PARENTS:

DEEPLY REGRET TO INFORM
YOU THAT YOUR SON WAS KILLED
IN ACTION 19 FEBRUARY 1945 AT IWO
JIMA VOLCANO ISLANDS IN THE
PERFORMANCE OF HIS DUTY AND
SERVICE OF HIS COUNTRY. WHEN
INFORMATION IS RECEIVED
REGARDING BURIAL YOU WILL BE
NOTIFIED. TO PREVENT POSSIBLE
AID TO OUR ENEMIES DO NOT
DIVULGE THE NAME OF HIS SHIP OR
STATION. PLEASE ACCEPT MY
HEARTFELT SYMPATHY. LETTER
FOLLOWS.

A.A.V. LIEUT GENERAL USMC

My Dear Mrs. Davis,

I have been trying to send you a few lines since Iwo Jima but due to censorship and a rule which keeps us from writing to casualties' families, it was impossible. One of the Marines from our outfit is going to the States, and he is going to mail this. It's not the right thing to do but in my own heart, I do not think it wrong. As you probably know, Jerry was my best pal. We had been in all the invasions side by side. We got wounded rather closely together and shared our hospital days. We have shared foxholes, clothing, money, packages from home - we were that close. Although I have never had the pleasure of meeting you, I feel that I really know you. You see, Jerry and I shared our letters from our mothers because the letters were so alike. I don't think I can ever obtain a pal who can fill Jerry's shoes. He was not only a "regular fellow" but also a darn good Marine - the best. He had a lot of courage and guts. Not only have you lost a son, I my best pal and the Marine Corps one of the best Marines, but the world has lost one of its greatest men. I feel proud to have known him and to have him like me the way he did.

*Yours truly,
George*

I see the visions of green trees blowing
gently in a
cool summer breeze.
There's a yellow tint over everything
like somehow, this
vision is from my past.
Children are playing in the street and
cars drive by on
the freeway.
I'm standing in the yard with my friends
all around me
talking,
but I'm looking away as if turning my
attention toward
the surroundings.
My life passes before my eyes, all the
childhood memories
I'm in my own little world, but my world is
these very
people and objects that surround me.
I suddenly realize where I am, how important
this place is.
I gain unending respect for this place
and these people.
In my mind's eye, nothing is as beautiful as
Ohio in the
summer,

and nothing is so precious as that little group
around me,
my friends and family.
My life passes before my eyes, all the
childhood memories
come back,
everything that influenced me and made me
who I am.
I'd never realized how special and
important it is, my
home, my people, my memories.
Wouldn't it be a tragedy?
Wouldn't it be unfair?
Would these people forget?
Would life go on as usual?
Would my message have an effect?
Would my spirit live on in my friends?
Would they carry on and still keep the
faith?

A Marine

A Memory:

Here in Italy, vino is ten cents a quart and since it's pure we find it's a nice substitute for vasser. I hear some Canadian soldiers using a few curse words I have never heard before, complaining about the cold rain and mud of Corsica. I see skinny cows pulling crude wooden plows over rich black earth. I look skyward and I can see houses hanging from the mountain like picture slides. When I enter a town, a flock of unwashed children pull at my coat and beg for gum. Then it's off to midnight mass. A prayer to the Virgin Mary. "Hail Mary full of grace. Please let me stay alive so I can go home all in one piece. It's a blend of smoky yellow candles, floating garlic aroma and a few "dominus sa vestal." I watch pilots playing poker with the sky as the limit. Money is of little importance when you realize that when tomorrow dawns there is the possibility you will not be around to spend it.

