

## **SvcMen WW II Letters**

FULTON COUNTY, INDIANA

# *HANDBOOK*

**Service Men, World War II, Letters  
1944-1945**

## **SERVICE MEN, WORLD WAR II, LETTERS, Contd.**

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LETTER FROM MALCOLM KESTNER

[Editor's Note: - Malcolm Kestner arrived in Attu, Alaska shortly after the Japanese had evacuated the island, writing this letter on Jap stationery which was left behind by the enemy.)

Dear Mom and Dad:

I imagine you are wondering already where I got this extra thin paper. Well it's writing paper that the Japanese use. The envelope is the kind of envelope they use too. After you finish reading this, have Genevieve take it to school and show Miss Fultz and the rest of the faculty who are interested in such things.

It's never warm enough to go outside without your coats on, and there is snow on the ground practically all the time. In the summer you can easily get a sunburn but you still have to wear your coat. We live in a tent which is boarded up on all four sides. There is no window in the tent but we have electric lights. We have a little coal stove in the middle of the tent which furnishes plenty of heat.

The dance band I'm in plays at different places all over the island once a night and sometimes twice a night. Besides playing in the band, we all are on a working party every morning. There is a show on every night at the theatre but they are all the shows which we have seen in the states; although it's something to pass the time away.

With lots of love,  
Malcolm

[The News-Sentinel, Monday, January 3, 1944]

LETTER FROM RAMOND HERRELL

LETTER RECEIVED FROM PRISONER OF GERMANS

(Editor's Note: The following is a letter received from Pfc. Raymond L. Herrell, son of Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd D. Herrell of Route 3, Rochester, who is a prisoner in a German internment camp.):

Dear Folks and Family:

This finds me alive and well and doing the best I know how. Hope it reaches you all well and doing the same. The weather is fair.

I haven't received but the one letter and three cards. Thanks to all.

## SvcMen WW II Letters

I got a letter from Mary yesterday. She's doing good. She's been telling some of the things you write here, so please keep writing.

You need not answer this if you think it's best not. How is Rena and family? I've never heard how they are doing. If you should happen to see her and family tell them I sent my regards. Tell all friends hello.

Love to all,

Ray

[The News-Sentinel, Monday, January 3, 1944]

### FOURTH LETTER FROM JEAN WALBURN

(Editor's Note: Mr. and Mrs. Harley Walburn received this letter recently from their son, Sgt. Jean Walburn somewhere in China.)

Sgt. Jean Walburn

Dec. 16, 1943

Dear Dad and Mom:

Your medicine is going to be spared a little farther apart for a while at least. I've been pretty busy. It took me two days to write Odetta a short letter. I didn't do much, but was busy. Anyway, it's gotten so that I can't write just anytime. I wrote Letha and Betty tonite, oh yes, Keith's too.

I got two packages from Keith's today. One was nothing but writing paper, and the other contained many envelopes, soap and cigarettes. The guys sure did smile when they saw all that stationery, as I guess it won't last long. Ha! They have been dividing their candy, so stationery is no exception. Anyway there's more stationery coming. The only trouble is that my table drawer broke today under the weight, Ha!

I guess you need some young folks to bring company home on Sundays. Ha! Do you miss getting Sunday dinner for us, when Safford's kids, Ned, and the rest came home with us? I guess Keith and I didn't appreciate it so much then, but now we know. I wish I could come home to that again, but am afraid it won't be quite the same, but we'll recapture all that we can, and remember those other times? They can't be taken away from us.

I like to think of those days at home. They make me forget that I'm so far away. The time passes quickly then too. It's odd that it doesn't make me feel blue, but I guess I haven't been away long enough yet. I'd like to come home though, don't forget that.

There is so much of the world to see and I've seen only little corners here and there, but I'd give a lot just to have a place, in the states, to call home. Everything isn't perfect in the states, but one would think so to hear the guys talk.

I'm sorry Dad that I couldn't send you a nice gift for your birthday, and I guess maybe the letter wasn't so much. Next year I'll make it up to you. I think you'd have liked something from China, but there is so little one can buy here. The war has caused such high prices and not much to be had. I regret it as much, or more than you do.

Things are so different here that there isn't a day goes by without learning something new. Some days I don't look for the new things, but it's only because I don't look. The other day I saw a large hog tied between two 10 foot bamboo poles leaned against a building. The hog's feet were sticking in the air and he was kicking to beat the dickens. It's owner had left it that way, and as soon as it had quieted down would carry it to market, several miles away. Two men carry hogs that way for quite a distance. One day I saw a man pulling a large hog on a two-wheeled cart. I have seen men driving hogs to the market, on foot. It's odd, but I never saw a man with more than one hog.

Another odd thing to see is a person leaving the market with a piece of meat tied to a string. That's the way they buy meat here. They don't wrap it in paper, just tie a string around it and go merrily home, swinging their bacon. Ha! They don't seem to mind the flies, nor the hot sun. Meat is so expensive that the average person can't afford more than a pound at a time, and more often it's less.

The usual method of cooking meat is in a stew, and eaten with rice. The Chinese don't cook rice as long as we do. I'm not sure whether it's because they want to save what pitiful little fuel

## SvcMen WW II Letters

they have, or whether they like rice half cooked. Their stoves are such crude affairs. I don't see how they can cook anything. They build their stoves out of dried clay brick, and all it is a pit with sometimes a piece of metal over the fire. The coolies can't afford coal, and charcoal is awful expensive too, so they use dried grass and any piece of wood they can find.

Talk about war prices, I was talking with a Chinese who is renting a room in the nearby village for his wife and daughter while he works here. The one room (and meager it is too) costs 200 Chinese dollars a month. The rental price was at one time something near 5 Chinese dollars a month.

I must quit now and go to bed.

Your son,  
Jean

[The News-Sentinel, Tuesday, January 4, 1944]

### FOURTH LETTER FROM JESSE J. CALVERT

Dear Mrs. Fultz:

Received your most welcome greeting card yesterday and was very glad to hear from you again. Mail received over here is very slow. Sometimes it is about two weeks between letters from my wife even though she writes every day, but when I do hear from her I usually get six or seven letters at a time.

England is very much like you read about in books. The buildings and villages are very quaint, but picturesque and the people are rather quaint too. They are friendly though. I have had the pleasure of visiting London and enjoy seeing places I've read about and never expected to see. Such as London Tower, Westminster Abbey, House of Lords, House of Commons and St. Paul's Cathedral, but I still think there is no place as good as Home in the U.S.A.

Thanks again for the Christmas card wishing you Joy and Happiness in the New Year, as ever,

J. Calvert

[The News-Sentinel, Tuesday, January 4, 1944]

### LETTER FROM JIMMY BALL

Dear Mom and All:

Christmas Eve., 11:00 P.M.

As I can't be with you in body I'm there in thought. I had a pretty good Christmas tho helped open some of the boys gifts listened to the President and Christmas carols. Then to top it off my crew and I drank a gallon of milk.

Tomorrow we are all going in and have Christmas dinner with my pilot and family. I got Willodean's letter and your letter and papers also the cookies and candy.

I had another flight to twenty thousand feet today and the engineer just about passed out. His mask didn't fit right and he wasn't getting sufficient amount of oxygen so I gave him my hose and a couple squirts of pure oxygen till he snapped out of it. Meanwhile I had a walk around bottle.

I think if it hadn't been for the pilot telling me to tell him to open his bomb doors and giving him my oxygen at once he would have passed out or maybe died, so I can say I've come as close to death as I want to. Maybe I even saved his life. I feel better about it any way.

Haven't been having much trouble with the radio lately except my hands get cold.

Well can't think of any more to say for now so will close. I hope you had as Merry Christmas as possible and will have a Happy New Year.

So long and write soon after the holidays rush. I'll try to get a three-day pass and meet you in South Bend then go to Chicago. Take care and tell everyone I said Hello.

Jim.

[The News-Sentinel, Tuesday, January 4, 1944]

### SECOND LETTER FROM JOHN HALL

## SvcMen WW II Letters

(Editor's Note: The first word in six weeks received by Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Hall, parents of John Hall, German prisoner, was the following postcard):

"Dear Mother and Dad:

"I hope this card finds you as well as it leaves me. Yesterday I got a letter from Doris. It made me very happy. She told me you were O.K. and Dad was getting better. More later.

"John."

[The News-Sentinel, Wednesday, January 5, 1944]

### THIRD LETTER FROM JAMES CLEMENS

(Editor's Note: Pvt. James J. Clemens has written the following letter to his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Oliver Clemens. James is in Italy.)

Pvt. James J. Clemens

Dear Folks:

Well here I am again. I am sitting in a barn and writing this letter by a candle light. You might not be able to read this but do the best you can. It is very muddy outside, been raining now for three days, and do hope it quits soon for we can't go to shelter any time we want to.

It is getting colder here now, we are sleeping in an old barn, but it's better than sleeping on the ground, anyway we are under shelter.

We just got through with a battle that I never will forget as long as I live, but I am still O.K. Have a cold but not too bad. At the present time we are resting, but never know when we will go to the front again, but don't think we will be very soon. I think we have had our share of it. Sure will have a story to tell when I get home.

#### Tough Steak

I got four days rest period the first of November so I went to one of the large cities here in Italy. I sure enjoyed it. I bought some souvenirs and am sending you a lovely tablecloth. Everything is so high here. The only thing that is cheap is labor, haircuts and shave, etc. I bought a steak dinner and they charged me \$1.60 and a very small piece at that and very tough. I think it must have been a piece of oxen after being worked hard for about 10 years.

While in the city I went down to the Red Cross building. Sure was a swell place. "They had a colored orchestra there and they played several of my old favorite songs. Had free eats and a swell recreation floor. They also had a large band in front of the building where we slept. It sure felt good again to sleep on a cot after laying on the hard ground, and had plenty of good eats. I also got acquainted with a couple of Italian girls and good looking, too, and can you imagine they want to come back to New York with me. They were going to have their picture taken with me but it started to rain, then had to give it up.

I got two Christmas packages so far, one from you folks and one from Irene. Everybody thought that the New Testament Heart Shield was a fine present. I do too and want to thank you.

Several of us fellows went to town yesterday to see a show. The name of the show was "Arsenic and Old Lace." It sure was a funny show. We also have a chance to go and hear a great singer today. Can't understand a word he says, so don't think I'll go.

I am still getting the Plymouth paper and the Rochester News-Sentinel and be sure not to let them run out. Keep them coming. We don't get to listen to the radio very often. I would like to hear some of the popular songs and have a few waltzes with some pretty girl. Ha! Ha! You hardly ever see an Italian blonde, they are mostly black haired. I sspose after this terrible mess is over and I get home I'll probably just be an old home boy, won't want to ever leave the house. The home will be so appreciated and I have seen so much country and will be so tired that I won't want to leave it.

I would like to see Sammy and Bobby. I got their pictures. They are growing. Am afraid they will be big boys before I get back. But hope this mess is over soon so I can come home.

Well I have to stop writing for a while and just received a package from the Argos Lions club. Everything was in fine shape and was glad to get it and want to thank them for it. I also got another box from Irene.

## SvcMen WW II Letters

It's hard to write a letter, can't tell you any news and can't tell you what I am doing, but you should know what army I am in by now. It's the army you read so much about in Italy.

Well I am getting tired of writing. I write to about 25 different people so it keeps me busy. So don't worry about me I am O.K. Lots of love to all.

Your Son

"Jim" Clemens

[The News-Sentinel, Wednesday, January 5, 1944]

### THIRD LETTER FROM ARTHUR HUNTER

Dec. 19, 1943

Italy

Dear Folks:

As I have some time this evening will scribble you a few lines as a person never knows what may happen next. Hoping this finds everyone well and the winter is not too severe, I am still well and getting along fine. Also have you heard from Harry? I wrote him a few days ago and I know it will help him. I couldn't give him any pointers but it isn't hard to get on to. Just keep alert and get the first shot. A dead German and Jap are the safest, but I know he'll make it alright.

I just now read a piece in our "Stars and Stripes," stating where the railroads intended a walkout. Just what kind of people have we behind us. Course perhaps we don't know the whole story behind all of this and we wonder.

If people would only wake up to the fact we have a ruthless war over here and the Pacific. If they only had to leave their loved ones and give their blood and sweat and come face to face with those hordes. Honestly I do believe that they wouldn't be willing to walkout on their loved ones. We need all the cooperation that can be had to win this thing.

We have been in the war for over two years. We have boys that have been away since that time. Do people often stop and think about those things? I don't believe they do. We know what we are fighting for, and what we are against. We do not kick about wages, hours and all the luxuries. We have no soft, warm beds or a roof over our heads. We have no warm fires to toast our toes by, and if we get wet and muddy we just have to endure it. We also have no fancy bath tubs and running hot water to shave in. For over a year and a half now we have shaved in cold water out of helmet tops and every man knows what that means and still we are carrying on, and we will until the aims of our dear government are fulfilled. As in every man over here and elsewhere and all the fighting men, it is to get all of this over with and get home (America) where we belong. So I cannot understand why people do as they do and prolong this war and lose that many more American lives. We are not griping and we will always carry on and to know our loved ones are safe and doing their part.

I have been reading in some old magazines out here, about predictions on the length and outcome of the war. I do believe the fighting has just begun. The enemy is still going strong and it will take an awfully lot to conquer these people. All I hope that the good Lord will take a hand in the matter and help us to a quick and final victory.

Have received some very interesting letters from kids back home, and have also received numerous Christmas packages. Everything was so nice and also useful articles. It is also very nice to know that you are remembered at this time of year and while the world is in such a turmoil.

Met a sailor in town who was a buddy of Ted Meyers from home, said he was getting along very nicely and was well. A person really runs into a lot of different people from near home.

Had a letter from my old boy friend's wife (Johnny's), said he was trying to get over. It would sure be a surprise, and would also be so glad to see him. Haven't heard from Chuck for an awfully long while. Probably he is very busy where he is at.

Well must close for now. Give all my regards and hellos. Hope this next year brings us all together once more. May the good Lord watch over you all. Write as soon as you can.

Love, Son and Brother,

"Jack"

[The News-Sentinel, Thursday, January 6, 1944]

## SvcMen WW II Letters

### PROP WASH FROM KEESLER

By Beezer (R. V.) Bennett  
Keesler Field, Miss.

Your humble servant packs his bag and baggage once more this week to troop train into the frozen North.

Yes verily--I am bound for radio school. My tests showed me equipped for aerial gunnery and bomber radio man. Therefore comes the transformation of hot house plant (my present status) into a trainee of the ice and snow.

This troop train ride somehow fails to excite me as previous events have done. Could it be possible that the Army life holds no more fascination? Is it possible that I am a veteran after only 5 months, 28 days, 18 hours and 37 minutes?

With that terrifying thought in mind I sit in the day room--this last night at Keesler Field--and glance about me to discover for sure if I have become bored or if it's just a figment of the imagination.

The day room is a rather interesting cross-roads of Army leisure time, I decide. The Army, Navy, Marines and other services have day rooms for the recreation of their men (or women) with the possible exception of those in the midst of battle heroes on the Pacific islands.

Those Book "Sacrifices."

A day room is an inexpensive affair promoting chiefly "ease of mind." Many of the letters he sends home to you were written in the day room. Most all of the books contributed to the U.S.O. book campaign settled in camp day rooms . . . Even those Bobbsey Twins, History of the Romans, and Experimental Chemistry novels that some broad-minded souls "gave up."

As I gazed about our day room on this usual damp evening, I saw quite a bit that twitched at my ever eager lust for "interesting events in the G. I. world."

Over there in the writing, reading, radioing section of the frame-worked building sits a lad from Philadelphia scratching off a thank you note to dear Aunt Jenny who sent him mittens for Christmas. Across the small chrome table from him sits intellectual Corporal Elmer reading the latest men's vogues in Esquire .(I doubt!) And beside the radio sits another Corporal--a dreamy individual listening to Teresa Wright emote for Lux Radio Theatre . . . Too bad his eyes don't notice Jitterbug Joe's glare from across the room. Joe would give his all to tune in Benny Goodman--and probably would if the Corporal didn't have two stripes more than Joe.

In the pool players section of the day room the whack of billiard balls resound . . . followed by a soft (not too soft either) curse. It's a good thing only males are allowed in the day room.

Over the reading, writing, game playing and radioing a thick pall of smoke hangs. The floors, cleaned so neatly by an orderly this morning, are now quite a mess of butts, torn up letters, (very few love notes are torn up I discovered after an evening of putting pieces together) and general refuse.

To accompany the blaring radio and clicking cue balls, the coke machine sings as a nickel drops into the slot and a coke slides out. There are also drones of soldierly voices--jokes followed by guffaws--brags about who had the workingest day or whispered re-readings of letters received earlier in the day from Jane or Pat back home.

By eleven o'clock each evening the day room is practically empty. The training soldier has relaxed and is nestled in his bunk.

Yes--as I survey all of these happenings I discover that army life has not become boresome as long as people like these can perform on funny stages such as a camp recreation parlor, my life is still quite exciting.

[The News-Sentinel, Friday, January 7, 1944]

### SEVENTH LETTER FROM ROBERT GREER

Robert Greer  
Somewhere Overseas  
Christmas Eve

## SvcMen WW II Letters

Dec. 24th, 1943

Dear Folks:

Writing to let you know I'm well and safe in England. The people are really nice to us. I was sure glad to leave the Mediterranean sea and North Africa areas. I couldn't talk to people down there. I suppose you know I made the invasion of Sicily and Salerno valley in Italy. I had to leave Fred in Italy . . . Fred was in the invasion of Sicily. He landed about 10 miles up the beach from us. It was pretty hot, hot I'm getting as I don't mind the shell fire anymore, so don't worry about either of us . . . I've seen the ruins of ancient Carthage, Tunesia, the volcano at Mt. Etna, Sicily, old churches, statues at Paleramo, the Temple of Neptune at Agripolie, Italy, Mt. Vesuvius, the Ruins of Pompei, the castle of the Italian rulers - it is called the House of Savoy. I'll name you some of the cities where I have been: Bermuda, Hamilton, Algeria, Nemoura, Oran, Arzen, Mastegneaum, Tunes, Algiers, Bone, Tunisia, Bezirta, Ferrysville, Tunis, Sicily, Scoglida, Lacada, Zella, Paleramo, Catanice, and Termni, Italy; the Isle of Caprice, Naples and Banolie. I also have seen Portugal, Spain, Spanish Morocco, French Morroco, Gibralter, Malta, Pantotaris and the Canary Isles. Well that gives you an idea where I have been during the past 10 months. When this war is over I don't want to let Rochester, Ind. out of my sight. I spent my 18th birthday overseas, where will I spend the next? Home, I hope. I have some souvenirs that I stole from Jerry. If he thinks he can get them back, I'll meet him half way. I hope he thinks to say a prayer first. I have a German bayonet taken at a pass in Tunisia for you. I did have a watch I took off a prisoner, but he started crying and I gave it back to him. It was a kid about my age. I guess my conscience bothered me too much. You feel sorry for them when you see them penned up.

I am getting a five-day leave next week, the first leave in a year. I think I'll go to London. The girls are sure nice to us Yanks. It sure great to be around people that talk your language. Send me the season's basketball scores. Merry Christmas.

Your son,  
"Bob"

[The News-Sentinel, Monday, January 10, 1944]

### SIOUX FALLS FLASHES, SPLASHES

By Robert (Beezer) Bennett  
(Sioux Falls Army Airfield, S.D.)

And so it began! What looked like the most tiring days in my history loomed ahead.

For at 5:30 on a sunny Wednesday afternoon, 300 members of the Air Forces (that which nothing can stop) boarded the most recent dug-up relic of Napoleon's time. The troop train we were to live in was a helluva mess! Our destination was unknown . . . Our suspicions favored the radio school at Sioux Falls, (brr) South Dakota. Disillusioned as the dickens we drug our selves and our two too full barracks bags (everything but the kitchen sink) onto day coach No. 1313, pounded the piles of dust from the nasty-green upholstered seats, coughed and swore, and in futile disgust resigned ourselves to fate.

The train was finally bound for Mobile, Alabama the trainmen explained and with that the engine gave a sigh, and dragging its coaches behind it, started on the journey.

We glanced gladly for the final time at the overhanging moss, dwarfed palm trees, and ancient mansions of Biloxi, Miss. Thank God we wouldn't have to wander those streets anymore on the week-ends.

We rode over water for about half a mile (Biloxi Gulf Bay) and then settled back to cuss and discuss the situation while passing more bodies of water along the coast. As the extraordinarily picturesque sunset reflected itself in the still gulf waters, most of the guys were engaged in poker, reading, or bull sessioning. The troop train ride had begun--and now was taking the aspects of every troop train ride every soldier in this war has experienced.

Dogs Still Popular

Supper time was the first inviting thing we'd known today. We had eaten a brief respite back at Keesler but we still enjoyed the hot dog sandwich and java that the mess car provided.

## SvcMen WW II Letters

After the repast and the usual cigarette that follows all meals I felt a little more at ease and picked up my mystery book for an evening's scanning. It seemed the only thing to do since we were in Alabama, heading due east and the scenery was blacked out by night. So I did it.

It was 8:00 now. We were changing engines in Mobile. As we sat in the usual smoky black station I roused from my murder reading (two dead bodies thus far) and surveyed the scene. We were parked beside the framework depot in the 27,000 (pre-war estimate) populated ship building haven.

There was quite a crowd in the depot this evening. I scanned them with an appreciative eye . . . Sailors and soldiers exited over a post-holiday furlough or despondent over the finish of a New Year's leave . . . A peroxide blonde was behind the wicker teller's cage. Our gang whistled even though she couldn't hear. Two old men sat in the depot -- There always has been and will be old men in depots I guess.

### Nocturnal Enchantment

Then the new engine was attached to us and we jerked out of Mobile, Alabama, passing its suburbs flowing over with dingy street lights and depressing side streets. Out into the night once more and lit another cigarette and returned to my reading.

It was Thursday morn about seven that I was rudely awakened from a fitful sleep by some idiot's turning on the car lights. I tried to rise from my pretzel-like position from the seat in which only a three-year-old child would have been comfortable. My sniffles of the night before had developed into bronchial pneumonia I thought and my head hadn't felt so bad since New Year's morning. With my few remaining grains of memory I recalled that after everyone had become a tangle of arms and legs and barracks bags the night before and after the coach lights had been killed, I retired to the wash room to finish my mystery. (The final score was four juicy murders and the murderer was not at all who I had imagined). (I never can detect a murderer in any story).

Finally, finishing my book I remembered, I went back to my seat, wrapped up in my coat and slept about as much as a condemned man the night before execution.

Now, I ceased recalling the recent ugly past, and gave my "all" to an attempt to arise from my hard bed. After several attempts (Oh, my aching back!) I slid into a sitting position and maliciously looked out the window. We were stalled in the freight yards of Birmingham, Alabama and as I looked at one of the fellow's maps (not his face - a U.S. map) I oriented myself to be heading northwest. It suddenly occurred to me that this tour of Alabama was fine but why the devil were we taking a scenic inspection of the state if we were headed, as we imagined, to South Dakota?

Rather chagrined by the thought I went into the wash room and brushed my teeth, glancing now and then at the ogre-like reflection in the mirror. After only one night of no rest I looked like Dracula. What would I look like after two or three nights? I shuddered and went to breakfast.

After breakfast everyone settled back into busying their minds. The poker game again reared up across the aisle. Someone unsuccessfully tried to begin a songfest with original (and very smutty) lyrics to "Casey Jones."

I watched the scenery pass . . . Coal mines, hills, valleys, sunshine gleaming on the Alabama farmlands, tank towns, the Tennessee river and its Victory ships. Very dull eye-fulls, thought I, even though it may be educational.

In each hamlet there were Negro pickaninnies ready and willing to profiteer from our purchases of candy bars, peanuts or oranges. I mused that the South's educational system must be pretty poor not to make these kids go to school.

The next stop was to be Nashville, Tennessee so I borrowed a magazine and browsed.

My attention focused next on our conductor. Throughout the morning he had remained in our coach--which was nearest the engine. He was an average conductor, looking much like railroad conductors should look. His immaculate white shirt, navy blue uniform, and "forty-ish" look gave him the "average" appearance I realized.

How the heck he managed to maintain a white shirt on an old dirty train such as this amazed me no end. I spoused his spouse, the plushy-bustly-wifely type, was back of his white shirt's



## SvcMen WW II Letters

whiteness. Every Monday morning I could see her hanging up a line full of white shirts for her conductor husband to conduct in.

With my fancies all settled I returned to my window gazing. (Terribly dirty, these windows.)

Thursday's luncheon was finished and the afternoon was well on its way. We had stopped at Nashville for water or something and were now winding our way through the Tennessee rural districts. We were headed north and the farms looked more healthy now . . . Also the weather was getting more nippy.

### Back Home Again In . . .

The most gratifying news I had heard so far was announced by the white-shirted conductor. Our next stop was to be in Evansville, Indiana! It was wonderful to just think of being in Indiana again. Even a brief moment in the state overshadowed the lack of luxuries in this poor troop train!

The rumor as to our destination grew more intense. Michigan, Illinois, and Wisconsin were all considered. I, personally, still feared that our exit would be made in the cold of South Dakota.

This troop train ride, I mused, was practically the same as an unusually crowded shopping trip via railroad to Chicago back in civilian days. The chief difference being that it was free, much longer, and you didn't know where you were going. I further reflected that these Tennessee wayside villages were very much the same as those Joe Sparks and I used to hitchhike through back in high school days. My companions stimulated my trend of thought and I almost began seeing little change in army and civilian life. I quickly recovered from that thought, however.

As the afternoon wore on and I finished my third pack of cigarettes the scenery changed slightly and the weather grew cooler. We were in Kentucky now and frankly I was very disappointed--the grass is not blue but green!

We passed Colonial-styled mansions and I dreamed up fantasies about their history. Each small town had its quota of people who waved friendly hands to us and I could hear the housewife in that brown house saying tonight at supper, "John, the biggest train full of soldiers went past this afternoon while I was hanging out the dish towels. They all seemed so cheerful when they waved to me." That's why we waved, lady, to let you know that we are cheerful.

Dusk was falling now and as we crossed the Ohio river I was back home again in Indiana. In all my life I never thought long rolling fertile fields of dead corn stalks could look as beautiful! Not red clay--not white sand--not sea shells--but black fields of earth.

About twenty minutes later I enjoyed my first taste of southern hospitality so far . . . And that was in southern Indiana.

Some very swell Red Cross ladies in Evansville lavished us with tasty cookies, cokes, ice cream and cigarettes while we stopped there for half an hour. The thing was appreciated and agreed upon that it was "damn swell to be back in civilization (north).

After supper I propped myself up in my seat and cat-napped while we toured through the corner of Indiana and northward through Illinois. About one o'clock Friday a.m. we stopped an hour near Chicago. Not near enough to smell the loop but at least in the Calumet region.

### Blood Donors Note

Then it was "Westward Ho" and sleep became absurd. Not only because of the unsleepable habitat but it was now intensely cold. The windows froze over and I put on my "longies," fatigue suit, and uniform. Over all that I wore my overcoat! Still I froze. Our blood had been thinned down South and this two below temperature was terrible. We sat up the rest of Thursday night griping and stomping our feet to retain circulation. The chief muse: "Didn't our ancestors care for heat back in this junk-heap's younger days?"

At breakfast we were in Iowa headed for Cedar Rapids (I was positive we were going to Sioux Falls, S.D., now) and the brief patches of snow and ice made us wish we hadn't wanted a white Christmas two weeks ago.

There was the very familiar homelike quality of this Iowa scenery yet it was somehow appalling. The dead corn stalks, barren trees, shut-up-tight farms and dirty irregular blankets of snow weren't an exactly cheerful sight.

The coach was getting a little warmer after breakfast and I unbuttoned my overcoat, took off my scarf and wrote a letter to Mom and Dad. Lucky people, in sunny Florida!

## SvcMen WW II Letters

Just before lunch we bore into Cedar Rapids--an extremely pleasant city. As I've before noticed in Iowa, a large number of the sedate churches are crowned with crosses. I like that!

The city's grounds were thinly covered with snow and as we went into the usual waving-to-all-people--especially females--procedure appeared the most alluring vixen we had seen this trip. She was dark and glamorous in a black fur coat. The windows almost broke as we made attempts to attack this compliment to the Corn State. She waved and grinned majestically and we were satiated.

Our stop in Cedar Rapids was brief and we headed into deeper snow.

About 4:00 Friday afternoon our destination was definitely announced by the Captain in charge as being Sioux Falls, South Dakota. It came without malice for we almost knew that we were going to cold Sioux Falls when we left Keesler Field.

After spending the afternoon in discussion of movie morals, our girls at home, etc. I noticed my fellow passengers on the now monickered "Sioux Falls Suzy."

We all looked entirely different from the cleaned and pressed prospective radio-gunners who had left the Mississippi moors only two days ago. All of us wore mixed uniforms and spats for warmth--our hands and faces were grimy and unshaven due to the devastation of the wash room water supply. Our eyes were like splotches of India ink from loss of slumber. I thought I looked like a very bedraggled Nazi prisoner of war just fresh from the Russian campaign.

With the double-cool of evening approaching I went in search of more clothes, towels, or what-not for protection.

At midnight after 54 hours of taveling we alighted from the coach into the wilds of Sioux Falls. It was the coldest weather this writer has ever seen.

Two hours were spent in the issuance of barracks and bedding.

The prospects of an Alaskan season looked pretty drastic but after so long a time I imagine the radio school and its Arctic climate will grow on me. When I do get accustomed to it the next trip will probably be to a hot Texas gunneray school but who am I to be nable to change climates readily?

With that thought in mind I pulled the covers over my head, fell asleep before the bed warmed, and dreamed that I was Wendell Willkie touring Russia.

[The News-Sentinel, Thursday, January 13, 1944]

### SIXTH LETTER FROM MICHAEL ZARTMAN

Michael Zartman  
New Guinea  
Dec. 28, 1943

Dear Mr. Wynn:

Just received your long looked for and much appreciated letter. So glad to hear from you again.

Well Friend this old Year of 1943 is about finished. I'm sincerely hoping we can finish this thing in this next New Year of "44". We have done considerably well in the past year and hope to accomplish much more this next year to bring this dreadful, cruel war to a close for good.

I really appreciate your kindness of visiting my dear Mother and Father so often. Thank you, Mr. Wynn.

I'm certainly looking forward to getting home and having that nice, long talk with you. I'm hoping you had a very Merry Xmas and I'm wishing you a very prosperous New Year.

I haven't heard from Pete for three months now. Don't know what the trouble is. I'm a bit worried. He is still in Hawaii though.

Well Friend, your kind letters will lift my spirits and make me feel considerably better so write when you can. I will be very grateful.

Time is growing short and night is closing in, and as I want to write a few lines to Mr. Holtz I shall say goodnight now dear friend. Thanks for writing. Take care of yourself.

Your sincere friend,  
Michael Zartman

## SvcMen WW II Letters

The News-Sentinel, Friday, January 14, 1944]

### LETTER FROM WOODROW RYNEARSON

Woody Rynearson

Jan. 8, 1944

Editor of News-Sentinel:

Will try and write a few lines to you to describe the place here in Florida where I am training. We are quartered in the Ft. Lauderdale Hotel which is one of the finest hotels of the South. We are about one hundred feet from the water's edge. Everything here is in full color and fruit at the market stages. The buildings are all Spanish type and painted white, surrounded by beautiful palms and pine trees. Sure is a beautiful picture to see at this time of year. We have swimming in the Atlantic every day and the water and beach are really swell. The weather here is like mid-summer and is so much different from what we have back there at home. Will be here in school for the next four months so will miss all the cold you will probably have up there. Too bad we could not all enjoy these fine days here in Florida.

Hope to hear from all my friends back home. My new address will be as follows

Woodrow Rynearson, F 2/C

C.-6-44, N.T.S. Fire Controlman

Lauderdale Beach Hotel

Fort Lauderdale, Florida

The News-Sentinel, Friday, January 14, 1944]

### FIFTH LETTER FROM LOUIS D. BALL

Louis Ball

Christmas Letter Home

Somewhere in New Guinea

Christmas Eve

Dear Mother, Sis and All:

Here it is Christmas Eve once again. Seems like I'm, getting farther away from home each Christmas, but if everything goes well I'll be home by next Christmas. I don't know how, why, when or what shape, but I intend to be there some way.

As I look out into the space I complete a picture in my mind of what you and most everybody are doing this Christmas Eve. Almost everyone likes to sit up until Christmas Day has arrived--some placing gifts around the tree for the tots to open in the morning.

A few out to different spots celebrating, what? I doubt if any of them know. To them it just comes natural. But--a lot of people are trying to forget the sadness that has been forced into their hearts. Too many of them it will stay with them forever, always hoping and praying that some day they will get the surprise they are looking forward for.

Tonight many of the people are sitting around talking about their loved ones in service and wondering what they are doing and what kind of Christmas they will have this year.

I will try to tell you so you can see for yourself that no matter how far we get away from home, we never forget any traditions. Right now I can hear the sound of voices from our neighbors singing carols. Yes, we sang them too.

It is impossible for us to have snow, a tree and exchange gifts, but in our hearts are the memories of the happy Christmases that have passed and are hoping to regain that happiness soon again. We can look forward to receiving the gifts our loved ones have been kind enough to send us.

The mail situation here isn't what it is in the States. So many of us will not get our gifts until after the holidays are passed, but this makes no difference for we know they have the spirit back home and it is our place to keep it up over here.

## SvcMen WW II Letters

I know you are wondering if I received mine yet and the answer is, no. Except for Pauline's and Aunt Zoo's, there is no hurry, I can wait.

We are all looking forward to tomorrow's dinner, besides Thanksgiving, we will have nothing but the best, turkey and everything that goes with it. Eat, drink and be merry. That's what we will all do, hoping we will all be home for the next Christmas.

If nothing interferes this time we will leave on our furlough Dec. 29th at last. There for a while we were wondering if we would get one or not. When I get back I think I will take another crack at combat flying. That is if I pass the physical examination I'll have to take.

I know you are wondering why I sent you this picture, the trees in the background are banana trees, the leaves are eight to ten feet long. I sent Aunt Evelyn a different one so the two of you can exchange them.

Now that everything is over I think it is only right that I tell you about my jump. I never explained it thoroughly as I thought you might worry. After all, all I got out of it was a broken rib. I had acquired a sick feeling on the mission so when we had it completed and was out of danger of Zeros, I plugged in my electric suit by a waist window and fell asleep. What a time to get sick!

All of a sudden someone was awakening me. I jumped up, they said get on interphones. I thought the pilot wanted to talk to me, so put the earphones on only to hear nothing. I saw that Hunt and Fitz were putting on their chutes and never realized what was going on until I looked out the waist windows, still dazed I noticed we would fly through a cloud and have to make a sharp turn to keep from hitting the side of a mountain.

Then in a flash it came to me. None of the engines were running. Now don't get any false impressions, but I put on my harness, fastened my chute and beat the radio operator, who was ready to go, to the catwalk in the bomb bay.

There were seven of us on the catwalk. No room for any more. I turned around to tell the radio operator who had his foot in my face, no more room, when I looked around the other six were gone.

Then I realized I would have to jump as I knew it was far more dangerous to ride the plane down. I didn't waste any time. We were almost 11,000 feet above sea level, but only 800 from the ground, with my right hand on the ring I waved goodbye to Fitz and Freeman and jumped. I didn't have time to count. I doubt whether I could even speak. After clearing the plane I pulled the ring or thought I did but instead my hand had slipped off the ring. I reached out with my left hand, grasped my right one, replaced it on the ring and with both hands I gave a big pull and push at the same time. I was going to make sure it didn't slip off again. It was a good thing too, for I was but a few feet from the treetops when my chute blossomed out. I was only in my parachute floating earthward but a few seconds, so I can say I didn't think of anything much but getting my chute to open.

The boys say there isn't much to it, that it was fun going down until they got stuck in the treetops and had to climb out any wher from 100 to 150 feet high.

I guess now that it's over we get a lot of laughs whenever we tell about it. We all hated the walk back. The next time I jump I want it to be right over Home and I want to do it on my accord. No more of this have to suff. I HOPE!

So you see I had more than one close shave, that is as near death as I've ever been, I can say I don't very well care for it.

Well, I want to write Aunt Evelyn yet, so will close until the next time. Give my best regards to everyone and tell them I said hello. Hoping to hear from you soon,

Louis Ball

[The News-Sentinel, Saturday, January 15, 1944]

LETTER FROM BILL HARTMAN

S/Sgt. Bill Hartman

[Staff Sergeant Bill Hartman has written a Rochester friend the following:

I was surely glad to hear from you although your letter never caught me in the States but was one of the first I received after arriving on this side. I also received your Christmas card the same day. I had a nice trip coming across. Much to my surprise I did not get sea sick. I saw some jell

## SvcMen WW II Letters

fishes, porpoises and sharks, otherwise there was not much to see except water, and there certainly was plenty of that. It felt good to plant my feet on good old mother earth again even though it was foreign and I do not think I'd make a good sailor. It might be OK for a few days but not for all the time. I do miss San Antonio, Texas, it was a soldier's paradise there. In fact, once you get in a God forsaken place like we are in just now, then you begin to miss a lot of things the good old United States of America has to offer. It takes things like this to make a person appreciate things that life has to offer in the States.

When I get back in the States after I finish my job over here, we will have a lot to talk over and I guess I will be a veteran then like you are. This is some country here, I must say, although some parts of it are a panorama of beauty, but other parts, to put it plainly, stinks. The people are mostly Arabs. I've been to town once, just on a sight seeing tour. I spent most of my time at the Red Cross, the only place you can enjoy yourself around here, unless, perhaps you can speak the lingo of these people. I guess my subscription to the News-Sentinel has run out. I must write and have it renewed, so I can keep up with the news of dear old Rochester. I am presuming that you are having real winter back there now. I think we have played along with these Nazi long enough and hope that we fellows can finish them off this year so we can be back home and have next Christmas dinner there.

[Bill Hartman]

[The News-Sentinel, Monday, January 17, 1944]

### LETTER FROM BILL BIDDINGER

Cpl. Bill Biddinger

Dec. 27, 1943

China-Burma-India Theater

Dear Folks:

I'm in extremely good humor today so is most everybody else around here. Mail came in today for the first time in several days and we all were prett lucky. I got a Christmas parcel from you postmarked Sept. 30. It arrived in A-1 shape. It certainly ws a very nice package. Not only did I think so, but all the rest of the boys said so too. In it was a can of delicious nuts, they were very fresh yet. A box of fudge in good shape. A toothbrush which I needed. I brought my old one from Bangor and it was getting pretty dilapidated. Chewing gum which is almost non-existent here. This fountain pen with which I'm writing and of course, you know I needed it. Socks, which always come in handy. I was down to my last two pairs and turned in a shortage to supply a few days ago, but no telling how long it will be before they come. A package of razor blades, towels and wash cloths and V-Mail. You certainly did a very good job of guessing what I needed. Probably better than I could have done myself. Thanks a million.

After I received five Sentinelsd, a greeting card from Uncle Clydes, a letter from Posey, one from Betty of Nov. 27, and Willodean's of Dec. 1. Before I answer the letters I'll elaborate on my Christmas.

There are (censored) of us in Bn. Hqs. We live and work together so had our little Christmas party together. We decided that everybody should get at leaseone gift by Christmas time, so each person wrapped up a present and gave them all to one person. I gave a deck of unused Red Cross playing cards. Well, it came evening and we gathered out around our campfire and began the evening by singing "Jingle Bells." Then what-ta ya know, hes even out here, Santa Claus came stomping out of the forest, accompanied by the cheers of "Here comes Santy." He was played by Mobilia, a boy from Massachusetts. He is a very even tempered boy and we have a lot of fun with him. He wore a beard made from rope and made a very good looking Santa. Well, after he had come, each man picked his present from the grab-bag and opened it in front of the fire, and read the reading put in it in the presence of everybody else. This was a lot of fun. I got a cake of shaving soap. After this we had a little impromptu act by two of our gang. It was very funny even though they madeit up as they went along. After this we sat ground and sang songs and Christmas carols as everybody else was doing around teir fires throughout the forest. It sounded pretty good. At 10:30 wehad Protestant services in the mess hall which even has a Christmas tree made from

## SvcMen WW II Letters

wild ferns and was decorated with other kinds of green twigs and candles. The Catholics had their mass at midnight after which we had a midnight snack and went to bed. On Christmas day we came to work at 7:30 and Lt. Helton told us to take the day off and go back to bed. However, I spent most of the day washing clothes and bathing in the creek. We had our Christmas dinner in the evening and for once I found the bottom of my stomach. He had pineapple juice, turkey, green beans, peas, mashed potatoes, sweet potatoes, cranberry sauce, chocolate cake, biscuits, bread, coffee and hard candy. I had to wait awhile before I could finish my last half piece of cake. And that about describes my Christmas in a foreign land. It wasn't at all bad. In fact, I really enjoyed it.

I'll send this letter now and answer your letters in my next letter.

Love,

Bill

[The News-Sentinel, Monday, January 17, 1944]

### SIOUX FALLS FLASHES, SPLASHES

By Robert (Beezer) Bennett

(Sioux Falls Army Airfield, S.D.)

So it was off to the U.S.O. Dance! Ho! Ho! Big times at the Service Club with the U.S.O. girls! Ho! Ho!

Pardon the nauseating introduction, readers, but that was the way I think I felt a few nights back when I plunged into my great coat and battled the storms for an evening's rhythmic trodding on female toes.

My before-the-dance conception of the event is always so much more entertaining than the actual thing! I inevitably picture myself entering the ballroom amidst swoons and sighs from the ladies--then I dream that as I stand placidly in the doorway surveying the gaily-dressed group (looking like a cross between Tyrone Power and General "Ike" Eisenhower) the band plays some anthem and everyone cheers as the girls mob for my Quixotic attentions.

Where this fantasy originated I shall never remember, but it always pops up as I am preparing for a dance.

This first Northern Army dance that I was to attend carried the same visions. As I had not tripped the light you-know-what except with Southern Belles for many moons, I felt that the Yankee daughters would somehow fulfill my meditation.

Then I went to the afore-mentioned U.S.O. dance.

As I entered the cloak room I was dimly amazed to see almost no swooning and only one girl threw herself at me--almost knocking me down in her hurry to get to the coke machine. However, I decided that my entrance into the ballroom would be more like the dream so I hung my coat in the entry, arranged my hair, straightened my tie, and tugged at my uniform until the mirror reflected me looking quite soldierly.

Then I entered.

Oh well, I thought, maybe they are too busy to notice my charms right now. So I noticed their's.

There were a few couples jittering to the recordings of Harry James but the evening was still young and most of the girls were just descending the Service Club stairs from the powder room. The wolves, I mean fellow-soldiers, were leering from various places about the dance floor so I (much against my will, of course) joined them in their leering and drooling.

The girls were from Sioux Falls. They were big and short and tall and fat and squatty and skinny. They were glamorous and the usual. They were, it is to be said for sure, girls.

After they had all reached the dance floor safely, convoyed by matronly chaperones, we lunged!!!

I found myself dancing with an enchanting chick who had three sons.

I believe she said in the Civil War!

We tore about the floor at a snail's pace for one number and then she complained of her neuritis so I let her carry me back to the stag line and she joined a less torrid bridge game.

## SvcMen WW II Letters

After ogling for about five minutes, I cut in on a couple. The girl I was dancing with then was much younger. She had just graduated from grade school and was the cuddly type I discovered. I have no objections to cuddling, but children with buck teeth and bi-focals will never receive my note for "Girl I'd like to be Lost in a Jeep With."

It wasn't long though before she had lured me from the spacious (like a broom closet) ballroom onto the drafty Service Club porch.

We sat on one of the divans (they get so dirty in winter) and as I weighed the uniform cleaning situation in my mind she giggled.

I've dated other girls with giggles but never one like her. It became boresome--just sitting there on a soot-covered divan listening to Alice in Wonderland giggle.

I finally ventured a toothy grin and commented on the cool climate (ten below zero to be exact). She giggled again.

Then suddenly she grew romantic--she gazed at the full moon and the snow covered plains and began reciting some poem which was similar to "Snowbound" but had a nursery character.

After she had finished her cultured comments on the tranquil place, she looked into my eyes and whispered softly, "Don't you think it's the most wonderful, most beautiful, most restful view in the whole world?"

"It would make a nice garbage dump," I replied sweetly--then I giggled.

Since that evening I have retired to the barracks and devoted my life to mending broken cloisonne dishes. I will never dance or speak to a female again . . . for at least a week!

Ho! Ho! Big times at the Service Club with the U.S.O. girls! Ho! Ho!

[The News-Sentinel, Thursday, January 20, 1944]

### SECOND LETTER FROM CHARLES C. COFFMAN

[Editor's Note: Charles Coffman, stationed somewhere in England, wrote the following letter to Mayor O. I. Minter]

I know you will be pleased to hear from me. At last I am again in foreign service. I'm somewhere in England. I like it fine here. Later on I shall write you a letter in detail about my impression of England.

On Christmas day I was terribly seasick. I thought I'd die. On New Year's eve I sang "Auld Lang Syne" with the blackout shades drawn, but I wasn't depressed. I was very gay. All of us were gay.

Everybody is so good to us here. The American Red Cross is wonderful to us. Yesterday while taking a shower, I was singing "On the Banks of the Wabash," and all the Indiana boys asked me for encores. I sang all of them from "Notre Dame's Victory March" to "I Can't Get Indiana Off My Mind." We aren't unhappy, sir, we just love the good old Hoosier state.

You'll hear from me again soon.

Cheerio

[The News-Sentinel, Wednesday, January 26, 1944]

### LETTER FROM HARRY HUNTER

(Editor's Note: Harry Hunter is stationed in the South Pacific. This is a letter received from him by Mayor O. I. Minter.)

Dear Capt.:

Had a little time so want to say hello to you and to Rochester. Hope that everyone is fine and helping all they can to get this thing over as soon as possible. I met Don Smiley today and was awful glad to see someone from home. I am also here with "Mac" Sherrard. He is in the Sea Bees here. We have it pretty nice here now under the circumstances. I haven't been here so long yet but I think I'm going to like it. That's the best way I see to look at it. Tell everyone I said hello and to keep them rolling and to keep their spirits up and we'll get this thing over and we can come back home and again be true citizens of Rochester.

Harry Hunter

[The News-Sentinel, Thursday, January 27, 1944]

## SvcMen WW II Letters

### FOURTH LETTER FROM FRED G. SHOBE

(Editor's Note: Fred Shobe expresses the feeling that the war will come to an end sometime in 1944 in this letter to the folks back home.)

Dear Friends, Mrs. Shobe and All:

Received your very nice Christmas card and note of November 11th and so glad to hear from you. By the way how is Mrs. Kiler? Is Maleta and son making their home with her? I received the very nice Christmas box from the congregation for which I am very thankful. It looks to us over here as though the end of this war will come in 1944. I am hoping to spend the next Christmas back with all the people whom I know and love.

Please give my new address to Rev. Schroer, and so I may be able to continue my work checking pictures, I would like for the Reverend to keep an eye open for a good used car for me. I have not heard from Geo. Deamer and family lately. Are they well? Give my best regards to all the congregation and tell them I am hoping to be able to join them soon.

Sincerely yours,

Fred Shobe

[The News-Sentinel, Thursday, January 27, 1944]

### LETTER CONCERNING JOE SLAYBAUGH

(Editor's Note: The following letter received recently by Mrs. Slaybaugh telling her about a visit the writer enjoyed with her son, Joe, who is now stationed in Australia.)

Canoona,  
Via Rockhampton  
Queensland, Australia  
Dec. 3rd, 1943

Dear Mrs:

We have had your son, Joe, with us for a few days and I offered to write to tell you how he is, and to have a chat about him.

He is very well, and enjoyed the cakes we were able to make for him, especially one for his birthday. There were three others with him, and my husband and son enjoyed games of cards with them. We had also some music and Joe liked that. His dry humor won all hearts, he is indeed a splendid type of young man and I hope we will see more of him. He told us of you and your big family and how lonely this cruel war has left you. I feel you should at least have Joe with you, he could be such a comfort. He loved to speak of his sisters and brothers, but best of all he loved to sit and talk about you and of the nice home you have and the comforts he has been able to buy for you. I've found most Americans good company and very appreciative, but Joe more so than most others. With him is Eddy of Hawaii and a fine man. Joe was hugging a fruit cake when he went off from our home. All too enjoyed swimming in our lagoon - "lake" - as they say.

We have a son in the R.A.A.F. now stationed in Edinburg (Scotland) and we have been most fortunate in receiving mail from him. I hope you are equally lucky in hearing from your boys. Our only other son is now released from the army to help work our country properties.

Upon looking over this I see I have not mentioned the cold milk the boys used to drink from our refrigerator. We milk our own cows and Joe would say "Boy! That milk is sure good!" It was indeed a great pleasure to have them all, but somehow I missed Joe, he was like our own boys, and lovable. Do please write and let me know if you receive this and I will pass the word on to Joe. It pleased him to think we would try to get in touch with you.

Our nearest township is Rockhampton--with a population of about 30 thousand in peace time. When this war is over--and please God that may soon be--I will tell you more about our surroundings. And also we hope to send a photo of our home and country. It is an attractive spot.

Our only daughter is married and living in Queensland's nicest climate near Toowoomba. At present we are having very hot weather, and had electric storms, causing much damage. Joe may have told you about it.



## SvcMen WW II Letters

We would very much like to have those lads with us for Xmas and hope it can be arranged. Roy enjoys chatting with the American boys and I guess 'tis the same with them.

I do not think there is much of interest in this letter, but I know you will like to hear of your boy.

Wishing you the compliments of the season and a safe return for your boys in 1944--I am

Yours sincerely,  
Carrie A. Geddes,  
Canoona  
Via Rockhampton  
Queensland, Australia

[The News-Sentinel, Thursday, January 27, 1944]

### LETTER FROM JACK MORRIS

(Akron boy lands plane in Bolivian revolution. Jack Morris, son of well known stockman and former county Commissioner, sees revolt)

Christmas Eve, '43  
Shellmeri, Equador

Dear Family:

Here it is, the night before Christmas and the temperature here today was nearly 120. The last I wrote you I was in Santiago . . . on the way to Peru we landed in the middle of a revolution in Bolivia. I had been hoping that something like that would happen when I was here, by chance I was able to witness the whole thing. They didn't do anything to us, search the plane and refused to let us leave for a couple of days.

The interesting thing about the uprising was it reminded me of a gangster fight or the cowboy shows that I once saw in the states. As I wrote before, the Lapaz airport is 13,500 feet high and the city is about 1,000 feet below in a valley. The revolutionists had four cannons of the 18th century vintage on the brim of the cliff next to the airport and overlooking the city. The main fight took place outside the president's palace with one regiment fighting on the president's side and the other with the new government. Other participants would walk down the street with a gun, and if he would see one of the opposing party men, they would fight until one finished the other . . . the one who won would then automatically become a hero, for people would rush from the stores and houses and loudly cheer him.

After the fighting was over . . . two days, more or less . . . the revolutionists took all the army officers over a major's rank to small towns in the mountains and jungles of Bolivia and dumped them. Without money and the lack of transportation system, it will be months for them to return to civilization.

This place that I am now stationed is about 100 miles from the equator and southeast of Quito. It is nothing more than a mining camp in the jungles, but we have a nice place to stay in. Since I wasn't married they picked me for this job of carrying machinery for the oil company farther into the jungle. The flights are only 20 minutes long, but it takes over a week to walk the distance and is impossible for a burro to traverse the distance because of the deep valleys between the two points.

I am stationed here for six months with another pilot, a radio operator, and a mechanic. We will be in Quito about half the time, however, since it is only about an hour's flight and we have to have supplies about every other day for it spoils in this climate quickly. We will have to stay here Christmas but I think that we will be able to go to Quito for New Years. The company sent us a quart of champagne apiece, so we are going to celebrate Christmas in style tomorrow. Very nice of them wasn't it? This is going to be a hell of a Christmas . . . a million miles from home, no show, and friends scattered all over the world. Akron would really look good tonight.

I haven't received any mail for a month. It is here in S.A. some place, but by the time it gets to Santiago, B. Aires from Lima, I am some place else. It should be in Quito shortly. Do you remember the S. American fellows that I took flight training with at Roscoe Turners? I met two of them in Quito and another in B. Aires. I imagine that Christmas in the states is very different this

## SvcMen WW II Letters

year too, but I hope that you all have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year . . . I'll be thinking about you. Wish the same to all the gang for me. There is a plane passing through here on the way to Peru, so I am giving them the letter to mail for me. What is new from home? I haven't seen a paper for a month. Write soon. My address is the same for awhile.

Jack

[The News-Sentinel, Friday, January 28, 1944]

### SIOUX FALLS FLASHES, SPLASHES

By Robert (Beezer) Bennett  
(Sioux Falls Army Airfield, S.D.)

Thur. Note

9:30, Jan. 24th

Dear Uncle Tony:

I didn't write a column this week but my excuse is A-1 as my excuses usually are (to me) and as usual my excuse is better reading material than the column would have been.

Anyway, I'm hospitalized! It all happened quickly and I'm not just positive as to why I'm in ward A-13, surgery, tonite, but I'll try to alucedate (I think that is spelled wrong but my Webster is still in the barracks so forgive me.)

Tuesday, I felt terribly ill. Tuesday night, while in bed, I became sick, delirious, etc. Wednesday a.m. I went on sick call demanding I had the flu. The sick call veterinarian informed me he thought I had appendicits and shipped me (dirty fatigues and all) to this hospital. A major, a captain and two lieutenants had consultation over my right side at the belt line and didn't give a damn that I thought I was a flu victim. They buzzed me to a private room, private bath, with shower (from whence I scribble--lights are out.) And held more consultations (with manyu jabs and pokes at my solar plexis) today. Now they don't seem to deem an operation necessary and have condescended to keep me here till my flu (I told them so) goes away--taking with it my 102 degrees of temperature.

Now you know--I may live, but should I not, give my obituary about half as much space as Rochester winning the state in basketball. I was born on Hitler' birthday--1925, etc.

Faithfully,  
The Beezer

[The News-Sentinel, Tuesday, February 1, 1944]

### SIOUX FALLS FLASHES, SPLASHES

By Robert (Beezer) Bennett  
(Sioux Falls Army Airfield, S.D.)

I glanced up from my job of Harvesting petunias and looked at Aunt Tillie who stood knee deep in mud before me.

"So you don't give a continental to hear about the appendectomy I had--almost--not quite?" I questioned.

"Very well," I went on, "Since you beg me so heartily I will tell you the morbid tale."

And this is the tale that I whispered in her shell-like ear trumpet one cold and humid January evening.

It all began on a chilly Tuesday night (EVERY Tuesday night is cold in South Dakota, Uncle Andrew) last week.

We had begun radio school two weeks before and were on the 3:00 in the afternoon to 11:00 in the night shift. I had finished classes for the day, had brushed my teeth and encased them in a water glass beside my bunk, and was almost in the arms of Morpheus when it began.

An excruciating pain tore through my 152.7 lbs., my head ached and throbbed like a Chris Craft motor, and I realized I was a late victim of the dread American winter sport--influenza. (Pronounced grippe by F.D.R.'s doctors, should any of them be reading this misprinted misprint.)

## SvcMen WW II Letters

The next day my fragile energies carried me to the camp dispensary and "sick call." May it be said here and now that all cartoonists and jokesters should making light [sic] of the Army "sick call"--they are not doing it justice due to censorship on comics.

At "sick call" I was rushed to the hospital--but not for my influenza. For my appendicitis!.

At the hospital I was given a private room, a liquid diet, and a list of hospital rules describing the best methods for a boresome death--i.e. no smoking in bed, shooting of craps, climbing out of windows, etc.

Four of the Medical Corps' esteemed officers held a two-day consultation over my sheet-covered carcass. During their recesses my temperature was taken 17 times by three doctors, six nurses and four ward boys. I had eight blood counts taken and with my liquid meals, I swallowed some two gallons of white capsules.

On the third day of the medical convention over my lowly body, the decision was announced.

I have lobar-pneumonia!

Now I lie in my oxygen tent on the seventh day of my recuperation and dream of strawberries in the snow. The more I think about it the more I feel that this pneumonia is another error. I think I have influenza!

(P.S. Aunt Tillie, I really don't have an oxygen tent but wouldn't it be cozy?)

[The News-Sentinel, Thursday, February 3, 1944]

### LETTER FROM GENE THOMPSON

Feb. 1, 1944

Aberdeen Proving Ground,

Maryland

Dear Editor:

I feel that I have gained some information about the American Red Cross that might be of interest to the readers of The News-Sentinel. When I was in Rochester, I knew very little of what the Red Cross actually does. Of course, I knew that they helped in floods, rolled bandages for our overseas troops but it all seemed rather vague to me.

At present I am confined to a hospital at Aberdeen Proving Grounds, Maryland and I have really been contacted by the Red Cross during my two weeks here.

I think everyone knows how slow time goes while one is confined to the hospital, even when one has many visits from the ones we love. Here in the Army it is even worse, we don't have any visitors at all, we don't know any one, thus lonesomeness and home sickness really sets in.

That is where the Red Cross steps in. Every day a Red Cross worker comes around to see every boy, they talk to him and go to the Post Exchange and buy anything that the patient wishes. This really cheers one up, also it is the only way for the boys to get cigarettes, candy bars, soap and the many things that the patient wants while confined to his bed. This really helps, I know.

As most people know, an Army hospital keeps their patients until they have partly recovered their strength. This means that one can be out of bed during the day and early evening. This is the period when boredom sets in the worst.

The Red Cross really have an answer for this too. They maintain a building connected to the hospital that is for the recreation of the boys that are out of bed. They have a reading room which is equipped with many good books and all the latest periodicals.

They have another room called the putter shop where the boys can follow their hobbies--model building, carving, drawing and sketching, and many other things.

Also they have a big room, about the size of the Rochester gym. In this room they have some entertainment every afternoon and evening.

Usually the afternoons are used for ping pong, checkers, cards and many other games. The evenings are usually filled by large group entertainment. To be more specific, last night they had a bingo party with lots of prizes. Three or four nights a week they have movies. Some of their movies are old, others are very recent. All this really helps we boys here in the hospital, none of us here realized how complete the Red Cross was. Now we have seen one phase of Red Cross work and we have plenty of confidence in the Red Cross when we get over there.

## SvcMen WW II Letters

I hope this has helped you to see some of the things that the Red Cross does for the service men, maybe it will help you to see more clearly to give to the Red Cross the next time they put on a drive at least I hope so.

Sincerely,  
Pvt. Gene Thompson

[The News-Sentinel, Saturday, February 5, 1944]

### LETTER FROM RALPH KREAMER

[Pfc. Ralph Kreamer, U.S.M.C., wrote the following letter to his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Harry Kreamer, Union township, describing the battle of Tarawa, in which he had taken part.]

December 7, 1943

Dearest Folks:

I thought I had better write you and let you know I am still alive. I hope you folks are as well as I am, for I feel fine. I suppose you folks have your corn out by now, at least here is hoping you have. For it has been so long since I got a letter from home. I have been on four different ships since I left the states, so you know I have been getting around. I think I have been all over the Pacific Ocean. I am getting so tired riding around on ships I don't know what to do, as long as we are on ship we don't get any mail. I suppose you folks are getting ready for Christmas by now. I sure wish I could get home for Christmas, but I don't suppose I will get home until after the war is over. Here is hoping that the war will be over soon.

#### Killed Several Japs

Well, you can say your son got some Japs to his credit now, for I killed one Jap with a hand grenade. I don't know how many I shot, but it was a few. My division was almost all killed, I was lucky and didn't even get a scratch, just some powder burns. So I feel real lucky. I never in my life was so scared as when we started in to this island for the Japs were shooting so many shells at us, it wasn't fun. I think I aged ten years then. If a man ever prayed any he did then.

The name of the island we took is Tarawa, it is one of the Gilbert Islands. There were four thousand Japs on the island. The size of the island was about two miles long and a half mile wide. The Japs had been on that island about two years, they had pill boxes that the bombs from our planes wouldn't even move, so you know they were dug in. I dug a fox hole on the island to sleep in at night and just above me was a Jap pill box which had a Jap in it, but we didn't know he was there for three days, so you know we had a hard time taking the island. They say we lost more men taking this island than any time yet.

I am sending some Jap money in this letter, so you could see what Jap money looks like. I never want to see another battle, for you see sights you will never forget as long as you live. Well, I could talk all day about that battle, but I will tell you all about it when I get home as I was on the front line.

There is no place like the good old U.S.A. Well, I wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Well, I am on the ship again to an island to give us a rest. I have run out, sountil next time,

Your beloved son,  
Ralph

[The News-Sentinel, Tuesday, February 8, 1944]

### SIXTH LETTER FROM ALBERT SWANSON

(The following is a letter from Albert Swanson, who will soon have been overseas two years. First in Australia and now in the Southwest Pacific.)

Southwest Pacific

Dear Mom:

## SvcMen WW II Letters

I received your letter two days ago but just found time to answer it. Sure was glad to hear from you. I also got a letter from Anna Forrest and packages from Lutheran Ladies Aid the same day. I wrote the Ladies a V-letter thanking them. Hope they get it. If not you can tell them yourself.

I am not going to take the furlough, so I will send a little more money home than I have been. Did you get the \$90 I sent home this month? You never said how much money you have received from me so I will tell you again just what I sent. In 1942 I sent \$15 for eight months, in 1943 I sent three bonds and one \$20 and \$50 for five months and Dec. \$90. So let me know if you got it all. I will send at least \$100 this month.

Mom there is a good chance for me to get to come home this year, but don't look for me until you see me, for anything can happen now days.

They say that they are going to try to release the guys in the Southwest Pacific after they have been 18 months overseas. But I got to see it first before I believe it.

Well this is all I can think of to say. I am doing the same things and in the same place and am O.K. and feeling fine.

Answer soon.

Your son,  
Al Swanson

[The News-Sentinel, Tuesday, February 8, 1944]

### LETTER FROM JOHN H. SHAW

(To Mr. and Mrs. T. G. Shaw, his folks)

Sgt. John H. Shaw

Dear Mother and Dad and Kids:

I've got some awful bad news so take it on the chin, and don't worry because it isn't nothing to worry about. I'm not coming home for 13 weeks or more. I'm in the hospital with a broken wrist. It happened to be my right wrist. I guess I'll be here for 6 or 7 weeks, and then I'll have to take about half or more of my basic training over. They got my wrist in a plaster cast and you ought to see me try to wash. It's funny, really it is. It kind of hurts though. They got me under ether to set it and put a cast on it. You see, I broke it about 9:30 Saturday morning and it was about 5:00 Saturday afternoon before they set it for me. So I suffered for a little while. But boy, they treat you like a king in this place. I got a little room all my own. They carry my meals to me, and a WAC comes in and talks to me. Boy what fun. I'm happy and well. The meals they feed me are wonderful. Say, did I tell you I almost got run over by a tank? We was practicing shooting at tanks, I was on one knee and the tank started my way. Well, I was aiming at him and supposed he'd turn away from me but he kept on coming, and I kept on aiming but at the last minute I turned a somersault backwards or I'd been a goner. That's the way the stuff happens down here. I also crawled under real machine gun fire for 75 yards. Please tell the folks, if they don't think it is a job, for them to try it some time. You can go ahead and send the boxes over. I got grandma's O.K. Well, I guess I better sign off for now so take it easy, and don't worry. All I got to do is lay around. So don't worry. I'm okay and in one piece and I intend to stay that way. Excuse this writing. From the looks of it, you'd think it was my left one I broke.

So long,  
(Love) Your son,  
Pvt. John H. Shaw, 35895874  
Station Hospital Ward H-3  
Camp Blanding, Florida

[The News-Sentinel, Monday, February 14, 1944]

## SvcMen WW II Letters

### SIOUX FALLS FLASHES, SPLASHES

By Robert (Beezer) Bennett  
(Sioux Falls Army Airfield, S.D.)

A week ago I was thrown bodily from the camp hospital after my recent bout with some germs. It vexed me to leave the luxurious sleep at the medical haven but I returned to Army life, radio school, and the weather element with malice toward none (except sergeants, of course).

The weather element . . . Um-m-m. Shall we talk about the weather? During this past recuperating week the weather has been the chief topic on the G.I. bull session list.

At the first of the week the mercury dropped slowly and the Sioux Falls daily reported a pending blizzard. We assistants of General Arnold just smiled and knew that it couldn't get much breezier than it had been these past weeks. The next time you see me remind me NOT to smile at weather forecasts.

On Wednesday the battle of Sioux Falls began! Snow started falling, wind started winding, and thermometers began getting out their "longies" and overshoes. (So did we!)

By Thursday morning at reveille (Did you ever freeze to death at 4:45 a.m.?) (I did once) the cold was impossible. The temperature was 20 degrees below and the three barracks stoves huddled together for warmth.

On Friday snow was drifted waist deep in places and travel was pretty tough in this section of the state the news-sheets stated. (Believe me, I didn't travel any place except to chow, school and to bed.) The centigrades and fahrenheites collaborated on 25 degrees below zero and I adjusted my ear muffs as I tried to remember those suffocating days in Texas last summer.

During this bitter fanfaronade (there is too such a word!) the G.I. daily ritual went on as usual. We are on the day shift in radio school now so from 7:00 each morning until 4:00 each p.m. we study the dit-dahs of Morse code, the mechanics of Marconi's invention, and devote one hour to physical training. In the evenings we lounge about the barracks listening to "Marcy Doats and Dozy Doats" (followed by a brief bit of head-hitting against the barracks wall) or reading and writing letters. With the exception of our appearance being enhanced with more and warmer clothes, the bluster had not too much effect on routine.

Today the sun has shone through and all is well with the world. The temperature is on the up-trend and Sioux Falls is having normal winter weather again. Such is life!

Not to change the subject, folks, but I read that the WACs are having a bit of trouble getting enlistments, and being an eager beaver for putting in my two cents, I'd like a word or two with you about the WACs.

Some of the instructors in radio school are WACs and they are doing a fine job. This is the first time in my military career that I've come in contact with any of the women who are giving their services to release a G.I. guy, and frankly I'm one to give three cheers for the WACs and what they are doing at this post.

The girls are business-like and very much like civilian teachers while instructing us in code or mechanics. They are not in the Army for a "good time" as some narrow minded rumorists would have us think. They are doing their job.

Naturally there are a few WACs who over-step the line, but there are a few soldiers, sailors, marines, and even civilians, who not only step over the line but leap over it! I think that the WAC should not be looked upon with anything but pride by civilians because the soldiers are pretty proud of an American girl who gives up a life in easier, big-paying job to help us with the war.

If you are interested in enlisting in the Women's Army Corps, add this guy's opinion to the situation, ladies, go ahead--enlist! The Army does need you.

[The News-Sentinel, Wednesday, February 16, 1944]

LETTER FROM BILL DAGGY

Dear Mr. Rankin:

I received your Christmas greeting just a few minutes ago. Since I have just a few spare minutes before taps I'll try to get this finished before lights out. Spare time is quite a novelty, believe me.

## SvcMen WW II Letters

No, I haven't been in action yet, but I imagine that before I get back it will come. I've been out here for quite sometime and have seen some very strange customs. To be exact, I have 18 months out of the U.S.A. on the middle of this month. That's quite some time to be away from civilization and all of those modern conveniences. It makes a fellow appreciate such things very much more than ever before. We have improvised many different conveniences out of many strange things to some people. A glass jar with a slot cut in a tin lid and a fiber belt can make a very good lamp when you don't have a lantern. In fact, it gives more light but its flame is very unsteady. A steel helmet can serve as a washpan but a five gallon sugar can cut down to the desired size is much better. Also a 50 gallon gas drum with a milk can with fine holes in the bottom placed under the small bung makes a good home-made shower. Of course a rack must be constructed first so the can is above you when showering.

It rains quite a bit in the tropics. When we are out boondocking in the jungle it is nothing to get caught in a downpour and come back soaked to the skin. The rain makes this dirt turn into a most treacherous mud I have ever seen. You can hit the deck before you know what has happened. It is plenty difficult to wash off, also.

Speaking of the natives I have seen some strange customs. For instance, the goots, as we call the natives, think that octopus and snakes are strictly a first rate chow to them. You should see them smack their lips and roll their eyes when eating this delicacy in their fall.

Well, I believe that I had better secure now as I really have very little to write about. Censor regulations are very strict and that makes writing rather difficult.

I'd be glad to hear from you again if you find enough time to write.

I hope to get home soon and that is only natural of anyone regardless just how much or how little time he has spent away from U.S.A. If luck is with me I should be home by June 1944. I sure will be happy.

Sincerely,  
Bill Daggy

[The News-Sentinel, Tuesday, February 22, 1944]

### SIOUX FALLS FLASHES, SPLASHES

By Robert (Beezer) Bennett  
(Sioux Falls Army Airfield, S.D.)

Smile home front. About the G.I. who applied for O.C.S. and in three weeks found himself off the coast of Sicily.

Life's like that! I found a few smiles myself while indolently stirring around our air field.

Biggest ludicrous happening was the sudden nuptial knot tied by one of my barracks buddies. The guy (four beds from mine, New Yorker by habitat, wonderful gold brick) was married this week on his night off. The wedding was attended by most of us comrades and in itself was eventful. He had his wedding breakfast day to be with his bride, but had to return to the barracks on that night.

We were ready for him! His bunk was placed neatly in the barracks overhead beams. His clothes were clung from North to South and they were carefully hidden beneath each obscure object in the place. His footlocker was last seen being thrown into a snow drift outside!

The newly betrothed private made his entrance after "lights out" and I won't go so far as to say that he thought his distributed articles were funny. No, I won't say that! His language made me blush as I lay beneath the covers smothering snickers. All of us exploded with merriment when the newlywed tried to get his bed down from the rafters but some well aimed shoes from him sent us into stitches!

Now the whole affair is over and the happy private forgives us. (Wonder how he found his raincoat in the chimney?)

Speed is the ultimate ambition of the century. I personally have solved an army speed problem which should revolutionize early morning griping over "rolling out." Should my idea be patented I'll live "at ease" forever.

## SvcMen WW II Letters

Each morning heretofore I have needed sleep. (At night I don't need it but that's another story.) So with my system I have had to get up so fast that I have no time to think about needing slumber.

It's a mind over matter proposition and may become monotonous but I shall elucidate. We must be in radio school by 7:00 a.m. Until the present cold weather we had reveille at 4:45, breakfast at 5:30 and spent two hours griping about being drowsy. Now those two hours are eliminated-- I sleep through breakfast, rise ten minutes before school begins. I need not dress for I sleep in my fatigue suit. (Speed, more speed!) Quick like a rabbit I roll up my comforter (Never sleep under the blankets because too much time is required making the bed--speed!) And place the comforter on the foot of the bed. In haste I grab my coat (toothbrush and paste in pocket) in one hand, my books in the other and am in class by 7:00! During the first hour of school I am excused, go to the latrine and wash, brush my teeth, and comb my locks. Isn't it simple? In those ten minutes I am so busy that sleep is forgotten and when I can slow down enough to think of it I'm no longer sleepy!

[The News-Sentinel, Thursday, February 24, 1944]

### FOURTH LETTER FROM JAMES CLEMENS

{Mr. and Mrs. Oliver Clemens have received the following letter from their son, Pvt. James . Clemens, who is fighting somewhere in Italy.}

Jan. 29, 1944

Dear Folks:

This happened to be the first chance I had to write for several days so will write a few lines. I am still O.K. but had a few scares the last few days. Those artillery shells sure are terrible.

We have been having swell weather the past few weeks, have been pretty heavy fogs that last until about noon, and I should say the temperature runs about 30 or 40 degrees at night, and as high as 60 degrees in the daytime.

I have received several letters this week so I have to get busy and answer some of them but suppose I will not get them all written today.

For the past few days my buddy and I have been invited out for a spaghetti dinner by an Italian family. We most generally take some coffee and a few small items that we can spare and it makes a pretty good meal. They always serve wine. They sure like their wine with their meals. This fellow says Americans are swell people. We have a hard time telling them what we want, but always make out some way.

I just don't understand how these Italian children live, their clothes are so ragged and very few have shoes. I have good heavy shoes and overshoes and still my feet get chilly in the mornings. These kids will do anything for you just to get something to eat. I sure feel sorry for them.

Well, we just had mail call and got several letters, got three from you folks.

We sure have been having good eats the last few days. We are issued ten in ones. They include bacon, crackers, cereal, cheese, green beans, peas, jam, butter, fruit, cocolate bar, etc., all we have to do is build a fire and warm it up.

Does Dad still listen to Gabriel Heatter and what does he say about the war situation? Tell Dad I think of him every night about that time.

Well I didn't get this letter finished yesterday so will try and finish it this morning. I was invited out to another spaghetti supper last night. It sure was good. I ate so much that I was in misery all night. Ha! Ha! I know I shouldn't make such a pig of myself, but it is something new, and tastes so good.

I just heard a good one that a civilian told me. He is saving is pennies and nickles and has \$40 saved up and he is going to America. He thinks he has enough saved up already and when we catch prisoners they fall in line with them so they can go to America.

Mom, just because my APO number was changed is no sign that I have been moved. I just think they changed it so we could get our mail a little sooner and won't get mixed up so bad.

I wish I could see my boys, Sammy and Bobby. I have them on my mind a lot.



## SvcMen WW II Letters

It sure is another swell day. The people here told me that the winter will end the last of this month.

Mom, I think when I get home again I will appreciate a home and a bed so much that I will never want to leave it. I suppose the first few nights I sleep in a bed I won't be able to sleep because I will have to get used to it after sleeping on the hard ground several months.

Well, I am rinning out of news and words so I suppose I had better close. Take good care of Sammy and tell him to be a good boy. Hope to see you soon.

Love,

Jim

[The News-Sentinel, Tuesday, February 29, 1944]

### THIRD LETTER FROM MELVIN D. SHRIVER

Editor, News-Sentinel:

This is a letter I received from my brother. As he has many friends around here I know it would be of interest to them, so I am sending it to be put in the paper. He arrived at the hospital Feb. 14.

Thank you,

Mrs. George Kotterman

Route 1, Akron

Feb. 21, 1944

Dear Sister:

Just a line to let you know I got your letter, the one you wrote the 18th, and I also got the money last Saturday. As I have nothing to do I will try to answer. Well, sis, I am still in the hospital and I don't know how much longer I'll be here, but I hope not much longer. It sure seems nice to be back in the U.S.A. even if I am in the hospital. One nicething, ou can write without everybody else reading your mail.

I suppose you still live on te old Rowe place. Are you going to farm another year or not?

In your letter you were telling about BillH. being in the hospital, do ou havehis address? If you do send it to me.

I wasin 11 different hospitals in Italy, Sicily and Africa, and this the the 12th, not doing bad, is it? I was plenty sick when I came to the hospital. I was on the battlefield when I got sick. I went through eight major battles without a scratch. Lucky me, and I do mean lucky, for we sure went through hell, and I do mean hell.

Now that I'm back in the U.S. I can tell ou what I had, malaria fever and pneumonia, both at the same time. I had three blood tranfusions and it affected my hart, but it's coming along fine now. I feel as good as ever, but I still can't go out and work or anything like that.

I hope you canread this, I am so nervous I can hardly write, but maybe you can make it out.

When I get home on furlough I can tell you a lot I can't tell in a letter. The pictres you sent me were very nice.

When I first came her to this hospital it was the first bed I've been in for 8 months and it sure seemed nice although I was outthe first three days. I went to the hospital on Oct. 15 so I sepnt my birthday in the hospital. I also spent 22 months overseas. They had me in a private room, a cupup and a nurse all to myself.

Tell Chester I will be seeing him before long and I have something for him. Well, as it's about time for chow, I'll ring off for now.

Love, always

Pfc. Melvin Shriver,

Moore General Hospital,

Swannanna, N.C.,

Ward 424

[The News-Sentinel, Thursday, March 2, 1944]

## SvcMen WW II Letters

### SECOND LETTER FROM CARL D. HEDGES

Dear Capt. Minter:

I am writing you from the world's largest island "New Guinea," 94,000 square miles of dense jungle and mountain. Cocoanus, pineapples and bananas are even more plentiful than dogs are in Rochester.

It's raining tonight and we are sure thankful for that, for when it gets hot here it stays that way for days and weeks. If you look up your history you will find that the hottest it ever got here was 185 degrees. Of course not over 90 or 100 now for this is winter here. In March we will have a little nicer weather we hope.

Plenty of Nips on the island but there is a 20 to 1 chance they won't be here long. We get the U.S.A. almost every day and can sometimes get our favorite programs. Everything is fine here and I'm hoping it is with you and all of Rochester's good people. Write soon as we like to hear from home.

Your friend,  
Carl D. Hedges

[The News-Sentinel, Thursday, March 2, 1944]

### SIOUX FALLS FLASHES, SPLASHES

By Robert (Beezer) Bennett  
(Sioux Falls Army Airfield, S.D.)

My friend who happens to be a dog, Prince Shaggy Sinatra Robespierre, looked up from his concentration on Dick Tracy in the Sunday funnies, and spoke, "It's time for you to write that so-called laugh riot for The News-Sentinel."

I was lying in a prone position on the barracks floor. From that state I could no naught but grunt a positive reply. However, it seemed to me that I wasn't in the right frame of mind (as if it mattered) to even sign a check much less write paragraphs that would be published.

My low frame of mind began when I met Prince Shaggy Sinatra Bobespierre just one week ago. He was calling for help as I passed the mess hall door. It seemed that the mess sergeant had run out of meat for dinner and "Shag" (his chums call him that) was the only available source to fill the meat platter.

Instinctively, I knew that I must aid this half collie-half chow-half elephant canine (I hate dog meat) so quick like a flash I screamed at the mess sergeant, "What is transcendentalism?"

The sergeant started, dropped Shag, and the pooch and I had sped away before the sarge could mumble, "I dunno."

After our escape I invited Shag to the barracks assuring him that it would make an excellent hideout for a few days. He smiled, wagged his tail and accepted my offer.

Since then I have some cause to wish I hadn't been so hospitable. For instance, the first night Shag slept on the floor beside my bunk, but he complained so much about its hardness that I was compelled to give him my bed and now I sleep on the floor. Besides that inconvenience, Shag is always borrowing things--clothes--cigarettes--and money. I have a sneaking suspicion that he spends my money on "Red Heart" and biscuits for the lady in Sious Falls. What else would keep him out till the wee small hours each morning? Too, I'm afraid either Shag or I or both of us will get into trouble with the F.B.I. He's been wearing my uniforms and they tell me impersonating a soldier is a criminal offense. When I informed Shag of the fact he just laughed and replied, "well, you've been wearing uniforms for a long time now and you're certainly no soldier." He's disrespectful!

Shag does have his good points though. Sometimes in the evenings we sit beside the fire and he reads poetry to me. His favorite is Joyce Kilmer's "Trees."

In our favorite chair we also have lengthy discussion on politics, post-war, women, etc. Naturally we don't discuss the soldier vote since I'm in the army . . . Shag has plans for post-war with which I quite agree. He intends to buy a chicken farm and make enough money to wear radishes as big as diamonds! Smart hound, Shag.

## SvcMen WW II Letters

Since he's been rooming with me Shag has become quite civilized. Each morning he bathes, shaves and combs his hair before breakfast. Of course he uses my utensils.

To pay for his board somewhat he has become my "personal secretary" so to speak. He answers all my mail and cancels all invitations that would keep me more than 24 hours away from camp. I wonder what he's been writing to my girl friend lately. Her recent letters to me are a bit on the chilly side. Possibly Shag and I had best hold an open forum on that subject.

Excuse me but I have to go now. Shag insists that I accompany him. There have been some new hydrants installed at the southern end of the post and he must inspect them.

(If Pinnocchio, the dog I left at home, or Taffy, Rochester's dog about town, Miller are reading this, I'm just kidding--honest.)

[The News-Sentinel, Friday, March 3, 1944]

### LETTER FROM BUD HERRELL

(Letter to Mr. and Mrs. Loyd D. Herrell, rural route 3, Rochester, Indiana, from their son, Bud, who is now a German prisoner.)

October 17, 1943

Dear Folks and Family:

Received your parcel on the 13th of October. It sure came in handy. Everything here is swell. How are you and the family getting along? Have you heard anything from Rena and family? Let me know. All my love. Your loving son,

Bud

[The News-Sentinel, Saturday, March 4, 1944]

### SECOND LETTER FROM DEAN MEYER

(Editor's Note: Letter to Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Breen from Mrs. Breen's son, Cpl. Dean Meyer):

New Guinea  
February, 1944

Dear Mother:

Our time is limited for writing letters due to work details and no lights to write by at night. Some of the fellows got together and decided a common form letter was the solution, so forgive me if this letter lacks the "personal touch."

We are somewhere in New Guinea, surrounded by jungles, cocoanut trees and natives. The natives are friendly and welcome us as friends. They are very dark brown, medium height, wear very little clothes and carry large knives. We see them mornings and evenings entering or leaving the jungles. Oftentimes we trade cigarettes to them for cocoanuts and bananas. Some of them speak broken, but understandable, English. Sorry I haven't a picture of the native women to send you.

Upon arriving here, we learned that our American money isn't legal tender. Instead, Australian pounds, florins, shillings, six pences are used. The Australian pennies are larger than our 50-cent coins. Some fellows are making rings from the florin coins, it make an attractive silver ring and a worthwhile souvenir.

There are some abandoned, wrecked Japanese landing barges several miles from here. They evidently had quite a battle here at one time. Fragments of useless equipment can be found when we dig and we do plenty of that.

This is a strange, but interesting, country to all of us. The weather is fairly hot in the daytime, however the temperature drops considerably at night, and it rains occasionally.

We eat well and sleep peacefully. I am well and healthy.

Write soon.

Love, As Ever,

## SvcMen WW II Letters

Your son,  
Dean

[The News-Sentinel, Monday, March 6, 1944]

### SECOND LETTER FROM RAYMOND HERRELL

Sept. 25, 1943

Dear Folks and Family:

Received three letters from you the other day. Sure was glad to hear from you all. Mother, if I knew the kids' addresses I would write. Well, there is no use writing them, for I hope to see you all before long. If you happen to see Mrs. Fisher tell her I still remember them all. Sure hope they are all well and happy. Tell sister and family hello and I hope they are doing good on the farm. It sure will be a happy day when I see you all again. Don't forget to tell all that it takes money to keep things going. Will close with Love and Happiness to all.

Your Son and Bud.  
Pfc. Raymond L. Herrell  
In German Prison Camp

[The News-Sentinel, Tuesday, March 7, 1944]

### THIRD LETTER FROM JOHN T. HALL

Jan. 2, 1944

Dear Mother and Dad:

Well, it is a new year isn't it. It will not be too long we hope. Hope you are well and so forth. A am ok and have received 14 letters from you in 2 weeks. Mostly old ones but they made me happy. Hope to hear from you soon,

Your son, John T. Hall  
January 9, 1944

Dear Mother and Dad:

Hello, how are things going with you. Very good I hope. Be home one of these sunny days. Goodbye now.

Your son, John T. Hall

[The News-Sentinel, Friday, March 10, 1944]

### NINTH LETTER FROM RAMON ALBER

(Note - Mr. and Mrs. N. M. Alber recently received the following letters from their son Ramon, after not having heard from him for five weeks. He is "somewhere on the Pacific.")

Ramon Alber  
U.S.S. Castor  
c/o Fleet Post Office  
San Francisco, Calif  
March 6, 1944

Dear Mother, Dad and All:

This is an open day to write. Hope you are all fine as this reaches you. Having no mail to greet me, it's very little I know, what's going on around home. I hope I get some soon. I know I have lots waiting for me "somewhere." Got one letter from Doloris three weeks ago, telling me of my little brother, Phillip. I have thought of everything. A am okay -- but feel bad sometimes. Would sure like to get a breath of Indiana March winds. Here it's plenty sultry. Larry is two or three years old now? I've forgotten.

Hope you enjoy all of such a little I can write. Hope my brothers are doing good in school. What is Marietta's new name? I forgot. Well, always think of me, Mom, and write.

Your loving son,  
Ramon

## SvcMen WW II Letters

March 7, 1944

Dear Folks:

Have received one of your letters (V-mail), written Feb.17. Have read it several times. Can't make out what all has happened around home. You must have written me before, telling me of Garland's death, but you say only of going to the funeral. I would liked to have seen him. Mother, I think that being his time to pass away, it's much better that he could be put down in his own country's earth, rather than others I have seen. I expect it was a big funeral. He was sure a swell kid.

Sure hope you and Gram are better of your colds. And hope Larry and little Phillip are okay. Hope the rest of my brothers are okay. Tell Sis to write me. Am glad Dad is well.

Here's all my love to all. And write. I will write again soon.

Your loving son,

Ramon

[The News-Sentinel, Saturday, March 25, 1944]

### SECOND LETTER FROM WALTER FUNK

Cpl. Walter D. Funk

March 22, 1944

England

Rochester News-Sentinel

Dear Friends:

Received the first copy of the News-Sentinel yesterday. Sure is good to read the home town paper again. Guess we can be proud we even have material to print papers as the London paper isn't any bigger than the Sentinel.

Hoping to be with you all soon,

Sincerely,

Walter Funk

[The News-Sentinel, Friday, March 31, 1944]

### LETTER FROM RALPH HAMMAN

(From Pfc. Ralph F. Hamman, son of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Hamman of Kewanna)

Somewhere in India

March 19, 1944

Dear Mother, Dad and all:

Well, here it is Sunday morning and I might add pretty early too, as it is just 7:30 and that is pretty early for me. I am waiting for the trucks to come in so I can go get vegetable rations today. After we get that done we are off for the afternoon. So the guys I work with and a few others and I are going swimming. Then we are going to the Red Cross tonight as there is a dance there every Sunday night.

I hope this finds all of you in the best of health as I am just fine myself.

The Red Cross has made up some tours for showing us boys different things so I went on one of them the other day and it was really interesting. We went to two of the temples here. We had to take off our shoes before we could enter and then we went to the Burning Vats, that is where they burn their dead. Boy, that is really a sight, some of the boys took pictures of the dead people in there and then we saw how they fix them up before they burn them. After they are burnt the ashes are thrown into a river right below the burning place, then all of the deceased's relatives go down and bathe themselves in the river to purify themselves. This is sure a strange and interesting country, but for my part, I'll take the good old U.S.A. any day.

I am learning a few words in Hindustan now--I wish I could learn to talk it real good--maybe I will if they keep us here long enough, but I don't care to stay that long

Well, in just two more days I will have served a year in the U.S. Army and what a year of traveling it has been. I have really enjoyed it though, even though it was tougher than hell at times. Well, the trucks are coming in so I had better stop for now and write more tomorrow.

## SvcMen WW II Letters

May God bless all of you and may He keep you all well and safe.

Your loving son,

Ralph

[The News-Sentinel, Friday, March 31, 1944]

### LETTER FROM RAY LINEBRINK

(Letter received from T5 Ray J. Linebrink, stationed in England, by his sister, Mrs. George Swope of Akron.)

March 12, 1944

Hello Sis:

Are you surprised to hear from me so soon. I received your letter, dated Feb. 28, yesterday.

I am sitting by the stove on a five gallon square can and holding a piece of cardboard on my knees to write this. Oh, yes, I am also using a kerosene lantern, if I didn't use it I would have to use candles.

Did I tell you we were living in tents. There are six men in each tent. How is everyone around there. We are all O.K. except for a few colds and sore feet which we can expect in the Army.

You were telling me about George being in Cleveland, well, my buddy who is a staff sergeant is from Cleveland.

I haven't had my furlough yet, but am expecting one berfore long, but will not be able to visit London. I sure wish it was for Akron, Ind. It is almost two years since I have been in and I am anxious to get back to civilian life again.

Your letters are sure a welcome sight to me and also my buddy, we both read them. Keep up the good work.