Joe

Dearly Beloved,

He was a short, fair lad and fair-haired, somehow suggesting your brother Lou. He was soft spoken, quiet and liked to play bridge. I got to know him on the ship. He asked to be transferred to submarine duty. Many a night we would stand by the rail, the star studded sky overhead, the swish of the wondrous Pacific accompanying our talk, only the phosphorescent gleam of minute life lighting up the darkness below and we would talk. He would talk, mainly, and I would listen. He told me how much he loved his girl. We discussed the advisability of marriage during these perilous times and I could see he craved encouragement from me, and I gave it wholeheartedly, for I feel that even a token of love snatched from the jaws of danger is worthwhile, if it is with the one beloved, and then there is always Hope and Faith. And there are always beautiful memories to relive and to dream and re-dream and to comfort one; and above all to light up the vision of the time to come. I did not see him again after we landed.

The next day was the Banzai attack - that furious, raging, mad onslaught made without apparent rhyme or reason, in a frenzy of despair and desire for self-immolation. They came and told me he had been killed - it is best you not look at him. And so I can best see him as I saw him last, whole, alive, dreaming dreams and speaking of Love. He was too young to have known his life for long - too young to be knowing Death for so long.

I love you my angel,
Morry

Dear Sis,

She says how after they bomb us flat, we'll need hundreds of bulldozers to scrape it off. Then she tells us of strikes (at home), etc., and our wives going out with other men while we waste our time over here. "Why don't you go home?" she asks. It's pretty good and we sure get a lot of laughs out of it. She calls herself "Tokyo Rose - Our Friendly Enemy." I don't tell Mom this 'cause you know Mom - she'll worry herself sick. The water situation is still pretty bad. We still wash and bathe in the ocean which is pretty salty. I think it will get better later on. I still have your picture and the fellows think it's swell too.

*All my love
From your little brother,
Billy Joe*

Dearest Mom and Dad,

I met this S/Sgt. Barry the first day I was in the ward in the "Krankenhaus." Usually the discussions start with combat experiences, but soon our discussion swung from the war to home and the folks back home. Before long I had all my pictures out of my wallet. He was with the 82nd Airborne Div. ever since their first combat jump in North Africa. In all, he jumped all five missions - N.A., Anzio and Salerno, Normandy on D-Day and, finally, Belgium. He was hit in Belgium. He showed me a picture of himself as a civilian and his hair was very dark. Now his hair is snow white and there were also lines of worry on his face.

Oceans of love,
Fritz

Dear Folks,

Last night on the radio we heard a lot of Christmas carols. Even the German radio stations were playing Silent Night. One of the fellows hung up his stocking to sort of carry out the old tradition, you know. This morning one of the guys had filled it up with a lot of hard candy. So you see, there is a Santy Claus after all.

*Love,
Bob*

My Dearest Wife and Son,

I have seen one of the worst atrocities than I thought humanly possible. Last Friday, there were 1100 Russian and French prisoners, possibly one American, in a little town. The Germans knew we were coming and they had to move quick. They had these men dig two huge deep graves for themselves. But we came too fast for them and they had to act quicker so they crammed these men into a little brick barn and spread straw all around and saturated it with gasoline. Honest honey, it was the awfulest sight I have ever seen. One day while I was up with the company I did something that has been bothering me ever since, even to the point of dreaming about it and it has really haunted me. Now, since seeing this, I don't feel as bad about it at all.

All My Love Forever,
Paul

Dear Mom & Family,

We had a big snow storm this afternoon. I was talking to an English fellow the other day. He said since the Yanks came to this country, the living has changed, the women have changed and now he thinks the weather is changing. He said this was more snow than he had seen in a long time. I told him that he ought to see some of the ones we have at home.

*Love,
Earl*

Mom and Dad,

Well, I know why I'm fighting. It's the same thing Dad did in 1917 & 1918, so we wouldn't have to fight, but we are. I'm fighting so my kids, or the rest of the fellows like me's kids won't have to do it. I want to have a family. I want Louise as my wife. She's the one I love, Mom, and always will. You knew that a long time ago. In case I never see her again, please tell her that I really have loved her and we would have been happy together, that I'll be waiting for her always. Also tell her to find a swell fellow who can love her ½ as much as I did and live happy with him.