Your brother,

Ray

[The News-Sentinel, Saturday, April 1, 1944]

### SECOND LETTER FROM BILL DAGGY

(Received: Mr. Dell Daggy, 614 Jefferson St., Rochester, Ind.. from Pfc. W. A. Daggy)

Dear Dad:

Well, at last I finally came through again didn't I and I'm mighty thankful that I'm able to write. Lately, I have been fighting the Japs trying to save my life. Believe me when I tell you that it is very hard work. It was at Eniwetok Atoll where I did this and while I was there I was in three different operations.

I spent several nights in slit trenches and fox holes with the Japs near and I'm not the least bit ashamed to say that I was plenty scared. Anyone that says he wasn't is a liar. But, strange as it seems, I slept OK when I wasn't standing a watch or the noise wasn't too great. I prayed that I'd get out OK and I guess my prayers were answered. Everybody out there was praying and proud of it. I'll write more later and don't worry about me as I'm OK.

Your son,

Bill

[The News-Sentinel, Tuesday, April 4, 1944]

### SIXTH LETTER FROM LOUIS D. BALL

(From Louis D. Ball)

New Guinea,  
March 24, 1944

## SvcMen WW II Letters

Dear Mother, Sis and All:

I started this letter today, but in no mood to write, so dropped it. Now that I got some mail today, the first for four days, I'll have something to write about. It's funny how it affects us when we don't get any mail. If I had my way mail would always come first and nothing but air mail, no "V."

I got letter No. 22 so am still looking for No. 21. I also got a card and letter from Aunt Matt, a letter from Jim, and Guy Price. Now I'll have something to do for awhile.

I was a little sorry to hear Jimmy had gone the other way, but in a way I'm glad he did. He might even beat me home. What's to be will be and there is nothing we can do about it. Anyway he won't have to put up with any fevers, diseases and not too much loneliness.

I think I told you that I had received a letter from Johnnie and he is somewhere in Italy. I should think he would be coming home soon. I hope the same time I do. He is fine and just as ready to leave for home as the next fellow. I am impatiently waiting for the fruit cake.

We left most of our grasshoppers behind, there are few up here, they are about as big as a humming bird. They almost knock us down when they hit us.

I am feeling fine and still flying. A lot of our friends who came over with us are going home soon. We will miss them.

I just received letter No. 17 of Feb. 15th, to make your letters complete up to No. 20. What a nice letter No. 15 was. I let Hunt and Nellie read it and they both said the same. It was one of your air mail chats. That's the kind I like to receive. Write more air mail and let the V-mail go, everyone likes them best.

Give me time to light up my pipe and I'll chat with you awhile and hope it's half as interesting as yours. Oh wait! I had to put it down, too much bite. I still prefer cigarettes. I let Fitz talk me into buying it.

I was glad to hear you liked the scarfs and belts. They weren't as good as I wanted them - but well - this isn't America. Wait till I light up a cigarette. Say, speaking of cigarettes, I got two half cartons from the Akron Chamber of Commerce and American Legion. I don't know who to thank, so will you thank them for me. I'm enjoying one now.

I got a letter from Harry and Rose and he saw Mr. Larkin who asked about me and told him my job was waiting for me when I get back.

No, I didn't throw my watch away. It is one of my prized treasures here. Also that long pocket knife and a pilot chute. The knife we used to clean the fish we caught on our jaunt.

I saw my first Japs the other day. Of course they were prisoners. One of them was shorter than me, unbelievable isn't it? You should have seen their smile when told to pose for a picture. They looked like half-starved rats, but seemed quite content that they were in American hands.

Well, Dear, the boys have arrived and a rmpus has started already, so I had better quit and get in the argument. I hope I can receive more and more air mail letters like No. 15.

Give best regards to everyone and write again soon.

Love,  
Louis

[The News-Sentinel, Friday, April 7, 1944]

### LETTER FROM WILLIAM HARDACRE

Somewhere in Iran (Persia)

(To Mrs. Harley McClain of Rochester, Ind.)

Dear Sis and Family:

Well, Sis, I finally reached my destination and it is here in Iran. I got 48 letters yesterday and three of them and a card were from you. I was sure glad to get all that mail and I will try and write every week from now on. I haven't received your package yet but it takes a long time for packages to get over here.

All there is around here is sand and it really gets hot here in the summer. It isn't so hot now but you can run around without a shirt and still feel plenty warm. It is cool at night but that makes one feel good. They say it gets up to 150 in the summer.

## SvcMen WW II Letters

We sure had a nice trip coming over outside of a few scares on the way. We really saw some historical sights and lots of pretty scenery. We sure had swell food on board the ship and could go any place on the boat all the time, but on the bridge. Our main work over here is getting supplies up to the Russian army.

I am feeling fine and hope you all are the same. I gained a few pounds in the boat so you know we weren't slighted for good food.

As ever, your brother,  
Bill

[The News-Sentinel, Saturday, April 8, 1944]

### LETTER FROM GEORGE OSBORN

Rochester News-Sentinel

Dear Sirs:

Following is a copy of letter from Lt. George E. Osborn, U.S.N.R. that might be of interest. Osborn is a former Rochester boy.

Feb. 9, 1944

Dear Mother:

This won't get mailed for a little while but I'm writing it so that I'll have it ready when the mail leaves. The primary purpose is to let you know that I found the Marshalls, but they didn't find me. Thank heaven a dispatch came through telling us that we can tell that we took part in the Marshall Islands campaign. I did! Four of my men, two radio men and two signal men with myself, landed on Kwajalein in the fourth wave of assault troops. Our party was the first Navy party to land on the beach. Landing when we did means that we got there about 15 to 20 minutes after the first troops landed and when we arrived the front lines had advanced only 10 yards inland. So there were 5" and 8" shells whirring through the air overhead and small caliber stuff whizzing around too close to be comfortable.

Our job was to set up ship to shore communications preliminary to the more permanent setup that arrives after the beachhead has been established. Both of these jobs are under my supervision being head of the radar group. The boys on board ship all said that they breathed a sigh of relief when we came up on our temporary circuit and established contact with them. It was terribly noisy on the island. They kept shelling the place with field artillery, naval gun fire and aerial bombs.

Every now and then an ammunition dump would blow up. But believe it or not I wasn't the least bit scared. There was a feeling of apprehension just before we landed, but no fright. Gee, how the place stunk! The pre-landing bombing had blown up the coral and God what a smell! that makes. It is a heavy, sweetish, sour milk odor that's so sickening. Of course the decaying bodies of the Jap soldiers that were lying around didn't add much to the pleasantness of the smell. Then it rained! First day and night it poured down! I slept on the ground in a fox-hole and awoke four or five times and found I was in inches of water. We stayed there four days, eating "K" and "C" rations. I don't envy the Army much if they have to eat them for any length of time. Once is enough for me.

The evening of the fourth day we were sent back on board the ship. We arrived about 6:30. I cleaned up (top to toe) and climbed into my blessed bunk about 8:30 only to be called at 2:30 a.m. and told to round up my men and instruments, that we were going in on the initial assault on one of the lesser islands; so we really took two of the Kwajalein atoll group. We stayed on this second one till 4:30 the morn after we landed. I was so dirty and ragged I was a sight. You can read more about this in the Time or probably newspapers. It wasn't a bit pleasant, but experience for me. One of my men removed a pair of cuff-links and some Jap money from a Jap officer and gave them to me. They are the only souvenirs I have from there. I certainly don't want many. I'd like to forget the place as soon as possible.

Glad you liked my Christmas cards, they were from Waikiki and Honolulu. Hope Chuck, Mary Jane and Van are okay. How are Elim's kids? I'd like to see my family again. There's a



## SvcMen WW II Letters

possibility (darned slight) that I may see the states before too long. If so, I'll get a leave but not long enough to make it to Detroit, so I think I'll take it in Los Angeles. I can dream, can't I?

Got to go stand watch for next 4 hours so take it easy and don't worry.

Love,

George

P.S. - So far I've been in the Solomons, Gilberts, Aleutians and Marshalls.

[The News-Sentinel, Wednesday, April 12, 1944]

### FOURTH LETTER FROM GEORGE D. HOLLOWAY

Sgt. George D. Holloway

22 March 1944

England

Dear Mother and Dad:

Well here's your traveling son writing again after spending a few days in the city of London. Haven't had much chance to write till now because we've been doing a lot of training. They've been keeping us rather busy so far this week and ready for bed by the time night falls. After eating supper (chow), getting your equipment cleaned up for the next day and yourself cleaned up it's late. We have only candles for a light, so very little letter writing is done at night in tents. At the present I'm writing on the Army's time so maybe I can complete this before we get too busy again here in the office.

Now for a little of interesting things I took in on my leave. I visited Buckingham Palace while the British soldiers were having their formal guard mount inside the gates of the palace. It takes about an hour for this performance which happens every 48 hours. They have a big military band that plays practically all this time and very good at that. These guards are all picked men to guard the palace and all are strictly soldiers. This was really something to see and quite different from our own which only takes about 15 minutes and without music. In the afternoon I visited Westminster Abbey and what a beautiful old place. Part of it has been hit during the raids so unfortunately I didn't get to see where the Kings and Queens were buried. They had the gate to that part of the Abbey closed to the public until after the war. I was fortunate to get in a group that had a guide so that made the tour more interesting. The Unknown Soldier's grave is the first thing you come across as you enter the Abbey. Behind the Unknown Soldier comes the Prime Ministers of England. All around the walls are statues of about all historical people. Gosh it would take hours to describe all the things in the Abbey and the beauty of all the sculpture art and colorful windows. To go through Abbey and spend just a few minutes with everything in it, would take days to complete the tour. When you're on a six-day furlough you try to see all in such a short time. Behind the Abbey you'll find the House of Lords, House of Commons and London's Big Ben. Didn't get a chance to visit the two Houses mentioned because you have to put your name on the waiting list which is very long. There's one man in the House of Commons whose ambition is to turn the big light on top of Big Ben's back on as soon as the war is over. It was turned off at the start of the war so he really must have a lot of patience. The Big Ben clock takes five men three days to wind it up so you can imagine the size of it.

The next day I took a taxi tour of London which was very interesting and unbelievable sights. We rode out to the old city of London where most of the destruction took place. You can't imagine how much damage could be done in one night which took place during the 1941 blitz by Germany. It's practically leveled to the ground. Incidentally while I was in London we had an air raid which lasted about two hours. Our building was hit by incendiary bombs but no one hurt. The building was on fire but we soon put it out. These bombs were lighting in the street like hail falling on a window pane. Those air raids are really nerve wracking and makes you want to shout after they are over. This one was nothing compared to the ones in Naples while we were there. They've had so many raids over here that the people seem to be the least bit concerned about them. They seem to make a joke of it but for my part it's no joking matter.

While I was out in the old London area I visited the Tower of London, and St. Paul's Cathedral. This cathedral is very beautiful and like the Abbey, it would take days to see

## SvcMen WW II Letters

everything. It has two outstanding historical men buried in there, Lord Nelson and Duke of Wellington. The sculpture, statues, fixtures and stain or painted windows are extremely beautiful and old. There's one cross on the floor in the cathedral that is the center of London, which I stood on. In fact there's so many that have done the same that it is wearing out the bronze spot. From here we rode around the city. I walked down the great Downing Street and saw where Churchill lives. Also saw the great Scotland Yards but not permitted to go in. Oh, yes, I can't forget crossing the London Bridge and it hasn't fallen down as the old song goes. I think that I saw the most interesting places to visit in such short time as I had. I hope to get back again if there's any possible way. It's really a great city. They have lots of shows here and all kinds. The people really go in for the shows and they do have some beautiful theatres. It's rather hard to find a good meal any place because of the rationing. I ate most of the time in the Columbia Club (Red Cross) where I stayed. The transportation is plentiful during the day but at night it's rather hard after 24 o'clock. The underground tube is the best and quickest. It only costs you a few pennies to go anywhere you want to go in London. In the evening you'd be amazed to find people whose homes were destroyed and the ones who fear the raids, sleeping in these underground tunnels. It's really a pitiful sight. They bring their own bedding. They only live in the tunnels at night. They have these double deck beds but not enough for everyone. The ones that aren't lucky enough to get a bed, sleep on the cement walk. They always come out with a big smile in the morning and don't seem to mind.

I'd better be closing before this turns out to be a book. You've got a good idea of what I've seen during my furlough. I hope this finds you all well and taking good care of yourselves. Write often and tell everyone Hello.

Your loving son,  
George

[The News-Sentinel, Thursday, April 13, 1944]

### SECOND LETTER FROM ALBERT L. FISHER

Somewhere in India  
April 2, 1944

Dear Elmer:

Was certainly surprised the other day to get a letter from you, but was very pleased. Gee, you won't realize how welcome letters are over here. Having nothing else to read, it makes them even more welcome and hearing of news from around home is very grand. I received my first sergeant rating this past month and am quite proud of that. It is just one more step to becoming a general. Hey, who am I kidding. The only way that I'll be a general is being a general nuisance and there is a possibility of me being that already. Ha! Am glad to hear you're OK and getting along fine. Keep up the good health. Gee, over here it is actually shameful. It is actually the filthiest place that I have ever been in. I believe God created the Earth, but I don't think that he created all of it. He must have stopped when He got this far and the Devil took over. Have been very busy since I have been here and there is no time for recreation, even though we did have some, but since we don't have any, we'll just bat mosquitoes for pleasure and tease monkeys and baboons. Sure are a lot of them here. About every night we have to chase them out of our Bashas (huts). They seem to take a great delight in romping over our beds or tearing our clothes; however I have a Bari (servant) and he keeps them away most of the time, that is when he's around. He is a very good boy, 19 years old and very efficient, but can't talk a word of English. We have to converse in Hindustani whenever we talk to the native Indians. It was a very hard language to learn at first, but after you once get the hang of it, it wasn't too bad. Just twist your tongue around your tonsils and sneeze real hard and you'll be able to pronounce most of the words. Ha!

Tai-Tai means "alright," Graum-Pawnee means "hot water," Chau is "tea," and there are a lot of them, but I guess I need not tell you as you'll have no use for the words. Ruth wouldn't like for you to start that kind of lingo. Well, my letter writing is very limited over here as I have so much to do, but I do try and get all letters that I receive answered, and that is a job. The weather is so hot here now, averages about 100 degrees night and day. Have had quite a lot of rain but will get

## SvcMen WW II Letters

plenty of it later on when the monsoons come. It rains so very easy here and jumping polecats you talk about thunder and lightning, you haven't seen anything yet until you've seen one of these tropical storms. They sure are dillers.

Snakes are getting very bad. They come right into your room, office or wherever they care to go. I got me a mongoose (it is about the size of a weasel) and made a pet out of him, as they are very good to kill snakes, but I don't see how they could do much to these 25 and 30 foot pythons and six foot cobras? Gee, they are sure a terrible looking snake and I usually make myself scarce when I hear or see one, however, I have shot a couple so far.

This is certainly a great life over here, but I am certainly wanting to get back. I saw Charles Mow the other day and were we both ever surprised. That is no name for it. I knew he was over here somewhere but didn't know his exact location. I do now. I'm sure anxious to get home and don't think it wouldn't look good, too. But I doubt if I'll be back home much before Christmas of '45. However, I hope it will be sooner than that. Well, I am getting so sleepy that I'm making all kinds of mistakes, so rather than cause you more trouble or eye irritation I'll sign off. Give everyone my best regards, especially your folks. Best wishes to you all. Write when you can,

Sincerely yours,

Albert

[The News-Sentinel, Tuesday, April 18, 1944]

### LETTER FROM HAROLD THORNBURG

San Francisco

March 13, 1944

Dear Mrs. Fultz:

Your very friendly card with its beautiful message arrived troday. It was extremely kind of you and the other ladies you represent to think of me along with the other Rochester men in the service. May all of them come home soon!

Rochester has always held a very dear place in my memory even though more than half of my life has been spent elsewhere. And I imagine it always will. Consequently it gives me much pleasure to hear from someone in the old home town. The moon shining across the broad Pacific waters tonight makes me think with longing for that same moon shining across Lake Manitou. I wonder where all of my old friends that I knew in Rochester are tonight. Those of my own age are undoubtedly scattered about the world either in one of the military services or in defense work. I would very much enjoy hearing from anyone who remembers me.

Sincerely,

Harold Thornburg

[The News-Sentinel, Tuesday, April 18, 1944]

### LETTER FROM DEVON SHUMAN

(The following letter was received by Kenneth Overstreet from Devon Shuman, who is now sttioned in Italy.)

Italy, March 27, 1944

Dear Kenny:

I'll bet you are surprised to hear from me, aren't you? I received your most welcome Christmas card about two months ago, so I thought it was about time I was dropping you a few lines. I am in good health and feeling fine, hope you are the same.

We have finally put away our overcoats and overshoes, it wasn't very cold any time last winter over here. I only saw snow once all winter and that was on the Cassino front. As you know I am on the Anzio beachhead now. It isn't too bad, but I get all the excitement I care for (and more to boot). I have been under shell fire several times, and I can't say that I like it. We have really played hell with the German air force. One night they sent over eight bombers and I saw seven out of the eight go down in flames, the eighth one was more lucky. I have seen the places you read about in the papers, and at times I wish I were there reading about it instead of helping to make the news.

## SvcMen WW II Letters

Do you look for much business at the lake this summer, you still have your summer resort, don't you?

Well, Kenny, I guess this is about all for this time, please write soon. Tell Carl Van Trump I said hello.

As ever,  
Devon

[The News-Sentinel, Friday, April 21, 1944]

### THIRD LETTER FROM CHARLES C. COFFMAN

Somewhere in England  
16 April, 1944

Dear Capt. Minter:

Your letter of 8 March came on 14 April and I was certainly glad to get it.

Thank you for the fine compliment. Coming from you, I consider it a very fine one and thanks for your well wishes. I am still a Staff Sergeant but I must be honest with you and say I am trying for Technical Sergeant. I hope I make the grade. But isn't much room in the Tables of Organization and there are a good many good men in our organization. But I think as to longevity I rank high in the organization. But in considering men for promotion longevity doesn't mean as much as it once did. But eventually I think I will get the promotion. As you said, the education of travel is very much of an advantage to anyone. When I enlisted I took your advice and signed up for Panama and I am very glad I did. You said I would like Panama and I did like it very much. The Canal Zone is a very interesting place and Panama is a beautiful country. I did enjoy my tour of duty there and saw many very interesting places. There have been many improvements in the Zone and the Republic. Several of my pals here try to embarrass me by calling me "Panama Pete." But that don't bother me because they are doing me an honor as I am proud to be a "Panama Man." I have informed the bunch that a service man from Panama is a "Panama Joe" and not a "Panama Pete." Since I have been in England I have seen many interesting places. I had occasion to visit London and was quite busy with the sights. I was impressed with the size of London. Westminster Abbey is the most interesting of all the places of interest that I saw in London. As you enter the Abbey one passed the beautiful tomb of the Unknown Warrior. The tomb is surrounded by poppies and at the head of the tomb is the United States Congressional Medal of Honor placed there by General John J. Pershing. In the Abbey there is a large statue of Abraham Lincoln. It was presented by the people of Chicago. I also saw and admired the busts of great men of Britain. Many great men are buried in the Abbey. To me that trip was an education. Besides the Abbey I saw No. 10 Downing Street, Scotland Yard, Buckingham Palace, Piccadilly Circus, Leicester Square, Trafalgar Square and the Parliament. I strolled through Hyde Park and St. James Park and I saw a movie and a stage show at the Carleton Cinema. I have indeed seen a lot of country and I am glad for the opportunity. But of course the U.S.A. is the most beautiful country in the world and there is so much of it. Although I enjoyed my stay in Panama and I am enjoying being in England it is back to the U.S.A. for me. When I do return to the states I will take a trip to California or Florida or some place like that and relax for a few weeks and then I will return to the Hoosier state and settle down. I am saving my money and every month I send home \$100.00 so I have an account in the State Bank at Whiting. Besides my savings I have some War Bonds. So with my savings, my bonds and the discharge money I will not be bad off. As for the bonus I think it will be generous and I will appreciate it and I will not throw it away or waste it. But let me say that if no bonus were appropriated I would not feel bad as all I ask for is a job and that don't have to be a white collar job either, but one which will support myself and wife and I will be satisfied. I wanted you to know how I feel about the bonus. I am keeping up with news from all the fronts but I seem to have a hard time keeping up with the news from the home front as I would like to know more what is going on back home. Occasionally I receive a newsy letter from home but not as often as I would like. My people write about how much they miss me but they do not mention much about local news and goings-on. I like to know I am missed and I miss my people too but I wish I could know more about what is going on back home. Please give my

## SvcMen WW II Letters

regards to Mr. Wm. Howard and tell him I will write to him soon. I also thank you for having an interest in my career as it means a great deal to me and I will at all times try to be appreciative of your interest and confidence in me. With all the best luck and good wishes to all.

S/Sgt Charles C. Coffman

[The News-Sentinel, Monday, April 24, 1944]

### LETTER FROM LYMAN BURKETT

Major Lyman Burkett

London, England

April 10, 1944

Dearest Mother:

I received your letter a couple of days ago and was very happy to hear from you. Yesterday was Easter Sunday and I thought of you a lot --- wish it were possible to send you a nice bouquet of flowers. It has been rather like a spring day around here --- something like Indiana--the grass is green, trees in bloom, flowers, and lots of daffodils -- reminds me of Wordsworth's "Host of Golden Daffodills." All the natives are busily engaged in their victory gardens. They utilize every square foot of ground over here--gardens in the public square, along the sidewalks, front yards, back yards, vacant lots (some made by bombing) and along the road side. But from my observation it appears that about the only thing they grow are cabbages and more cabbages. Really you have never tasted anything as tasteless and unappetizing as English cooking. They never seem to make much fuss about their meals, merely eat because it is necessary and then they tend to boil everything in plain water without any seasoning whatsoever-- soggy potatoes, mushy cabbage and tasteless, sugarless pudding. It all tastes something like wet sawdust. But then I guess I have been spoiled and am too accustomed to good old farmer type meals. I had a nice talk with Kermit Calloway, and of course he would like to be out Rochester way too. But then I am getting along fine, seeing a lot of new and strange things and having a wonderful experience. Give my best regards to the Green Oak bunch and tell Unc to grow a good garden---with lots of tomatoes.

Just lots and lots of love, your son,

Lyman Burkett

(Received by Mrs. Lulu Burkett, R.R. 1, Rochester. Mrs Burkett has her son's complete address should any of his friends desire to write him.)

[The News-Sentinel, Wednesday, April 26, 1944]

### LETTER FROM THOMAS SAUSAMAN

Pvt. Thomas Sausaman

Dear Mom:

I am going to try to drop you a few lines to say hello. I am okay and feeling fine and dandy. Hope this letter finds you both in good health, too. I can't tell you where I am, only that I am at sea. But I'm in perfect condition and enjoying myself.

We have boat drill once in a while. The ocean is really rough, but not too bad.

Have you seen Betty lately? I have got one letter from her since I have been back. Well, Mom, I will close for now, so write soon and often.

Your son,

Thomas

Received by:

Mrs. Gladys Sausaman

221 East Fifth Street

Rochester, Ind.

[The News-Sentinel, Tuesday, May 2, 1944]

### SECOND LETTER FROM JESSE THOMPSON

Sgt. Jesse H. Thompson

## SvcMen WW II Letters

South Pacific

April 4, 1944

Dear Capt. Minter:

It has been a long time since I have written you, but I have not forgotten you or Dear Old Rochester. I hope to return to Rochester some day to see all of my old friends of course there will be some of us who will never return but I am certain they will always be remembered. How nice it would be to walk down the streets of Rochester. I can well picture the old town in the summer time, and it would be good to see all the kids having a good time. Please tell Harley Zolman I am grateful to him for sending me the candy and gum, it was appreciated and it was swell of him. I have a poem I would like for all the mothers and fathers to read. -----.

Yours truly,

Sgt. Jesse H. Thompson

[The News-Sentinel, Wednesday, May 3, 1944]

### SECOND LETTER FROM ANSEL SNOOK

T/Sgt. Ansel Snook

April 28, 1944

Dear Friend:

Received your letter and was very glad to hear from you, that you are O.K. and feeling like jumping up and clicking your heels when this is all over which we pray will not be in the very far distance.

Have made twenty-seven missions and still in good health.

Was in Cambridge on my last pass, went through King's College grounds. They are very beautiful now, acres of poppies in bloom, a river with grass down to the water, wild ducks by the hundreds, but a little too cold to fish, but the fish stories they tell about the big ones they catch, makes you want to try it once.

Wishing you the best of luck and health. Be seeing you soon.

Your friend,

Snook

[The News-Sentinel, Friday, May 5, 1944]

### SECOND LETTER FROM DEVERL BECKER

(Letter received by Neighborly Club from Cpl. DeVerl Becker, who is stationed at Fort Lawton, Washington.)

April 8, 1944

The Neighborly Club:

When your cake arrived yesterday, I tried to hide it from the rest of the boys for only one reason: after eating that delicious candy you sent for Valentine's Day, I had a pretty good hunch that anything else you might send would taste just as good, so I made up my mind that the next time I got something from you, I'd be darned if I would let them get their claws on it before I had a chance to really enjoy it.

So tonight, while I'm writing this letter, I'm drinking coffee and initiating the cake. No hungry "wolves" around that have the "gimmies."

At the same time, I am thinking what a truly fine group you are in remembering your neighbors that wear the uniform. Perhaps you will think I am too sentimental, but today, when I opened the package and realized all the time and work you must have spent in preparing this gift, I

## SvcMen WW II Letters

actually felt a lump in my throat. For a few brief seconds I was home again with all my friends, and you who have thought of us and tried to bring happiness by your gifts.

I am truly proud to declare my home in a community where there are neighbors such as you. At the present time, the only way I can express my appreciation is by saying, "thanks a million," but maybe some day, somehow, I can prove myself as true a neighbor to you as you have to me through these dark hours. I sincerely hope so.

Your friend,  
DeVerl Becker

[The News-Sentinel, Thursday, May 11, 1944]

### THIRD LETTER FROM RAYMOND HERRELL

March 1, 1944

Dear Folks and Family:

This leaves me fine. Hope it gets to you the same. I have gotten eight parcels from you so far. Tell Ruth I got her letter. I have got three from Irene. Sending this with all my love to the family.

Ray

(Ray can send but four cards a month and two letters. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Herrell, Rural Route 4, Rochester, Ind.)

[The News-Sentinel, Friday, May 12, 1944]

### SECOND LETTER FROM BILL HARTMAN

From Bill Hartman  
Somewhere in North Africa

Dear Capt. Minter:

I've thought of writing for some time but just have not been able to get around to it.

I want to thank you for the magazine I received from you. I read it from cover to cover and when I finished it I passed it on to some of my buddies to read. We enjoy good reading matter. Everything is going about the same for me over here and I don't remember if I told you or not that I am now at the Postal Directory and have been here for several weeks now and I like my work very well even though I am on duty at night I do get to sleep until noon and then get up and start making my rounds in the city and as I work I take in the points of interest. I am stationed in a very modern city and we have a number of beautiful parks and I think I've seen them all. They have nice palm and fig trees, lining the walks and some of the most beautiful flowers I have ever seen. There are also a lot of historical monuments and I really regret that I do not have a kodak to take pictures of the things I've seen. We also have some very historical buildings here and I have visited many of them but have many more to see. There is always something new and interesting in the way of customs of the people and to us they seem very odd. In ordering a meal at a cafe you do not get coffee, milk or even water with it but they serve wine with all meals. A friend of mine and I took in a show Saturday night, it was really good, but we didn't know when to laugh as the jokes were told in French, so we just sat back and looked on and listened and when they laughed we laughed also.

I had the pleasure of spending a Sunday afternoon at the beach on a large and famous sea and I really got a nice tan - yes, it was a sun burn. I've had some rides in the 40 and 8, men of the first World War know something about that, too. And then perhaps my greatest thrill was my ride on a camel. I used to think that roller coasters were rough riding, but I have changed my mind since riding camels. I hope I'll get a chance to visit the Holy Land while I am over here as many of the

## SvcMen WW II Letters

men have had the opportunity. Today is my Dad's birthday, there in Rochester. I sent him a cable message and I trust he gets it OK.

I see by the papers and over the radio that there is a lot of water in the central part of the USA this spring, even worse floods than last year, when I encountered some of them, when with my wife, I was driving home on a furlough and saw something of the flooded areas.

I must close and make my trip over town and in closing I send my best wishes to the good people of Rochester and vicinity.

Yours Sincerely,

Bill Hartman

[The News-Sentinel, Tuesday, May 23, 1944]

### LETTER FROM WAYNE REESE

[TWO ROCHESTER BOYS MEET IN NEW GUINEA -- The following is a letter received from Pfc. Wayne Reese by his parents Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Reese, of Argos, Indiana. Wayne attended high school in Rochester and has many friends here.]

Dear Mom:

I hope this finds you all in the best of health. As for me, I never felt better in my life. I am on guard most of the time. I sure do enjoy it because there are a few Japs around. They are being taken P.O.W. every day. I have seen both good and bad Japs.

I got the pictures last night and I sure thought they were good.

Mom, I finally met a boy from Rochester. His name is Joe Slaybaugh. I met him on the road, as I was going one way with a case of food (45 lbs.) on my back and he was going the other way with his rifle. The road goes over the mountains and through the swamps. The mud is about a foot deep. I carried the food as far as from home to Argos, 4 1/2 miles. It sure was good to talk to Joe. We went to school together at R.H.S.

The four kids are sure getting big. If I don't get home in a short time, I won't even know them.

I had better quit and get my supper. I will write more in a day or so.

Wayne

[The News-Sentinel, Saturday, May 27, 1944]

### LETTER FROM DALE SMILEY

May 22, 1944

England

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Iler and Family:

Just a line or two to let you know that everything is still going OK. Am sorry that I haven't written sooner, but with this spring weather coming on, I can't seem to force myself to take a little time out for letter writing. You know that disease that everybody gets about this time of the year-- I think they call it Spring Fever--well, anyway, it seems I have a strong case of it. . . Before I forget it, let me thank you for the most welcomed V-mail. Little do the folks back home realize what the letters mean to the fellows over here.

Oh yes, let me tell you about the wonderful, unusual, and fortunate accident that occurred the other day. It all happened while one of my squadron buddies and I were in London on a pass. On that particular day it turned out to be perfect so we spent the afternoon in the famous Kew Flower Gardens in the outskirts of London. The garden was really beautiful, especially with everything so nice and green, flowers blooming, birds singing, beautiful women strolling about (slipped there), etc. After walking for an hour or so we decided to lay down in the grass and benefit more from the warm sunshine. After making ourselves comfortable by taking off our coats, hats and unfastening our ties, we prepared for a nice quiet snooze in the park. All of a sudden, somebody yelled out "THE QUEEN" and I snapped out of my drowsiness and looked up--there, not more than five yards away was the Queen, yes, the real Queen Elizabeth of England in person. Due to her sudden presence, we didn't have time to brush up and so just sat there and smiled (to be truthful, we looked more embarrassed and blushing than anything). Accompanying her was the



## SvcMen WW II Letters

Archbishop of Canterbury and about 25 yards to the rear were her chaperons and guards. She smiled as they walked slowly by us and then continued on with their conversation. [?]

After coming to my senses, I grabbed my coat and hat and my most prized possession, the box camera that I have always carried with me through rain and shine, and started running after the Queen so as to snap a picture. Finally after catching up with them and gathering up enough nerve to ask her for a picture, (in the meantime trying to think up the appropriate way to address the Queen), I walked slowly towards them while my knees were knocking to the tune of a fast rumba. When about five yards from them, I asked, "May I have a picture, please?" She in turn said something to the Archbishop and then they stopped and together turned towards me and posed. I nervously snapped the picture and shyly thanked them and departed while they continued on their way. Probably after such an interruption as that, they were thinking, "The nerve of those Yank soldiers," or "Well, of all things," or something to that effect.

Just to make sure I would get a picture of them in case the other didn't come out, I took a shot from a distance. Excited for the remaining part of the day, I couldn't wait to get back to camp to tell the other fellows and also have the pictures developed. After bragging to everyone about seeing her and also having them to pose for a picture--well, you know how it is. The next day, our photo section developed the film and now for the great downfall, I just hope that I haven't built up your thoughts too much--but here goes for the rest of the story. In all of the above excitement, I forgot to wind the film up another notch for the next exposure and so had the disgusted results of a double exposure which ruined everything. Of all the times, it would happen then. But as the old saying goes, "It will happen every time." Now to brighten your thoughts up just a little, luckily enough, the picture of the Queen came out in the center of the two exposures and a good print can be made from the two shots by enlarging the view of the Queen; however, the Archbishop and the background were sadly out of the picture completely. Yes, I know that I should be hit in the head with a golf club and given about six weeks of extra drill but there is no use crying over spilled milk as it has already happened and there is nothing I or anyone else can do about it; that is, with the exception of the Queen and she could invite me back for a retake but I hardly think that is probable. Well, I hope you don't break out laughing as it really isn't as funny as it sounds. The one shot in a lifetime and I messed up the works. Leave it to me to do just that, ahem, Darn it, Doc, it ain't funny . . . .

Anyway, I got to see the Queen and the Archbishop of Canterbury, what more could one ask for? (The picture would have made it a little more impressive and convincing. Better luck next time, I hope). No remarks, please.

As for the life in the ETO--well, it still is the same old routine. Have not seen any of the fellows from home with the exception of Fritz Cessna. I talked to Bob Cessna the other night over the telephone. Sure sounded great to hear his voice again after so long a time. We are trying to make connections in London but haven't succeeded as yet--still trying though.

So much for my side of the story--how is everything going back in ye good old town of Rochester? Fine and dandy, I hope. Let's see now, yes, it won't be so long until summer vacation will be here for the children. I bet they hate that--like so much. What is Lynn going to do this summer? Will he get to go to a Scout camp? Sure would be a great experience for him. Doc, how is your flower garden coming by now? Probably all up and blooming, eh what? Did you get to do much fishing during the winter?

Jane, how did you make out in school this year? You should be winning top honors all the way. By the way, you haven't gotten a new boy friend since I left, have you??? Don't let me down now. Oh yes, how is that little sister of ours--I bet she is almost a grown girl by now.

Oh, oh, there goes taps so lights out shortly. Goodnight for now. Write soon. Give my regards to everyone.

Cheerio with love,  
Dale Smiley

[The News-Sentinel, Wednesday, June 14, 1944]

## SvcMen WW II Letters

LETTER FROM CARLOS E. JEWELL

North Africa

### LASTING HAPPINESS

Dear Friends:

I am just another one of the boys in service and overseas long enough (20 months) to know some of the trials, tribulations, and the everyday happenings of the average GI.

Never will I forget the Sunday morning of Nov. 8, 1942, when I got the first glimpse of African soil. My curiosity as to the new land was so high that believe it or not--the millions of shells exploding around us and bursting in the air bothered me very little. The first works of course, started before daylight. There was more light and noise than I had witnessed in all of the combined 4ths of July I have ever seen.

We were really lost though after landing, didn't know where we were going or what we were going to do.

Our first happiness was the third day when the armistice was signed, but if we had had any idea what was ahead yet--we wouldn't have been so happy. Then what we all looked forward to for a little happiness, and still do every day of every week, is mail. May I also say the mail can and does give us many or more disappointments as satisfaction.

Last September, just a few days after finishing the long hard march through Sicily--we really threw our hats in the air and celebrated over the surrender of Italy. We had the general idea that in a few months Germany would follow. How little did we think we'd have so much hard fighting in Italy and it has been hard. I know because I was there until the first of this year. A lot of my buddies are still there, some of them to stay forever.

Now I better hit the next subject of importance--that is a girl or girls that resemble the girls we love from America.

My first experience with girls that couldn't speak our language was a beautiful French nurse in a French hospital. A lot of my buddies came to see me while I was in the hospital, and of course they met her too. All of them have seen her picture. Her picture still gives me a moment of happiness and something to talk about.

Talking (shooting the bull) is another pastime. It is especially pleasant if you predominate the floor or have someone outstanding in the group, preferably one with plenty of wit and humor.

The little things in life are so important to each and every one of us. For instance--a few days ago a Red Cross girl won two cartons of cigarettes in a contest and afterwards walked past me and asked if I could use a carton, handing them to me at the same time. It made me very happy, even though I didn't use them myself. I was planning a package to some friends in Italy so they were included.

Just yesterday we were coming to camp from work in a weapon carrier and as usual every GI was whistling and yelling at the many girls on the street. Then we were stopped a few seconds because of heavy traffic. Suddenly three WACs walked between us and the truck behind us. I don't remember what my first phrase was, and probably just as well I don't, but after they reached the sidewalk my eyes still following them, I noticed one had two cakes. "Hey, Toots, how about a cake," came from my lips. To my surprise she immediately turned around and deposited both of them in my outstretched hands. I was so shocked I couldn't grasp the words to thank her till she was so far away I had to yell as if I was talking to a regiment of men--then I offered her a kiss for her kindness but she walked on, returning a very sweet smile.

Very few GIs go with WACs because there are so many GIs for each WAC. Most of the boys that can speak any French find a French girl now and then to substitute for our good American girls. We are happy when we get a date with a nice looking French girl. There are plenty of, or at least as large a percentage of, good looking girls as in the States, but why is it we are always longing for the ones we know at home? We receive pictures of friends back home and admit they're not as beautiful as some we know here but, oh, how many times you'd rather have that sweet girl in the picture or the one you just received two or three letters from.

## SvcMen WW II Letters

We have many things of interest and worth while in our lives here but most of them are temporary and we realize we must get back to the good old U.S.A. to have what we consider would be as near lasting happiness as one can have on this earth.

Pfc. Carlos E. Jewell

[Pfc. Jewell is the son of Mrs. Sylvia Jewell.]

[The News-Sentinel, Monday, June 19, 1944]

### LETTER FROM CLAUDE BILYEW

North Africa

Dear Bob:

Your letter found me in good health except my ankle. I turned it and it is very sore. I can hardly walk on it.

I wish I was there to go swimming with you. I bet you have lots of fun with those nurses at the hospital.

I went to the show tonight and saw "Four Jills and a Jeep." Martha Raye played in it. I saw her in person at Casablanca and it makes one enjoy them in pictures more after seeing them in person. I have seen quite a few movie stars since I've been overseas. I was in action once with Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. He is a swell fellow. A bomb dropped from a German plane, hit around 40 and 50 feet from us.

Bob, I was thinking all the time that you was a freshman this year, but guess I was thinking wrong. Glad to hear that you got all of your credits. Tell everyone I said Hello.

Your Big Brother,  
Claude

### SECOND LETTER FROM JACK MORRIS

Quito, Ecuador

June 13, 1944

Dear Mom:

I suppose that you have been real worried about me due to the revolution here in Ecuador, but it was really nothing. As I told you in my last letter, we expected it to happen any minute and we were prepared. When the fighting started in Quyaquil, we got out of bed here in Quito and went to the airport to take off immediately if the revolutionists tried to take our planes. All during the night Quito was quiet for our radios were the only means of communication with Qyuayquil although the people knew that something was happening. They set machine guns all around the place and we thought that we were going to see some fighting . . . Nothing happened. About nine the U.A. [?] ambassador sent us word not to resist if they tried to take our planes. Later on the party in power ordered us to take the planes and the Equatorian chief of staff to the U. S. army base in Salinas. A few hours after we got there the revolutinists captured the amy man and took him to Quayquil, having tied him with about 100 feet of rope. Later on we went to Quayquil, but most of the fighting was over.

The reports in the U.S. papers slightly understated the deaths for there were over 500. They really massacred the bcal police force and wouldn't even let them surrender, killing them when they tried to. They chopped several heads off, tied people behind trucks and dragged them to death, and many other barbarious deeds. It was over almost as soon as it happened.

And then all last week, we carried the new president all over Equador in the plane, half-way expecting somebody to blow us up any minute or start shooting at the plane. It was rather nice in that he gave the pilots a breakfast especially in our honor for carrying him all over the country.

Tomorrow we are flying to Balboa, and when we return we take him on another tour. It is rather interesting to watch the developments for they have taken about 200 political prisoners and most of them are my friends. They will probably be sent to prison until the new regime is over . . . The old political prisoners were just let out of jail since the new presidency. That is more or less the picture of the revolution, but minus many interesting stories which are too numerous to mention.

## SvcMen WW II Letters

Jack Morris

[The News-Sentinel, Tuesday, June 27, 1944]

### LETTER FROM KENT D. MILLER

Capt. K. D. Miller

New Guinea

June 6

Dear Mrs. Slaybaugh:

I am Joe's company Commander, Captain Miller. I received your anxious letter today, and though I'm certain that you have heard from Joe by this time, I thought that I would drop you a line or two about what a fine boy Joe is, and kind of help him explain why he was unable to write for a while.

Joe speaks so very fondly of you and the folks at home, that I can well understand why you are so concerned when his letters stop coming through. He stops in to trade a few stories with me now and then, in the evening, and never fails to say how dearly he loves you all. You see, I'm not much older than the boys, I'm 26, and we often get together and swap stories for I was a private three years ago when I came into the army and have quite a lot in common with them and can understand their viewpoints.

Now about the reason for not hearing from him. I know he had told you about the big invasion we made into enemy territory for I have censored his letter. We, Mrs. Slaybaugh, during the sea voyage and the first few days of combat, Joe and the rest of us just didn't have much time to write, and even if we had, it was sometime before they could have been able to get our letters out, so it was just impossible for Joe to let you know how he was getting along. Joe is a good, clean-spirited American boy, and I know he never missed an opportunity to write his loved ones, if it's at all possible. The fighting is all over now and Joe is no longer in any danger.

I was so sorry to hear that you have been in ill health, but I'm happy that you are once more able to be up and around. Please accept my very best wishes and hopes that you will enjoy good health now and in the future.

I know, as you say, that Joe is only one of thousands of boys in the service, but Mrs. Slaybaugh, Joe is a good boy, and has a good heart, and is well-liked by everyone. The army would certainly fare well if all the boys were like him.

Please don't worry about him too much, Mrs. Slaybaugh. I'll watch out for him, and I want you to feel welcome to write me anytime you wish about him. You can rest assured that I will tell you the truth.

I have been over here with another company for some time before Joe's battalion came over. I have been through seven invasions of enemy territory and I'm proud to say that I have never lost a boy in my company.

Joe is feeling fine and is in good health and spirits, and outside of the usual homesickness that we all have, he is happy.

I must close now, and so I send you all my best wishes for health and happiness. Please feel free to write to me any time.

Sincerely,

Capt. Kent D. Miller

[The News-Sentinel, Wednesday, June 28, 1944]

### LETTER FROM JACK HUNTER

June 16, 1944

Italy

Dear Folks:

Just a few lines this evening as I have time. I am still kicking and getting along swell and still after these Huns. I imagine you know or understand why I haven't wrote sooner but as I have said before I'll write whenever it is at all possible.

## SvcMen WW II Letters

It was a great fight and it was terrible but it takes good old American guts and courage to get this job done. I have had the opportunity to visit the big city here of Rome. It is quite a sight and very ancient and yet some very modern buildings. Gosh, almost walked my legs off and got lost a couple of times but outside of that it was the first time for a spell that we had had the chance to have a little relaxation as we were boxed in on the beachhead about Anzio, and as you know by the papers we never had too much room to get about. But we have made up for it since we took over from the Jerries. It's a grand sight to see them run and as we say the only good one is a dead one and it is the truth. I used to think that to kill a person was out, but I have taken the other slant and the only way to get this damn mess over with and get home is to kill every blame Kraut a person can see. I guess I sound cruel hearted but they had bumped off so many of my buddies that I get burnt up every time I think about it. I lost my best pal in this last action and believe you me it hurts quite a bit.

It was great news to us about the invasion. I only hope and pray that the Jerries will see their mistake before too long, but on the contrary it's still a tough one to crack. We were very busy the day that it happened but it did us and our morale great when we heard it, at least we can see a finish in the future now. We have sweated it out for quite some time now.

Suppost Bill is still on the coast or at least I hope so. I have been sweating him out the last few days, didn't know whether he was in on the landing or not.

I was slightly wounded in the hand in the action here and received the award of the Purple Heart so if you receive word about it, I'll explain it now. It's nothing to harm me in any way, just a shrapnel wound and O.K. and back into the game once again.