I remain loving you always, forever,
Jack (Killed In Action)

To My Journal:

June 30 - While we were sweeping, air strikes were called on the Hill. At 5:30 PM we found a trail leading up. The word was passed to "fix bayonets" at that point. Everybody thought it was a joke. Then a man in front of me tripped a booby trap grenade and received a sucking chest wound. The 1st platoon was pinned down by sniper fire from a bunker on top of the forward ridge line. After three hours of fighting, we took the hill. But 1st platoon took eight dead, seventeen wounded 2nd platoon, seven dead, sixteen wounded. During the fight, Lima company came up the hill behind the enemy position.

July 4 - Today we are spending Independence Day on top of Hill 728. The skipper is trying to arrange some kind of celebration. On the resupply run today, the helicopter brought cokes, C rations, letter mail. Sometimes we get fresh fruit, juices, smokes, candy, etc. From this hill, you can see the Laotian border off over mountain ranges and rolling hills. We are not trying to make contact with the enemy because we have no blocking force. We are reconnaissing.

D.A.G.

Dear Mother and Dad,

I'll start by saying that my points are now 54 - I got 5 for one more battle star which the division now wears and 5 more for the Bronze Star. I got it for a patrol into enemy lines one night when we were in the Bulge. I remember the exact time because three of us spent two hours on our stomachs not over 15 feet from a German machine gun nest - it was cold as hell and I was sweating like it was June.

Right now we are occupying a zone and trying to get things straightened out between the Russians, Czechs, Partisans and the peace-loving American army. We have the Russians near us. They are quite an outfit. Not particularly well dressed soldiers but they are plenty tough and darn hard to get along with. They reflect the attitude of Stalin in all actions. And they trust us about as far as I can throw a horse. But by being diplomatic, we get along and I hope we'll do the same in the future.

All my love,
Phil

Hi Grandma,

Here I am alive and the war is over. I am writing you from Japan in Tokyo Bay where everything is quiet and that seems funny doesn't it? We were among the first ships in. You have probably heard of Japan's volcanic Fujiyama mountain. Well I saw it real close. I watched it at sunset and it was the most beautiful scene I have ever witnessed. This is a rich and beautiful land. Well your prayers were answered and I came through a lot of tough spots and am very happy and thankful. I am really anxious to get out and get home and stay there and live like a human. An awful lot of our boys won't be coming back.

I remain your grandson,
Clyde

Dear Jackleen,

This is destined to be a sad letter because that is how I'm feeling. I promise this will be the only sad letter you receive. I know we promised faithfully never to write a letter like this. Indulge me this once. Do you realize how much those last several days together meant to me? Then you know how much the last seven years have meant. How lonely my life would have been had it not been for you. When I think back, I feel that we must have lived two lifetimes worth - and I would gladly live two more. The prospect of spending a year separated from you leaves me numb. I am consoled by the thought that you are living as normal an existence as possible. I pray that you are. I have spent all these lines telling you how sad I am and now I say you shouldn't be. These thoughts will not be repeated. I will learn to live with them tucked away. Occasionally I will call one forth, savor it for awhile and tuck it away again. Did you see me as I waved goodbye to your airplane? I was standing on the car but you probably were on the other side of the plane.

All my love,
King Edward IV
(Killed In Action)

A Memory:

We parachuted into Normandy six hours before D-Day. I was all alone in the dark except for three live cows and five bloated dead cows. I sat on a rock and was spellbound by the beautiful fireworks that lit up the sky. I felt relaxed and was thinking, "this is a nice, quiet, peaceful war." However, when I saw fiery sparks curving towards American planes the fireworks lost most of their beauty.

J.F.

To The Editor,

As I read the Christmas note which came from Akron, an exhilaration exploded within me. It was nothing easily perceived but it was something which immediately attracted me. It was a feeling of collective consciousness. Most likely it's an energy which has always been there - somewhere within me. And now I'm aware that feeling is not only within me, but it is also with me. Thank you - and Merry Christmas!

M.P.S.