Must quit now but will write again when available and always waiting for a word from home. So will close once again. Write soon, give my best regards and hello's to all. Bye now.

Love,  
Jack Hunter

[The News-Sentinel, Wednesday, June 28, 1944]

### LETTER FROM BILL WERTZBERGER

Pfc. W. J. "Bill" Wertzberger  
June 11, 1944

Dearest Mother:

Not much news to write you about, as I haven't received a letter from you since the one of May 22nd. That was the last date of Mildred's letter, too, but then I think I know what might be holding up the mail service, however, some of the fellows here have received letters dated as late as June 1st. Perhaps I will hear from you today. I hope so and I hope that you are well and everything going all right.

I received a V-Mail (dehydrated) letter from Russell Black's wife just the other day and she said Russell had just returned from a trip to Indiana on a furniture buying trip and that he stopped in the bank there at Rochester but Howard was out at the time. Guess Russ was rushed for time so he didn't get the chance to get back. I hear from Russ or his wife often but they have said nothing about Russ entering the service. No doubt his age and dependents will keep him out for some time to come yet.

We had fried eggs again this morning for breakfast and even though I ate early breakfast at 6:30 the eggs were a little cold and hard as evidently they had been fried quite awhile. After breakfast I washed a few pieces of clothing, finishing by 8 o'clock, then showered, shaved and went to church at 9 o'clock and then another surprise for our noon meal, roast chicken. I had a nice large piece and it was really good with a good gravy and french fried potatoes. Quite a meal for here, don't you think?

I wrote Denny and Jimmy a short note the other day enclosing the insignias they wanted and also a little money order for each of them to use for a little extra cash while on their vacation.

Everything going on fine with me, Mother, and I have been feeling swell also been keeping quite busy as we have received quite a few PX supplies the past few weeks. However, I much prefer to keep busy as the time passes more quickly that way.

## SvcMen WW II Letters

I have been thinking of Jim Ellis since we received news of the invasion and have been wondering if he is in it. Have the folks in Rochester heard from him lately? The boys seem to be doing a fine job over there judging from the news we receive over the radio. More power to them!

Well, Mother, I will close now and hoping I hear from you very soon, I know you have written but it just a question of the receiving them at this time.

With lots and lots of love,

Bill

[The News-Sentinel, Thursday, June 29, 1944]

### SECOND LETTER FROM HERBERT V. BECK

T/Sgt. Herbert V. Beck

Somewhere in India

June 9, 1944

Dear Mother:

It's been quite some time since I've heard from you, or anyone else. I've received no mail since that I wrote you about last month. As a matter of fact, none of the other fellows have either. And I guess it will probably be several days yet before we get what has been written in the meantime, but has not caught up with us as yet. So I hope to be hearing more soon.

Well, we arrived at our destination well and OK, and without mishap. It was quite a long, and interesting trip, and I hope to see much more now that I'm over here. These Indians are an interesting people. Many of them live and do things in a manner of the past. For clothing, they wear a long strip of cloth draped around them, or wrapped in some manner and a turban for a hat. Most of them are of the poor class and beg for money (Buck-Shees Sahib). They still plow with the water buffalo and some sort of ancient plow--merely scratching the ground. They live in mud huts with thatched grass roofs. Some of them are more fortunate and live better. A baby may be purchased for 8 Annes or less (\$0.16) at times. They have them and don't want them or can't feed them and will dispose of them at most any price, and if giving money one has to be careful to see he's not buying the wrong kind of a souvenir, as it has happened before. It's really pathetic to really see how some of these different people exist. There are going to be lots of these Americans realize just how lucky they are. They are beginning to realize how fortunate they are to be Americans. Everywhere we've been, the different people all like the "Yank" soldiers the best, and I guess they've a reason to.

It rained this evening and it sure felt good. It's been so hot, one can hardly get a decent breath at times. I'm getting a good tan a little at a time. We are in a quite nice camp sort of resting up. Boy! did those showers feel good. We'll probably be getting lots of water soon, as it's time for the monsoon rains to start. Tell the rest of the family I said Hello and to write. I'll get around to them soon.

Love,

Herb

(T/Sgt. Herbert V. Beck is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Carl Beck of this city.)

[The News-Sentinel, Friday, June 30, 1944]

### LETTER FROM OMER SPOHN

S. Sgt. Omer Spohn

June 22, 1944

Somewhere in France

Dear Mother, Dad and All:

Just a few lines to let you know that I'm O.K. Sure hope all of you are well. Well, I finally received many of your letters. They certainly were welcome. I believe everyone in the family dropped me a line and that's very pleasing. Tell Jean I'll try and get her letter answered soon. Ruth wrote a nice long letter telling me all about Kenny. Guess he's quite a lad. Haven't written Ruth or Hazel for some time, so drop them a line for me. Have you had any fresh strawberries yet? Well, I have, and I picked them right out of the garden. They sure hit the spot. Had some

## SvcMen WW II Letters

fresh milk, too. Sorry I have to make this so short, but I must close for now and write Marietta a line. Tell all I said "Hello," and I'll write when I can.

Your son,  
Omer

[The News-Sentinel, Monday, July 3, 1944]

### EIGHTH LETTER FROM ROBERT GREER

(Robert L. Greer, age 19, Rank Mo. M. M. 2/c, U.S.N.R., was a member of a U.S. naval crew in the American Assault Force which invaded France.)

Robert L. Greer  
With Invasion Force

"This was not my first action with the enemy. I saw previous action at North Africa, Sicily, Italy. I have received the following promotion: Mo. M. M. 2/c, 6-1-44. My home address is 510 1/2 Main street, Rochester, Ind. My parents are Bert W. Greer. His address is 510 1/2 Main street, Rochester, Ind. Brother Fred served 18 months in Europe (U.S. Army Inf.)"

Robert attended Rochester High school.

[The News-Sentinel, Wednesday, July 5, 1944]

### LETTER FROM MAX E. TEETER

Pvt. Max E. Teeter  
New Guinea, June 6, 1944

Dear Mom and Pop:

I am now assigned to the Fifth Air Force and I have reached my new base. I was transferred in a B-24 bomber, my first real plane ride. I have been assigned to the motor pool and am driving trucks.

It doesn't rain here so often and we have laundry service here. The floor of our tent is off the ground about a foot. The food here is much better and the water is fine also.

I received the snapshots, also started to get The News-Sentinel just before I shipped.

There are quite a few dogs and cats here. There aren't any coconuts here but some bananas. Here it is warmer at night but still cool enough to sleep between wool blankets. We have electric lights in our tents.

Love,  
Max. E.

(The letter was received recently by Mr. and Mrs. C. C. Teeter, 200 Pontiac street, from their son, Pvt. Max E. Teeter.)

[The News-Sentinel, Friday, July 7, 1944]

### FOURTH LETTER FROM HAROLD DEAN CLEVINGER

Dear Mother:

I received your letters today and was sure glad to hear from you. I am feeling fine and I hope you are too. Tell Bob and the kids that I said hello and that I'm still in India and will bring something for them from here when I come home. Have you heard anything from Veria Lewis, when you see Sis tell her to see Veria and tell her to write. Tell the kids there are monkeys and everything else you can imagine--all kinds of animals.

Well, mother, I will close for now. Write soon. With love.

Your son, Harold.

(This letter was received by Mrs. Omer Gregory of Rochester from her son, Harold Clevenger, who is now stationed in India.)

[The News-Sentinel, Tuesday, July 11, 1944]

### SECOND LETTER FROM THOMAS SAUSAMAN

Pvt. Thos. Sausaman  
France

## SvcMen WW II Letters

June 30, 1944

Dear Mom:

Well, Mom, I am dropping you a few lines. I hope these few find you in good health. I am okay myself. I'm in a hospital now. I'm not hurt very bad though, so don't worry about me.

How are things around Indiana now? I imagine kind of dead.

I'll close now and write more later. Write soon and as often as you can.

I remain your son,

With love,

Tom

[The News-Sentinel, Friday, July 14, 1944]

### LETTER FROM WALTER DEVERL CARR

Pfc. Walter D. Carr

June 25, 1944

Somewhere in France

Dearest Mother and Father:

Well, Mother, just a very few lines to let you know that I'm all O.K. and still getting along fine, although I'd like to forget and believe me for which I'm mighty thankful to God for the fact that I'm still here. Am terribly sorry that I've been unable to write you sooner, but, due to the fact that I've been in combat for some time now, this really is the first opportunity which I've had. I probably won't get to write you very often but anyway, Mother, you can rest assured that I'll always write you whenever at all possible.

Hope you'll excuse this poor writing but I'm doing it from down in my foxhole, which, by the way, is about the safest place to be whenever possible, especially when there's so much artillery and mortar fire overhead. Take it from me combat is surely a very serious thing but let's skip the subject for there is so many other things I'd much rather talk about.

Do hope Father is coming along much better by now and tell him I said hello and take it easy. Also tell him to keep that chin up, don't worry and I'm sure there's lots of happiness ahead for all of us.

Well, Mother, tell Dot and Becky and also Bette and Bob hello for me. Be sure to take good care of yourselves, keep that chin up, don't worry about me for I'm quite sure God's with me. Answer soon.

Bye now and be seeing you. Lots of love for all,

Your son,

Deverl

[The News-Sentinel, Saturday, July 15, 1944]

### THIRD LETTER FROM ALBERT L. FISHER

Lt. Albert L. Fisher

Somewhere in India

July 4, 1944

The News-Sentinel

Rochester, Indiana

Dear Friends:

I will take this opportunity to write you a letter; not that I don't have anything else to do, but because I was in a plane wreck last week and wrenched my back; therefore I have to obey the doctor and stay in bed for awhile. After seeing the wrecked plane, I considered myself very fortunate to get out the way I did. I don't mind the laying around, because it gives me a good chance to get some much needed rest, do some letter writing and do some reading (what little there is to read.)

We are having the regular monsoon weather here now and I never have seen so much rainfall in my life. During the month of June, we had 87 inches of rain, which is almost as much as you have back there in a whole year's average. It doesn't look much like a jungle here where I am at



## SvcMen WW II Letters

anymore, but just a continuous sea with a lot of islands protruding above the water. For 15 days, we had a continuous rain, not too hard at times, but just a steady drizzle. The only chance we got to see the sun was while we went above the clouds on our flights. Mud, water, mosquitoes, leeches, scorpions, frogs, toads, snakes and insects of all kinds are what we're putting up with now. These leeches are not just a common ordinary leech, but they get as long as four inches. By Gee, I think the Red Cross should draft them to draw blood for their bank. The sure can get it and mighty fast without you even knowing it. Sometime ago, I had 17 of them on me at once and didn't know they were even on me until I removed my clothes. They leave such an awful sore, too, which is difficult to heal. If I don't get any scars of battle, I'll sure have some from these plagued pests.

The situation here is just about the same as ever; although there are some improvements. The Japs are sure treacherous and very cunning, but they have found someone that can keep up with them and even outwit them at their own tricks. They are sure not anyone's fool and always pop up where you least expect them. They have met their match now and we're giving them a dose of their own medicine and pouring it on plenty, too. I will not make any comment as to when I think they will be finished, because I don't know and I doubt whether any one else does either. All we can hope and pray for is that it will be soon. I know that I am sure getting fed up with this environment and so in is the rest of the boys, too. It isn't like sitting back there in the States and reading about it or hearing it over the radio, but here, you see the actual thing and know the facts. Two years over here is sure going to seem like a long time and I sure will be thankful when I am on the road back home. I used to think it great to read about war, battles, and travel, but never again do I want any part of either reading, seeing or even hearing about war. I have had enough, but am going to stick it out and leave my trademark among them.

The crops over here, rice and tea, are sure coming along very nice now. The rice is about 12 to 16 inches high, however there is a lot of it that is still very small. You can see the Indians out in their rice paddies transplanting rice and cultivating it with their water buffaloes or cattle. It is a very interesting sight to see an Indian that is very lightly clad, following behind two oxen, which are pulling a plow that resembles a hockey stick. They can only cultivate their rice fields when it is very wet. It is sure a muddy sight. I am anxious to see how they harvest this rice with all the water that they have here. Rice is their main food along with some fish and salt. With those three articles, they can go a long way through life; however, the higher caste have other food, which they grow over here, such as mangoes, pineapples, bananas, cocoanuts, onions and other numerous vegetables that I am unable to spell. It is bad enough to pronounce the names of various things, let alone try to spell them.

I have eaten several meals with a rajah close by here and have thoroughly enjoyed each meal too. A rajah is a very wealthy Indian that has a lot of estates or tea gardens and gets a big income from them; also from the people that lives on the estates and works them. This certain rajah has three wives (don't see how he does it) and seven children. He had a seven course dinner there and of course had to eat with my fingers. It is sure a messy way of eating, I must say. The women never all sit down at the table with company, but stand in the back of you and see that you get all that you can eat. I felt like a stuffed sack when I finished, but they thought I ate very little. They are sure big eaters and that is about all they do. They have very strange customs about getting their children married. First of all, the bride and groom to be never get to see each other until the time they are married. They send pictures back and forth of each other and that is the limit; however the folks are allowed to see the opposite sides. In fact, they do all the arranging of the marriage. If a boy doesn't want to marry a certain girl or vice versa and the folks think it's all right, they get married anyhow. I wonder how that would work back in the States! The lower caste don't do this way. They just get married whenever they want to and to whoever they want to, whether they are of age or not.

I saw a very interesting sight some time ago. I saw a funeral pyre floating down a river. That is really something. A lot of the Indians dispose of their dead that way; others leave them out for the vultures to take care of, while some bury their dead. Some of these sights are just unbelievable. I have taken quite an interest in the people over here, trying to understand their

## SvcMen WW II Letters

ways and customs, but am not making much headway with it. Seems as though the more I learn about them, the more confused I get. If you enter a village and they ask you to eat with them and you don't, they will be so insulted that they practically kick you out. I have encountered that situation several times and I usually eat, if it is no more than just stick my fingers in the food and make a pretense that I eat. It is much better than getting kicked out of the village.

I could go on and on telling of various things about these people, but it would take a book to describe it all. Summing it all up, I will say, every person that comes home from this theater will sure have a lot of most interesting stories and they won't have to be exaggerated either to be interesting. Must close now and go over to the mess hall and see how they have the corned beef or mutton camouflaged this time or whether it is aquarium fodder again (sardines and salmon) or as the British say, "I say there old chap, won't you come along and have a spot of tye with me." Keep the fire burning, because we'll be coming home when the lights go on again. Cheerio and best wishes to you all, remain,

Sincerely yours,  
Albert L. Fisher, 1st Lt.  
A.C., 28th Airdrome Sqdn., APO 483,  
New York, N.Y.

[The News-Sentinel, Monday, July 17, 1944]

### FOURTH LETTER FROM HAROLD D. ALSPACH

Harold Alspach, RM 2/c  
July 6, 1944  
Sicily

Dear Mom and Dad:

Well, at last I did receive a letter from you. Of lately our mail has been all bottled up, but finally some got to us, so now I have to start answering some of it.

How is all the business going, when do you plan on moving into the house in town? You will have to send me a picture of the front side from the street. I might get back next year one never knows.

Sis and Spike must really get along O.K. I certainly would like to see her and those ducks if she tends them like I used to. Is she anxious to go to school in town this fall? It won't be long before you will have to start thinking of such things.

Do you have it figured out how we can go out to Aunt Hazel's with rationing, etc? Would the Plymouth hold up, could I talk enough tickets out of the board to make the trip? I think if I could figure all the gas I haven't used since they started it, I would have enough, don't you?

Did Viv drink all that good beer up that I heard they had saved for him in the basement.

Send me Johnny Price's service and outfit number and all the dope on it. I get around quite a bit, maybe I could run across him. Where is Joe Smith based at?

Once I get back to the states, I don't believe I will have to go overseas again, since I have spent so much time here, but I would like to go back to South America. I like it down there, maybe after the war, I will go there and get a job. It's like home to me in these hot climates. I think after all the veterans get discharged the states are going to be rather crowded, besides there is good pay in South America.

Well, I now rate four stars on my campaign ribbon of Africa, one for Tunisia, Sicily, Salerno and Anzio. I've been connected in all these, so I think I've had about my share, don't like to crowd my luck too far, since my best buddy is on the bottom of the ocean there at Anzio, when I go up there, I think of him, especially when I sail over the top of him. This ole mud boat has been plenty lucky considering the close shaves the Germans have given us, but I hope to be able to walk off it with my seabag over my shoulder instead of swimming away from her.

Well, I'm running out of gossip, am getting to be a regular old maid, guess it will take you a month to read this one, by that time I should have another one pounded out, though it takes lots of steam to get started.

## SvcMen WW II Letters

Well, mom, I better start stopping. Tell dad to take good care of the new house, cause I would like to see it once and see that the young lady gets started to school.

Good night, lots of love,

Harold

From Harold D. Alspach, RM 2/c. Received by Mr. and Mrs. Henry Alspach.

[The News-Sentinel, Tuesday, July 18, 1944]

### LETTER FROM JOE SLAYBAUGH

Pvt. Joe Slaybaugh  
Somewhere in S.W.P.  
Tues., July 4, 1944

Darling Mother:

Since today is Decoration day I will try and write you a nice long letter to let you know I miss you very vry much and get very lonesome for you. Golly Mom it seems ages and ages since I have seen you. But these are the things us true blue, red blooded Yanks have to withstand and face. I am getting along just fine and am well and safe. I hope this letter finds you feeling well, Mother. Gosh the time sure flies here. We have plenty to do to occupy us so we don't get lonesome, but at night when you are not doing anything, then we start to really get lonesome and worry about our loved ones back home. How is everyone feeling now, Mother? I hope everyone is well and working. I will not say happy because I know I am not happy either, mom, just as I know you aren't happy. No one can be happy with their boys overseas in service on the fighting fronts. These jungles are really bad places, mom. We have a lots of things to fight then the Japs. Golly, mom these jungles sure work on a guy and it changes a guy. It makes a young man old. It wears you down and takes all the pep out of you. So don't ever let none of the guys tell you that jungle fighting isn't tough. I have waded in mud up to my ankles. I have slept in fox holes with water 2 inches deep. So you see we are not having fun. I am getting use to this kinda life. We have seen quite a bit of excitement here. What we have over here is a common everyday happening. We have a "Oregon woodpecker" over here that scares the living daylight out a you. But they silenced the Oregon woodpecker (Jap machinegun). Then we have a "Washing Machine Charley," he is a regular visitor about every night at a certain time he comes over. They really pitch some flak up in the air at him but he always gets away. He shuts off his motors and coasts in. Then we have a "Whistling Charley," but "Whistling Charley" doesn't whistle any more. But he sure gave us a scare several times. The same morning they got him, he threwed one right over us and fell in the ocean. I was just getting up and another kid, by the way his name is Ball, standing by me all at once we heard that old familiar whistle coming right at us. I hollered drop to the ground. We both dove onto the ground and Old Charley went over and hit the ocean. All we heard was a thud. We were darn glad to hear it thud back of us in the ocean. Boy I was really sweating. Then we had a "Walking Tom" there was a kitchen by us and they said one night around 1 o'clock they saw a guy go to our water tank and get some water. We know it wasn't a G.I. because in combat you don't walk around at night. So I and three other guys set some booby taps the next evening about 7:30 on the trail he came on the night before. All at once we heard an explosion. So six of us went out to see what it was and there was a wild board blown to the devil. I felt like cutting a chunk off him and cooking it, but I didn't think that would be very good, because they say these wild boars eat dead Japs. Of these things, I think old "Washing Machine Charley" is the worse. You can hear him, but can't see him. But you know what he carries and they are for you. If you make the mistake such as making any kind of a light, it is just too bad. At times you can't hear him. Boy then is when you really sweat. Yes, Mother, I have had quite a few thrilling adventures in the past three months. Oh, yes, we have an "Ack Ack Pete" over here that takes cracks at the observation plane that gives our artillery the range. They also got "Ack Ack Pete." So that about takes car of our buddies. I have seen more dead Japs over here than I have live ones. But that is the way I like it. A dead Jap is a good Jap. So much for over here and me. Now for you guys at home. How is Johnny and Frank? Is Johnny still working at Topps? I hope he is well and all the Standburys are well. How is little Joey D, Connie, Joey Allen, Freddy,

## SvcMen WW II Letters

Roberta, Barbara, Alton, Sutie, Verl, Bob, Patty, and Sissy, Delores S. Gertrude, Mary Jean? Fine I hope. How is Sarah, Effie, Charley, Helen, Doris, Olive, Betty? Fine I hope. Have you heard anything from Dad lately? How is he? How is Uncle Charles and Doodie. I hope they are okay. Tell them I said hello and tell them to take good care of themselves. Well Mother I am about out of words for now. I have two Jap rifles now. One .25 caliber and one .303 caliber. I had to set two rising sons to get them. So much for that I don't even like to think of the things I have seen. Well Mom I'll close for now. Please send me some cigars, air mail stamps and envelopes. I have plenty of paper but no stamps or envelopes. Tell everyone I said hello and give them my love and tell them to write to me. I love you very very much mother and I pray for your well being. Pray for me mother. Don't worry about me I'll be okay. Here is some Japanese invasion money for this island and islands near it. I am sending you four paper notes. These are a 1 gulden note a gulden note, ten cent note and a 5 cent note. All this money was given to the natives for their work. They also paid their soldiers with invasion money. These four pieces of money is worth 94 1/2 cents. But since it is Jap money it isn't worth a darn. I got a lot of invasion money, some off the natives, some off dead Japs. Bye now Mother. I love you very very much and I miss you very very much. Take good care of yourself and be careful just for me. Bye now.

Love and kisses,

Joe

P.S. - Send cigars, send air mail stamps and envelopes.

[The News-Sentinel, Saturday, July 22, 1944]

### THIRD LETTER FROM CARL D. HEDGES

Carl Hedges

New Guinea

July 1, 1944

Dear Friends, The Studebakers:

About this time of evening, back in Rochester on Saturday evening, I can see the streets crowded to capacity, the stores and sidewalks jammed, it's hot, and everyone's walking faster than the next so they won't be sold out before they get into the stores. You may send a boy overseas, put him behind a gun and bury him in a foxhole, but you can't take the memories of bygone days for his plans for the future away from him. We'll fight like mad up to the limit and I know it's not in vain, for we'll all be more proud to march down the streets of the city, towns, and hamlets when we know we may once again have "Peace on Earth, Good Will Toward Men."

Some people may take a letter like this to mean that I'm homesick. Please don't think that, for I'm not, of course I want to get home as bad as the next buddy, but I'm willing to stay over here until this thing is over. I assure you, my friends, that we've got both barrels "Open fire on the Japs" and won't stop til we rid the earth of the aggressors.

I suppose you are busy as ever. I think of you good friends very often I just can't find time to write you more often. I often said I'd write to you once a week, then something always comes up.

Is rationing still as strict as it was back in November when I was home? Thank goodness we don't have to be bothered with that over here.

Some of the latest movies that have been showing over here are "Up In Arms," "A Guy Named Joe," "You Can't Ration Love," and tonight is a picture of war, "The Russians Strike Back." If you ever get a chance to see "Dexterity," I recommend you see that one, of them all. It shows just what we put up with over here. Some of the folks back in the states think us Yanks over here are living the life of Riley. I can assure you this is not my idea of Rest.

Believe it or not, this is my 15th letter I've written today. I suppose you wonder when I'm going to stop this gabbing and scribbling, don't you? It takes me a long time to wind up, but then after I'm at the peak, watch out!

I sent home some Australian and Japanese money, and am planning to send a rifle (Japanese calibre 25) and some maps. I've sent them to the Captured Enemy Depot to get okayed and I hope to get them in a day or two. I want you to look at them for I think they may be of interest to you.

## SvcMen WW II Letters

I'll have to invite all my friends over for a dinner when I get back and tell you all about this experience over here, for you can plainly see that I've been writing you six pages and could write six more, but Mr. Censor has too many other things to do so I'll sign off now, wishing you all the best of luck.

I hope to hear from you soon, as I always enjoy your letters a lot more than is known.

God bless you all, I remain your friend as always,

Carl

(Received by Mr. and Mrs. C. M. Studebaker from Carl Hedges, now serving in the armed forces in New Guinea.)

[The News-Sentinel, Monday, July 24, 1944]

### FIFTH LETTER FROM GEORGE D. HOLLOWAY

#### SGT. GEO. HOLLOWAY TELLS OF D-DAY INVASION EXPERIENCES

Sgt. George D. Holloway, member of the 325 Glider infantry, of this city, took part in the D-Day invasion, and reports to his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Granville Holloway of this city, that he is again back in England, safe and sound.

George, who is a graduate of the Rochester High school and former member of the school's basketball squad, has been overseas for over a year. He enlisted in March of 1942 and prior to his entry in the army he was employed as a clerk in the Berkheiser grocery.

The following letter, which was received by his parents the forepart of this week, will be of interest to his many friends:

July 16, 1944

England

Dear Mother and Dad:

Here's your fighting son again back to let you know I'm well, safe and as you see above, in England. Next to home in the U.S.A., this seems like home too, in a way. Since being back, there has been a lot to do in getting things organized and in working order again. You'll never know how wonderful it is to be back where it's quiet, peaceful and nothing going over your head. Now that I'm back, maybe I can get caught up on my writing, which is far behind. There's a lot to write about but would rather forget about it. There's a little that I can write about so will do my best to give you an idea of what I've been through.

As you know I went over the Channel by glider, which was very quiet until we hit the ground. We weren't on the ground more than 15 minutes until we had captured four German soldiers. We had rocket guns shooting at us from all directions, so didn't take long to get out of the field we landed in. We took the prisoners along for quite a ways until we finally disposed of them at one of our headquarters. We walked all day long and finally was in contact with the rest of the outfits.

Our first big mission came up the following evening and from that time on we were in contact with old Jerry all the time except for two days, and then, in artillery range. During those 30 days, there is so much to tell you but would rather not. When I get back home, it may be different. I hope you don't mind, but know you understand. It's funny how much a person can take under circumstances but come through in flying colors. Only scratch I got was from a "K" ration can, thank goodness, yes.

We took a lot of prisoners and among them were Japs, Poles, Czechs, Russian and Prussian men. The last four were forced laborers and either had to fight or else. Many of them gave themselves up. Most of the Jerries will fight to the last, which we helped them out. That business of fighting from hedgerow to hedgerow is no fun and really rough. They were dug in behind those rows something terrific. Some of them had everything in them but running water but didn't stay long when we started their way. We ran into some of the S.S. troops and the Panzer divisions. Most of them were German static troops, set around to delay us but they sure failed. Coming in the way we did, old Jerry had the pants scared off of him which gave us time to get set and then really go to town on him.

In the 30 days in the front, we went through some of the hardest fighting of the campaign, which won't be forgotten. Most of these days were spent going continuously from daylight to dark,

## SvcMen WW II Letters

so there was little time to even eat any of the rations we carried with us. At night we'd set up in defense, then in the morning early, take off again. Each day you'd think that you couldn't go on the next day from lack of sleep and rest but you did just the same. I guess that's the hazards of war that we used to read about. In times like these, it's surprising what one can do.

Those days are behind us now, as we'll be ready for the next one and in hopes that this is over before that time comes. I wouldn't give a million dollars for the experience I've just come out of or give a penny for any more of it. It's time to get busy again so will have to close. Before closing here's a few of the places I was in or very near that you've read about in the paper, which will give you a good idea of where I've been and the fighting I've been through: La Hay Du Puits, St. Mere E'Clise, Ettinwill and St. Sioer La Comp. Here's hoping I've given you a fair idea of the past 30 days I've spent.

In closing I hope this finds you all well and taking good care of yourselves. Tell everyone hello for me and hope to be seeing you all before too many months.

Your loving son,

George

[The News-Sentinel, Wednesday, July 26, 1944]

### FOURTH LETTER FROM JAMES NIXON

Sgt. James Nixon

Somewhere in England

July 17

Dear Folks:

Well, we are back again in jolly old England and I can assure you that it is sure a wonderful feeling to be back. I am fine and outside of losing some excess weight am pretty much the same as always.

Got a letter from Mabel this morning so I suppose you hear some noise makers around the house once in awhile, now. Are you still having such terribly hot weather? Oh yes, there was a picture in the June 12 issue of The News-Sentinel that I and 21 other men are very anxious to procure for sentimental reasons. I intend to write Lib and see if she can get them for us as they have a value to us that is far above money. Is the lake filled up this summer--that is all the cottages. I suppose the dance hall has a big business as the people can't go so far away from home as usual.

Well, bye for now,

Jim

(Editor's Note: The photo of which James is so vitally interested is that of an airborne glider. These types of gliders were used to carry airborne fighters over the channel on D-Day. There's a possibility this same glider may be the one which carried Jim and his fellow engineers over the channel on invasion day. The glider bore the marking E-3.)

[The News-Sentinel, Wednesday, August 2, 1944]

### FIFTH LETTER FROM JAMES CLEMENS

(Mr. and Mrs. Oliver Clemens have received the following letter from their son, Jim, somewhere in Italy.)

Dear Folks and Sammy:

Well, here I am again to have a little chat with you. I write so many letters and get so tired that I just have to drive myself to do it.

We are having very hot and dry weather. I just wish we could get a nice shower, I believe we boys would feel better. When we go back to camp after going in swimming the dust is so bad that we feel just as dirty as we did before.

We got PX rations yesterday, each one of us got 15 packs of cigarettes, nine candy bars, cheeseip, soap, shaving cream, etc., that has to last us 15 days. About every three weeks we get one or two bottles of beer, the only trouble with it is it's not cold. You know that warm beer is not very good.

## SvcMen WW II Letters

I visited an Italian family the other day, that I met, and spent several evenings with several months ago, they sure were tickled to see me again and they just couldn't treat me good enough. I hated to leave them and don't suppose I will see them again. They want me to write to them after I get back home.

Now, Mom, I will tell you some of the battles I have been in, we have permission to do so now. I have been in the battle of Salerno, which was the invasion battle. It was a tough one and never will forget as long as I live. Also the battle of Volturno, Mt. Comeno, which is referred to as the million dollar hill, the battle of Cassino, also was in the push through the Gustove, Hitler line, then the battle of Rome. I will always say that the good Lord was on my side.

I have visited and seen the old ruins of Pompeii, it is the city that was covered up with lava from Mout Vesuvius many hundreds of years ago, also saw the million dollar church that is still standing. The city itself is not so beautiful but it is the history that makes it so well known.

The most beautiful city that I have ever seen is Rome. The people there are well dressed and hardly know there is a war going on. I guess they have plenty to eat but lack such items as coffee, sugar, salt and chocolate, etc. The people back in the States can be thankful even if they are rationed on these articles.

Our company threw a party and a dance there in Rome. Most of us boys had dates with Italian girls. I had my date with an Italian nurse. Sure was good looking and we had a swell time, that was one night I forgot about the war.

One beautiful place that I saw in Rome was Vatican City, especially St. Peters Cathedral. Several of the boys saw the Pope. I didn't get to, but if I ever get another chance I sure will go to see him.

Well, Mom, I will try and finish this letter. I got my new teeth yesterday, don't know if I ever will get used to them or not. The dentist said they would have cost me around a hundred dollars back in the States, so I guess they gave me a pretty good set.

Well, I think I had better close, because I want to go to the show tonight. I go whenever I get a chance because I don't get to go very often. Tell Sam hello and be a good boy. Hoping to see you soon.

Love,

Son Jim

[The News-Sentinel, Wednesday, August 2, 1944]

### LETTER FROM ELDON E. SUTTON

Dear Uncle and Family:

How are you? I am fine. I have received several letters from you since I have written you. But there has been several weeks at a time that I never got to write home, as I was moving around so much. You will notice that I now sign my name Sgt. for some reason or other. I was made section chief, and was chosen to be one of the first to take a section of men with our line of equipment to this place. We was part of a big task force. And we landed right behind the infantry. Boy oh boy we run into war. The fur was flying everywhere. But we all got through it. I have saw so many planes shot down that I don't think much about it anymore. As high as 10 a minute. That was the biggest scrap that I have been in. I never will forget the first one that I had a big hand in destroying, there was one coming at very high altitude, I could tell where he was by the sound of him, so I had listened so much in basic training. I went into action and hit him broadsided. He twisted and squirmed and tryed to get away but I stayed with him and he was in flames. It wasn't three minutes until I heard another one coming at a very low altitude. I whirled the equipment around and went into action and hit him in the nose. I said to the captain, there he is and here he comes, and boy was he coming. Only 10 or 15 feet from the ground. He shot holes in oil drums at the rear of our position, but missed us, turned to the right and crashed. The next morning we went up to where the wreck was. There was 5 dead Japs laying around and the plane scattered around. Three was burned quite a bit, one looked as though he never had a scratch on him. One was still clinging to his machine gun. I got the boots off the pilot. I wouldn't take a

## SvcMen WW II Letters

hundred dollars for them. After it was all over the captain said to me, Sutton you know you was actually amazing how you stood at those controls, and never moved but held it right on him. Boy I had him blinded until he couldn't see. If I had got scared and run for a fox hole, there wouldn't been anyone left to tell about it, but I was not a bit scared though I was staring death in the face for I had a job to do there. These dirty Japs have learned a few things that the yanks will kill them. I saw a funny sight the other day. The M P's had a Jap prisoner and some negroes saw him and made a dive for him and was going to cut him in pieces, but the M P's got him away. Boy those black guys sure had the fire in their eyes. That Jap didn't have very long hair but he was so scared they were standing on end ha! ha! I see a lot of them and don't have a bit of love for them if it wasn't for them we could all be home. Bye now, your nephew.

Sgt. Eldon E. Sutton, 37223551  
Btry C, 286th AAA SL. Bn.  
APO 920  
c/o Postmaster  
San Francisco, Calif.

(This letter was written to Mrs. Elmer Sutton of Rochester.)  
The News-Sentinel, Tuesday, August 8, 1944]

### FIFTH LETTER FROM JESSE J. CALVERT

From Jesse J. "Bill" Calvert

Dear Ed:

Received your good letter of July 26, which found me well and pretty busy. But I don't mind. How are you and Mrs. Vawter? Fine, I hope. I expect at this time this morning, you are in church services with your many friends and members of the church. I sure wish I were there with you. Speaking of the church plays, we boys really enjoyed doing it. We all had such a good time. And we all are praying and hoping for the termination of this war so we will all be back to our loved ones, and church. It is a day which we are all looking forward to. At present, the news sounds very good and let us pray and hope that someday soon the bells will be ringing to signify that the new world peace will be in effect. Sure glad to hear that you are having pretty good luck fishing. I guess I'll have to learn how to fish all over again after I get home. It's been so long since I've been fishing. I'm hoping these few lines find you and Mrs. Vawter well and that I'll hear from you again soon.

As ever,  
Your friend, Bill

(Letter from Bill Calvert to Mr. Ed Vawter.)  
[The News-Sentinel, Saturday, August 19, 1944]

### LETTER FROM GAIL FUNK

Gail Funk  
Italy  
21 July 1944

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Funk:

It has been some time since I've written you folks but the sparetime is rather scarce at times. I hope you both are doing good, you sounded like in your last letter as if you weren't so well this summer. You want to take good care of yourself.

The grain is almost all threshed now, their threshing machines are more or less like ours only very old and smaller. I have seen some places where they have to beat out the grain with clubs, etc., like Grandpa used to tell me they did before there were threshing machines. The women haul the grain usually, and always on two wheel carts pulled by a couple horses or oxen some times. Don't misinterpret those two wheel carts, they do haul a big load and they really load them down. The wheels are about five feet or so high.

I have been to Rome a few days a while back and I can say that it was the best time I've had since being overseas. For the first time in the 14 months over here, I could almost forget Army



## SvcMen WW II Letters

life, war and everything else. I rather expect it was something like when Walter had his furlough in England. We, there were two of us, got a hotel room soon after we arrived in Rome. They only cost 50 lira (50c) which isn't bad for a day and night. And then too, there was real sheets and pillows and springs on the bed, things a GI doesn't see over here often. This may sound silly but I did have a hard time going to sleep the first night. Each morning we would get up, go around the corner to a newsstand and buy a "Stars and Stripes" and catch up on the news. Newsstands for first time since I left New York. They have streetcars, several autos and hundreds of bicycles. One Italian telling me about the Germans when they were there, etc., said that when they left they took with them all the bicycles that they could find. There sure must have been a heck of a lot hidden.

One of the most interesting places was the Vatican City. Without a doubt, I have never saw anything to compare with it. As you enter the Vatican you are suddenly within a large high walled stone circle, which in the middle stands a tall statue sort of thing. Around the top of this great circle, every so many feet are statues of different Bible characters, there must be over 50 of them in all, then as you walk on through the circle, to the far side you come to the St. Peter church. Here we found an English speaking guide who took us in and as we went with him, he told us of the building, etc. I'm not up to par on the Catholic religion but I'll try to explain it as well as I can. Along the sides all the way around are altars, 22 in all, each represents a Pope. Up along the walls are still more statues of religious characters and Popes. The floor as well as the ceiling is covered with the most beautiful works of art in the world. And even to the painting clear up in the dome which is some 250 feet high, all in painting are large enough to be easily distinguished from the floor. The church is layed out in the form of a cross. As you enter the church you are at the foot of the cross then as you walk on down you come to the branches on either side. In the middle is the tomb of St. Peter, that is a very large bronze covering all covered with carvings. This is not to mention all the gold candlesticks, beautiful chandeliers of glass and gold too. I can't express to you just how really nice it is there.

The old ampitheater was another place of interest. It looks exactly like all the pictures I have ever seen of it, round, old and big. I found out it was completed in the year 79 so it is gting pretty old. It stands in good shape to be so old, although all the steps are worn off so that now it is just an incline and no steps at all due to the millions of people who have walked up and down in those thousand and some years. The lion pens and walks are still intact and you can see just how it used to operate.

The Roman ruins are at different places around the section of the ampi-theater they are left the same for years and years and possibly always will be. You can sorta use your imagination a little and more or less see how the old Roman buildings used to be. There are large stone columns laying around, blocks of rock, etc.

Rome has a lot of trees in and around it, which makes it look good, too. The people are the best Italians I've met, and you run into several that speak English. They dress just like the people at home and with as good a clothes too. There are plenty of stores which have almost anything. So far, prices are fairly low, but as time goes on they will go up and up as usual when the GI's take over. You can sell cigarets, any brand, for 50c a pack, they offer you 40c at the start.

I took a lot of pictures while I was there so I should be able to show you some interesting ones when I come home. There were many, many other interesting things too, but I can't tell you all of them. Hope you find this interesting, see you soon, and wirt, whenever you can.

Truly,  
Gail

[The News-Sentinel, Tuesday, August 29, 1944]

FOURTH LETTER FROM ALBERT L. ESHELMAN

Albert L. Eshelman  
8-27-44

Dear Mr. Vawter:

## SvcMen WW II Letters

It sure has been a long time since I have written to you but we have been pretty busy. I suppose Rochester is still the same old place. I was sorry to hear about Jim Liston, he sure had spent a long time there in the store and made a lot of friends too.

How is fishing this summer, that's one thing I want to get caught up on when I get back home, especially fishing through the ice, that sure is lots of fun.

The folks tell me that Myron Berkheiser is in France, is that right, and what is he doing, they weren't long in getting him over there.

I have a nice camp and the countryside is beautiful and we know less about the war here than you folks do at home. The hills around here are covered with tilled fields, hedgerows, grass and fir trees with the sun shining down on it sure looks might nice. The weather here is about like the forepart of October here now a coat feels mighty good, in fact it has all summer long. I guess where Bill Calvert is it's been sort of hot.

Is Rev. Coverstone still at the old church? If you see him give him my best regards and maybe I'll be home soon so I can turn your gloves wrong side out again. It sure will seem good to get back there talking over old times together. I don't expect our experiences over here will be heard of much for some of the fellows won't want to talk about it.

Where is Conde Holloway and Cecil Rhodes or don't you know either. I have lost complete track of most all of the fellows. I know about where Bill is at and that's about all. I have lost his address but Marie is sending it to me. The white caps are gathering around up there, looks like it might snow but it's not quite cold enough yet. The sun don't shine much here even though the days are very long. Maybe Bill or someone has told you about our restaurants over here. They are very scarce but the fish and chip joints are plenty. Chips are our French fries. We usually get a fish and chip supper once in a while that's a shilling or 20c.

Well, Ed, don't work too hard and take good care of yourself. If you see Grandad and Grandmother tell them hello for me and that I'll write them soon. I have been very neglectful about writing. I hope I can do better in the future so for now so long.

Your friend,  
Roy

[The News-Sentinel, Friday, September 8, 1944]

### SECOND LETTER FROM JOHN H. SHAW

(Mr. and Mrs. J. G. Shaw of route 5, Rochester, received the following letter from their son, somewhere in England)

Dear Folks:

Well, here I am back where I started. I'm O.K., well, healthy and happy, and believe me, I'm in one piece.

Thank God for that. I just got scratched. I received the Purple Heart also.

I made PFC and got the Combat Infantryman's Medal.

I haven't heard from home for over a month. Write to this address and send it airmail, I don't know how long I'll be here but I hope it's a long, long, time.

Well, bye bye, and don't worry.

Love,  
Your son, John

[The News-Sentinel, Saturday, September 9, 1944]

### LETTER FROM CLYDE E. TOWNE

Clyde E. Towne  
France  
Aug. 16

Dear Folks:

Please excuse me for writing with a pencil as I run out of ink, but just the same I know you can make it out. I received three letters, one from Aunt Grace and one each from the girls, dated July 27 and Aug. 1. I am sorry to add that I started to write several times but had to give it up,

## SvcMen WW II Letters

since it's been a few days ago that I received them I just had to answer them and tonight I am very happy to have the pleasure of presenting this brief letter.

It is only four more days until my birthday and how I know you folks will remember me. I hope and pray that I will be able to enjoy myself on that day although it can never be like ones I spent at home.

The course of the war is rapidly changing and I have faith to believe it will soon be over. I have always said, three months after the invasion our European enemy would be defeated.

I can proudly add that France is a country of fast women and beautiful horses. Pardon me, but you can reverse that phrase if you like. I hope I'm not exaggerating when I say I was met with barrages of hugs, kisses and handshakes while passing through French cities. They offer us fruits, cider, and wine. If you don't toast to them they seem to be a little disappointed. But it is always a pleasure to have their friendship.

My, my, these girls are really sweet and I thought I'd seen pretty ones, but I'll take that right back. I've heard about the French but since I've seen them I believe both.

I thought I'd sure seen people happy but never have I seen anything like the French and the way they welcomed us. When passing through, many times I've seen them clap their hands so hard you could hear them a block off. I've talked to many and I've failed to find one who hasn't a relative a prisoner. I remember talking to a young fellow about 18 who could speak and understand English fairly well. His father was a prisoner. One of his neighbors had a little girl about five years old. I held her in my lap. She put me in mind of little Betty when I was home, sweet as can be.

Well before closing I'd better say I'm quite well and in the best of health, must go until we meet again it's good bye and God bless you.

Best regards and good luck to all.

As ever,  
Junior.

[The News-Sentinel, Saturday, September 9, 1944]

### LETTER FROM EDGAR HERRELL

From "Red" Herrell  
Somewhere in France  
August 20, 1944

Dear Folks:

Hello, everybody. How are you all. Hope OK. Well, this is Sunday and I am here in a woods somewhere in France. I am all right. How are the onions and crops doing. Well, I seen quite a lot over here. Seen a lot of dead men, and towns blown apart. I am getting used to all the shooting going on. About all I done so far is pull Guard every night. Well, I am in Headquarters Platoon now. But I guess I have to replace one of our men, we had two men wounded the other week. Well, I seen a lot of France since I been here but expect to see a lot more and hope to go through Paris before long. Well, hope to be home before long. We are pushing the Germans pretty hard and they are giving up but they don't give up very easy. Well, that is about all I can say so will close, with lots of love.

Your son,  
Red

(Letter to Loyd D. Herrell of Rochester from his son, Pvt Edgar Herrell, who is now stationed somewhere in France.)

[The News-Sentinel, Saturday, September 9, 1944]

### SECOND LETTER FROM ROBERT J. MINGLIN

(Letter received by Mr. and Mrs. Glen Minglin, Fulton street, Rochester, from his brother, Pfc. Robert Minglin, who is stationed in Italy. Pfc. Minglin is with the field artillery.)

Somewhere in Italy

Dear Brother and Family:

## SvcMen WW II Letters

Received your box and letter today. Thanks ever so much for it. Everything got here O.K. Hope I can pay you back some day soon. Thanks for the red handkerchief. We are allowed to wear them around our necks now. It's just like playing cowboy with these "krauts" only we ride these peeps [?] about as fast as they wil go instead of horses. We like to wear red because it stands for artillery and we are proud of our artillery. I'm still driving my peep [?]. Yes Glen, it's still as hot and dusty over here. How has your work been? Hope it hasn't been too hard.

Have you been out to see the folks lately, and how are they? How does Dad's corn look this year? Do the farmers need rain? Is Mom getting very many eggs? Wish I had about three for breakfast, although we get fried eggs every once in a while. Oh yes, we had some delicious doughnuts and coffee for dinner the other day, the Red Cross lady brought them out to us. Don't tell Willetta you know how she loves them too. Ha! How is Grandma this summer? Tell her I said hello and am thining of her a lot.

Glen, I had a nice few-day pass into Rome, wish you could have been along. I just about walked my legs off. I wanted to see everything and Rome is no small city. Homer (my buddy) and I went sightseeing a lot and saw many historic buildings and spots. In afternoons we go swimming and eat all the ice cream we want at the Red Cross club building. In the evening we would go to the movies or USO shows. Hope you will get to see the rest camp and Rome soon in the movies. That swimming pool where we went swimming was sure beautiful, it was inside a large building. Have you found time to go swimming out at the lake this summer?

Well Glen, I better close for this time and get some shut-eye. Will you please thank The News-Sentinel for me, they have been very good in sending me the paper and it's lots of company for me. The radio news sounds good this evening, as you know. Thank the good Lord that this awful mess may be over very soon. Give the folks and Willetta my best regards and love. May God bless you all. Write when you have time.

With love,  
Your brother, Bob

[The News-Sentinel, Wednesday, September 13, 1944]

### SECOND LETTER FROM GEORGE DAGUE

(Editor's Note: Following is the first of a series of most interesting letters received by Mrs. Elsie Dague, 819 Jefferson street, this city, from her son, George W. Dague, formerly of this city. George has had over two and a half years service overseas in Iceland, Ireland, England and France.)

T/Sgt. Geo. W. Dague  
Somewhere in France

I don't know if any of this will make sense or not-- but will try to put down a few of my own experiences--in France so far. Since this is the thing we have all been overseas for am sure that most men share my own opinion--that is that at last it is here--and we feel better that it is. This not being in the actual fighting end can get on our nerves after so long for you feel that if you were in there pitching too, that maybe it would mean the war would end one day sooner, or even one hour sooner, for we all want to have it over with as quickly as possible.

When the invasion started, I felt that we would be slated for this sooner or later, and tried to figure out just how I would make myself comfortable, when the time came. Being in the Rear Echelon (that is back to the rear of your fighting troops for you civilians), my main problem was living, and fighting. Of course the latter could very easily become possible too--but all one can do is be preparad for it--if and when it might come--and so I place living--getting along in the field--as the one big problem in my life right now. First of all I was worried about keeping warm--with only two blankets--but that was probably because I was generally so blooming cold in Ireland--but so far it has been quite warm here and I haven't sufferd any from the cold. Maybe the weather man has been giving us a special treat--Ha.

But to get on--I got a hold of seven old raincoats--cut them down and saved just the back pieces--sewed them together into a sorta sleeping bag, that I button on one side to close it, and had that all fixed up to help keep me dry and warm too. Then we got salvaged shelter halves and made

## SvcMen WW II Letters

fronts to close off our pup tents so that in bad weather we could still be fairly comfortable. What a great help those little things have been so far, and I am thankful now that we did many such things in advance of this day's arrival. The next step--months ago--was starting to strip one's equipment down so that one could carry everything needed. It was hard to tell what you would send home and what you would throw away, what you could carry--for nothing was in the open about ever going into operations. But I got busy and from week to week, pulled myself way from a few more items that had helped me to feel at home where we were and gradually got stripped down to the place where I could just stagger under the load. I intend to discard much yet, for it is best to travel as light as possible--but at the same time--as long as you are in the Rear Echelon--it is possible for you to have use for a few more items in your spare time--when you get the spare time. It was most hard to part with snapshots, pictures, and such items as that, and I kept out about 24 of them and sent all the rest home. The field is no place to have any such things unless you can carry them on your person all the time for in barracks bags, pack, etc., they get very damp and soon go to pieces.

Came the big day and we were off--as I have written to some--we had a very calm trip over. We had the nicest and cleanest transport I have ever seen or hope to see again--and that was something. Also, the first white bread, in just a year's time. What a treat that was--even though the brown bread has always been pretty good. We had fair eats--plenty--that is the main thing and a very smooth trip. We were lucky on that point, for many of the boys have had rough seas to come into this country--and that isn't good. I wish I could describe the Channel--but I don't know how much I can write of that--except that everywhere you look--there were convoys--more boats than I will probably ever see again, and most of them bringing in supplies, or lying off the coast--waiting until they could unload them.

The morning we came in it was fairly calm, the tide was going out, slowly and we unloaded into landing craft--came in to where the water was about three feet deep--and waited for awhile--for the waves to die down--and in the meantime one of our officers thumbed a ride on a passing "duck" and several of us loaded on with them and got a free ride to shore--so I didn't have to do any wading and I couldn't kick about that as the water looked plenty cold. I thought about our boys who had come in on D-Day, with plenty of hot lead whistling around, and how calmly we were able to unload. Thanks to the good job they had done before us and I thanked everyone of them in my mind. They did a real job--and I don't mean maybe.

Of course when you get to a new position--the first logical thing to do--is to get your tent up and protection dug, and that is generally what I do if nothing is popping. I have quite a setup here in this present spot, am bunking with my old pal, Johnny Miller and we have constructed a "deluxe" model home. We have dug in--right under our combined shelter halves (pup tent), have it banked around the edges and have good protection--then have our tents pitched over that. For the first time we have lots of room in our tent--because of the added head room due to digging in--and we have our hole lined with extra shelter halves, some cardboard and then our bedding on top of that, with our belongings around the edges, that act as sorta shelves. It is snug and very cozy and took a lot of hard work constructing too--that is one reason why my correspondence has suffered quite a bit--for I want to be comfortable and safe before I worry too much about mail. Each day or evening--when we get some spare time--we add to our job a bit--like clothesline inside--to hang our towels and many such little things that help one to get along. In the daytime and during the evening hours, we tie one side of the tent up to a tree--overhead--and let our home air out--and all in all we are both very proud of it--think that it is the most comfortable dwelling we have seen in these parts--ha.

When a civilian--one never gives a thought to the fact that water is piped into their home--sanitation is provided--etc.--it all seems so simple--but in the field those are the things that give one the most trouble. We have to carry all our water at least 200 yards--both drinking and washing--nothing much to carry it in other than tin cans we get from the mess hall, and of course, sanitation must be provided for--we miss those comfortable seats thaty ou civilians have back home, but managed to get along without them--as one does with many things when they are roughing it.

## SvcMen WW II Letters

Of course--living in tents like we do--everything gets pretty damp--letters received and lying around for a few hours, feel damp and start to curl up, paper gets soft and it is hard to keep writing paper around one's quarters--matches get damp and won't light--clothes get damp--all even when the weather is clear--simply because you are living against the earth's surface--as anyone who goes camping can tell you. It is fun when you can go camping for a few days, then return to your comfortable homes, etc., but in this business when you go into the field, you have "had it" as the English say, for you know that from now on, your life will be mostly just that way. It isn't too bad and we get along in great style, but we are human and still long for a Simons mattress, sheets, water taps, hot and cold--(if you can't shave in water you just have to find some way to heat it yourself) and many other simple things.

Most of the time we eat our chow from the mess kitchen, but many times we prepare our own meals--either eating the ration cold from the cans or building a fire and heating it--making coffee--if things permit us to do just that. We get to be experts at making our own chow and I believe that I would prefer to do that all the time when in the field, if the diet could be varied and if we had the time to take in cooking all our meals. It takes much time though, first to make the fire, then to get the water, then to cook, etc., and not having anything other than your mess kit to use for cooking utensils. Drop in for a meal soon--ha.

Of course if you have been reading the papers about Normandy or know of this section of France already, you will know that this section is a very picturesque bit of country--mostly dairy country, lovely fields, very small, most of them surrounded by hedgerows or a row of trees, everything very green, and many fancy looking cattle. You might think that the Nazis stripped the countryside of all meat, poultry, etc., but there are herds of cattle all over, and all of them look to be good cattle. They certainly do have good greenage, but doubt if there is much grain to feed them now. The people do not seem to have had it quite as tough here as they have in the cities--at least they have had enough to eat--just no chocolate--little entertainment--but they are not used to much and clothes seem to be the most prized possessions. Many of the men are wearing our trousers, some shirts, field jackets that I suppose previous troops have given them and most of the little boys have one of our field caps on their heads. The kids are nice looking--most of them--though one doesn't see many people about.

The field where we have our tents pitched is also used as a pasture for about 30 cows and they come along the tents, leaving their calling cards all times of the day--nothing you can do about it either--ha. But guess that we will get used to that over here. The cattle stay clear of us soldiers--guess the uniform tells them that we are not civilians--or something--for when you get to within about ten feet of them they start to move off in the opposite direction.

On the way over we were each paid 200 francs--which is the equivalent of \$4.00--and I doubt if we will be getting our full pay each month. We have not been paid for last month yet, but have no need for the money, for we get cigarettes with our rations, one pack a day, etc. and then all towns are off limits to the troops--so outside of buying cider (hard) from the local farmers, that is about the extent of our dealings with them--so don't need money now. Maybe later on we will have a chance to spend it, but not for now. I think that I have spent about 30 francs on cider which one can get from 3 to 5 francs a quart. Haven't seen any wine or other stronger drinks about, but then this section does not go for those drinks--so I understand--they are strictly a cider drinking people--at least right now. Maybe the Nazis took all the good beverages with them.

When we move into an area, one must be careful to always be on the lookout for mines and booby-traps--guess you have all read enough about them. We haven't seen any actual cases of these being set as yet, but maybe the reason for that is that we have kept to the cleared areas. The engineers who go through the areas checking them and clearing them out, do a grand job, and if one sticks to the road or areas already marked out, there is little danger, but at the same time we always make a thorough check to determine if any have been around or are actually there. They are dangerous weapons and it pays to always be careful in this business.

I have picked up several pieces of German equipment and suppose that before the war is over I will have many items--if I can send them home or keep them. I now have a nice German rifle--it is a very good piece--and wasn't in too bad condition when I got it. Some Frenchman had shot the

## SvcMen WW II Letters

German and got the weapon and he didn't have any use for it, so gave it away. I have cleaned it up good and will keep after it until it is as good as new and then I will have to get some of their ammunition to see just how it does work--how accurate it shoots. If I can I will send it along home later on in the process.

Don't let the newspapers fool you--Herman the German, does come over in his planes--but usually at night--for he doesn't like to risk it too much in the daytime--and we have heard them overhead several nights--have seen some fireworks--which really makes a racket--and lights up the sky--and could hear the bombs drop on their destination. It is strictly a nuisance business--compared to the way our own air force and it makes you glad that one has dug in--just in case any parcels might happen this way. Don't worry too much about all that so you can bank on me taking good care of myself always--under any conditions. Now, there is no fooling around, and I take every pains to take good care of myself, that is the only sure way of getting through this mess in good shape.

When I first arrived in England--a little over a year ago--and saw the remains of the bombings of the year previous--I began to know what we were fighting for, that it was our fight after all, that we couldn't sit back and be isolationists--not if we could get around and see what the Nazi war machine was trying to do to other countries. And now I have seen the actual imprint that total war leaves on a community--if I had any feeling at all--when I examined the ruins of churches--centuries old in England and Ireland--I had one hundred times the same feelings to see some of these French towns that have been hit hard. Some have been literally blasted off the face of the map. Some have been totally destroyed by the retreating Germans--so that our forces could not have any use for the buildings. I began to understand why the fight down at Cassino in Italy took so long a time--here--it has been a long struggle--in the short time that we have had forces on the continent. It has been a fight from hedgerow to hedgerow and that is mainly why there has not been any rapid progress--such as there has been in other theaters of war.

What few French people I have seen and had contact with, have mentioned the Bouche with distaste, but evidently in this section of France, they were well behaved troops, and other than occupying the country and taking over all the buildings they needed, they sorta let the people alone. The French here are weary after the first bit of fighting, then four years of occupation, and now it is starting all over again, and they have to go through it again--so you can see how weary they are of war. I too get weary of war as I know all of you must but we have to stop and think how very fortunate we have all been compared to the French, and all the other countries that have been occupied those four years.

The weather here is quite changeable, but then, it was the same way in the UK too. In the mornings it is very cool and I usually put on a sweater under my shirt, then by noon, it has warmed up and really does get warm in the afternoon, if the sun shines. It has been very warm today. I can stand a lot of that kind of weather--ha.

I am going to enclose one of the franc notes that we are using for money--they are of course printed in the USA as far as I know, and will be redeemed by the Allied forces when the natives get ready to cash them in. Thought that you might enjoy seeing one of them. The franc is worth about two cents, but then, it shouldn't be too hard to get used to, as you only have the franc to remember, whereas the English system was very confusing at first to all of us.

This will be all for this time. I will continue these from time to time as I get a chance, and in typing carbons, will save all that week of redoing the same thing over and over again. I have been at this about a half dozen times today and on several different machines, so if it sounds pretty disconnected, please understand that under conditions such as these, that one's mind isn't always on the beam--there are too many other things to be thinking about.

Au Revoir

[The News-Sentinel, Saturday, September 16, 1944]

LETTER FROM ORLYN E. MASTERS

## SvcMen WW II Letters

(Editor's Note: The following letter was received by Mr. and Mrs. Oscar H. Msters, of near Kewanna, Sept. 15, from their son, Lieut. Orlyn E. Masters, who is in a German prison camp in Germany at Stalag Luft I.)

June 3, 1944

Dear Mom:

Our anniversary is tomorrow, seven months. That is a long time, too darn long in a way. Just think, I could have been one-fourth of the way through college. Oh, well, this is one experience or tale that will be good to tell my grandkids, ha! I am still farming, now I have a garden, or the room does, and I am the operator. We have beans, etc., all up nice. I am still eating out of the food package for we still have some left. We sure did eat the dickens out of it. But I am eating the chocolates myself, the rest I divided up with the rest of the boys in our combine, 'cause the rest will do the same. They sure are a bunch of boys. I sure have a suntan now, and am enjoying it, as all my washing consists of one garment, dry shorts, which isn't much.

As yet I haven't received a letter from you. I am expecting one any day, but am in high hopes. How is the corn coming? I imagine it is up and almost layed by, by now.

Well, must close with oceans of love,

Orlyn.

### LETTER FROM WELDON CARR

Sept. 6, 1944

England

Dear Brother Eagles:

Well, thought I would write you a few lines to let you know I am getting along fine and hope everyone is O.K. I sure have had lots of excitement since I left Rochester and the States, almost too much. I sure was glad I joined the Eagles before leaving. I have been in several clubs back in the States in Baltimore, Washington, New York, and sure enjoyed it. I was wounded the 28th of July and captured by the Germans the same day. I was in their hospital about four weeks, then we were re-captured by our troops and brought back to England for treatment.

I got hit in the back but am getting along OK now, but am in bed again now with the flu. We sure have rotten weather, rainy about every day. When the Jerries got me they took everything I had. My money, paybook and wrist watch. I didn't care so much about the money and paybook, but hated to lose my wrist watch as you can't get them over here, and I sure miss it.

I don't know where I will be sent after I leave here. Tell Eddie Campbell and all the rest to write as I would like to hear from everyone, tell them to address it the same as on the envelope.

Well, so long fellows, hope to see you all up at the hall some day soon, and be sure and write soon. You can read this to the boys if you want to.

Pvt. Weldon Carr, 35892299,  
APO 209, c/o Postmaster,  
New York, N.Y.

[The News-Sentinel, Saturday, September 23, 1944]

### THIRD LETTER FROM GEORGE DAGUE

T/Sgt. Geo. W. Dague

Somewhere in France

Due to the sudden change of weather--I decided up "wet" France--instead of sunny France--but then--today is really the first real wet day we have had so far. It is pouring down rain--and I do mean rain--and with the soil slightly clay--and mud--it really can get to be a gooey mess--when you get off of the sodden areas. It must be tough weather for the boys in the front lin foxholes--and I hand it to them for the way they can get along--under all kinds of climate--and under any field conditions.

Since the first installment--we have improved our living quarters a bit--so will get that down before I forget the improvements--ha. The herd of dairy cattle got to be quite a nuisance--they



## SvcMen WW II Letters

were trying to re-landscape our area I guess--so we got busy--and put a strand of wire--about three feet off the ground--around our camping area--and so far--they have only broken through once--and we fixed that up in a hurry--and so we have had a bit more peace and quiet. It got to be a little disturbing at night--to almost feel a cow's hot breath on your neck--especially if you had your home dug in--for they did fall through a couple tents in the daytime and now that we have solved that problem--we sleep a bit better.

We have set up a small stove--one that we used in our Nisen hut but back to Ireland--up in our area--and every night--about nine--the boys start to make coffee--or to cook some ration of some kind that they have managed to pick up during the day. As usual--no matter how much we get fed--we are always hungry at night. They stand around the stove--and shoot the bull until it is blackout--and then off to their pup tents--to lie there talking long into the night--or to wait for "Bed-Check Jerry" to fly over.

The ground has been pretty hard for me--so yesterday I decided it was about time to do something about it--so I dug out about six more inches of clay--drove in stakes around it--and took some German wire--and stretched it across the pegs--making me a bed--it really works too--for I did sleep like a clock last night--first really good night's sleep I have had since we arrived--and I guess I more or less needed that. When I get my blankets--and raincoat--etc--over it--it sleeps very much like an army cot--and of course--that is what we are most used to now. When we get home--we will have to break in easy on the soft beds again--oh yeah--it won't take me long to get used to all that comfort again I'm sure.

After chow last night--went up--and laid down--to test out my new bed--it was so comfortable--that I started to read a few May News-Setinels that I had just received--and fell off to sleep slept a couple of hours--and woke up when Johnny came up from the office. I had planned on writing letters--but the bed was so comfy and I didn't have any ambition--so instead--laid there--and read some Time magazines which I am way behind on. They have been giving a very fine account of the fighting in France--and it is all of much interest to us. You can be right here--in one sector--and not know the complete story of what is going on--so you see--we wait for Time very eagerly to get all the story--and to know what was happening on other sectors. It was raining last night--but we have our quarters trenched--and fixed very snug--so we did not suffer from any wetness. Had a candle lit in the tent--and it helped to keep it nice and dry--and at the same time--give us light to read by. Johnny took a spell--as he does every night--of playing his harmonica--and we always get a kick out of his foolishness--which goes along with everything he does--except his work of course. He is a grand fellow--and it is indeed a pleasure to have him with me.

Speaking of "Bed-Check Jerry"--that is the nickname that we gave to a German plane that had a habit of passing over every night about the same time. The boys were waiting for him the other night--and got him--so last night--they didn't seem to have anyone to replace him on this run. No doubt another will take over soon though. They certainly do fire the book at him--or any other Nazi plane that comes over here.

A couple of nights ago--while I was writing letters up outside my pup tent--one of our own planes crashed not so far from here--so you see--it all brings things very close to us. The pilot came out of it OK--so I heard--and I was more than glad to hear that. What a sight it is --to see those planes roar overhead. I was talking to some men yesterday too--and they were from the front--they looked up at some--and said--boy--you don't really appreciate those fellows enough--until they come along to help support you--in the front lines. The fighters are used for bombings too--some of them carry two bombs under the wings and some one large one slung under the middle of the plane--they do a grand job and are really a big help to the "doughboys"--in helping to soften up certain objectives.

Getting back to the herd of dairy cows that roam our field--they move from one field to another--almost on schedule--all day and night--as there are gates opening from one field into another--and they seem to have a regular eating schedule to work from. They seem to be eating all the time--no doubt it is because there must be little grain feed for them--and so they must just get along on more greenage. The lady and her daughter come through regularly too--twice a day--with their horse and cart--milking the cows--and carrying the milk in the cart. They have quite job

## SvcMen WW II Letters

taking care of this bunch. One night--a couple of the boys helped carry a couple heavy cans of milk to the road--since they did not have their usual cart with them. That is typical American style--for the boys have always been eager to help people--wherever we have been--and it wins friends for them too. The people do appreciate it--the women are hard workers--both here--and in other countries that we have been--and you have to hand it to them for the job they do.

Every day--a few horse and cart outfits--something similar to a covered wagon and a buggy combined--roll past and camp on the roads. I have yet to see a single car over here. There no doubt just isn't any gas to operate them--and yet--the roads are full of GI trucks--Jeeps--etc.all day long--going in all directions. When you see the war from this angle--you really understand why it takes so much money to fight one--especially on the scale as this war. There is nothing about it to compare with the last World War.

Several days ago we sent our uniforms in to be washed. We only carry one pair of ODs (woolen)--and one pair of fatigue clothes with us--so we wore the fatigues while the others were being washed--We were allowed to send six pieces of clothing--and it all goes in--in bulk--comes back the same way--so it is some job to sort it all out--and get your own clothing. That is why we have to have everything clearly marked--if we want to get it back of course. They do a good job of getting it clean--no press of course--ha. But it doesn't matter here. We are not on parade. I suppose that we will get this service regularly--for we don't have much facilities to do our own laundry around here. We can wash out the hankies--socks--and such little items when we need them.

Several of us found a building--that the Germans have used from time to time--as a small arms ordnance shop--to repair guns, etc.--and to do work on gas masks--and they left quite a bit of junk around when they took off. One of our boys speaks French very well--and the lady who owns the place told us about the work they were doing--she also had two German Majors billet in her house. They would come in--look over the place--and tell them which rooms they would take--and no sort of payment of any kind. If they wanted your entire premises--you just had to move out--so you can imagine how tough that made it. It is different with us--when we need a building--we always find out if it is available first--and then after that--make arrangements to pay for the use of it. Just one of those little differences--between the things that we are fighting this war for.

We have a place to eat--under cover--close to our kitchen--and the Special Service section have set up a radio and speaker there--if the radio isn't working good--they play records for us during chow. Of course--we have to stand up to eat but it isn't too bad. I'm getting so I can sit on my helmet--balance myself very well while I eat from my mess kit in my lap. We get one slice of white bread--once a day with one of the meals--and ration biscuits with the other meals--and sometimes--we have bread twice a day. The white bread is quite a treat for us--for we haven't had anything but brown bread since we first came overseas. Chow has been pretty good--we had ham the other day--and that was a treat. The menu usually consists of mainly canned goods but it is OK with me. It has really been much better than I thought it would be.

We have also had several movies in camp--though I haven't attended any of them yet--I am always too busy doing something else--like trying to make my living quarters a bit more comfortable--to bother with them. Most of the fellows just pitch their tent--and let it go at that--but I must have comfort regardless of where I am. The boys say that it takes too much energy to do all those things--but I think that it is worth the hard work and effort--simply because I am a homey guy--and like to have a few comforts--no matter where I may be. It will be some day--when I can get back to the good old USA--and really have a home of our own--to putter around--and to fix up--and I live for days like that.

Mail is coming through in great style--I received a bunch of local papers the last few days--and many of the boys have received packages--the contents of which have disappeared very quickly--but that is the way it should be--for things won't keep very long in the open, like this. I am looking forward to a couple myself--and know that they will be greatly enjoyed.

The days go by fairly fast here--much faster than ever before--and I never can figure out whether it is Wednesday, Friday, or what have you. The date finally comes to me about the time

## SvcMen WW II Letters

the day is over--and there is no such thing as weeks here--for we are on duty all the time and that way you sorta lose track of one week passing--from the new week starting.

Incidentally, just before we left to come over here--I got a short haircut and I do mean short--about a half inch of hair left on my head--but it is the only way to travel in this life. You can keep clean that way and don't have to comb it--and most of the fellows keep their hair that way now. It makes my grey hairs show up a bit more--ha. But that doesn't bother me much. At first--we all looked like a bunch of skinned rabbits--but now that we are used to seeing everyone's hair short--we think nothing of it.

This will be all for this trip--as I didn't seem to have any more news on my life around these parts. Hope that the rain will let up later on today--but for now there doesn't seem to be much hope of that happening. Oh well--might as well get used to being wet--as I guess we have much more of that in store for us.

Au Revoir for now

[The News-Sentinel, Monday, September 25, 1944]

### SECOND LETTER FROM MAX E. TEETER

Pfc. Max E. Teeter, 35141392  
APO 920, Unit 1  
c/o Postmaster  
San Francisco, Calif.  
Southwest Pacific  
Sept. 16, 1944

Dear Mom and Pop:

I finally made the first step toward the rank of general yesterday, was made Pfc. That pays me all of \$4.00 more on the month plus the 20 per cent overseas pay, and to think I was making \$200 a month at my job on the Erie, quite an advancement in the wrong direction. I had some small pictures taken Saturday. I hope they turn out good. We sent them to Sydney, Australia, to be developed. We had another cloudburst last night. I have never seen it rain like it does here. It really comes down by the bucket full. I haven't received any mail for two days now, it is about time I should get some on the 14th. I received two packages mailed July 15 from Fort Wayne. The nut meats in the long box were mouldy, but the ones in the round box were all right. They sure tasted good. I am rationing them out. They should last a week. I received my first News-Sentinel, the one with my letter in it. You never told me it was in there. I haven't seen any natives wearing grass skirts. They all wear skirts and undershirts or any other pieces of cloth or clothing. I have seen a few around here with just a loin cloth. Those natives in New Guinea were called Fuzzy Wuzzys, but the natives here are much cleaner and cut their hair short.

I also received letters from Nome and from Arnold Murry, also one from my cousin, Ruth Nye, along with the packages on the 14th of September.

Love,  
Max E.

[The News-Sentinel, Friday, September 29, 1944]

### FOURTH LETTER FROM GEORGE DAGUE

T/Sgt. Geo. W. Dague  
Somewhere in France

The weather today--is right between wet and sun shiny weather--but as long as it doesn't suddenly change to wet weather--it will be fine with us Yanks. We had a bit of rain yestrerday--but more of the April shower variety--then steady downpour--so it didn't mess up our bivouac area too much--and most evrything was dried off--by the time we hit the hay (dirt) last night. Weather is a very important matter to we soldiers--especially to the boys on the front lines--for during wet weather--their life becomes very difficult--and it slows down our fighting programs too--to a great extent. But then--the farmers have to have some wet weather if they are to carry on--and so we

## SvcMen WW II Letters

can't just keep hoping for dry weather all of the time. Enough of this weather business for now--just used it to get started.

After all the flowers we saw daily--in Ireland--it would seem that there are practically no flowers at all over here. Of course--it is a little late--for the spring flowers--of which I am sure they have many. I have seen several fields--full of the poppy--that we heard so much about from the last war--and also around the farms--one sees small flower gardens--cultivated by the women of the house--and quite a few [ - - ?]--usually--the dark red--small variety of rose. Our place--in Ireland--was so very full of all kinds of flowers--but then--they had been cultivated--when the house was a showplace for society--and have lingered on--even without the usual care they always had in the past.

Some of the fields here are smaller than we saw in Ireland--and many are larger--even so large as to remind us of the fields on the farms back home. This may sound a little simple to you--but you have to live among--and see daily--the fields the people have over here--to really appreciate the fact that it is a different scene from our farm lands at home. In Ireland--it was stone hedgerows--stones and rocks--piled about five to six feet high--or less--and from three to four feet thick--bordering each field. Here--it is a different matter--each field is surrounded by a hedgerow--of trees and bushes--with the dirt piled up to form a ridge about three feet from the level of the field--and on each side of this row--there is a ditch--which helps drainage perform--and is covered over with briars and bushes and small growth. Some of the hedgerows are grown solid--with the small trees, etc.--but the ones around here--have a path thru the middle--and the cows love to go up and down them--as that shoos the flies off of them. I have never seen flies so persistent--they stop off--and settle down on you and you have to kick them off. I doesn't do any good to wave them off--you have to either smack them to mean business--or just sweep them off if you don't want to hurt them. They swarm on the cattle--and horses--until I don't see how they stand it--but they don't seem to mind too much--maybe just one of those things that they get used to over here.

Incidentally--the cattle are very clean looking cattle--they do not look overly fat--and as milkers--they seem to have very small milk bags--compared to the cattle back home. It may be because they have nothing other than grass and pasture--to feed them on. I was watching the lady empty one of her buckets of milk the other night--into the larger cans on the small wagon--and the milk looked to me like it had a sorta yellowish--and greenish color--it may just have been the light shining on it one way--but it certainly did look that way to me.

We, of course, try to keep our pup tents well camouflaged--but the cows don't seem to get the idea--they think that we are cutting them for their feed--and every day--they get thru the fence--and eat all the greenage off our tents--knock a couple of tents in--and make us very angry--to put it mildly. We are getting some barbed wire today and will try to erect a better fence--and see if we can't get across to those blooming cows just what we are trying to do in this location.

Since most of this squib has been about Mother Nature--maybe I should tell you about the bird's nest in our offices. The surgeon has his office located in one of the farm buildings here--and when they moved inside--they noticed a bird's nest--right over his desk. Evidently it is a barn swallow--similar to our martins--but it didn't seem to disturb the birds at all--there were two--taking turns sitting on the nest--and on about the third day we were here--the family hatched and then it was birds in and out all the time feeding the little ones. It was something to go over there and watch the two parents work--while everyone in the office was moving about talking, etc.--typing--and in and out the birds would fly--if the one came in--and the other was still on the nest feeding the babies--it would fly around the room--or light on a nail used for a coat rack--or any where that there was something it could step on for a few seconds. They come in and out of the window--and soon I suppose they will be taking their family--and departing from the building.

We have been very fortunate in having movies here at our camp. An outfit that does just that--drops in regularly--to put on a movie in the evening--and we hold it in a large--(it isn't so large--but it is the largest area I can think of right now)--sorta barn structure--which also doubles as our dayroom--mess hall--where we eat our meals standing up--or sitting on the dirt floor--but to get on with the entertainment. We have had three very good movies in the past week or so--"Adventures of Mark Twain," "Shine on Harvest Moon" and "Around the World"--all of which we enjoyed

## SvcMen WW II Letters

very much. Outside of sports outside--it is about the only entertainment that we can look forward to. Our special service section also has several outfits--with which they go forward and entertain our troops with--and the movies mean a great deal to them too--more even than they mean to us in the rear here.

The other evening--I decided that I had too many things to do--to stay here and try to write letters--so soon after evening chow--I proceeded to go on up to the tents--laden down with water cans, rifles, etc.--all the equipment that we have at the office during the daytime, and it might be of some interest to you to know just how filled the evening was. First--after shedding all of the war equipment--I started in--and cleaned my carbine--and then my German rifle--(it is still in bad shape--especially the bore--but I am keeping after it and hope to have it good as new soon)--as this damp weather necessitates your leeping after our weapons--to keep them in first class condition--then I dubbed two pair of shoes. With the damp weather--the dubbing does help keep our feet dry--and that is very essential in this business. Then I got busy--and fussed around the tent--driving the stakes at a better place--trenching it again--just in case we had more wet weather that night--and then fixing my two blankets--so the bed was ready to hop into later on. Scouted around the got enough firewood to build a fire--and heat water to shave and wash with--and by that time--it was almost ten o'clock--and I crawled into my tent--lit the candle and finished off the day--by reading the Stars and Stripes--until it was blackout time. That is the way many evenings go past--in a hurry--and it is all routine business--but of course--sometimes we stop everything--to cook some chow--if we are fortunate in having secured some during the day--that chow business--at any time of the day or night--takes precedent over everything else--ha.

As you know by the papers--our air force was out in strength several days ago--supporting a new push--one has no idea just what the size of it was--to read in the papers that as many planes took part in the bombardment--etc.--but to have watched them fly over--on their way to the lines--was really something. I was outside much of the morning--counted the first 400 of the bombers--and then gave up--as they continued to roll past in the distance. The air was full all morning--of their motors and also--as they reached their objectives--and dropped their loads--we could feel the earth tremor--from the impact. The air force has done a grand job--in this war and of all the branches of the service--ours--the infantry--appreciates their work most.

Some of the fellows in camp here--get out during the evenings--and take a short walk around the countryside. There are a few very small communities nearby--but I have never been able to find the time to get around to them. We are not supposed to wander the countryside anyway--so I prefer to remain right here for the time being--however, several of the fellows go over to visit a lovely Catholic church--in the not too far distance. The sexton is a very pleasant wee man--and enjoys having them drop in to see the church--and always lets the boys ring the church bell--guess he thinks they are all yet boys--and enjoy that--which they do--and those who have been over to visit him always have a different story to tell when they return. If I could speak more of the French lingo--I might try such things myself--but I have never gotten about only the few words stage--and probably will let it go at that. It comes easy to some fellows--but to me--it has always been a difficult language--was in college and still is for that matter. I can do better at reading it--than speaking it. All of which reminds me of some of the booklets we have found around--in different localities. I have sevral books--or booklets--that give the French--and German meanings--one, on the opposite pages of the book. I have translated part of it--and it was used by the German soldiers--to question the natives--to find out how many living rooms and bedrooms they had available--(that is all they had--ha)--the number of livestock--chickens--farmland--and many such questions--also if they had any weapons--and to turn them in immediately or suffer the consequences. Mayby--i fl have more spare time I will try to translate more of it--just for my own interest. As I have said before--the Germans were not too severe in these localities--and they only demanded one cow a month--from each herd of cattle--which wasn't considered excessive by the local people.

Today the company is running a truck up to a place--where we have some kind of a laundry working--and also a power point--so that a few of the boys can have showers. I haven't had a shower in over a month--have bathed out of a small pan, of course--but think that I will take a run

## SvcMen WW II Letters

over today--and try out the shower. It is just one showerhead--out in the woods--so one person can't monopolize it very long at one time--ha--and it is strictly rustic in setting--and equipment--but the best part of it all--is the fact that it is warm water--ad you don't have to heat it yourself--ha.

This will be all of the local color for today--as I have to get busy--will continue with it a little later on--but the longer we are here--the more news we seem to have to write--that is mainly because we just get used to everything--and nothing seems like news to send home. See you again,

Au revoir

[The News-Sentinel, Tuesday, October 3, 1944]

### FIFTH LETTER FROM GEORGE DAGUE

T/Sgt. Geo. W. Dague

Somewhere in France

Here I am again--for a little more chatter for the moment--about life here in France--as I see it--and live it myself. Each one has been headed up--by the type of weather that has impressed me most right at the very moment--and today--for everything seems to have turned to powder. You might think that one here is never satisfied--(that would be true too--ha), but when an Army is on the move--you notice the weather more than any other time--for with vehicles--men--and all that to move--it is too dry--and right now--all the roads are like powder. When I wrote the second squib--it was wet weather--and I had just finished digging a trench--thru hard clay--and now--a day or so ago--I just finished digging one thru earth--that was as fine as powder--and very dusty--crumbly like. From the looks of the fields the farmers do need rain very much--but then--the harvest comes along well in this dry hot weather--for it does help the grain they raise here.

I have intended to write this chatter for several days, but just haven't had the chance--for I have been too busy--little jobs that keep one occupied--for I couldn't figure out enough rightnow--to show that I had done anything. Most of the jobs have been housekeeping jobs--trying to be comfortable as possible--while on the go. Just about the time that you get all settled--it is pull stakes again--and you have to start from scratch--it is that--which discourages most of the fellows from trying to be comfortable--but not me--I have to think of m comfort regardless if it takes half of each night--to make me comfortable.

I slept on the ground for a night or two--and then had to fix a bed--and this time--I fixed it a bit different--think that it works better than the last idea. There was plenty of odds and ends of lumber about--so I took two boards--about 1x4 and six feet long--and wrapped my extra shelter half around it--then drove tent stakes in the ground at both ends to hold the canvas tight and made my bed on top of that. Of course it sags when I get in bed but it does keep your back from being flat on the ground--and it sleeps much better too--believe you me. This sleeping part--is the most difficult for me--for when I sleep on the ground--I get up--with every joint stiff in the mornings. I think that I will keep this style of bed for awhile, as it won't be any trouble to throw the two boards on our trucks--as we move along.

The grain here is very ripe and they have been cutting it in a field next to our bivouac area--the hay takes me back to my childhood days--when we used to spend our summers on the farm--down in Indiana--visiting our relatives and having such a good time as kids--helping with the harvest--and chores around a farm. I suppose that if I had been brought up on a farm--none of these things would hold so much enchantment for me--but as it is--it has always seemed more like a vacation period around a farm. The women work in the field--just the same as the men--and incidently--you never see any men milking the cows over here--it is always the women--and I understand that they do all the milking--that the men never do that sort of work. The farm women--about all I have seen so far--are sorta the rugged type--but they have to be--the way they work--and they have to work hard to make a living around here now.

## SvcMen WW II Letters

The past few days I have noticed more flowers around the farmhouses--about here--they have many potted plants--especially geraniums and such flowers--and I have seen several front yards that were all abloom with beautiful flowers--reminded me of many farm yards I have noticed back in Indiana. The homes are all of limestone or some sturdy mason stone and very well built--they all look alike--some larger that is all. I haven't been on the inside of any of them--but the fellows who have say that they are kept pin-point clean--though they are not furnished very lavishly. They also keep the surface of their homes very clean--don't know how they do that--or it may just be the nature of the stone used.

The first night here--I was so dusty--from being on the road--and handling our equipment, etc., that after we were all set up I decided to take a bath. In front of the chateau where we have our office located there is a large mill pond and although the water looks almost green like--it is fairly clean--just a little stale I guess--but at any rate--on the far side--there is a wash house--an old one--probably a hundred or so years old. It is built--so that there is a front part--about four feet wide--about three feet lower than the water's surface--with a stone wall--holding the water out. The French women of this community--would all come to wash their clothes there. There are a few women--who have been washing over there from time to time--but most of the civilians are probably out of the area. At any rate--I took a large five gallon can over and proceeded to have a good bath--felt much refreshed by it all, too.

I went over last night and washed my leggings--for the first time since we landed in France--they were very dusty--that is all--for the mud--that got on them during the wet siege we had--seemed to come right off when it dried--I also laundered several bits of clothing--and now--have most everything clean again. We really don't carry much clothing with us--so, when you change--it is always a good time to launder your underclothes right then and there--so they will be ready to put on next time you manage to take some kind of a bath. This water business is a critical one for us here--as most of the water must be hauled to our camp --especially the drinking water--and it all must be treated before we drink it--as their water here is none too pure.

One of the best field rations we have over here--(or anywhere for that matter of fact)--is called our "10 in 1" ration--it is given that name because it will feed ten men--for three meals--or one ration as we call three meals. Part of the boxes are packed in a small corrugated box--covered with paraffine--and yesterday they had a stack of them out beside our mess hall--waiting to haul them away. That gave me an idea--and so I got busy--salvaged a bunch of them and tore them up into little slips--stacked one box full of them. Then I dug up two large tin cans--one about a gallon size--the other two gallon--and proceeded to make a stove to heat shaving water on. I cut out part of this larger can and fixed it so I can get bits of paper and wood in the bottom part--and set the other can in the top half way down--and presto--touch a match--and I have hot water in just two minutes for shaving or if coffee--it will take about five minutes to bring the water to a boil. It will be very easy to carry this along with other things we accumulate--and since it will heat water so quickly--several of us can use it at the same time. It works like a charm and you have to make such things if you desire the luxury of hot water for a shave, etc. I used to shave with cold water in England a lot--but over here--seem to have a bad time getting a very good shave with cold water--so now that problem is solved, I will probably get another idea later on--and want to try it out too--but that is the way you perfect the little things--here in the field--the little things that were always no problem in garrison--but which can be such a hinderance to you in the field.

The weather here for the past few days have been very hot and do I ever enjoy the heat. Of course it is only warm from about 11 o'clock in the morning until about 8 at night. The mornings are very damp every morning and it is sorta misty--foggy each morning--until you can feel the dampness in the air--then the sun comes through--and really dries everything out--and again at night--as soon as the sun disappears--it gets chilly--not just cool--but chilly--and one feels the need of a field jacket--or some such bit of clothing--in the evening hours.

The moon has been beautiful the past few nights--a regular harvest moon--it is hard to realize that it is harvest time--even in the States--the months fly past--and you lose all track of seasons--of time--or anything--except coming home.

## SvcMen WW II Letters

A few days ago we received an engineer circular--showing how to fix up homemade showers for the field and the Colonel has the idea that our section should have something of that nature as long as we have the room to carry it around with our equipment. It would be a great help for this bathing problem is a serious one--altho I have managed to do very well so far in the game. At any rate--we got a command car--and went out looking for parts the other night--found some large gasoline drums--that we can get if we need them--and then found several German vehicles--that had been hit--and I do mean hit--they had burned out--until there wasn't anything left but the chassis and motor--and we salvaged some gasoline tubing off of them--a couple shutoff valves, etc., and such equipment that we will need to hook up the hotwater heater. We have found some pipe and need just a few more items--and then we will be all set to put it together--to see if it will work.

Speaking of the burned out German vehicles above--one of them was a Ford model 1942--and looked just like our long Ford trucks back home--that is--what there was left. The hood was identically the same style as our Fords--and this job probably had been made in '42--in the Paris Ford factory--for the Germans. The other two jobs were different style cars--or rather trucks--and I couldn't make out just what the names on them were. Of course--our Army salvages all of the enemy equipment that is of any use to us--and the rest--is pulled off into a field until some salvage crew can come along--and haul it to a metal dump--a lot of it will stay right here--and no doubt be processed later on--but the French industries--you can see many parts of their equipment--that have been cheapened--probably because of a shortage of material--using steel tubing instead of copper or brass, etc.--but on the whole--everything shows signs of good workmanship--all the way thru. More and more things made of plastic--so I guess they are pacing the U.S.A.--in the plastic field--at least they were driven to the use of it--several years ago--and in that way--a nation always progresses fairly rapidly in the use of a new material.

One of our officers came in yesterday--with a German sock--full of French coins--some German had evidently been hoarding coins--and decided to drop the mess in a foxhole and lighten his load that much. There were about 800 francs in the sock--which would be worth about \$16.00 and was quite a stack of metal.

The countryside is covered with blackberry bushes--most of them have been picked by this time--but occasionally, you find some--where the berries are just ripening now--though I really don't care much for them myself. I just am aware of their presence--as I am continually getting scratched by the stickers on the bushes--and they certainly do have their briar patches in the woods. Every field is a combination field and woods--for every hedgerow here--so far has been a row of trees--with brush and briars etc.--in between them--until there is no need for any fences to separate one field from another.

This will be about all for this time--must get along to some other things now--but like to put these things down on paper every few days--or I forget just what I had intended to write about--as there are new things coming up right along--and you just naturally forget about the days that have passed. Life isn't too bad in the field and we have it soft--compared to many others--especially those boys in the front--their life is really a rugged existence--merely that--and nothing more--but they seem to come through as good as we do here. More power to them. So long for now.

Au revoir.

[The News-Sentinel, Friday, October 6, 1944]

### FOURTH LETTER FROM CHARLES C. COFFMAN

(Editor's Note: A very interesting letter from Staff Sergeant Charles Coffman who has been in service about four years in Panama, England, and now in France. He is a Fulton county boy.)

Somewhere in France

23 Sept. 1944

Dear Capt. Minter:

This is it. I am somewhere in France. My squadron is occupying a captured Boche camp. We are living in tents. Although we don't have the comforts of home life it isn't too tough for us. We found some boards and made some floors for our tents. The Boche helped us to make our



## SvcMen WW II Letters

tents more home-like. They left chairs and tables and now we are using them in our tents. We have electricity, too. The Boche left electrical wiring, bulbs, and sockets and our electricians are getting it all in good use. In my tent there is a radio, with pick and shovel and rock and sweat we made a sidewalk in the area. Our bunks aren't too hard to sleep on. We took mattress covers and stuffed them with straw. He brought along a football and baseballs, bats and gloves, so we are well provided with recreational equipment. Water is rationed. A helmet is a very useful item of equipment. Besides being a protection for the skull, a helmet is used as a wash basin, a water bucket, a seat and for other purposes too numerous to mention.