Dear Mother,

I know that we in the Army are called upon to sacrifice more than the people in civilian life. I know you're going through everything I am, except the physical end of it. And being a mother I'm sure you would do that if you could. When these people came up to us and were just satisfied to look at us, well, I sure did feel pretty damn small. And I couldn't even say a word, in spite of the fact I don't like the feeling of being gazed at like a rare specimen in a lab of some sort. Now if I should feel like this, I'm wondering just what the people back there who let us down should feel like. Yes, I want you to show this letter to those people back there who cried like babies when they had their drinks cut off at twelve o'clock, and I want you to show it to the people who think this war should have been over some time ago, and to any other person who thinks Elmer Davis is just trying to sell war bonds. I really can't put into words the feeling that came over me when I saw those people. Nordhausen was just small fry compared to some of those places. Freedom is a wonderful thing when you take what they took for three years. Every one of them was sure the Americans would come.

Your loving son,
Jim

Hi Folks,

It's the day after Christmas here in sunny Saudi. Our Christmas was not the best I've ever had, but not too bad. Christmas eve, some of the mechanics came around singing carols. It was unexpected and did a lot to raise spirits! My tent mates and I decorated the little tree you sent, made some of that Wassail stuff (not bad!) and opened presents. It was a nice, peaceful evening. The pot-bellied stove and the Christmas candles set a homey atmosphere. Yesterday, Christmas day, we had Christmas dinner. The mess hall outdid themselves! We even got the Saudi version of a White Christmas - a huge sand storm! We told ourselves it was Saudi snow!

Love you,
Chip

Dear Dad,

Three days ago, our company was mortared and received grenades and scattered small arms fire. The third platoon leader was killed, the first platoon leader wounded and eighteen others were evacuated. I didn't get a scratch, but I have never been so scared in all my life. Dad, I saw the sunrise that morning and, along with others, sat for hours in disbelief. I must have thanked the Lord a hundred times since for that sunrise. We headed back. I saw my point man go down. When I got to him he was unconscious, shot through the chest and back. I slapped his face and told him to wake up, this was no time to be sleepin' on the job. He came to, in pain but OK. My RTO did a fine job calling in support. After going through that and seeing how all of these "scared" men become strong, good fighters, you know I can't help but respect their courage. I can't help but love them.

*Keep in touch,
Bud*

Hi Folks,

We'll be going to the port in a couple of days to pick up our brand new M1A1 Abrams tanks. I saw them earlier this week, super nice, straight out of Lima. Go ahead, Baghdad, make my day! Maybe we've finally outlived the Vietnam stigma. I pray it doesn't wither away when the casualties start. The soldiers over here are among the finest, best trained men and women who've ever served the nation. They are meeting the challenge with exceptional skill, courage and dedication. I am proud to be with them. As the deadline approaches, please don't worry. It's surprising but I feel pretty calm. I've prepared and trained my people as best I can. I've made my peace with the Lord. What ever happens, He will mean it to be. Been listening to the radio and none of it is very encouraging. It's hard to believe Saddam really thinks he can best us! Is he nuts? It's nine PM. Three hours til the deadline.

Love to all,
Chip

Dear Son,

Just across the channel from me is Bataan. I've been there. Our men were brave men. Here we have gathered once again to hold. And we shall. In the meantime, fellow, remember to say your prayers for all of us - the ones who'll never see their sons again - and the ones of us who still hope to. Take care of mother. Be the man I know you are. Be a real soldier of Bataan. Know how much I love you - want to be with you - I treasure the two little snapshots I was able to save of you and mother. I'm a major now, son. I hope I've made you proud.

*Love you boy,
Dad POW /
Killed In Action*

Dear Dawn,

It is hard for me to tell a little girl how much I love her, but someday you will know that it is very much. Did you know that from our house to Vietnam is more than 6000 miles? The next letter you get will be from Vietnam. Be sure and say your prayers before you go to bed and I will remember to say mine. When we get to Vietnam, I will be very busy. When you are busy, time passes very quickly.