The trip to our destination was very interesting and educational. France is still a beautiful country. I had always wanted to see France and I am glad to be here. We were given a very warm welcome by the French. Our presence is greatly appreciated. France loves America. America must keep the love of France for all time. Most of the fellows are out of cigarettes so I am anxiously awaiting a package from my sister.

Three of my buddies and I have become acquainted with a very charming French family. We are learning to speak French and Madame Proust who is our hostess says that we are learning fast. Madame says that my pronunciation is very good. I taught little Claude Proust to sing "It's A Long Way to Tiperary," in English. In ten minutes Claude could sing it almost as well as I can. The Proust children are very intelligent. The Proust family think I have a good voice. They asked me to sing "America" and before I had it finished I began to cry and could not continue. But they understood. We have grand times singing and studying together. I must close for now. Soon I will write again.

Sincerely,  
Charles Coffman

[The News-Sentinel, Monday, October 9, 1944]

### FIFTH LETTER FROM HOWARD SHIREMAN

Wednesday Morn  
20 September  
Paris, France

Dearest Mother and Dad:

Sorry I have not written you more often of late but have been too busy to do much of anything except work and sleep. Moved into Paris a few days ago and since then have been doing unpacking, straightening around and getting our supplies and equipment for the office in order. If there ever should be another move I swear I shall skip town, in the 3 1/2 years I have put in the Army don't recall ever lugging so darn much stuff. The first leg of the journey from England to France was made by airplane and was it ever a swell trip, and very beautiful scenery, then spent a few weeks down under the coast until rest of the office and personnel moved before making the final move on to Paris. Made that trip on the back and of an army truck, and even though it was a long dirty and tiresome ride it was very interesting. The countryside was nearly all large hills and valleys with quite a lot of farming and numerous apple orchards of course, actually believe that every French farm must have three and four orchards. No wonder there is so much cider to be had at all the farm houses. The cities, though, I can't say much for, small, dirty, narrow dirty streets, and the people also looked dirty and poorly dressed, but Paris, that is altogether different question. With few exceptions such as food, cigarettes, gas and fuel there seems to be plenty of everything, but of course expensive. Women's hats contain enough material in them to make you two dresses, Mother, and more than the English women get in an entire year's rations. Silk stockings, underclothes, perfumes, cosmetics and the like are for the asking, if you have the money. Although against army orders and if caught you are subject to a severe court martial, many of the boys got lots of stuff by trading their cigarettes for it, or else selling them to the people for 100 francs (frank is 2 cents) at first but now they have dropped to about 50 francs. They all seem to be hungry too, and all would give most anything for stuff to eat, especially sweet stuff, chocolate candy, etc., one girl we met who spoke fairly good English told me she had not tasted a piece of

## SvcMen WW II Letters

candy since the occupation of France, and had to quit smoking, in fact all the women did and they could not get cigarettes, a small issue was given to the men only.

Had a day off yesterday, first one since leaving London, and did it ever feel good to roll back over at 6:00 o'clock and go to sleep again. We are billeted in requisitioned hotels and am fortunate in having a large room with a swell bed in it, two inner-spring mattresses on it and it's just like Heaven when I climb in at night but vice versa when I have to crawl out in the morning, would rather take a beating than get up. The Army has taken over some restaurants and made them into mess halls but still have the French chefs and French waitresses but personally I would just as leave go through a regular chow line and take what I want. Well anyway, getting back to yesterday morning, slept until 10:00 o'clock, got up and started writing letters, in fact just about everyone I have neglected except you which I put off until the present. About noon three of us went up to chow and then started on a sight-seeing tour of our town, well, Paris is a city of small streets, seemingly always ending up at the same darn corner, and not knowing the city, we had a devil of a time getting any place, but did manage to see the Eiffel Tower, some other large building which sets near it and was built for the Paris Exposition in 1937, which is a beautiful place and you're able to get a large view of the city from it, then wandered over to Notre Dame Cathedral and through it. After hearing and reading so much about it I was very disappointed in it--impressed me as a very cold and dismal place, in fact every cathedral and church I have visited over here and in England seems the same, doesn't carry the warmth and cheerfulness that our churches at home seem to possess for some reason.

Time to get to work, Dear Mother and Dad, so for the time being will say goodbye and will write again in a couple or three days. Hoping for a letter soon, too.

All my love to you both always,

Howard.

[The News-Sentinel, Wednesday, October 11, 1944]

### SIXTH LETTER FROM GEORGE DAGUE

T/Sgt Geo. W. Dague

Somewhere in France

Here we are again--and the past few days have flown past so quickly--that I hardly know what day it is--let alone what the date is. When you are on the go--one day passes--and you start out on the next one--with little time to realize just what you are doing. Packing, loading, moving, unpacking, unloading, and then getting ready to repeat that process all over again--at the same time--trying to set up your own personal equipment--tent, etc.--everything that you used to get along. When things move like this--about all you can get done is what work must be taken care of--eat your meals, wash once a day, and catch a little sleep at night--and that seems to take up your 24 hours a day.

There are so many things on my mind--from the things I have seen--since I wrote the last squib sheet--that I am all mixed up--am afraid that I will forget to tell you some of the things--that mean the most to me--but then--there are always some things that I can't write about--and they fill my mind too. I guess the only way is just to get rambling--and see what comes out.

We are located on the front grounds--of a large chateau--(we are just in the grounds--as refugees are living in the chateau)--and it is a very beautiful place. Sorta reminds me of some of the small town parks back home--large trees, with much space between them--ideal for our setup--and this is the first spot in a long time--that I was pleased to move into. This is the kind of a setup I like most--for we are using our large tents--for offices--and are in the open altogether. When we try to locate our offices in a building--it seems that we are always too crowded for space and at the same time--the other surroundings never seem to fit in with the building setup--but then--we take things as they come along--and don't worry about it.

After we got set up (it looks sorta like a tenting grounds, or a circus, something of that nature, just not the color around that you have with a circus--ha) the French came through and looked us over. As a matter of fact they have been in and out all the time we have been here--all of our equipment is of interest to us--and I guess that it is a pleasure watching us fuss around--after

## SvcMen WW II Letters

having the Bouche in here before. The Countess (who owns the chateau and grounds here) came around with three of her daughters--and looked everything over--and as far as I know--it was all OK with her--ha--or tres bien (very good). The refugees who are living around here now--have been evacuated from the various towns--that have been hard hit by the war--for those towns have all been cleared out--generally by the Germans before the fighting reached them--and the people are sent farther into France--so we have passed the towns--where these people have their homes. They will not be allowed to return until some sort of order--is arrived at in their towns--and until they will be able to have the usual businesses functioning again. The refugees seem to have nothing to do except come around and watch us--and they are all very friendly to us--as a matter of fact--the people in this town--came out with open arms when we rolled in--their town has hardly been touched by the war--that is no evident signs of damage--and yet--only a few miles away--other towns have been leveled to the ground. Such are the fortunes of war--and they all take it--as it is--after all what other way can you take it. It is the same way with bombings and the way that the average English person accepted that--as just part of the war--the part that makes their backyard a part of the battlefield.

Everyone must shakehands with you--even the little kids--and they are the most open about their greetings of course. They all wave to you--as you pass on th road--until you about wear your arm out--and here they all have to shake hands with you--not once--but every time you see them--(they sure are a hand-shaking group--good politicians and the older people are the same way. Of course all the GI's have been busy--passing out chewing gum, candy of all sorts, cigarettes, pipe tobacco, ration bisquits (spelling - ha) and everything they have to hand out. We get the most pleasure out of giving the kids candy--don't suppose thatt hey have had much around here for a long time.

Here I am again--will try to finish what I started out to do--a couple days ago--I was interrupted then--after the first page--it seems ages ago--but it was only two days ago--and this afternoon--since nothing seems to be perking--I will try to remember a few more things for the squib.

Since most of the first sheet was about this location--guess that I might as well continue that line. The kids have been very thick here in camp --ever since we setup shop--and they have made many friends. They sorta attach themselves to a soldier--and stick with him every where if possible. Today noon--there was a little girl and boy--just wee tots--went through the chow line with a GI--sat and watched him eat--never saying a word--and of course he gave them some candy--and some of the meal. To look at these people--you wouldn't know that they have been short of food. Their appearance seems to be good--of course they are very short of clothes--that is very noticeable--and yet the women seem to be very well dressed. They apply makeup very attractively--and of course--are of interest to most of the fellows. The children--clean or dirty--are all cute little buttons--good looking kids--and as sweet as all get-out. They keep shaking hands every day when they see you--and are certainly going to grow up to be great politicians--ha. I am getting so that I can talk a little with them. Just single words--etc.--but you can find out a few things.

Yesterday I had an occasion to go downtown here--with the Major--and we looked in the shop windows--on the way back. The stores seem to have quite a few items in them--jewelry, sweaters, hardware, etc.--and they all looked just like our shops back home--more up to date than the shops in England, etc.--although I haven't had much of a chance to shop in them. The towns are all off limits--except for business--and of course that doesn't give you much lee-way to find out what they do have.

On the way to town--we passed a very large chateau--with massive layout of grounds--gardens--and the flowers--arrangements and varieties--is really something to see--it is most beautiful--and was really the first place like that--that I have seen over here. Have seen many large chateaus in the countryside--but none of them have been in good kept up condition. Most of them are now being used to house refugees from the destroyed towns--until they can get the towns in shape so they can move back.

## SvcMen WW II Letters

After being around here in France for awhile--you accept many French ways--without a thought. When we first landed--we noticed the artistic touch that they put on their steel--and iron works--such as fences--window fixtures--grills--etc.--no matter how simple a thing it was--it had a very artistic flair--all beautiful work and I have seen more and more evidence of that around here--but have to remember to look for it--for you soon take such things for granted. There is a way about the people--that identifies them as French--and you can't help but sense it--and see it.

One of the boys in the Signal detachment here bought a little Cocker Spaniel puppy--about six weeks old--from a refugee--paid \$20.00 for him--which is cheap for a good dog--he has papers for him, etc. and he is quite a fellow. If I had some way to take care of one--I would like very much to get one myself--but they have their own trucks--and it is easy to carry one with them wherever we go. We have a good deal of fun playing with the little mutt--and they named him after this town. He will be quite a souvenir of France--if Chris gets him back to the States. The Signal boys have always been great for dog mascots--they used to have one at Custer--that helped them lay wire--through culverts, etc.--and when he died--even the News-Reel men came down to take pictures of the funeral--I suppose when this puppy grows up--they will have him trained to do all sorts of handy little tricks.

I spent this morning--doing my laundry--took me all morning--and I took my portable stove down to a water tap--at the far end of camp--and heated my water as I used it--everything was dirty--and I had to get busy on them--but got a good job. As I washed some of the refugees came by--especially the kids--and they all stopped to watch me--commented on the stove--I had made--and especially on the soap suds that I had in my water. I was using some of our GI soap--which is more or less a yellow soap--only a bit more harsh than the old fashioned yellow soap--and the kids would dip their hands into the suds--and look at it so funny. I guess they have been a bit short of soap--for they always get a kick out of it--when you give them a bar. Little things like that--which we have plenty of--they have been terribly short of for many years now.

I talked to a man and his wife the other night--best I could--ha--they had a sweet little girl--about a year old--and were soon to have another addition to the family. They said that the Germans--some of them at least--could speak pretty good French--but whenever they tried to talk to the people (if they were the real Frenchmen)--the French pretended like they couldn't understand their French--you can imagine how mad that must have made the Bouche. I ask about the Americans--and they of course launched into a big out--oui--and told me that the French might be--ha. They are mighty happy to see us here--believe you me--and I have seen more and more demonstrations of that nature the last few days. Before I had only read about it in the Stars and Stripes--but a day or so ago--I had the occasion to make a trip and pass through many French villages--the people were all out along the sidewalk--cheering each vehicle that came along--and throwing flowers in the cars--they had pitchers of cider--the big drink here--pouring out drinks for any who stopped--and in one town--they were passing out boiled eggs--we got ten in our car--and we never even stopped in the town--and they were all warm yet--from being boiled. They surely were good--the first eggs like that--that we have had since we left Ireland. They must have passed out hundreds of them that day. The towns are all decorated with flags--and paper decorations--reminds you of some of the Fourth of July's we used to have at home--when people draped their homes, etc. And you not only see the French Tri-color every where--but many American flags--and British ones--the three together. Of course--some of the home made U. S. flags--have only six stars on them--others have the full 48--and some--just don't have any stars--but you can see what they have intended it to be. Where they came from--no one knows but many of them have been made by hand--with the stars sewed on to the background. After what the French have been through in this war--I believe they will rebuild into an even stronger country--I surely hope so--and I hope that they will be able to get things ironed out at home--without too much difficulty. Most of the people who did business with the Nazis--have moved out with them--as there is little internal disturbance--in the areas as we move in.

Part of the Band that is with the Rear echelon--gave a concert--here in the park the past two nights--and the French people certainly did appreciate it. It was something to watch them--when they played their national anthem--at the end of the program--just before the Star Spangled

## SvcMen WW II Letters

Banner. Such little things--that we can do--when we have time for it--helps much in furthering good will between us--and the French--and of course--our cigarettes--as every where else in the world makes friends with them--for they certainly do go for them. The men in the Band have more or less adopted two little refugees--they are with them always--running errands--always more than willing to be able to do something for the Yanks.

The little booklet they gave us--just before we landed--telling us what to expect in France--told of how we would find their farms and fields different from the English--but I have found them to be very different from what the booklet said. As a rule I think that the people over here--even with occupation of the Germans have kept up the conditions of their farms -in much better shape--than anywhere else I have seen. Each farm is kept very neat--and it is truly beautiful countryside--the main objection is the dusty roads--for many of their roads are only dirt and gravel--and you know what heavy Army vehicles can do to them--in no time. The dust really is thick--I have seen it up to a foot thick on some roads--and you can just imagine what happens when you drive through it--or walk through it. After you have been on the road--and come in--every bit of your clothing is saturated with dust--and not having very good washing facilities--you know what we are up against. I was so dirty yesterday that I took sponge baths twice--used about a gallon of water both times--and finally did feel clean last night, but there isn't much you can do about washing the dust out of your clothing. One just had to wait till they take in laundry--and I sent my OD uniform in today--am wearing my fastigues--which are much cooler this weather anyway.

At the last stop--I took a walk one evening--with two other fellows--about 2 miles from camp--and stopped in several farm homes to have a drink of cider. At the last stop I had a chance to see the insides of one of their typical farm homes. It had one very large room--with a large hearth and fireplace along one wall--where they did all of their cooking and baking--and on each side of the same wall of the room--were two large high beds. It was bedroom--kitchen--living room--all combined. Everything was very neat--but it was furnished very scantily. They had a very large long table and were eating their evening meal--which consisted of some kind of meat--and large pancakes--they take the pancakes and spread jam or jelly on them and then roll them up--eat them that way--like a jelly roll. They do the same thing in England and Ireland too--so that wasn't anything new. We sat and drank cider with them--talking what little we could. On the wall they had a large family picture--of their wedding--hanging in the most prominent spot. They also had a calendar--and several religious pictures--and a couple statues of religious nature. Religion is very high--with the people in France--and a good many of them are Catholics, I believe.

The villages are all laid out around the church--and no matter how small the village is --it has a large church. I have been in several of them and though they are simple--not as elaborate as many I have seen in the UK--they are all beautiful and all have a special touch of worsip about them.

The rest of the village centers on all sides of the church. The priest is quite a main figure in town--if you want to know anything--you seek either the Mayor or the priest--and they can tell you everything. Usually the school is operated under the church and in the one spot where we located our office in the school building--we had to get the keys from the priest--and make the arrangements with him. They all seem over anxious to help--so anxious that they get excited and you have some time figuring it all out. Suppose you wanted to ask someone in a town--where the Mayor's office was--that sounds simple enough--but you don't know the French if you think it is that simple. You can't just ask the question right out--but after some five minutes of conversation you finally get around to what you wanted to know. It is something to watch them talk--wave their arms --motions--and expressions--and I get a real bang out of it.

This will be all for right now--maybe I will be able to add later on--but I have some work to do on the maps--and will have to leave this until later--but for now--au revoir.

[The News -Sentinel, Friday, October 13, 1944]

### SECOND LETTER FROM CLAUDE BILYEW

Pfc. Claude Bilyew  
Sept. 3, 1944  
Southern France

## SvcMen WW II Letters

Dear Mel Myers:

Received your letter some time ago so will take time this Sunday afternoon to answer it. Your letter found me in the hospital. I had my tonsils taken out. I feel fine now though and I hope this letter finds you the same way.

I went to church this morning. The chaplain gave a very good talk.

It sure turned off cold here last night. It rained and after the rain it got cold. We had quite a storm along with the rain. The sun is out today though warming things up again.

Milburn I like it better here, in France, than any place we've been since we've been overseas. Of course it still won't come up with good old Indiana. Sure will be a happy day when we get back there won't it?

I just finished a letter to my sis, Mary. She went to New York to see her little Frank. Love must be a grand thing. Ha. Ha.

I've got so many more letters to write I don't know where to start first.

Mel keep praying for me and I will do the same for you. You know it makes no difference what part of the world you are in. He is right there to help you. So if we hold fast to Him I am sure He will work everything out OK.

Your Brother,

Claude

[The News-Sentinel, Saturday, October 14, 1944]

### LETTER FROM CHAS. L. RICHARDSON

(Editor's Note: This interesting letter received from Major C. L. Richardson who is serving with a hospital on the front lines in Germany. While the letter was written more or less personal, Capt. Minter considers it so interesting that he desires to share it with folks here.)

Sept. 29, 1944

Dear Capt. Minter:

Received your Kiwanis Bulletins and also the one signed by the club members and I assure you I appreciated all this and I desire to send my regards and best wishes to all the club members. I have been in France and in Belgium for some time. This is the rainy wet season here and also rather cold, and about like our cold wet weather in November there. The people here seem very prosperous and have good fertile soil. In fact I have been wading in their sub-soil for a week. I have a very useful pair of rubber boots which have done yeoman duty. To work in surgery in them seems rather odd.

I am on the "swing shift" now which means from 7:30 to 7:30 and we are kept very, very busy. We even did a Caesarian operation last night which is a little unusual for an Evacuation hospital on the war front. It was for a Belgian civilian woman and there was a nice 6 1/2 lb. female child.

The countryside over here is very picturesque. The Meuse Valley is very beautiful and it is really a valley with high wooded hills on each side and the valley from one to four miles wide.

Paris is a beautiful city and I had the pleasure of being there at a very opportune time and I will tell you about that when I get home. I will make an effort to get to Brussels soon and it is also a very beautiful city. Poor Old London has taken quite a beating but is still a great city and a very obstinate people. That is meant for a compliment to them.

I hear from home very often . . . You would be very much interested to be over here. We have a large army and for size and rapid movement I would say excellently handled. It is an enormous task to support such an army.

We have all we need to live in the Field. There are just a few things which we thought necessary and important which can be done without very well. We tear down, load and move on short notice. A Collecting Company comes in and acts as a Holding Company for our non-transportable cases. All abdomens, chests and some heads are held 10 days. Others we transport as soon as possible. It is quite a job to keep the ball rolling.

I am in charge of surgery at night and am responsible for what is done whether I do it personally or not. As you well know the army, you know how I mean.

## SvcMen WW II Letters

I am in good health and my hair is no thinner and no gray ones. Tell Charles Pyle my waistline is 31.

Four of us live in a tent. We have a stove but my tent mates are a bit lazy and won't build a fire so we do without. Tell all Hello for me.

Sincerely,

Chas. L. Richardson

[The News-Sentinel, Saturday, October 14, 1944]

### LETTER FROM JERRY VAN LUE

Pfc. Jerry Van Lue

Sept. 25, 1944

Dear Dad and All:

Well, here I am finally in the thick of battle, if you want to call it that. I'm on Peleliu island in the Palau group. The going is rugged as can be. The men who have seen action before say that this is the toughest blitz in the history of this war. I can readily see how it is considered so. I'm okay so don't worry. The tide of battle has turned and we are pushing ahead slow but surely. It's sort of hard to get the Nips out of the caves in the hills. The other night, another mortar man and I helped a wireman string lines. A sniper threw a couple of grenades at us but wasn't a very good shot. I didn't have a weapon with me. When that sniper threw the grenades, all we could do is hit the deck and stay there. You can't see the little devils at all, but you can smell them whether they are dead or alive. Close calls are frequent, but they always seem to miss me. We've only had two air-raid alerts. The Jap planes here were all destroyed on the ground.

I haven't received my watch yet, but I expect it any day now. We've started getting a little mail in.

I've lost a lot of weight from food and no sleep, but I guess I can stand it. Tell the kids I'll not be able to write them for awhile, but I'm thinking of them.

Love,

Jerry

[The News-Sentinel, Wednesday, October 18, 1944]

### SEVENTH LETTER FROM GEORGE DAGUE

T/Sgt. Geo. W. Dague

Somewhere in France

I have just come from listening to the 9 o'clock news on the radio--and since we do not have any too good connections on the daily paper "Stars and Stripes"--here we all listen to the radio every chance we get--to see just how the war is going in other sections than the one we are located in. Of course--one can't get very much from the radio news--you all realize that back home--for you no doubt listen to every report--and we do the same here. There are a couple of good BBC broadcasts daily--early in the morning and this evening program. Things seem to be progressing fine on all sectors--and of course you can imagine how gratifying a feeling that is to all we Yanks here.

After hearing about the Air Force--just completing another of their triangle hops--from Britain--bombing on the way to Russia--then bombing on the way to Italy--and on the homeward trip--bombing again--in a three way hop--with fighters flying all that distance with the bombers--and also thinking about our boys who hit the trenches on D-day--those who are in the very front fighting this minute--the boys who are scattered all over the Pacific against the Japs--all of these having gone through hell in one way or another--I feel that what little I have contributed to this war effort--is so small that I am humbled beyond all comprehension. I hope that no one will ask me just what I did over here--for it seems to me--that it is the fighting men who deserve all of the credit for our success this far. Of course--having been in personnel work in civilian life way back when--I realize that our work is necessary too--but it all seems small when compared to the actual efforts of others. Take the fighters--covering all that territory--and all the time--each one of them were alone in their ships--of course they have a special life they lead--they have to--to be able to

## SvcMen WW II Letters

hold up under the strain--but they sure do deserve much credit. They are making the way much easier for the infantry--and every doughboy realizes that today, too. Of course--without the vast supply organization behind all of the army --they couldn't get up and go places--and so our work is essential too--but you still have to fight to shrug off that feeling that your part is entirely too small in this vast conflict.

Today has been another one of those grand warm French days--and this weather is being greatly enjoyed here--for it is the warmest spell we have seen in three years. I believe that we will all have a very warm spot in our hearts for France--mainly because there was never a time--when we really could say that we were actually hot--from the heat--in England--Scotland--or Ireland--and most certainly not the Rock--Iceland--ha. I took a little sun bath this afternoon and did it ever feel good on my skin--which is as white as a lily--but maybe it will tan up a bit--or should I say redden a bit in a few more days of this weather. It is hard to realize that summer is almost over--but the time goes past so very quickly--that one has no idea of the passing of days.

It is now the next day--if you wonder why letters get slow at times--this is just a sample. I started this last night--after the late broadcast--and it was almost dusk in the tent--then the wind was blowing--and when I got down to the above line--a breeze whipped in and messed up the paper--and it caught in the machine--torn in half--and so I had to start all over again. By the time I got started--and the above part finished--it was too dark to write and yet I was in the mood--but instead--I spread my blankets out on the ground--and took a break--lay there for almost an hour before I went to sleep--and now--this morning--I have a little free time--so will see if I can't finish up some more of it.

I received a nice package of stationery last evening--from my friends in Scotland--but in the warm weather coming over--and the time it took to arrive all the envelopes were stuck together--so you see how hard it is to keep paper. Our chaplain has a supply that we can draw from--and then I only buy about ten airmail envelopes at a time--that way--don't have too many around to get stuck together. But don't send any over--as it would just be wasted--as one can't keep much around at any time--due to living on the ground more or less.

Did we ever get a nice stack of mail yesterday--I received 16--in the evening and then about 10 o'clock--four more--but had to wait till this morning to read them--and now--as I am writing here--one of my buddies brought me 12 more. If you wonder why the bunch all at once--it is our first real mail delivery in about two weeks--you see it doesn't always catch up with us--as other things are more important to be moved--and the mail comes thru--in good time--when done here now. When they get the railroads working--then we should get a little better service--but what a job it must be--for them to keep track of all the units that are now over here in France.

(to be continued)

[The News-Sentinel, Thursday, October 26, 1944]

### LETTER CONCERNING GORDON O. SHAW

Rochester, Ind.

Oct. 21, 1944

Dear Editor:

Mr. T. G. Shaw and family received the enclosed letter in regard to their son who has been a German P.O.W. since Sept. 23, 1943. His address is: S/Sgt. Gordon O. Shaw, P.O.W., 113-520, Stalag 17B (Luft 3), Germany, Via New York, N.Y.

As this is from a repatriate, it is of interest to other P.O.W. relatives.

Sincerely yours,

T. G. Shaw

R.R. 5, Rochester, Ind.

Oct. 18, 1944

Dear Mr. Shaw:

I am engineer on a Fortress. I met your son, Gordon, at Blythe, Calif., when we were both taking training. I met him sometime later at Grand Island, Neb. He then went overseas in a different group than I.



## SvcMen WW II Letters

I met him again in the German prison camp. We recognized each other, and were quite happy to see each other.

He is getting along O.K. He is not one to sit around and fret about his confinement. He is the athletic type. He plays softball, basketball, and volleyball. The camp has many musical instruments. They are supplied by the Y.M.C.A. They have a wonderful orchestra It is made up of 13 pieces. The orchestra puts on a jam-session every Sunday afternoon, and the boys enjoy it very much. They also put on stage shows such as "Hellzapoppin'," "The Birth of the Boogie," "Ezmirelda's Escape," and a few others. They are very good and the fellows do enjoy them.

No, I was not on the same crew with Gordon, but I did know him very well, and considered him as a buddy.

I left the camp on July 27, 1944. It is located in Austria. About 60 miles out of Vienna, three miles out of a town called KREMS. Gordon is now at M Stammlager 17 B. When writing to Gordon use both Stalag 17B and Luft 3. Luft means airforce in German.

If there is anything else you would like to know, just drop me a line, and I will try to answer your questions.

The News-Sentinel, Friday, October 27, 1944]

### THIRD LETTER FROM MAX E. TEETER

(Letter from Pfc. Max Teeter, written to his parents, Mr. and Mrs. C. C. Teeter, 200 Pontiac St., Rochester, Indiana.)

c/o Postmaster  
San Francisco, Calif.

Dear Mom and Pop:

I received your letter today. It was written on the first, so that isn't bad for mail service. I was glad to get the pictures. It seemed good to see the pictures of the good old Erie. I think that all of the pictures are coming out good.

I saw several whales when we came over. Of course, they were quite a ways from the boat. We saw quite a few flying fish. I don't get to go to church because I have to work most of the time. The mornings are the coolest part of the day. The thermometer registers 150 degrees. That is the usual temperature. There is very little work done in the afternoon during the extreme heat. It don't seem like the middle of October. It is so hot. Yesterday was really a scorcher. I guess it will get hotter until about the middle of November. Then it begins to get cooler. We aren't bothered with many bugs, a few mosquitos and lizards. This morning one of the boys found a land crab in his shoe. The lizards crawl around the rafters and every where, looking for bugs and worms. It rained yesterday for over an hour. When it rains it really rains. No slow drizzles. I didn't have to work today, so I went down to the sea shore (about 300 yards) some of the boys have made boats out of P-47 belly tanks. They have small engines on them and they ride around the ocean just as if they were in a motor boat on some nice lake. The tide was out and I walked out on the coral looking in the small pools of water at the different kinds of sea life. There were small creatures with little arms. They looked like an octopus. I think they are called "squib." They will sting your feet if you are swimming barefoot. I saw a few baby fish swimming around in the small pools. It looked just like a small fish pond in the solid coral with all the little fish and snails swimming from pool to pool. We had some excitement around our tent the other day. One of the boys was burning some old letters and they caught a big brush pile on fire that is right behind our tent. We moved all our stuff out of the tent and used fire extinguishers to put the sparks out. Nevertheless, there was a dozen or more holes burned in our tent so the boy who started the fire patched the holes. We expected to see our home go up in smoke at any time. It's about time to get ready to eat. I get The News-Sentinel. It is about six weeks late but that isn't too bad.

Love,  
Max.

[The News-Sentinel, Saturday, October 28, 1944]

### SEVENTH LETTER CONTINUED FROM GEORGE DAGUE

## SvcMen WW II Letters

T/Sgt. Geo. W. Dague  
Somewhere in France

This is going to be another beautiful day--if I am dwelling on the weather too much--just stop and think what it means to all of us--to have good clear weather. It means good movement ahead for our equipment--it means much better working conditions for us--as well as better fighting conditions for our men--and every morning--when it starts off right like this--well--we give a sigh--and feel much better about everything. You can get pretty discouraged and downhearted--when everything you have gets wet--to some degree or another--and if this weather keeps up another three weeks it will really mean a great deal to our efforts. Since this is the warmest we have seen in a long time--the title--"tropical"--although isn't that warm--came from that satisfied feeling of one who has been too long--in a cold--or cool--or very damp climate.

The other night--we had trucks--to take us over to a Quartermaster shower unit. They have it all set up--beside a laundry unit--and have it in tents of course--all camouflaged--and along a stream--so they have a good supply of water. It is the second shower we have had over here--and what a grand and glorious feeling it is --to get under a hot stream of water and really bathe oneself. At other times--every few days--we try to get a bath out of our helmets--which will hold about 1 1/2 to 2 quarts of water--and sometimes manage to do it--on less than a gallon of water--many times much less--as water is a very critical item over here in France. You have to learn to get along on very little at times--and whenever you do have it--it is always a great effort to carry it from the supply point--to where you can use it. Such simple things as water taps--with hot and cold water--will be things to rave over when we do get back home again.

The way these French people farm--is of great interest to me. They use very old fashioned methods--and never yet--have I seen a team of horses--hitched side by side--don't know what you call it--but they hitch them one in front of another and usually use three horses--if the job is a big one. Little things like that always seem so strange--when you have always been used to seeing it done in a different manner. Their wagons are all on the small scale (of course their railroad equipment is of a smaller gauge than ours--and the coaches and freight cars are all very small)--but you have to consider that their fields and farms are much smaller too--so they are only what is needed for them to carry on their work. Most everything is done by hand--and I have seen very little of any of the types of equipment that we have back home. Maybe the Germans have cleaned the country of it--for other spots.

In the evenings--this camp of ours is filled with little French kids--who seem to come here to play--but of course--they are the refugees youngsters who are living right behind us here--and this is a good open space for them to race around on one or two scooters they have--roll hoops--and all that business that kids do--and they were raising a heck of a dust cloud--right next where I had my blankets rolled down. I got the old French dictionary--and went to work--telling them to play elsewhere--because of all the dust--bribed them with some bon-bons--candy to you--any candy--ha. And finally after much motions--got them to understand--and they practically tip-toed off to another section to continue their game. They play very different to our kids--suppose that they have their own games--but all are very nice looking youngsters. They do show the effects of not having too much to eat--and not having a good diet too.

It is almost chow time--noon now--and as usual--there are about 15 French people gathered around our kitchen watching the men prepare the food--and stand there while they hand it out--and then watch us eat it. Don't know what is so interesting about that process--as it isn't that they want food--I believe that they are all provided for at these camps--but anything that we do--is of great interest to them--and we sorta feel like animals in the zoo many times. Of course--we have to be on our good behavior all the time--for after all--we are creating goodwill--as well as doing the fighting over here too--and many of the older people--knew Yanks from the last war--and no doubt are interested in what this batch is like. They are glad to see us here--and they show it in every way--not only to being interested in the way we do things--but by trying to help us all they can. The kids are usually busy doing all sorts of jobs around the kitchen--running errands--and odd jobs--and of course they always get a candy bar or something to make it worth their while--ha.

## SvcMen WW II Letters

As I ramble on--certain things come to mind--and so I stick them in--as I go along--it probably makes for crazy reading--but just mark it up to being a bit rushed. They have a good many donkeys over here--on the farms--and they are little fellows--stubborn too--as I have seen some of them working. But what impresses me most--is the way they like to bray at night--sometimes all night long--until you want to get up and have donkey steak for breakfast.

The other evening--about eight o'clock--we saw a family of refugees come in--coming from the South--returning to their homes in the North no doubt. First--came the husband--pulling a small two-wheeled cart behind him--with comforters--and what few belongings they could carry with them when they were forced to leave--but a real load for one man to pull many miles over up and down country--his dog was beside him--and a small boy, too. Then came the wife--(I would guess them to be about 45 to 50 years old)--pulling two cows--who seemed to want to stop and rest--but she was determined to keep up with the rest of the family--and behind the cattle--two little girls--with sticks--switching the cows to keep them moving. The woman was pregnant and none of them were clothed very well--their shoes just about ready to give out. That is what they seem to need most--both clothes and shoes--with shoes being the most important item on the shortage list--and from what I gather--there just aren't any to be had. They wear sneakers--wooden shoes--boots--anything--and many of the younger children go barfooted too--even then thou they are refugees moving many miles back to their home. But to get up--the next morning--at 6:45--out came this same procession--in the very same order--having the same trouble--and moved on North. No doubt they were nearing their home--and were anxious to get back--to find out if anything had been left intact--or if they just had a rubble of ruins to move into again. That is the part that gets you down in your heart--and makes the old lump come into your mouth. These refugees move on everything possible--some carrying their things on bicycles--others on small two wheeled carts--some on large rubber-tired carts--with a horse pulling them--but you are liable to see most any person pushing a wheelbarrow containing all their life belongings--from a young girl or fellow--to an old woman of 70 years. Although they may have lost everything--they are still of spirits--after four years of the Bouche--to wave to you--to give the V-sign--(it really means something here too believe you me)--and to smile to you--letting you know that you are most welcome--wishing you good luck on your way--as you pursue the Germans back into France. They have these refugee camps all along the way--and at the same time--they set up homes in these large chateaus--and grounds--where they can bring people from bombed out areas--such as Cherbourg--and other places--to give them a horse--until the Army can get out of their way--and they can move back in--and start building over again. It is one of the most touching scenes of this war over here--and everyone that you see struggling northward--in the countryside--makes you wonder what the folks back home would feel about strikes--rationing--etc.--if they could just see this sight. But alas--they will never know--they will never feel the pangs that these people have--they will never hate the Germans--as these people do--they will never know how cruel this war has been to millions--all over Europe.

Several stops back--I found several papers--that evidently belonged to one of the German troops stationed at that particular chateau. It had been used by them for a hospital--and in the church cemetery--nearby--there were 95 German graves--one right after another--all of them having been killed about the same time. There were also two American graves--all having been buried by the Germans--and they made a very neat job of it all--gave the two Americans a much better burial than their own men. But to get on--I found several letters--transportation tickets--etc.--that belonged to this one soldier. The one letter--our chaplain translated for me--and it was from his mother in Germany. There was not a single thing about the war in it--only that certain families had moved back into town--and that they too were back in their own home--which evidently was meant to construe that the bombing raids had hit their own community. His mother was looking forward to his next leave--had sent several packages--to him and had thanked him for his girl friend--for the lovely things he had sent her from France. But--every hope and wish in the letter was followed by the phrase--"may God be willing"--and it indicated--that it wasn't to Hitler that they were turning to--to save them--or to the Nazi--or an other force--but mainly--if God was willing--then they would be protected--I found many such things--but didn't have the heart to keep

## SvcMen WW II Letters

them--think that it is better to destroy them--after looking them over--for what value can they ever have to me--or anyone back home?

To get off the above subject--and off to one closer to home. I suppose that you are all rading Ernie Pyle's columns about the war over here. If not--by all means do read it--he writes the most human side of it all--that I have ever read. There was a grand article in Time--July 17th about him--and his life and work--and it is excellent reading. We read him in the "Stars and Stripes" when we got them--and enjoy every bit he writes. To quote him or rather to quote John Steinbeck: "There are really two wars--and they haven't much to do with each other. There is the war of maps and logistics, of campaigns, of batallions, armies, divisions and regiments--and that is General Marshall's war. Then there is the war of homesick, weary, funny, violent, common men who wash their socks in their helmets, complain about the food, whistle at Arab girls, or any girls for that matter, and lug themselves through as dirty a business as the world has ever seen and to it with humor and dignity and courage--and that is Ernie Pyle's war. He knows it as well as anyone and writes about it better than anyone." Those few lines say a great deal he certainly is the greatest war correspondent we have over here--if not in all the world--because he writes about the war--as it affects us--the little fellow--and not the way it affects the world--or a nation--or powers.

I must hurry over to chow now--so will have to leave you for the time being--but in a few more days--will try to get back with you--providing that the weather--the war--the bees--(they are everywhere here--ha)--the kids--and everything else don't prevent it. I enjoy these little chats--and hope that it gives you all some idea of how things are over here--it won't really give you much news about me--but will give you some idea of how I think--in the middle of all this mess here.

Just one parting blow--before I forget it--I may have covered it before--but I have it on my mind--and it won't hurt to write about it again. While you are sitting still in one spot--you don't realize the force of an army--but when you pack up and move--and get on the road--and then see mile after mile--of streams of vehicles--guns--tanks--every sort of implement of war you can imagine--bulldozers--ammunition--rations--(even if it is just a hundred jeeps)--all full of men and equipment--rushing along the road--always forward--forward--pressing the Germans more and more--you realize the force of our Army--and it gives you a tingling feeling deep inside--to know that you are a part of that force--even though you are just one little cog in the machinery--you ara a part--and you feel that you alone--carry the force of the entire strength. It is then too that we appreciate what production has done for us--what the Navy has done for us--and what the air force is now doing (by protecting us on the road)-- and our thanks go back to all of you back home--to you who buy bonds religiously--because you want to help--to you who work at any job--they all help us here--Well so long--or au revoir for now.

[The News-Sentinel, Monday, October 30, 1944]

### LETTER FROM JAMES WALTON

(Letter received by Jack Elin from Cpl. James Walton, now serving with the Army Signal Corps in France.)

Cpl. James Walton

Dear Jack:

Received your Vmail yesterday and was happy to hear from you. Glad you liked the little souvenir, although I'm sorry to say that helmet I sent you wasn't the one I found the head in. Ha.

Jack I wish I could tell you where I am now. I'm stationed in a beautiful city at the present. It has many parks, statues, sunken gardens, and pools. It's all very picturesque. I'm quartered almost in the down-town district or the loop as we'd say in Chicago. Right among all the night life. Champaigne flows like water here. I'm going to be a stock-up guy when I return home to beer. Ha.

Over here a quart of champaigne costs about \$4.50, cheap compared to the States. I only wish liquor could be sent through the mail, I'd send you a couple bottles of good champaigne.

Jack, since the last time I wrote you, Ive really traveled. I've been in Paris, and it is beautiful. The day I arrived there, was a day not long after the Germans had been driven out. People were still celebrating the liberation. They made each of us feel like we were General "Ike"

## SvcMen WW II Letters

himself. You could hardly make your way through the streets, people stopping you, shaking hands, etc. One girl stopped me and handed me a quart of wine, just like that. For me, she says.

I visited Notre Dame Cathedral and it takes your breath away. Outside, to the right of the cathedral, stands a large statue of Emperor Charlemagne, he was crowned there in 800 A.D., it's the largest statue of any one man I've seen. Inside the church I saw Louis Pasteur's tomb, and the tombs of several kings. Also, Napoleon's tomb, quite impressive, it's meant to be that way. Also stood under the Eiffel Tower, made me think a little of New York City. Spent a few minutes under the Arc of Triumphe, in that, there is an oil lamp burning, it's been burning since 1918. The Arc was covered with flowers the day I was there. Saw where Pasteur and Dr. and Madame Curie had their laboratories and where they studied.

Wish I could fully describe the streets of Paris to you. I'll try a little. The streets are very, very wide, twice as wide as our largest avenues in the States. All along the streets are huge modern stores, sidewalk cafes, theatres, hotels, and beautiful trees line the avenue. Along the street curbs are thousands of benches. In Paris there are few cars because of the gasoline shortage, so people ride bicycles, there are literally thousands of them. What cars you do see are our own government cars and French government cars. You've read about the French F.F.I., I'm sure. It was nothing there to see. The F.F.I. go tearing down the avenue with guns out searching for Germans, there are still plenty of Nazis left in Paris dressed in civilian clothes.

I also saw Louis XIV palace at Versailles. Quite impressive.

Well that's Paris for you Jack, hope you can get a little picture of what I saw from my description.

I left Paris, Jack, and continued on my way, went through the city of Chateau Thierry, you remember that place I'm sure, it was quite famous in the last World War. Still is today, you can see the old 1918 trenches, they're still viable, but covered up a lot with grass and brush. I saw the old battlefield where in 1918 the good old 4th Division made its name. It was like walking through a history book.

Jack, remember a few weeks back when the Yanks bottled the Boche up in the Falaise Gap? After they had slaughtered and beaten hell out of them, I passed through that gap. To see that place, one would think the wrath of God had fallen on it. It is several miles long you know, and almost every ten feet along the road there were burning German tanks, anti-tank guns, command cars, airplanes, cannons, equipment of all descriptions, dead animals and humans. I'll never forget that place. I talked to one of the Doughboys who fought through there, he had four wristwatches on one arm, four on the other arm, a pocketfull of rings, pistols, and money, all German. He didn't kill Germans for nothing. Ha.

Before going into Paris I have seen the following places: St. Marie Eglies, Caranton, S. Lo. St. Lo, that was the place, a mass of rubble. It was at Caranton that I got the living hell scared out of me.

So you see, Jack, I have been around some in France, but with it all I'll stick to Indiana.

How is the factory coming, Jack, I hope not too many headaches. I can hardly wait to get back to the place.

You probably have read where the government is giving any course in education we want to study while we are overseas. I've written in for a course in Economical Engineering and should be getting it any day. It's going to be interesting and it sure won't hurt me. One of my friends, a college man, has had quite a bit of "Time and Motion," he used it quite a bit in working with machinery in Detroit. He and I get together and he has passed along lots of pointers. There is a lot to that subject, much to my surprise.

The Army is now making a new battle jacket for us, it's made out of cotton gabardine, I was wondering if the factory had contracted for any of them.

How's Herman? Tell him I said hello.

I realize you're very busy so a letter just any time will be appreciated.

Your friend,

Jim

[The News-Sentinel, Monday, October 30, 1944]

## SvcMen WW II Letters

### SECOND LETTER FROM ARTHUR MAGLECIC

T/4 Art Maglecic

Dear Dad and Sisters:

Just to drop you a few lines to let you know I am just fine.

Glad to hear that you are all OK. The weather here is cold and wet. We had a little tank battle and most of us came out fine. Some of the men became shakey. They were all nervous and broken down. The enemy sneaks up on us in the dark but we took them on and got most of them. The rest of them took off they didn't want any part of us.

We received a write-up in the paper on this. Well, looks like I had better close for now. Hope to hear from you soon. Good luck to all of you. Take good care of Pop. Sending you another check.

Your brother,  
Art

[The News-Sentinel, Saturday, November 4, 1944]

### SECOND LETTER FROM CLYDE E. TOWNE

(Letter received from Pvt. Clyde E. Towne, Jr., by his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Clyde E. Towne, Sr.)

France, Sat. Night  
Sept. 30, 1944

Dear Folks:

I hope to write a few more lines that may be of interest or news to you. But first, I will say I'm well, doing fine and in good health. Since I've been quiet for so long, you've probably been doing a lot of wondering and me, just as much fast thinking.

I don't know just how to start in but I'd like to give you a small idea of what ret. is like and what he's made of. Time has passed rather fast but how well I remember those first few days and nights. Not one can I ever forget, but to write it is much harder than if spoken.