Love,
Daddy (Killed In Action)

Hi Hon,

This morning I had my first combat assault. Took off at 0710 with five gun ships. We had to take three lifts into the LZ. No friendlies on the ground so we really covered the LZ as the slicks came in! None of the slicks took a hit in my LZ! If it had been real hot we probably couldn't have suppressed all the ground fire. The best part of the day was we brought everyone back, although five ships got hit in various places. Anyway, I did real well and learned a lot and that's the important thing.

*Lovies,
Me (Killed In Action)*

Dear Dad,

I thought I'd write you because I want to tell you some things I don't want Mom to hear. We can hear the bombs and artillery. I get worried at times but then I stop and think of everything you and the Corps taught me. You surprise yourself how far back you can go and remember things you have been taught. And I had one hell of a teacher (you).

I love ya, Dad
Ponch

Dear Ernestine,

Many of us gathered around the radio at the Service Club to hear the President's prayer for the invasion. Darling, this date the whole world has been waiting for; and we know it brought sorrow to many a person - sister, brother, mother and father, friends, relatives. There are men shedding blood for our freedom. How fortunate we are here in the States. Let us not be unmindful that over there men are giving their lives in order that we may have freedom of religion, speech, fear, and want.

*Love,
Wayne*

Dear Folks,

I was just noticing a guy filling his ammo belt with cigarettes. I once saw a cartoon by Mauldin of two guys in a fire fight & when trying to get ammo out of their belt they both had all cigarettes. I saw that exact situation actually happen once. We were getting so we're hurting for ammo.

Love,
Lindy

My Darling Melinda,

I played those letters like a pianist would play the notes of a thrilling sonata: My darling Melinda! Has it ever occurred to you that I have never heard anyone speak your name? That is only one of a million things I have never experienced about you. The softness of your arms stealing around my neck. Your impatient kicks when I held you and you did not want to be held. Have I ever seen your sleep-filled eyes, or the yawns that say, "I want to go to bed." I often wonder what you think about. No doubt, very wonderful things, but it shall remain an unfathomable mystery. To us, and to you, the mind of your babyhood shall be unwritten history. The cost of this war will never be measured in dollars and cents, and who can weigh the cost of the longings of one million men? Goodnight, Melinda. May your dreams be sweet.

Daddy

Hi Mom & Dad,

I got a drill sergeant who is not human, I don't think. It's going to be real tough for the next 7 weeks. There's no heat in here either. You only get 5 minutes to eat your food and I was able to finish half my lunch today. My tendons are hurting still. I don't know how long I'll be able to last with them like this but I'm going to try and see. I don't know when I'll be allowed to make phone calls. Would like to hear from you.

Love,
Doug

Lori,

Well, by now you know what's going on over here. Yes, I'm a little scared. Sometimes I don't know if I can handle squad leader. I have 6 other guys working for me and they all look to me for answers. Sometimes I wish I was a private. We watch the planes go over and can hear the bombs when they hit. Just waiting for the time to push North. I don't know what to write but I don't want to stop. I feel closer to everybody when I write. Sorry this letter is sloppy. I'm writing by flashlight.

Love ya,
Rich

Dear Mom, Dad, Karen, Friends,

In the very near future the undersigned will once more be in your midst, dehydrated and demoralized, to take his place again as a human being with the well known forms of freedom and justice for all, to engage in life, liberty and the somewhat delayed pursuit of happiness. He might be a little Asiatic from Vietnamese-itis and overseas-itis and should be handled with extreme care. A little time in the land of the Big PX will cure this problem. Show no alarm when he insists on carrying a weapon at all times or looks around for his steel pot when offered a chair. Keep cool when he pours gravy on his dessert or mixes peaches with his Seagrams. Be tolerant when he takes his blanket and sheets off his bed and puts them on the floor to sleep. Abstain from saying things like Nook Maum, rice, fish, powdered eggs, dehydrated potatoes, filled milk. Do not get upset when he washes his plate with the toilet brush. Be especially watchful when he is in the presence of a girl. Keep in mind that under that tanned, rugged mean looking exterior, there is a heart of gold. By no means

plan his leave for him. Fill the ice box with
beer, get out the civvies, fill the car with gas
and get the women and children off the streets,

BECAUSE THE KID IS COMING HOME!

Daryl J.

Dear Mildred,

Today was a big day for me, and I had a ring side seat at one of the world's most historic events, the official surrender of the Japanese. We dropped our hook outside the breakwater. All around us were innumerable combat ships. Around them swarmed landing craft of all descriptions, hurrying their human cargo ashore that they might have a large show of force on hand. Overhead hundreds of B-29 bombers droned their way, then fighter planes in even larger numbers. If the Japanese signatories of the peace which was being signed on the USS Missouri only a stone's throw from us had any doubt left, they had only to scan the water around them and gaze into the sky. It was truly a magnificent show.

*Love,
John*

Hello Chris,

Prayers were answered when the chemicals used became ineffective as the wind changed and they blew back on Iraqi troops. How astounding! I am here to give glory to God. I became very disheartened during all of this and wondered would I ever see America again. How are we going to get me? Perhaps on the wings of angels.

Love,
Gail

Dear Mom & Dad,

Hi! I'm in Saudi Arabia. The mission that lies ahead of this division is awesome. It is one that brings great pride to me and makes the hair stand up on the back of my neck thinking about the honorable profession I am in. Regardless of my personal convictions, I will follow the decisions made by the leaders of our great country because I trust in them that they are to make the decisions that will keep our country great and I will, if called upon, give my life for that. Trust in the Lord and pray for the brave men & women here. I feel comfortable with my life & soul right now. Please do not open the enclosed letter. If the time comes that you need to open it (you know when that will be), please do it in the presence of Janice. I pray that I will be able to destroy it a few months from now. Tell everyone hi! and I'll see you the fourth of July.

Love & prayers,
Rod

Dear Folks,

I saw a woman in the Philippines pounding meal from grain, likely rice, with a large weight hung by a pole and counterbalance arrangement, and a large bowl. It reminded me of the pictures in our history books of the colonies. That's why I think there is a lot of opportunity left in the world for expansion of industry. If we could show the people how to produce more with the same labor, it would create more demand for our products and promote a healthy trade. Their standard of living would go up and the world would demand some of the things we have, too. With a little education, these people could adapt themselves to a higher scale of living, making for a better world all around.

Your son,
Judge

Dear Folks,

Well I guess this will be my Christmas letter to all of you for the year 1970. All who always get together to celebrate Christ's birthday. Right now I am sitting on a jungle-covered hilltop - a setting sun. It is very hard to get in any sort of Christmas spirit as every day is the same - tromp through the jungle and hunt poor Charlie. We will be on our firebase for Christmas, but no matter where we are, everyone's thoughts will be of home. In a way, I am thankful of being away from home over the holidays. It makes you realize just how important family relationships really are. Vietnam has taught me another thing also and that is the value of life. It is my firm belief that God loves Charlie Cong just as much as he loves us. In war, he is on everyone's side. It is just because the family of man is so ignorant and selfish and refuses to practice the love that all religions teach that we have war today. The other day, we killed a Montagnard. He was called an enemy as he indeed had a Soviet rifle and was working for the VC harvesting their rice. No doubt he would have fired at us had he seen us first. But as I stood looking down at his bullet-riddled body, covered only by a loin cloth, I felt only sorrow. He was not my enemy. The VC indoctrinated him,

handed him a rifle and sent him on his way. No, this "enemy" just like all other war casualties, is a victim. Man's failure to accept Christ's message, Peace on Earth, Goodwill Toward Men: the day after Christmas, we all go back to our selfish ways. Diplomacy has failed to bring peace. I guess religion is our only hope - that and every man's willingness to swallow a little pride and replace it with understanding and love.

*Love,
Curt*

DEAR SUZIE,

THIS IS IT BABY IM COMING HOME!!!

Jim