My career here has been brief and yet long, but still more, I've found a good deal of excitement and yet I'm contented more than any place I've been since being overseas.

But most of all, you'd probably do a better job keeping up with me to know I'm in the 5th division of the Third army. At first, though, we served with the First army and later joined our original one.

We've cracked some mighty hard nuts, including the St. Lo line and the Brittany Pe. And we fought the Germans all the way to Verdun. Between these points, we've had it tough going a number of times.

If I had a map I could pin point the hundreds of cities, towns and villages we fought or went through. A couple of the larger ones were Angers and the spearhead to Rheims.

Before the big push started, things were pretty quiet and then one morning hell bent for election, broke the silence. It was something we had hoped and was looking forward to and at last it came. Our air force bombed, dive-bombed and strafed the enemy into submission and our armored columns overran what was in their path. Our artillery did a very nice and neat job of supporting the infantry.

So fast was the break-through that the Germans had very little chance of getting away. The prisoners we captured had very little, if any, heart to fight.

I'm telling you the sight of the dead of both sides as well as the cattle and horses too, smelled something awful. I saw very few Yanks, but mostly and plenty of Germans dead. They were the best Krauts I ever met and they wouldn't bother you for anything in this world.

In the advance, the answer to my question came as I had thought it would, were we drawing interest on the efforts we had expended and also the work we had done we wanted to see it with our own eyes and true enough, we did.

Knocked out enemy tanks, guns and what not, as well as hundreds of trucks left in ashes, were clear evidence of the German retreat.

## SvcMen WW II Letters

We were strafed a number of times and I must say those Jerry planes were really traveling. In that sort of an attack, I find it interesting and I love its excitement. You can see the lead flying, it is so thick.

In the early stages, the first we had we shot down the Germans and they licked their wounds and decided to call it quits. The planes that fell were nothing but heaps of junk and pieces were scattered for two or three hundred yards and usually one dead Jerry unrecognizable.

The worst of all things, I dread most is their bombers. They come at night usually dropping flares and then their bombs and how I hate to hear them whistle.

Every time one bursts, the ground would shake and dirt fall in your face. You'd think your foxhole would sink in. One day a month and eight days after my birthday, I was eating dinner and the Germans were shelling an area a few hundred yards away and they exploded the same time that a few shells were timed to hit where I was and I'm not kidding they landed almost in my lap. I didn't hear any whistle but I could feel the breeze they made. They had me pinned down and all the time I knew I had to get under cover. I was laying on my stomach and every time I started to get up and bang so I hit the dirt again. One shell hit about 15 feet away from me and it burst damn near in my ear, aside from that the shrapnel was really flying thick and I could here the pieces flying through the air.

How I got out of there alive is a miracle I'm sure. There must of been a hundred pieces that missed me only by a hair and I was really sweating, too. When I finally reached cover, I looked myself over for wounds and found only my pants had been ripped in that mad rush for freedom.

I hope I never get another shave as long as I live but here they come regularly.

After it was over, I had to laugh at myself because it seemed funny for awhile but I might of been there yet. I thought eternity was knocking but I guess it wasn't my time.

I'll trade my wardrobe for a plow jockey's joy any day.

This is all I have for this time, maybe you think it's enough, huh? Well, till we meet again, I'm sending my love with the best wishes to all, until then, Good by and God bless you.

Always,  
Love,  
Junior

[The News-Sentinel, Monday, November 6, 1944]

### SIXTH LETTER FROM GEORGE D. HOLLOWAY

(Editor's Note: Letter written to Mr. and Mrs. Granville Holloway by their son, George, who is now serving in the United States Paratroopers somewhere in Holland.)

George Holloway  
October 17, 1944  
Holland

Dear Mother and Dad:

Greetings, Ha! Every time I see that word, reminds me of the letter the draft board sent me and look where it got me. I've really been getting around since that day of Marchy 25, 1942 and there has been a lot of water pass under the bridge. Well I'm not a man to be complaining but frankly, here's one guy that is ready to come home. Those two years overseas is about ready to be staring me in the face. Well, time will only answer the question of returning back to the homeland so here's hoping time keeps marching on but fast.

The time has finally arrived of telling about the little glider ride to this part of the continent of wooden shoes and the home of windmills. It was a smooth ride up until hitting Holland and then things became more exciting. In fact, too much excitement. When you see flak and tracer bullets coming up to greet you, the excitement is gone. Nails started coming into that coffin, like popcorn popping. Don't know why but it was all going into the tail and wings. Finally our tow plane was hit, so we were forced to the ground. It seemed like the glider just sat there in the air for hours to us. Kept getting machine gun and small arms fire but still none coming into the main body of the glider. Our pilot finally landed and it was a perfect one at that believe me--nothing like in Normandy. You'll never realize how we felt to have our feet on the face of Mother Earth again.

## SvcMen WW II Letters

We could all kiss it. We hadn't any more than hit the ground, when a couple boys from our strategic division came out and took us back to their lines. After arriving there, we learned that a couple more minutes in the air and headed in the direction we were going, we would have landed right in the midst of old Jerry. All I can say is thanks and some one's prayers were answered once more. The following evening, I was back with my outfit once more, who had reached their destination which was miles from where I landed. Since then things have been rough but nothing like before.

The old Army words we've picked up over here is: \* \* \* \* -- You've had it. Now you have learned of a few more of my experiences, which is getting to be rather a long list. I don't know how much of this will get through or pass the eagle eye, of the censor, but hope at least the beginning and ending comes home.

I'd better be signing off before this becomes a book or you get tired reading. I'm feeling fine and getting along likewise. Take care of yourselves and chin up. The big light is just ahead and is getting brighter every day. When we are standing beside that light, then we can think of the home journey and happy days once more. Well, Goodnight, until a little later. Tell all Hello for me.

Your loving son,  
George

[The News-Sentinel, Friday, November 10, 1944]

### LETTER FROM VERNARD HARTLE

(Letter received by Mr. and Mrs. Walter Hartle at Leiters Ford from their son, Pfc. Vernard Hartle, stationed in England.)

Dear Folks:

Twelve letters today, six from you. Gladys Bingle wrote a large letter and I received an interesting letter from Mrs. Hawkins. Mary wrote and so did Clara and Rosella.

I sent a package out this morning and I don't care who has it, the powder and perfume, I mean. The flashlight will need batteries if it is used. Will try and get some more to send home later. Saw in the clippings where Herbert Bowersox is over here. I guess I am at the wrong camp at the wrong time to see any of the boys. May see some of them before we get home, that is if they ride in our planes if the planes haul them.

Was out driving the other day and saw my first old estate with the castle, have seen what they called castles but none of them like this one.

Slept in my first house a while back, but no sheets on the bed. Bud must be some boy. Jeanie and Connie are still growing and Bevie sure is interested in her school work. Will try and write again this week.

Love,  
Vernard

[The News-Sentinel, Monday, November 13, 1944]

### FOURTH LETTER FROM RAYMOND HERRELL

From Red Herrell  
Somewhere in France  
September 27, 1944

Dear Folks and Kids:

This leaves me O.K. I sure hope it finds you all the same way. I got eight of your letters, sure made me feel good. Well, how is everything going? Hope O.K. We got in a scrap with a bunch of tanks and the good Lord let us come out on top. It sure was a tough fight. I've been wet and muddy for three weeks now. Been in my fox hole for three weeks now, haven't been 100 yards from it. The people back home think this war is about won, but I'm telling them all they better not slack down now if they only knew what us boys are going through for them, they might buy more war bonds and quit their griping about what they are sacrificing and work harder. Well, I got the expert infantry combat medal. I hope this finds you all O.K. Close with loads of love.

Your Son,



## SvcMen WW II Letters

Red

(This letter was received by Mrs. Katie Herrell, Rochester, from her son who is stationed somewhere in France.)

[The News-Sentinel, Tuesday, November 14, 1944]

### EIGHTH LETTER FROM GEORGE DAGUE

T/Sgt. Geo. W. Dague  
Somewhere in France

G. I. Joe Camps on the Count 's chateau grounds

Want to try and put down a few thoughts about this present camping grounds--before we continue on our way--and it all passes into history in my mind. Have been rather busy-- since we hit this spot--and haven't felt much like writing anyway--so you waited until I was in a little better mood--but am afraid that tonight isn't the night--however--will make a stab at writing a bit--and maybe it will put me in a little better humor.

The night we arrived here--about three in the morning--I got very little sleep--after driving that night--and then staying up--to guide the trucks in with our equipment and men--later on in the morning--then trying to set up office--clean this place up a bit before noon and next day--and eat--and then nap for a few hours--I was pretty worn out by that evening. Since we have our office located in the Chateau--we put up our two squad tents--which are 16x32 feet--and buggers to put up too--for they have such a high ceiling to the tent--and by evening--I was really all in. Didn't feel like doing much--except turning in for some sleep--however I did turn out the last chapter of this business. Got to bed about ten that night--since I much prefer to sleep in the open--I pulled my blankets etc.--outside--in the woods and slept good--until about two o'clock that morning--when it started to pour--so back into the tent I went--in the pitch dark--and since the ground was very rough there--I didn't enjoy much sleep the rest of the night. Was on the go all the next day--but did manage to rig up a hammock out of two shelter halves--(I was bound and determined that I would get a good night's sleep some way--ha)--and hooked it all up between two trees--about 30 feet from our squad tent. Everything went fine--and I went on after chow--laid down in it--for a sample and went sound to sleep--slept until bedtime too. By that time--it looked much like another rainy night--but I was bound and determined not to haul my things back into the tent again--so I rigged up a half shelter over the hammock--and turned in. Had hardly got under the blankets--until it started to rain--but I had already decided to stay outside--no matter how wet it got--ha. I was getting pretty determined--when I made up my mind to that--knowing how it can rain over here. I did stay out all night--and didn't get wet either--but I didn't sleep well either--for the constant dripping off the pine trees onto the canvas over me--kept me half awake all the time--and then too--there were several German planes flying overhead--and I have gotten to the place where I always wake up at night when I hear a plane or planes passing overhead. So today--I wasn't rested up either. Tonight--since it looks like more rain--I have fixed my bed inside the tent--have given up hopes of being comfortable--and will bunk on the hard ground tonight--probably won't be able to get up in the morning--ha. Well it will take much effort anyway. Since the Germans seem to have lost all their air force--at least it seems that way--we haven't been digging in like we were--haven't had any reason to--and hope that we don't in the future either. Saves a lot of work I will say--but I don't mind digging in--for it is for our own safety when we do just that. This should be enough about my trying to get a comfortable night's sleep--but it is such an important feature of this life in the rough--that that is why I deal with it so often. Without my proper sleep--or even half way proper sleep--I am not worth much in the daytime.

But more about this place. It is a beautiful estate--the Chateau--belonged to a certain Count--whom I can't of course identify--and the chateau--which is one of the largest homes I have seen yet over here--has been built in the past 20 or 30 years so that it is very modern. It is a beautiful four-story structure--and I am at a loss as to how to describe it--since every room is different--and there must be from 80 to a hundred rooms about the place. The room that I am writing in--has the walls covered with marble in about six different colors and patterns--with panels, etc.--fancy work around the room--and has six large double French doors--about 20 feet high--facing the front

## SvcMen WW II Letters

grounds--overlooking a large lawn--and opening onto a large front porch--or whatever they would call it here. The room next to this has the walls covered with large tapestries--all very beautiful done into the walls.

All the rooms on this floor--have the same large French doors (half windows too) so that about half the wall space is in such glass openings. All of which makes me think that this was merely the Count's summer house--and not a year around place--but it must have cost a fortune just to build this place. There is a massive kitchen--and bakery--on the subfloor--going down from this main floor--and also a massive wine cellar--in the basement--where the records of the house were also kept. This place must have been built on the site of a former chateau--for there are records of what they had to eat--for every single meal--way back into the early 1800's--and also records of the wines--etc.--from 1900 on. There are also books--on the running expense of the house--but I haven't had a chance to look much of that over. We are not supposed to disturb such things--however--the Nazis have dumped all such stuff--into one large basement room--and it is a mess down there. All sorts of books--and magazines--going way back when--but all in French of course--so I haven't read any of them--ha.

The upstairs rooms --are mostly bedrooms --sitting rooms --etc.--and they are papered in very loud papers I would say--ha-- but they stick to certain colors--just like our large famous homes back in the States. They have a rose room--a blue room--etc.--and all of them very similar. They have small dressing rooms off of them--and throughout the house--there is an abundance of large mirrors--from full size--to those about ten by 5 feet high--and all of them must have cost a small fortune in mirrors. The rooms have alcoves--where the beds were--and had curtains--that pulled together closing off the bed from the rest of the room--or they might have been used as a sorta drapery. Most of the furnishings of the chateau have been removed--however--there is still quite a lot of odd furniture around--overstuffed chairs--bedsteads--etc.--and all of it is very lovely work. I don't know enough about any of the periods--to describe it very clearly.

There are many additional buildings about the grounds--a chapel--and of course--farm buildings--sheds--buildings for the workers--and all that sort of thing--and everything is of course masonry--or brick work. Have seen more brick work about here--than any place before. They are very artistic about such work--and especially with the cement fronts--for they pattern them--with a trowel--or with other kinds of cement--and make it look like a solid masonry job.

This place was used by the Germans--as a bakery--and storehouse--for foodstuffs. I can't begin to tell you the stuff that was piled in the various rooms --and much of it still right where it was when we moved in. We only moved enough--to use the rooms that we need--and that was plenty--for the bags, took as many as four men to lift one. They had all kinds of flour--sugar (there was no shortage for them on that stuff even though the natives got practically none of such food items --bag full after bag full--of tea--(it is not the real tea--and looks like twigs--and leaves of trees--all kinds mixed together to form a substitute for the real thing)--bag full after bag full of French cookies--they are very hard so I don't care for them. They are packed in a large burlap or paper bag--about the size of two cement bags--and inside they are packed in separate small bags--first sealed in a paper bag--then that one is inside a cloth bag of good material--so there doesn't seem to be any shortage of bags and such material. The burlap bags--with the flour in it--are all of good material--looks like a substitute material for the real thing but they are all well made--and of course all have the German eagle--or whatever bird it is--that stands for the Nazi party. In an adjoining warehouse--there was other food stuffs--like cheese, Swiss style--and something very similar to our limburger (brr--how I hate that--ha)--b eans--and endless materials. There were also French bisquits--which I like much better than our own GI ones--as they are sweeter--and much softer too. We have used a lot of this material--but for the most part--it is turned over to the French Nationals --who are using it to feed the refugees--and the different towns--that are rather low on foodstuffs. You see-- very little foodstuffs can be moved about--while there is a war on.

Several of the rooms here in the Chateau--are filled with loaves of bread--it is a dark bread--sorta on the style of our rye bread--and is the type that it never spoils --the outside has a very tough crust on--but the inside--never hardens--and it can be used or stored for long periods of time--before it is needed. We have been having a loaf every night--with our nightly snacks--of cheese--

## SvcMen WW II Letters

etc.--and it tastes fairly good--though it seems to lack salt--otherwise--I would consider it very good bread. When you take over such stocks--our Quartermaster uses what it can--or that it needs--and the rest is turned over to the French--through our Civil Affairs section--for the natives. For some of our meals--we would have our own meat--German beans--French bisquits--and some outfits--even had Japanese condensed milk for their coffee--so that just gives you a little idea of how our diet may change from time to time. Everything that we have used so far--has tasted very good--outside of the strong cheese and I never did cared for that.

In a nearby town--when it was taken over--several warehouses were discovered--with all sorts of German supplies--mainly kitchen items--but also uniforms--equipment for the soldier--even bolts of silk--and darn good silk from what I understand. I didn't get to see the warehouse--but have seen much of the stuff that came from them--and would liked to have gotten a few souvenirs--if it had been possible. The fellows are sending home everything imaginable--as long as it is legitimate items. Our Special Service Sections has taken over certain stocks--such as razor blades--tooth brushes--soap--shaving soap--etc.--and passed it out to the troops for use--to supplement our own supplies--and I have a little of that. They also passed out no end of German stationary--but it is all rather cheap--and I didn't get any for that reason. Have enough paper as it is to carry around--and to try and keep dry now.

We have all sorts of German vehicles--in use now. The practice is to paint the Allied mark--the large star with a circle around it--so that it can be identified by our own air force--and other ground forces--and then put a serial number on it. They had all kinds of cars--Dodges, LaSalles, Cadillacs, Fords, Chevys and many foreign makes--from Italian cars to French makes. This morning I went over to our Ordnance Company--to pick up a couple cars--with my Colonel. We brought back two Fords--I drove a 1941 Ford two-door--which is identical to the same thing in the states--in good condition--with about 50,000 kilometers on it--and the Colonel drove back a small Ford--a four cylinder job--with a motor about the size of a washing machine motor--but it perks right along. It no doubt was either a German made or French made car--as they have factories in both countries. We also brought over a good GMC truck--a huge one--and in excellent shape--to be used by our APO for hauling mail up to the division. It isn't often that we capture their material in good condition--as it is usually either shot up--or destroyed by the Germans--when they are forced to abandon it--however--they have had very good luck in this community. It was something to get into a car--so much like my own back home--and drive it along--so much different from riding in a jeep--or a command car--and especially a truck--ha. I guess the AG section will adopt the small Ford--for my part--I would prefer the other one--as it is just like my own car back home. Some of the cars had to be converted back to gasoline motor operation--as they were using charcoal burners on them--similar to the kind they use in England--etc. But it doesn't take any Ordnance long to do such work--they work wonders--and if any of it can be put into use--it is done so quickly. Of course--parts will be a problem--however--when they stop running--we will just have to discard them as they will no longer have any use to us.

In one of the cars--the one I drove back here--were several letters--and so I picked one up--brought it along to the office and had one of our chaplains translate it for me--I like to know what these other fellows are thinking about too. Here is the letter as translated--and I hope you will catch some of the humor in it. This letter was written 27 July 44 and received evidently some time this month:

"Dear Fritz:

"After a long time I finally have come to write to you again, and want to thank you firstly for your card of 22 June. From your letter I see that you are once more in the city while we are here existing in a forest, where when the weather is nice, it is quit agreeable. However, in the main we have bad, rainy and because of that--cold weather. Our quarters are below ground, in dugouts, but here too one must accustom himself to conditions, even though during rainy weather our quarters can be compared to a showerbath.

"Otherwise, it is amazingly quiet here, in spite of the constant alert and the lack of many comforts. For that reason we are however compensated by an additional I Reichsmark per day and must wear our uniform and boots during the night.

## SvcMen WW II Letters

“As you perhaps already know, Walter, since 12 July 44, has been with the German Labor Corps and yesterday I received the first news of him. The mail is now terribly delayed and most of the time I receive only one letter and paper every seven or eight days. Yes, the conditions have changed very much and if today one receives a special furlough, he can count on a week or longer to reach his destination.

“I was sorry to hear that they dropped bombs over Vienna and caused some damage. After the speech made yesterday by Dr. Goebels, I am curious what will come next and I hope that it will be weapons that finish the war quickly.

“Otherwise I am feeling fine. We get enough to eat and our national dish is Palat ham of which I eat 30 to 40 pieces a week. Also Viennese Schnitzel which we prepare ourselves today. Should the war last very long, I will become a cook yet right now I am only a fireman and most of the time do I have to wash the dishes. The good part about it is that we are four soldiers of the same province living in the same dugout and that we understand each other.

“Dear Fritz, I hope that you are well and remain. With many regards,

“Your brother-in-law,

“Fritz.”

So you see--the Germans are finally beginning to see the light of day--and as the chaplain said--this fellow is evidently from Vienna--for his humor is typical of that section. I don't like to pick up other people's mail--but in such a case as this --one can learn how things have been going with the other side--and it often throws light on certain situations too. It looks like they suffer from the wet weather too--ha--and don't care for it one bit more than we Yanks do.

I have seen a lot of German prisoners here--the first day--went over to the stockade--which was just a few hundred feet from the office--and looked over about 400 of them. They didn't look like the supermen I have heard about--but none of them do--when they have been captured. This batch didn't seem to have suffered too much--but were probably service troops--and not the regular fighting bunch. They have been much better off though--in this area--than several we have passed through. Incidentally--we fed this bunch--their own rations found here--wonder what they thought about that. I do believe that the average (not the SS troops) soldier realizes that all this retreating and withdrawing--isn't winning the war for Germany--but doubt much of their officers feel the same way. They are too fanatical--for the most part. Well--this will be all for tonight--as I have other letters to write--will be back in a few more days with some more news--if I can find the time.

Au Revoir,

George

[The News-Sentinel, Thursday, November 16, 1944]

### LETTER FROM TED RILEY

S/Sgt. Ted J. Riley

Oct. 24th

France

Dear Mom, Dad and Ray:

Just a few lines to let you know that I am O.K. I hope and pray I stay that way for it is miserable enough over here without being sick too. I have a slight cold but that don't even count.

It is raining over here again today. We all wish that would quit. The mud is hard enough to get around in without more of it. We lugged boots all during training but now we don't have any. They are too heavy anyway. You can't run with them on very good.

I received the letter the other day with the card in it concerning your blood donation. Well I hope I never have to get bad enough to have to have plasma but you can never tell.

We boys were talking about it after I had showed them the card. We all agreed to the fact that not very many people knew the good they were doing in donating blood. In our own little station here I can recall three boys that would have never gotten to enjoy the fine points of the place we call God's country (U.S.A.) if it had not been for plasma. It makes you think that maybe it is O.K. to give a pint now and then after you see what it does.

## SvcMen WW II Letters

By the way you can thank the Heinies for this letter. They left some stationery behind and we are putting it to very good use. They are nice that way. I just finished a German cigar a few minutes ago that one of my aid men brought in to me. They don't stop to take much stuff with them when they leave. They are even kind enough to drop a few shells to us now and then.

By the time you get this letter you will be thinking of Thanksgiving dinner, won't you, Mom? Well you have a good one this year for Cal and I will do all in our power to be home to stick our feet under the table next year I hope.

I received another letter from Ned H. the other day. He said he had a hammock and asked if there is not a hotel close that he could stay in. The way it appears to me he must be in a transport outfit, for he told me to keep an eye for their trucks that travel the roads. The only truck we look for is the chow truck.

Ray you must have that Akron ball club shaped up pretty well by now. I suppose you are out to beat Rochester this year. Well good luck and don't be too hard on those little guys. Remember when you were little? I don't either.

Must close now as I am all talked out. Is it time for fresh pumpkin pie yet? It sounds like I am hungry, don't it?

Close with all my love,

Your son and brother,  
Ted

[The News-Sentinel, Friday, November 17, 1944]

### LETTER FROM JAKE R. FLYNN

(To his Mother, Mrs. Oma L. Flynn, 510 1/2 North Main street, Rochester.)

Pfc. Jake R. Flynn  
Nov. 10, 1944

Dearest Mom and All

Well, Mom, I'm over at last after crossing over the Atlantic ocean. It really feels good to have my feet on solid ground once more. But it isn't the right ground that I'd like to have my feet on. It was quite a trip too. There is only one more trip across the ocean that I want to make, that is the one that will take me back to good old U.S.A. and you, Mom. Now, I don't want you to worry about me, because I can take care of myself. All the light I can give you about where I'm now at is: I'm just somewhere in England and wishing this were the U.S.A.

The weather here is really cold now. Cold and wet, rains part of the time. I hope that you will be able to read this, but I can't write any larger. You have a magnifying glass to make it larger.

I imagine Dave and Lem are out hunting today. Gee, I'd just like to be there to hunt with them today. Let me know if they shoot any game. America is well off compared with this country. I will really enjoy hard times when I get back. I will be satisfied with anything. They are worse off here than we were when we lived on the Beatty place. You remember those good old days. Those were the days that frozen milk was delicious. (ha, ha.)

How's Maxine nowadays? I imagine Rochester is as dead as ever, am I right? Do you know whether Dovichi's place has opened yet? How is Leona? Hope she is making it out alright on the farm. Tell her I said "hello" and to keep her chin up, this war can't last forever.

General Sherman was right when he said "War is hell." It surely is, anyway it sure has played hell with England. Mom, I want you to watch yourself and stay well this winter. I don't know when I'll get to see you again. But keep those home fires burning and I'll be home before you know it. Keep all the letters that I write to you from now on, Mom, because they will be good reading whenever I get back, especially these V-mail letters.

Well, Mom, I'll have to get ready for chow. Chow isn't much here, but it is something to eat and when I start thinking about some of the boys who would really enjoy eating this stuff, it really tastes good. Well, Mom, so long for awhile and may God bless you and keep you 'til we meet again, I hope soon. Write often, Mom.

Your homesick son

## SvcMen WW II Letters

Johnny

[The News-Sentinel, Tuesday, November 21, 1944]

### TENTH LETTER FROM RAMON ALBER

Dear Mother, Father, Gram & Bros.:

Today is really a nice day compared to what it has been in the lasst month. But it is really nice out today, the sun is shining and pretty warm.

Don't know if I have told you before but we fish off our ship once in awhile. But it is for bigger fish than the ones I used to bring home. We catch small tuna and other varieties of fish.

Received two letters from you today, Mother.

Got two pictures too, one of Dad and Ray during sugar maple time, and also one of Johnny.

Tell Gram hello and read my letter to her. I think of her a lot.

Glad that Dad got all his wheat out. He probably has those potatoes dug by now.

I hope the boys all are doing good in school.

I reckon you did lots of canning this year, Mother, and Auntie too.

And Sis, has she made up her mind yet what she is going to do. I hope I can see Sis and Russell and all of you one of these days.

Mother, will write again tomorrow, so shall sign off for today. Will write to Dolores yet.

Your loving son,

Ramon Alber

(Ramon Alber is a pharmacist mate third class in the U. S. Navy and has been "somewhere on the Pacific" for a year, and is a son of Mr. and Mrs. N. M. Alber, route 5, Rochester.)

[The News-Sentinel, Wednesday, November 22, 1944]

### NINTH LETTER FROM GEORGE DAGUE

T/Sgt. Geo. W. Dague

Somewhere in France

It has been sometime since I wrote the last squib sheet--but I have been too busy most of the time--to take much time out for writing--letters of any kind--and am consequently rather far behind with my correspondence. I enjoy writing these squib sheets regularly each week--for that way--everything is still fresh in my memory--and it does not require too much brainwork--ha--but I will try to give you some of the dope from our last stop. I am rather tired this evening--as we moved on to a new spot today--and with the unloading--the cleaning up of the office--etc.--it all wears one down a bit--but now--just a little about our last stop.

In our last move--before this one today--we settled in a place--formerly used by the German army--with barracks--etc.--all having been built a long time ago by the French for their army--but which the Germans have utilized ever since they first occupied France long ago. The place--like all those that Herman gets out of in a hurry--was filthy--but we have gotten to expect that. There is much more to this war--than just the fighting and--take our end for example--when we move into a spot--especially if there are any buildings--it means clean up everything for you know the American army--it must be clean--and anyway--we always tidy up the place before we get into operation. It is standard operations for us--and I prefer it that way--for I don't care to be around a place that is dirty in any way. There are many kinds of dirt--for example--when we are bivouacing in the woods--one gets pretty dirty--but it is fresh dirt--that is--just the woods soil--etc.--and one doesn't mind that too much--you get used to it in time--however--when you move into buildings--and they are dirty--you get dirty--in a different nature--most of the buildings have cement floor--and there is always a powder dust around--then the usual trash dirt that accumulates anywhere that one is living--and not being any too clean. However--we got busy--got our office all set up in great style--and then went to work on the barracks--and got them in fine shape.

The best part about that last stop--was the beds--for it was something to get in out of tents--and sleep on beds and mattresses for a change--even if they were regular military cots--and not as good as our steel ones we have back in the States. But it was a welcomed change by everyone--and in no time we had our place all fixed up--with full length mirrors--had the water going in the

## SvcMen WW II Letters

building--it was something to have a few of the modern conveniences--although there were no baths going or evidence of any around the camp. I set up my living quarters right in the back of the office--so had a little privacy for awhile--and that was enjoyed much too. I enjoy that privacy a great deal--for it is something that you get little of in the Army --let alone in the field--however--many fellows are lost if they can't be with a bunch of buddies. I set up one of the officer's cots--and had a nice mattress on it--a night stand--(the place had been used for a hospital by the French long ago)--and really had it made as far as living conditions were concerned. The room incidently--had large wall paintings on the walls--French paintings--depicting life in the French army--and they were very humorous along certain lines. The other barracks--were painted up by the Germans--and of course--much of it had been scratched over--or marked over--by the Doughboys--specially whenever they came across any of Adolf's pictures.

The rooms around camp were all topsy-turvy--with things strewn all over the place--pictures and cards---letters--gas masks--shoes--uniforms--and all sorts of belongings--that the Krauts had discarded when they took off. They always leave things in great disorder--and it is something to walk around--look at things--as long as you can be sure that they haven't left an traps of any kind. If one should read German--they certainly could get a lot of intresting letters to read.

At the last stop--I managed to get a shower--and did I ever need it--Wow!--it was my third shower since we landed--a few of the fellows have had more--but I have found that I can keep clean--as long as there is a source of water around--regardless of showers or not. It always takes so long to take one--for there is usually a long line of fellows waiting to get into the tents when you arrive--and incidently--it generally takes some time to reach the shower point, too. But--since someone asked about the shower business--I will describe it a bit more clearly. They usually have several tents up--one right next to the other. You go in the first one or two tents--and take off our uniform--them proceed on to the last tent--which has duckboards around the ground--with many showerheads--and you take your shower--then back to the tent--dress--or if it is crowded--and they allow it--you can go outside in the sun and finish dressing. It isn't modern--but it is sure a great and grand feeling to get under hot water--and take a truly good bath. They usually have a Laundry QM outfit connected with the shower--and if you can wait about 45 minutes--you can get your laundry done while you wait. They have equipment that takes it all through the process in no time--and comes out completely dried. I have found that they do shrink up one's clothes a bit--but you can't worry about that when you have a chance to get things clean again. Many of the fellows take a sun bath--when the weather is good--and wait for their clothes that way.

We also had a few other conveniences at that last stop--we had our mess hall in a large building--used by the Germans for a garage--and the different sections got together--and moved tables and chairs in from the various barracks--and we ate in style--for a few days--it was a nice change from eating out in the open on the ground--but from the weather that we have been having lately--I believe that I would just as soon be out in the sun--and sitting on my helmet--as to be inside--for it has turned very cool of late. Even though the sun has been out most every day--the weather is decidedly cooler--and you really notice it.

As we proceeded along the way--German warehouses are taken over--those left intact--and not destroyed--and some time back--we came into possession of one full of fur-lined jackets--of course the fur isn't anything to rave about--most of it must be rabbit--but they sure are warm to wear under our own field jackets on a cool day or cold evening. Our Quartermaster issued one to all the men--and you can wear them--either side out--either the fur side--or the skin side--I believe that the Germans issued them to their Paratroopers--for they usually get all sorts of added equipment--just as our own do. You see fellows with all sorts of outer clothing--not because they need it--or are short any themselves--just because of the novelty I sppose--and the thought that we are getting to use some of Herman's things--and putting them to good advantage ourselves--that lends interest to it.

We had several movies--the first in almost six weeks--and I didn't even have the ambition to go see them--after the first try. I did go one evening--to see "Christmas Holiday"--got up and left during the second reel--for it wasn't very entertaining to me. The good bed--for a change--held more interest to me--and I didn't like to think of wasting time--sitting in a movie that I didn't care

## SvcMen WW II Letters

much for. But--the men generally do enjoy the movies--for it is far and few between that we have them now. We also had a USO show--the first in France for us--one afternoon--it was named "Swing Time"--and was headlined by Freddie Morgan--there were three men--three women in the show--and it was mostly singing--dancing--wisecracking--etc.--the kind of a show that the boys eat up--and it was really a treat to all of them. They gave the actors a great hand--and the actors appreciate it too. They have to come a long way to put on such entertainment--and are taking many risks and chances themselves to do that for the boys--but all their efforts and talent are greatly appreciated by the men--all the more so by the fighting troops in the front lines.

I started this squib--just a little before chow--and now--have eaten--just came over from the mess hall--and after taking off my equipment--here I am. Speaking of equipment--you probably don't realize what we carry with us at all times--I just took off my helmet--carbine--gas mask--ammunition belt with knife--first aid packet--and canteen of water on it--all quite a load in itself--and now that I have started to take inventory of some of the things we carry around all the time--I am going through my pockets--and give you some idea of the items I carry with me most of the time.

First of all--the shirt pockets--one contains my paybook--and snapshots of my precious darlings that I carry with me always--my fountain pen--some aircraft identification cards--a dozen pipe cleaners and a packet of four (ration) cigarettes--and a couple keys--used to open canned rations. In the other shirt pocket--I carry a letter from my darling that I carry always with me because it is a special one--a package of chewing gum--four lumps of sugar--a packet of lemon powder--one of orange powder--one of boullion-- and two of coffee--which we get out of the ration packages--a small Army chocolate ration--and a package of butterscotch candies.

(to be continued)

[The News-Sentinel, Monday, November 27, 1944]

### NINTH LETTER FROM GEORGE DAGUE CONTINUED

Now--for the pants pockets--the top pockets are always reserved--one for my billfold--which has identification cards--some francs, etc. in it--and about 50 feet of heavy cord--which often comes in handy. The other hip pocket--a couple of hankies--jackknife--and matches. The two side pockets are the ones that carry the odds and ends--of course I have a pipe in each pocket--my tobacco pouch in one--some more matches for a pipe smoker always uses lots of matches--a couple pieces of hard candy from C rations--a package of cigarettes which I carry in a small tobacco can--a few loose coins (you hardly use coins over here--with the franc being printed in 2 francs on up)--and a pipe reamer. This is an unusually low inventory--for you see--in the process of moving today--I have used up some of my stock. Oh yes--one always carries some toilet paper--we get packets of that with our rations too. Then--when I have my field jacket on too--that gives me two more pockets--for extra ammunition--and odds and ends that I can't find other places for--so you see I travel prepared for all emergencies--ha.

Another little thing that I thought I would mention--because at home--it is difficult to appreciate the way certain things are done here in the Army. Packages take a terrific beating--coming all the way overseas to us--and it is a shame the way some of them come in--after the men have been awaiting them out for a long time. Many are so damaged--that most of the contents are lost--mine have come through in fair shape--but anything sent overseas should be packed in a double cardboard box--to prevent crushing. You see--after a package is mailed at home--it travels to New York City--in good shape--there it is placed in a mailbag--and stacked in storage for shipment--with the stacks getting pretty high--and each mail sack weighs about 100 pounds or more. Then--it is loaded on to the boat--and stacked very high there too--so you see if your package is in the mailsack on the bottom of the pile--it may very easily have a ton of other packages over it. When it is unloaded--it is stacked again in a similar manner--then it goes through the process of being thrown onto trucks--thrown off--and thrown up again--several times--moving up to where your unit is located--until it has been handled over and over again--before it ever reaches your own APO. Unless the packages are packed in very heavy boxes--you can easily see where they simply wouldn't stand up under the strain placed on them. Well so much for all



## SvcMen WW II Letters

that--it doesn't seem very interesting to me--but I think it is better for the folks at home--to appreciate just such things--so they can plan accordingly.

This will be all for this evening--as I am going to try and write a few other letters--will try to come back in a few more days--with more recent news--and not to get behind like I have the past two weeks--take care of everything at home and we will do our best over here--Au revoir for now.

George.

[The News-Sentinel, Tuesday, November 28, 1944]

### SECOND LETTER FROM LAMOINE HARDACRE

(Received by Mrs. Harley McClain.)

Guam Islands

Dear Sister:

Will write you a few lines now in answer to your letter, I received yesterday. I sure was glad to hear from you again. Don't get excited over the envelope I am sending this time. Ha.

I bet Virginia is sure cute now and would I ever love to see her now. She done all right in birthday presents didn't she? Almost like Christmas. I think the cake with candles was all right too. Tell Harley to do a good job on the color book because I may want to inspect it one of these days. I got the other picture of Virginia all right. I have it here in my book of memories. Boy she sure is cute all right in that picture. I would appreciate it very much if you would send me a picture of the kiddies again. I will be waiting for the pictures.

Tell Lizzie I would like to send her a few Jap wigs but it seems they have lost them all. Ha. I have seen plenty of skulls laying around though. Yesterday on the job while we were working a truck load of Jap prisoners went by and one Jap about 20 waved at us like we were old friends or something and laughing all the time. I told the fellows maybe he was happy because he was all P.O.W.

Well, Sis, I guess I can wait a while longer for the watch but I sure need it bad. Especially on guard duty so I can tell when to quit. Everyone is in bed then and I can't tell when to come off. I imagine the jeweler is busy. So I will just wait for it and hope it isn't yoo long.

Thanks a million for the Christmas box. I will let you know as soon as I get it and how much I enjoy it. I know it will come in handy though We can use almost any and every thing now.

The aluminum watch bands are pretty neat all right. I am making Connie one now for her birthday and think it is pretty nice and I am sure she will like it. If I ever get caught up I will make and send you one. They make nice souvenirs from here.

Well, Sis, I still got to get me a pair of glasses one of these days. My eyes are so bad now that I can hardly see after it gets dark. They smart, burn and water. Well, there isn't any more to say for this time so will close

With Love,

Your Brother,  
Pfc. Lamoine Hardacre  
APO 246, c/o Postmaster,  
San Francisco, Calif.

[The News-Sentinel, Wednesday, November 29, 1944]

### LETTER FROM DARRELL L. CHAPMAN

Darrell L. Chapman  
15359685, APO 201  
c/o Postmaster  
San Francisco, Calif  
Somewhere in the Philippines  
Nov. 6, 1944

Dear Dad, Mother and Sister:

I bet you have been worrying about my safety ever since the news of the invasion was announced. I'm fine and dandy.

## SvcMen WW II Letters

I sure have had the experience since I left my last location. Our trip here was like a luxury ride to a new country and our convoy was every bit as much as you have been told. We had nice quarters. Eats were good. Ice cream three times a week. Had ice cold drinks three times a day if you wished. We had a PX on board ship where we could get most every thing.

I will try to give the experiences of D-Day. We ate breakfast at 4:30 and were on deck long before daybreak. It was like the Fourth of July off in the distance as the big boats were busy shelling the beaches that we were to hit in a very few hours. Then we had a little excitement as Jap planes appeared which were knocked down or scared away. No damage was done to us. Then at the prescribed time we hit our rendezvous. Then the scene changed to a sight like a hen with several little chicks, as the landing craft were circling the big boats waiting for the order to load assault troops. Then everything loaded and the first wave headed for the Leyte beach under order of our splendid Navy cover. They hadn't hit the beach yet when I went over the side for my new adventure. My work kept me up on the situation and the first report was: "The first troops hit the beach on the second, and were yards inland still standing up." When I gave out the report it brought up a roar from our men and lessened our worry.

It took ours some minutes to hit the beach as we had anchored some miles out. We had such a load on our boat that we didn't make it on the beach so had to wade in water waist deep. The first day was fairly quiet as we again had hit them where they had least expected us. Everything went swell, in our favor. By mid-afternoon we had our first airfield (which today is sure proving a real headache to the Japs). The first night we stopped in what used to be a small village but was deserted as the Filipinos had went to the hills by orders from the underground we have here. They started returning the second day.

I wish you could see the smile on the faces of the people as we took the first big town that you hear so much about. It made you feel like a knight or someone freeing the slaves. Everyone from people 80 to babies a few weeks old were in the windows or along the streets saluting or holding up two fingers and yelling "Victory." Most of them can speak fair English.

I think that I can truthfully say that the Philippines had more within a week after we arrived than they had in months.

Our main headaches were the air raids. I have seen several air battles and it sure is a pleasure to see the Jap planes burst in flames and hurl earthward. Then the cheer from the troops went up like it does when the Zebras make a score at Whitmer gym, only this cheer was for the thing that makes it possible to be able to cheer at a basketball game. We sure loved Mother Earth there for a few days but they are very scattered now. Have a few at night but getting so I sleep through them as they never do any damage where we are.

Sometimes I wonder how many of the old gang at Richland Center are over here with me. I have an idea there are several from Rochester. Haven't met any of the home folks over here. Received a letter from the John Becks yesterday. Three letters in last three weeks isn't bad.

Tell all hello and to write and don't worry about us. Just put your money in bombs and back us up. You put out the guns and equipment to us and we will put it to good use.

Wish I could be home by Christmas but where I will be only God knows.

Tell the church folks hello and would enjoy hearing from anyone.

Wishing God speed to all the men and women in the armed forces. Give them all you've got. Loads of love. Keep the home fires burning and give all the dear old class of '38 a hello.

Your son,

Darrell Chapman

Graduate of Richland H.S.

Class of 48

(Note--Anyone desiring to write Darrell may secure his complete address from his parents. Publication of the complete address of overseas service men is not permitted by the U. S. censors.)  
[The News-Sentinel, Friday, December 1, 1944]

FIFTH LETTER FROM CHARLES C. COFFMAN

S/Sgt. Charles Coffman

## SvcMen WW II Letters

Dear Capt. Minter:

Your letter of 10 October reached me in good time and I was happy to hear from you. Today I am off duty so I'll endeavor to write a letter that you will consider worth reading, even though I have a bad cold and am also a bit nervous and my mind does not seem to function properly. I thank the News-Sentinel for printing my letter of 23 September, and you for sending me a copy of it.

You were wondering about the reaction of the Proust (French) family in regard to the Krauts. Every member of this family has a burning, intense hatred toward the Krauts. Not only this family but every true French family has the same feeling.

It was true the Krauts weren't so destructive in some districts of France as in some others during their occupancy. I presume that the reason for this is that the Krauts, in their hasty departure in fleeing from the Allied forces, had no time for further destruction in France. They were too much occupied in keeping themselves from being destroyed. For four years the Krauts tried to re-educate France, to destroy French culture and to pollute the French with Nazi "Kultur." The Krauts, Boche, Heinies, or whatever one chooses to call them (I could give them a suitable nomenclature, but I would not repeat this to a gentleman), looted, pillaged and persecuted a great, liberty-loving people. Decent French girls entered convents to escape from the lust of the Kraut soldiers. Priceless treasures of art, literature and music were stolen or destroyed. The stirring French national anthem, "La Marseillaise," was insulted and replaced by the anthem of a tyrannical, barbaric nation. The French Tri-Color was replaced by the swastika of the New Order. I could tell you much of the sufferings of the French people as I have learned much from the Prousts and from others with whom I've associated. I know why these people have such a strong hatred for the Krauts. Never again will the German nation overrun France. I've been told this by the Prousts and by others and I know they mean it.

Our great General MacArthur in the Pacific has said "The only good Jap is a dead Jap" and he is right. The same applies to a Kraut. I would like to see these two species of rats exterminated forever. The Japs had planned to exterminate the white race. And the Krauts had planned to enslave all democracies. Then why not exterminate these rats. Why let them breed again and spread filth and destroy freedom? Perhaps my mind is a bit "cockeyed." But if I am, then there are a lot of soldiers, sailors and marines who are cockeyed too. Before the war I didn't have this state of mind but war does something to a fellow. After hostilities cease and I return to America I'm certain I'll have a different state of mind. But from now on and until then I am going to think as a soldier.

It was very hard for me to leave my girl friend, Tony, when I left England and came across the channel. I have formed an attachment for her and at present my affection is strong. But whether or not it will keep up I do not know and after all time will tell. When I was in Panama I formed an attachment for a very nice, attractive Spanish girl and I found it hard to leave her also, and for quite a time I corresponded with her. Perhaps in time my Tony will be just a memory but to me now she is very real. We correspond.

In the "Yank" magazine I noted that a hot zephyr or two warmed the mid-west. Like you, I do not complain about the weather, but a hot zephyr or two would be welcomed by some of us here.

Your advising a young man who has a real good military start to remain in the service after the war is good and sound advice. And I assure you that I will not disregard your advice. I will think it all over and try to act sensibly before I come to a verdict about it. Sometimes I think I want to return to civil life and again I think at other times I want to become a professional military man. I think that as a civilian too I can make a success because I am a different fellow, physically and mentally, than I was before entering the service. I have confidence in myself now. And I believe that in post-war America a young fellow who is ambitious and not afraid to work can do all right. And then if I choose a military career I also have confidence and have no worries about my future. (Of course there is that English "Tony" and that Spanish senorita in the picture.)

## SvcMen WW II Letters

When I write to you I always find it easy to express myself in the language of one military man to another for the service is a great fraternity. I find it easier to write you than to any of my correspondents because you understand soldiers and know what they mean.

Today our nation at home is choosing its leader, its commander-in-chief, its Prsident. It is a great day in our nation's history. Two great capable men are competing for the difficult task of heading the greatest nation of this world to victory, to prosperity, and also to employment. Regardless of who is chosen for this difficult task, America will come through this war alright. I am living in one of the greatest, if not the greatest periods in the history of our nation. I'm seeing history made and helping to make it. And out of all this suffering, misery, sacrifice and the mighty efforts of the home front and our armed forces, I see a great vision--a greater and more glorious America.

I am too overcome by emotion to continue writing this letter, so with best wishes, I am as always,

Your sincere Friend,  
Charles

[The News-Sentinel, Monday, December 4, 1944]

### LETTER FROM HENRY COX

(Written to Pauline Cox from her husband, Henry.)

Novemer 12, 1944  
Somewhere in Germany

Dear Wife and Baby:

Well, I will try and write a few lines to let you know I am O.K. How is everybody at Home? Fine I hope. I got a letter from you yesterday and was sure glad to hear from you. I also got one from Altha and mother and one from Erma. I got a Christmas package from Erma and Charles, too. It sure was nice and I am using it now. Well Pauline I got to visit a town in Holland a few days ago and I sure enjoyed myself. I had a nice visit with a Dutch family and I ate a meal with them. I also got to eat some ice cream. It sure tasted good after going so long without it.

A little bit about the town. It was a nice place about the size of Logansport with several hotels which were real modern and also restaurants and stores, a lot like ours in the States. They also have a couple of nice theatres and parks. You don't see very many cars but what there is are mostly Fords and Chevrolets just like ours at home. Most everyone rides a bicycle, old and young. They have a few buses like we have too. The people were all friendly and tried to make us feel at home.

Well, Pauline, it has been rainy and cold the last few days. It snowed a little one day just a few minutes.

Oh yes, I got some Christmas cards and sent some out too. You will probably get one by the time this letter gets there. I am sending one to our little daughter, too. I wanted her to have something from Daddy, anyway. I can not imagine how sweet she is trying to talk and everything. Well I have run out of news for now. So will close hoping to hear from you soon. Lots of love and kisses to my sweet wife and baby.

From Henry

[The News-Sentinel, Wednesday, December 6, 1944]

### LETTER FROM P. D. HENRIOTT

P. D. Henriott, GM 3/c  
U. S. S. Oakland  
Nov. 21, 1944

Dear All:

I am sorry that I haven't been writing as I am very busy. I am fine and well and hope this finds you the same. I have mailed Christmas cards to everybody I know. I sent one to Alexander Henriott and girls. I hope they like it. It is the same thing as yours.

## SvcMen WW II Letters

Mother, in this letter I am sending you a money order for \$25 and an article on "The U.S.S. Oakland Goes to War." I hope you like it. The \$25 is a Christmas present as I can't buy you anything here. I would like to send more but can't. Oh yes, Mother I have turret two in the drawing of the "Flying O." You can do anything you like with the article, put it in the newspaper or anything.

I don't know what to name the calf unless I name it the "Flying O" or "Betsy III." Mother you choose one.

Mother, I hope you and Dad have a merry Christmas this one as I am going to have my second one away from home.

P. D. Henriott, GM 3/c

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### "The U.S.S. Oakland Goes to War"

Reproduced below is part of an article which appeared in the Navy Day edition of one of the Oakland, California papers.

"First taste of action for the U. S. S. Oakland, after being commissioned July 17, 1943, at the Bethlehem shipyards in San Francisco, was to the capture of the Gilbert islands from the Japs last November 18 to 26.

"Then from Nov. 27 to Dec. 10 the U. S. S. Oakland aggressively and effectively fought the enemy for the capture of Kwajalein and Majuro atolls in the Marshall islands.

"Again the U. S. S. Oakland fought gallantly in action during the operations against the Japs at Tinian, Saipan and Guam in the Marianas which began last Feb. 22 and continued for six days.

"For command and leadership of the U. S. S. Oakland in these victorious battles for her commander, Captain William K. Phillips, a native of Tullahoma, Tenn., whose family is in Atlanta, Ga., has been awarded a silver star medal, gold star medal and commendation ribbon, it was disclosed for the first time today.

"Captain Phillips' silver star award carried with it the following citation:

"For distinguished service in the line of his profession while in command of the U. S. S. Oakland during the action for occupation of the Gilbert islands Nov. 18 to 26, 1943.

"The task force of which the U. S. S. Oakland was a part, maintained its position within easy bomber range of enemy bases for eight days and was twice under attack by enemy torpedo planes.

"One of these attacks was pressed home to close quarters in the face of heavy anti-aircraft fire from our ships, but only one of our vessels was damaged. His courage and intelligent leadership not only brought his own ship through safely but materially contributed to the defense of the entire task group and the success of its mission.

"His actions were in accordance with the highest traditions of the naval service.'

"The gold star award was in lieu of a second silver star medal. The story this time read:

"For gallantry and intrepidity in action as commander sound screen of a carrier task group, and as commanding officer of the U.S. S. Oakland during the period of Nov. 27 to Dec.10, 1943.

"On the night of Dec. 4-5, subsequent to air attacks by U. S. naval aircraft on Kwajalein, his ship was ordered to take station to destroy enemy aircraft attempting to trail the task group. For seven hours Jap aircraft were in the vicinity and for more than five hours persistent aerial torpedo attacks were made against our forces.

"Throughout this period the U. S. S. Oakland repeatedly and effectively fired upon attacking aircraft causing them to withdraw. The aggressiveness and effectiveness with which the gunfire of the U. S. S. Oakland was employed was an inspiration to our forces.

"The efficiency and determination of the personnel under his leadership were indicative of the ability and devotion to duty of the commanding officer.'

"Captain Phillips' letter of commendation with ribbon was presented by the commander-in-chief of the Pacific fleet with the following words:

## SvcMen WW II Letters

“For distinguished service in the line of his profession, and for gallantry in action during the operations against the Japanese bases at Tinian, Saipan and Guam in the Marianas on Feb. 22, 1944.

“In this action for the first time in the war in the Pacific, a carrier task force was discovered by the enemy and obliged to fight its way to its objective.

“Throughout these operations he at all times fought his ship with courage and skill. During the night of Feb. 21-22 the screen of which his ship was a part, shot down at least eight enemy planes in flames and drove off all others before they could inflict damage upon the task force.

“The excellence of his performance in the execution of his duties contributed greatly to the success of our mission and was in keeping with the highest traditions of the naval service.”

“Battle stars go to each crew member of the U. S. S. Oakland for their part in the heroic ship’s action. (Note: Stars have been authorized for (1) The Gilberts operations, (2) The Marshall operations and (3) Asiatic Pacific raids, 1944. Although not yet announced, it is probable that an additional star will be awarded for the operations against the Marianas.)”

[The News-Sentinel, Wednesday, December 6, 1944]

### LETTER FROM RICHARD McKEE

(Letter received lately by Mr. and Mrs. George McKee of near Athens, from their son, Sgt. Richard McKee, stationed somewhere in England.)

November (censored) 1944  
Somewhere in England

Dear Mom and Dad:

This is the second time that I have started this letter. I started to write on some V-mail stationery but decided it wasn’t big enough for the amount of writing I had to do.

Well, to begin things. I just got back off my furlough last night, and what a furlough! Boy I never expected to see some of the things that I did see. I only had four days but I sure had a good time while they lasted. I spent all four days in London.

I’ll start with the first day and tell you what I did. Monday afternoon after finding the Red Cross and getting our rooms and other things straightened out (incidentally we got a room for three nights for only 13 shillings, that is \$2.60--we even had clean sheets to sleep on) we decided to go out and see some sights, so first we grabbed a cab and went over to Madam Touceud’s Wax Works, no doubt you have heard of it. I never seen anything like in before. They had a wax figure for just about every famous person there is or ever was and they sure looked real. They were so complete that the one of Pres. Roosevelt even had that little mole on his face. Well after that we went and saw the London Tower. It is an old castle that was built in the 14th century. It had the Church of England in it. We went through the room where they keep the crown jewels but they didn’t have them there at the time. Well that finished the first day.

#### Hears Buzz Bomb Hit

Tuesday we just went over the city looking at the place. We had quite a little experience Tuesday night. We went to bed about 10:30 and about 11:00 the air raid sirens started and then about four or five minutes after we heard a funny popping in the sky and then it stopped. About two minutes after we heard a big blast, the building rocked and just about pulled us out of bed. We found out the next morning that it was one of those buzz bombs and it had hit a big building. They had three raids that night.

Wednesday we signed up for a tour around the city, it only cost seven shillings (\$1.40). First we saw Buckingham Palace; we couldn’t go in because the King and Queen were in. Next we saw the House of Parliament and London Bridge and then we went down and saw Scotland Yard, No. 10 Downing Street, the Treasury and the Admiralty buildings. We saw the little Curiosity Shop that Charles Dickens built in 1756. We then saw Big Ben and Westminster Abbey. Boy that was worth seeing if anything was. We spent about 30 minutes in it and I believe I could have spent a week in it. I have some postcards that I bought on the inside of the Abbey and also St. Paul’s Cathedral. I’ll send these home one at a time. We went through St. Paul’s and it sure was a sight. They had ought to include it in one of the seven Wonders of the World. Next we saw Trafalgar

## SvcMen WW II Letters

Square and Picadilly Circus and then we went back. That evening we went out to the Covent Gardens. It is London's biggest and best night club and dance floor. It was even more beautiful than the Aragon and Trianon Ball Room in Chicago.

Yesterday we just fooled around until 7:30 last night when we had to catch the train back. All in all I had a very good time.

I can't tell you just exactly where I am at but I go to Oxford on passes. It isn't such a bad place. I went through the University on one of my passes.

Well I guess I better close for now and save a little something to write about the next time.

I am feeling fine and hope everyone back there is the same. If you know of anybody that is located here in England and if you know their address, let me know and maybe I can look them up.

Love,  
Dick

[The News-Sentinel, Monday, December 11, 1944]

### SECOND LETTER FROM FREDERICK WAGONER

France  
May 25, 1944

Dear Meg, Glen, Carol:

Well at last I have time to write you a few lines.

Hope this finds you all O.K. around there, it does my self as always.

I am writing this by candlelight, so if you can't read it, well excuse for this time.

How is the weather over there by now? It still rains here every night and day, no sunshine either.

I have caught up with our company at last, or didn't I tell you that a few of us came here to France ahead of our company. Well we did and we just caught up with them yesterday. I have seen Cherbourg. It is some mess.

I got my mail for the first time yesterday since I left England. Boy I sure enjoyed it. I got 15 letters and your Xmas box. Your letter was dated Oct. 30th. The box was swell. I mean it came O.K. Nothing was hurt. Everything hit the spot. The popcorn was grand, and so was the cake. Well everything was really good, and thanks a million. Along with those letters, I just got a card that Sis sent me when you all were out in Ashtabula. Ha Ha.

As yet Marg there isn't anything I really need, so don't worry about that and tell the rest the same.

Thanks for Bob's address. I will write him over here. I just wrote Francis Carlson, and heard from him yesterday. Of course he couldn't say where he was at.

I suppose they are about done picking corn by now, eh?

Well, I hope Bob gets his furlough, and I hope we all get a nice long one one of these days soon, also, Ha.

Well I really don't know any news so I guess I'll just have to close now. Oh yeah, I got real turkey for Thanksgiving, also this year.

Well if you don't hear from me before Xmas here's hoping you all have a swell Xmas and a Happy New Year. Again thanks for the swell box. Well bye for now.

Loads of Love,  
Fritz

[The News-Sentinel, Wednesday, December 13, 1944]

### LETTER FROM JAMES ZIMMERMAN

(Letter received from James W. Zimmerman, by Mr. and Mrs. O. C. Montgomery and son, Leroy, of Rural Route 5, Rochester, Ind.)

December 5, 1944

My Dear Friends:

## SvcMen WW II Letters

I have received your Christmas Greetings, and wish to express my thanks for your grateful remembrance. I am still in the Admiralty islands and we are planning a bit of a Christmas celebration, for we, too, have many, many things to be thankful for. Our countrymen have given us the best to be had in equipment and supplies; and for this, we are all deeply appreciative to you who have endeavored to hold up the "home-!" I trust that all is well in our family and hope you will enjoy a most Happy New Year! Also, let us hope it will be one fostering "Peace on Earth, Good Will Toward Men," in its most reverent meaning.

Respectfully yours,  
James W. Zimmerman

[The News-Sentinel, Thursday, December 14, 1944]

### SECOND LETTER FROM JOSEPH WILDERMUTH

Ensign J. M. Wildermuth  
"At Sea"  
December 7, 1944

Dear Folks:

Yesterday it was cloudy and a little rough, but today the sun came out again and some of the fellows took sun treatments on the deck. The sea calmed down so all in all it was a very nice day. Wonder what it was like three years ago today. We are about 300 miles out from Pearl Harbor now and expect to arrive Saturday afternoon--the 9th. Has sure been a slow lazy trip and since this ship didn't make me sea-sick I don't see how anything can.

Saw some real flying fish today--didn't believe it until I saw them with my own eyes then doubted it. They splash out of the water and fly along for over a hundred feet if they want to and just above the water. We chased out a school of 20-30 once and they just flew away over the next swell. They were only about 10-12 inches long and the only fish we've seen so far.

Will be glad when we get there so I can hear from you again--seems like ages since I've gotten any mail.

The food has been good--beefsteak today noon--and they kept milk fresh some way until today noon so guess we will survive another day or so without that. The bread ran out day before yesterday so now we have hot biscuits.

-----  
Oahu  
December 10, 1944

Haven't unpacked yet. Your letter postmarked Dec. 2nd in Rochester was waiting for me here yesterday when we arrived! Had a very nice package of letters and it was very good to get them.

We, four of us, have had to move twice so far and we have quite a collection of baggage. The first time they provided a pick-up truck for us, but the second time, we provided a jeep for ourselves. Took it back when we got moved.

We aren't living in the Navy Yard at Pearl Harbor but in Quonset huts towards town. They seem to be like an overgrown brooder house like ours, it at least doesn't lurch and rock all around day and night!

-----  
This morning we went to finish checking in--it took an hour so they let us take the rest of the day off. We really had a good time. We caught a ride in a jeep over the island's most scenic drive--up through a beautiful valley, through a really windy gap and then down a steep winding mountain road that makes the Smokey Mountains look sick. Caught a different ride from there. A soldier got in the same truck and talking to him I learned that Roland Pratt is in his same division and they were now on this island instead of two down the chain. Went to his camp but Rolly had just left for a week's maneuvers. Will call up when he gets back and try to see him. Some luck--finding where he is stationed like that. We rode in a Command car next--like a big jeep--saw



## SvcMen WW II Letters

more mountains then drove by the sea. We switched to a jeep again for a really long ride on around the east and north edge of the island and back through the center. Saw cane and pineapple fields. Got back to where we started in a Red Cross station wagon. The whole trip seemed to be from 60-100 miles long--may have been less but I didn't realize the island was so large.

On two different days we have seen the same sign in Honolulu, so it must be true. Up over the sidewalk on a signboard is this --Dr. S. Ouch, Dentist--wonder how it affects business!

Oahu  
December 13, 1944  
9:15 p.m.

Dear Folks:

Yesterday was what seemed like my first day in the Navy since the last of October. Got up at 6:15 to get to school by 8 (we eat down the street a ways then they have trucks to take us on to school). Was quite a day because I didn't get back to our chicken-house until 9:20 that night! Would have been a bad day but when I did get here there were sixteen letters here for me. Didn't do another thing for the next hour or so but read them and got to bed pretty soon after lights out. The letters made it a very different day from the way it started. Could hardly believe it but one of Garnet's letters was postmarked at Edgerton, Ohio on the 7th of this month! Five days isn't bad at all. One of your letters had just a 3-cent stamp and it took 22 days to get here from Indiana.

The laundry situation is very bad here so I did everything that wouldn't need pressing the other day. Had buckets, strong soap and very hot water--the only slip was when I put the sox and handkerchiefs in the same bucket. Have blue handkerchiefs now!

Next week I change to a destroyer command for assignment but have no idea how long or short we will be around here.

Will see if I can get to bed before lights out tonight--would rather have a stack of letters.

Love,  
Joe.

[The News-Sentinel, Thursday, December 21, 1944]

### THIRD LETTER FROM FRANCIS BLACKETOR

Cpl. Francis A. Blacketor  
Somewhere in France  
December 10, 1944

Dear Etta:

How are you getting along with your work these days? I am feeling just fine and getting along alright. I have been intending to write you, but just haven't had much time for writing during the last two or three months. I have done quite a bit of traveling around and saw a lot since I last wrote you. I have been in Holland, Belgium and am in France now.

How is the weather at home these days? I suppose you have had snow by now. We are having a lot of rain here, but it hasn't been so cold. It freezes a little once in a while.

How is Aunt Carrie feeling now? I haven't heard from her for some time. I will wish you a merry Christmas and Happy New Year now. Write when you have time.

[The News-Sentinel, Saturday, December 30, 1944]

### LETTER FROM LOVELLE BLACKETOR

Dear Etta:

I imagine you thought I had forgotten you but I haven't. I hope this finds you in good health and spirits. I just got out of the hospital a few days ago. Had a touch of malaria fever but am working again and feeling fine. This will be a lonesome Christmas for both of us. The one closest to you has gone to a happier resting place and the one closest to me is 12,000 miles away. But we still have lots to be happy about. Write and I will answer. Love.

A Lonely Soldier,  
Lovellev

## SvcMen WW II Letters

[The News-Sentinel, Saturday, December 30, 1944]

LETTER FROM EMMETT J. CARPENTER

Somewhere in Germany  
December 1

Dear Dad and Mom:

A few lines tonight to let you know that I have not forgotten you. I am all right and getting along fine. I hope you are the same and that things are all right at home. I got your nice letter and sure was glad to hear from home. It makes me feel good to get your big letters and, all the good things you say in them, for Mother, I know it is all true, and for the best for me. I am sure glad to have a Mother and Dad like you are to keep praying for me night and day, and Mother, I am living up the good things you tell me about.

Well, how is Dad getting along with his work? I hope all right. Tell him to be sure and not work too hard and that goes for you, too. What kind of work are you doing these days and how is everybody around? I hope all right. I am glad you had a good time Thanksgiving. I sure would have liked to have been there with you, but maybe next year I can, and I hope so.

Well it is raining out here and lots of mud. That, I don't like at all. Have you seen Delores and Sharon. She writes that Sharon is getting big. I will be glad when I can be home with them after this war is over.

Well this is all for this time.

Your son,  
Emmett J. Carpenter  
Known as Billie Bellward

[The News-Sentinel, Thursday, January 4, 1945]

LETTER FROM JAMES VAN DIEN

29 December 1944  
Italy

Rochester Sentinel  
Rochester, Indiana  
Attention Of: Mr. Van Trump, or Mr. Barnhart:

Dear Sirs:

In all probability you have forgotten who I am, but even so, I am writing you today to say that I have not forgotten you, and the city of Rochester, and I can tell you, and Russ Parker, and Johnny Barrett and the Chamberlin boys that I would much prefer to be sitting in the "Tom Thumb" or the "Berghoff" or "Dovichi's" with fellows like Don Newman, Lefty Rowe, and those fellows too numerous to mention, than I would be to sit here and just think about it all.

I should like to tell you about a few of the things I have seen, places I have been, and so on but I am afraid that the censor would be a little unhappy about it, so I guess it will have to wait until a later date over a few beers. My primary interest in writing you is to find out the location of some of the boys from Rochester who are now in the service, due to the diligence of the draft board in your community. I have been over here some time now and I have run into several fellows from the state, but none from the city of Rochester, or at least if they were, they wouldn't admit it.

All joking aside though, I really would appreciate a few lines from the people of the city, telling me some of the news. You see over here you soon get to thinking about the things you once knew, and it is a big thrill to get a letter from an old and almost forgotten acquaintance, so how about giving me a few lines in The News-Sentinel, with a request that some of you who are not so busy drop me a line now and then.

I might add as a closing thought that if there be anyone, and I hope not in your community, that think that "Shicklegruber" and all his playmates are whipped, and that therefore it is useless to buy just one more bond, please tell them for us over here, that we do appreciate all that they are

## SvcMen WW II Letters

doing at home, and that we are up against a shrewd bunch of cookies, and with the help of God, (and Fulton county) we will send you another letter from the heart of the Fatherland some day. By the way, should you print this, I would appreciate a copy being sent to me. Thank you for your time and remember me to the home folks.

Sincerely,  
Jimmy Van Dien

(Editor's Note--Anyone desiring to write Jimmie may secure his complete address by phoning The News-Sentinel. Government regulations forbid the publishing of complete addresses of men who are in the overseas service.)

[The News-Sentinel, Tuesday, January 9, 1945]

### LETTER FROM JAMES F. BLACKETOR

From Overseas  
Dec. 27th

Dearest Mamie:

How's everything, hope you are getting along OK these cold days.

I know you are wondering why I haven't written any sooner. Well I've been too busy moving etc. and no way of getting mail out until now. I got two letters from you and one from Bessie last night. I'm getting along OK, the weather is nice but pretty cold. One good thing since the ground is froze we don't have all that mud to contend with. I can tell you a few places I've been now. We landed in Marseille, France. I was in town a few times on business and it's sure a mess. Several ships were laying in the harbor, some of which the French had scuttled a few months ago.

As we moved northward I saw many war torn towns, and several places of destroyed enemy equipment along the way.

The villages were odd and interesting. It seems like the farmers all live in these villages and go out to the farms during the day to work. They have their barn and house all under the same roof and all these buildings are connected to their neighbor's. They sure don't look like a healthy place to live.

They also use lots of oxen here. They hook them up in a line instead of side by side. It's common to see a horse in front, then a big old oxen, then a mule.

The people wear lots of wooden shoes. The automobiles have large barrels on them and they burn coke which makes a gas. Along the way they get out and shovel in some coal then continue. Everything tho is years behind our countryside.

I came through an ancient fortified city, Langres, north of Dijon. It's up on a mountain and has stone walls around it, perhaps forty feet high. They have holes in them to push larger stones down on the enemy. There was also a deep moat around the city. It has been dry for years though, cause large trees and brush had grown up inside. Sometime I'm going to find out about the history of the place.

I also came through the city of Nancy which is pretty large.

Now we are sleeping in a school building which beats a pup tent all to pieces in this weather. Of course I don't know how long we'll be this fortunate.

Christmas was just another day here, except for a very good turkey supper with all the trimmings, and we managed to procure plenty of cognac, a pretty good drink, compared to some of the wine we've gotten.

Well, honey, guess I'd better be signing off for this time. Hope from now on my letters aren't so far apart. I can't tel you how much I miss you so I won't try. Bye and write soon.

Love,  
Jim

[The News-Sentinel, Tuesday, January 9, 1945]

### SECOND LETTER FROM KENNETH "TONY" MILLER

Dear Mom and All:

## SvcMen WW II Letters

I finally found time to write you a few lines. Well, Mom, I'm not in France any more. We were in Belgie, or the way we pronounce it is Belgium. The people sure were nice to us. We couldn't of asked to be treated any better. Now, I'm in Germany. We got a German plane to our credit. We have all been strafed about three times. I worked on Christmas day and have been working night and day since then. One good thing, we are not in the mud and rain like we were in France.

We are sleeping in houses now in a small village. It will be all right if the Germans don't get our range and blow us all up. Well, Mom, I got your package and Eva's too, so you can tell her I received it and also Helen's package too. Well, Mom, the boys are making so much noise that I can't hardly think, so I'll close now, hoping this will all be over soon.

Your son,  
Kenneth Miller

(Letter received by Mrs. Flo Miller of Rochester from her son Kenneth, now in Germany.)  
[The News-Sentinel, Thursday, January 11, 1945]

### LETTER FROM CHARLES GUNTER

(The following is a letter received from Charles Gunter, by his mother, Mrs. Amanda Gunter, of Rochester.)

Dear Mom:

I Hope this letter finds you and all the rest well, I am getting along fine. I am getting plenty of rest and that's a good thing. Did you have a good Christmas? I am sorry I couldn't send anything, but as soon as I can get settled once again, I will send something.

How are the kids getting along? I sure wish I could see Dean and Sylvia. How is the weather at Home? I'll bet it's really cold. One nice thing, it's warm here. I wrote Harold a letter the other day, and I wrote him one tonight. Have you been receiving my mail? I sure hope so. Well, Mom, I will close for tonight, and I hope to hear from you soon.

Your son,  
Charles

[The News-Sentinel, Thursday, January 11, 1945]

### LETTER FROM JOSEPH KARNS

(In the following letter from Corp. Joseph Karns, a step-son of Ray Coplen, custodian of the local American Legion Home, the local soldier, now somewhere in the Philippines, reveals a meeting with Harvey Clary, Jr., some little while ago. Clary is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Clary, R. I.)

Somewhere in the Philippines  
Dec. 29, 1944

Dear Friend, Capt. Minter:

Well it has been some time since I have been able to write you as we have been very much on the move.

I am fine and I hope that this will find you OK and all my relatives and friends around Rochester.

I am now somethere in the Philippine islands. I recall that the last time I talked with you, you told me that you was an old "stockholder" in the Philippine islands as you had spent many years here. What part were you in and on what islands did you serve?

Did you ever know a boy by the name of Harvey Clary? His folks live near Rochester and his father is a member of the American Legion. I met him over here and it was nice to see someone from home. We had daily visits. He is in good health and looking good. And I assure you that I am all right also.

I hope that all things are well around Rochester.

I must close now as we are kept plenty busy and we have these Jap-rats on the run toward Tokyo.

Write to me when you have time.

## SvcMen WW II Letters

From a Friend,  
Cpl. Joseph Karns

[The News-Sentinel, Monday, January 15, 1945]

### THIRD LETTER FROM JAMES S. SNYDER

(Letter received by Mrs. William H. Snyder from her son James, who is stationed somewhere in Italy.)

Dear Mother, Dad and Bob:

How is everyone by this time, now that Christmas is over? Were any of the kids home on Christmas Day?

We had a good Christmas dinner, turkey with all the trimmings. I ate so much that I was stuffed all afternoon.

We gave a party for about 50 of the Italian children. We gave them some candy and other items that we all contributed. They sure had a big time. It was nice for them because otherwise, they wouldn't have had anything for Christmas.

Mother, will you thank the society for the fruit cake that I received. It was grand.

I sure hope that Ed gets a break to stay in the States, however, I don't imagine that he will.

Well, for this time,

Love to all,  
Son, Jim

[The News-Sentinel, Monday, January 15, 1945]

### SIXTH LETTER FROM CHARLES C. COFFMAN

Somewhere in France  
December 31, 1944

The News-Sentinel  
Rochester, Indiana  
Att. Editor  
Dear Sir:

In the sports page of the Saturday, Dec. 30, 1944 issue of the "Stars and Stripes" I read this: "Elkhart (Ind.) high school defeated South Bend Riley, 5-4 in a basketball game when a Riley player became "befuddled" and dropped the ball in the wrong basket."

Being a dyed-in-the-wool Hoosier basketball fan, I'd have given a month's pay to have seen that game.

I've been telling my comrades about the classy brand of basketball that is played by Indiana high school basketball teams. I've told them about the tight defense that makes Indiana basketball tops in the country. The Elkhart-Riley game is proof for my argument.

A few days ago from T/Sgt. Jim Williams, who is from Rochester, I received several issues of The News-Sentinel. I was very much interested in the news about the Zebras. According to the reports I read, Rochester has a good team this season.

Best wishes to the Rochester Zebras. Here's hoping they'll be the 1945 State Champs.

Sincerely yours,  
S/Sgt. Charles C. Coffman  
46th M.R.R. Sq.  
APO 149, c/o Postmaster  
New York, N.Y.

[The News-Sentinel, Tuesday, January 16, 1945]

SECOND AND THIRD LETTERS FROM JOE SLAYBAUGH  
(Received by Mrs. Beatrice Slaybaugh from her son, Joe)

## SvcMen WW II Letters

Jan. 8, 1945  
Somewhere in the P. I.

Dearling Mother:

A few lines to let you know I am just fine and am well and safe and I am hoping that this letter finds all of you folks at home well and working and happy. I have received a few of your Christmas packages and was very very glad to receive them. Thanks for Henry's picture, Mother.

I was very happy to hear that you received the \$100.00 I sent to you. You spend it all on yourself. I want my little, short, fat sweetheart to have anything that she wants. Of course, I know what she wants more than everything but she can't have that until this darn war is over.

Mother, we are having very bad weather here in the Philippines. It rains d---- near every day. But I don't mind it, although the mud is darn near up to our knees. Gosh, it is hot too. We had a pretty tough time on here, not only with the Japs, but also the rain, mud, cold and diseases.

Don't worry about me because I am just fine. Just take good care of yourself and be a good girl and stay in bed and rest like Dr. Dean says so you can be well for me if I ever get to come home. We have received the papers. They are going up to higher authorities now. Mother, I may not get to come home now, so I don't want you to plan or count on anything, and then be worse. So until you see me walk into the house, don't count on anything.

You stay in bed and take it easy like Doris and the doctor wants you to. You don't have to work for anyone or anything. I'll see to that. I only wish, Mother, I had some way so I could send you a \$100.00 bill a month, but I can't the way things stand now. The only way I could send you \$100 a month, would be to get lucky in a poker game or get a higher rating. As far as the ratings go, I am probably left out in the rain. But some time I may get to send you money home regular. I know you want me more than anything else, but that is impossible. And when I do get home you will not have a thing to worry about, or you will not have to work.

Did you send Elizabeth that enlarged picture of me. Have you received some pictures of me from a girl by the name of Eleanor Horder of New Jersey? She is a buddy of Mines girl friend and she is supposed to send you a set of pictures, some that I had taken in New Guinea.

Well, Mother, I will close for this time and I will write to you again soon. I have been very busy. I love you very much, Mother, more than you'll ever know. I love you. Love & Kisses.

Your baby Yank Soldier,  
Bye, Joe.

P.S. - Thanks for Xmas packages and Henry's pictures.

-----  
(Received by John Slaybaugh, Sr., of Griffith, Ind., from his son, Joe.)

Dec. 22, 1944  
Somewhere in P. I.

Dear Dad:

Just a few lines to let you know I am just fine and am well. I hope that this letter finds you and Olive and everyone back home well, working and happy.

Daddy, I know you have been very very worried about me because I haven't written you and the things you have been hearing over the radio, but I have been very busy and I haven't had a chance to write to you, but I will make up for all of the lost time now.

Well, Father, it will soon be Christmas again. Glad you are well for this Christmas. I was in Australia for Christmas last year and in the Philippines this year--not doing bad, eh, Pop?

Dad, there isn't much I can tell you as you know, but I will tell you about the people here. The people are very friendly and they are clean, the cleanest natives I have seen for a long time. We have them to wash our clothes and mend them when they are torn. The people over here are almost all Catholics. These people are very religious. This country is better and the climate is a lots better here than in New Guinea. That New Guinea is a hell hole believe me. Boy they have some rugged stuff over here to drink. It is called Tuba. It is made out of dried cocoanuts and the flower of the cocoanut tree. It smells awful, but it will give you a real buzz.

## SvcMen WW II Letters

Dad, I am glad that I am above the Equator now. Gee, I can really tell the difference in the weather and everything. It rains a lot here and boy that rain is really cold. It gets kinda cold here at night. It is hot in the daytime.

Well, Daddy, I'll close for now and I'll write to you again soon. I am sure I will get more time to write to you now. Oh yes, Dad, these Filipino girls are awfully good-looking and are very friendly also. Tell everyone I said hello and give them all my love. Don't worry about me, Daddy. I'll be okay. I hope you are the same. I love you very much, Dad. Tell Olive I said hello. Has she heard from Bee lately? Is he well, and is he still in France? I hope he is well.

Bye now, Dad. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year, Dad, and I hope we may spend next Christmas and New Years together. Drink a big shot of whiskey and a bottle of Hoosier just for me on Christmas and New Years. Write to me often. Love and Kisses.

Your son,  
Joe

[The News-Sentinel, Friday, January 19, 1945]

### FIFTH LETTER FROM ALBERT L. ESHELMAN

Sgt. A. L. Eshelman  
Somewhere in England

Dear Folks:

Gee, thanks a million for the lovely Christmas card in which I received from all of you Monday. It sure was beautiful.

I sure hated to hear that Bruce Lowe passed away. I guess we can't all live forever.

I forgot to mention in Dad's letter about the bond in which he got for me I guess that is one of the nicest things that any Dad could ever do for his Son. I feel so helpless over here not being able to return in any way my appreciation for all the fine things you do for me. Maybe, some day I can return the favors, at least I'll try until the day I lay down for keeps.

It sure has been picturesque weather lately. The ground, bushes, etc., are covered with thick frost. The fog was so thick it froze so quick that it would almost cake up on your eyelids.

I don't know when I'll get around to writing John and Jeanette another letter, as I got so many Christmas cards and letters over the holiday that I don't know when I'll get caught up. Oh, my goodness, that reminds me, Carl and Alice sent me a couple boxes of candied peanuts and I haven't even thanked them yet, so I had better sign off and get to that.

So long,  
Sgt. Albert Leroy Eshelman

[The News-Sentinel, Saturday, January 20, 1945]

### FIFTH LETTER FROM HAROLD DEAN CLEVENGER

Somewhere in Burma  
Dec. 23, 1944

Dear Mother:

Well, it's been a long time since I have wrote to you so I thought I would write a few lines. How are you and the rest of the family. I hope you are all feeling fine. I am Ding-How!, that means very good in Chinese. We are backing the Japs up here in Burma. I have been under gunfire and so far I am O.K. and I have seen some Japs, dead ones. I am sending some Japanese money in this letter for the kids. I have three Chinese friends, one is a Captain and one a 1st Lieut. and a Warrant Officer; and they can speak a little English, and they eat very good rice, and their tea is good. I have lived out in the jungles for five weeks now. We have walked about 100 miles so far - that's a lot of walking. I have some Chinese money too. When you get this letter write and tell me if there was snow on the ground Christmas. After I finish this letter to you I am going to write one to Sis and one to Jack. Well, Mother, there isn't much to write about. I can't think of anymore to write now, so I will close and wirt to Sis and Jack.

With lots of Love, your Son

## SvcMen WW II Letters

Harold

[The News-Sentinel, Saturday, January 20, 1945]

### FOURTH LETTER FROM CARL D. HEDGES

Pvt. Carl D. Hedges

New Guinea

47th General Hospital

Dear Capt. Minter:

To start this year off I will reply to your good letters, newspaper clippings, items of general information to us, and the various other things you have sent me.

During the past five days I have received more than 30 letters and I am trying to get caught up on replying to them, but it seems when I do get all straightened out, along comes another bunch of welcome letters from friends throughout the world.

I received 35 Christmas cards for which I am most appreciative. I want to give you a short story of Christmas as we enjoyed it right here on N.G. Christmas at the 47th General Hospital started December 24th when after the movies the Red Cross gave us a fine program in the Enlisted Men's recreation hall. The doors were opened at 8:30 p.m. Upon entering our eyes were cast upon the beautifully decorated room, centered with a 10 foot Christmas tree, beautifully ornamented with Christmas decorations. At the base of the tree we found 600 wrapped presents, one for each member of our organization. Each package contained candy, games, books, stationery, pencils, and some more useful articles. After everyone was seated our 47th General Hospital Band played several selections starting off with "Boogie Woogie," all followed by other fine selections and a favorite song "White Christmas" sung by Irving Berlin. During the rest of the evening refreshments were served consisting of ice cream, candy, cake and Coca Cola. Our Christmas dinner, which by the way was the same as we had for New Year's dinner yesterday was roast turkey, sage dressing, cranberry sauce, giblet gravy, buttered corn, Parker House rolls, butter, olives, cheese, pumpkin pie and coffee, cream, sugar. We were each given a calendar of 1945 centered with a picture of our Commander of this area--General Douglas MacArthur.

Yesterday I went on a short trip to some nearby islands to visit some native missions. The one I enjoyed most has been established over 60 years and the natives were very clean, very friendly, have clean homes, a beautiful church, well kept surroundings and they have a fairly large saw mill. I also noticed a large field for sports. On the wall of their recreation hall were hung some highly prized trophies. Yes, and believe it or not, they have a Boy Scout organization there too. Of course this was one thing in which I was much interested. I would like to tell you more about the place but I think I will have to wait until I get home. (WHEN??)

Today at this hospital we were honored with a stage show given by that friend of all--Mr. Irving Berlin and I assure you the program was enjoyed by all. He sang some songs and other members of his troupe sang, danced, etc. Has Rochester got the new fire truck yet? Not that I am anxious to have it used but that you will have it in case of necessity to use it. My new chaplain's name is Wm. H. Bergham, he is a Captain here at our headquarters. He is a mighty fine fellow and comes from the best state of all--INDIANA. He is from Terre Haute.

You are right about these tropical waters being infested with many kinds of sharks, poison fish, and so on. There is a fish here that if it attacks you, you will be dead in a couple of hours. We are lucky for they do not come very close to shore. But many sharks have been seen in the vicinity of the "Old Swimmin' Hole."

I must close now and I hope that all is well in Rochester, Indiana, United States of America, Western Hemisphere. And I hope that it is not as hot as it is here at present as it is 98 in the shade but no shade. Please write me again my friend, and remember me to my friends there at home and I wish them all a very prosperous New Year.

Pvt. Carl D. Hedges

New Guinea 1943-1944-1945 ???

[The News-Sentinel, Monday, January 22, 1945]



## SvcMen WW II Letters

### LETTER FROM EARL EDWARD WHEATLEY

Dear Sir:

The W. G. Wheatley family near Leiters Ford has received a letter, dated Dec. 20, from Pfc. Earl Edward Wheatley. He said he was nicely settled in a grain bin in a barn so cold their ink was frozen. Pfc. Wheatley said his Christmas dinner was K rations.

He also stated that his outfit had pulled out of Germany so fast that they were compelled to leave behind them the strange machine they had captured from the Germans and which they had spent days in studying, trying to find out what the Germans had used it for. Pfc. Wheatley is in Belgium.

Mrs. W. G. Wheatley  
R. R. 1, Box 46  
Monterey, Ind.

[The News-Sentinel, Monday, January 22, 1945]

### SECOND LETTER FROM JAMES WALTON

Cpl. James Walton  
Wednesday Eve  
Dec. 20, 1944  
Belgium

Dear Herman:

Hi, Pal, not having dropped you a line for some time, I thought best I get busy and do this very thing--and so be it. I'm doing it.

You undoubtedly have known for some time that I've been in Belgium, and that's quite right. Although this eve, if I were given the choice, I'd be in good Old Indiana.

Today Belgium isn't the nicest place on earth to be, as you have probably read your newspapers telling of the counter-offensive Germany has thrown against us. And they are some few miles inside Belgium now. What a Christmas present for us boys. It's hard to believe but true. An American is the best damn soldier in the world, but even so, he has his bad days too. I hope by the time this reaches you, the situation is well in hand. It must be. If not, then, I'll be an old man when I see you again.

Belgium is quite a place Herman, welcome and cordial. The people, I like much better than the French or English. They resemble us so very much in so many ways. They're a healthy looking crew--big, red cheeked individuals. The men are handsome and the women--well, as we'd say, not so hot and please don't take that literally. Ha! Seemingly when the Belgian woman reaches the age, let's say 30 years old, she begins to spread out in all directions, the pretty get old quick, but if I remember right that's quite a custom of the European female.

I, myself, as an individual have been invited out to dinner several times by elderly couples and enjoyed myself. The language is practically all "French," a little "Flemish" thrown in, and I find that I can converse with them with little trouble at all.

I was really surprised when I came to Belgium to find in their stores, things that we are unable to acquire back home. The stores are full of alarm clocks, toasters, irons, etc. And the food situation is above par for most of these European countries. At one time we were allowed to eat in their restaurants, now we are not allowed to, but I'm speaking of when we were, it was no trouble to order a T-bone steak, French-fries, pie, ice cream.

The beer here, Herman, is darned good, almost like back home. Course they water it somewhat, but what the Army gets for us isn't, and it really hits the spot. The nearer it seems, that we get to Germany the better the brew gets.

Just like in England, without his "pub" the English man is lost, and so with the average Belgian. Without his cafe and music, he's lost. This city I'm quartered in, about every fifth establishment is a cafe. Almost all the cafes have their little five, seven, eight piece band, and their wages are what the customers hand out to them, at the end of about every fifth piece, when one of the band members--usually a girl--passes the proverbial hat. We spend quite a lot of our leisure time in these cafes.

## SvcMen WW II Letters

Speaking of this city I'm quartered in, Herman, it's quite a place. It lies in a valley, flanked on both sides by a range of mountains. A river runs through the lower part of town. I've spent many hours watching the river barges ply up and down the stream. Their unusual boats, built long and slender. Whole families live on them all year round. Their chief cargo seems to be wood, coal and turnips.

I spoke a few minutes before of the many commodities there are to buy, but what bullish prices. An ice cream sundae, would cost you close to 50c, a steak, two to three dollars, everything seems to be double according to the standards of the U. S. It doesn't take you long to go broke here, if you try and live the life you know back in the states. And I assure you most of us don't live that way.

This city is quite historical in some spots. The city prides itself in having a castle, built squarely in town, built by Marie Therisa of Austria and Louis XIV in 1783. It's built on a high hill, overlooking the whole city, and it's surrounded by a moat and a thick cement wall. I've been fortunate in being able to go through the entire place from bottom to top. Cannons even stand today, where they were placed by Louis XIV soldiers.

Well, Herman, that's quite enough about me. What I'd like to know, how are things coming? The factory and all. I suppose that brother of mine and the rest are working their heads off and all that.

You don't know how good it's going to feel for me to get back to work, go to my home every night, where I'll be the "First Sergeant." Ha! (I think). Those are the thoughts that make me keep plugging away.

Tell Jack I send a hello, and will answer his last V-mail I received, soon.

Also tell Burdette, Seymour, I send greetings. And will drop them a line one of these days, too.

And you, Herman, be good, write me when you can.

You won't receive this before the holidays, but hope you have a couple of great shots for me.

Well so long Pal--lots of luck to you--and be good.

Your friend,

Jim

[The News-Sentinel, Monday, January 22, 1945]

### LETTER FROM W. G. HECKATHORN

Pvt. W. G. Heckathorn  
Somewhere in England

Dear Folks:

It's been quite a while since I wrote to you or any one else, but now that I am back from my furlough, maybe I can get all caught up again.

First of all, I hope you are fine. As for me I am tired, and I mean tired. But now I'll try to tell you a little of my furlough.

I had 11 days, 7 days furlough and I had worked on New Year's Day and that counted two, and then the weekend. So that way I had 11 days. It started on Friday. I slept till noon, then started to get my things together. On Sat. night I went into Burnily and stayed till Sun. night. Got up on Mon. a.m. at 10 and got started out of camp at 11. My buddy came with me. No bus so we stood there for a long time. Finally a truck let us ride on the back. We rode in there for about 20 miles. Finally got to a town and got the bus. Then the question was: where were we going? We thought we would just ride a while and see the country. We stopped at 4 o'clock at Hillifax. Saw a large hotel and we had never stayed in a big hotel before, so we got a room. Tea at 5, so we took a shower, or bath in a bathtub. Had tea and then we were out to look the town over. Can't tell you much about the town.

All English boys. No U.S.A. After walking for about an hour we walked by a place and heard music, so we went in. It was a beer joint and neither of us drink beer, so we got pop. They saw we were Yanks, so they played a song for us. We stayed there till 10. There were lots of girls there drinking beer and smoking. But I saw one in a corner and she wasn't, so I went over and

## SvcMen WW II Letters

asked her why she was in there. She said she wanted to listen to the music and stage show. We sat there with her a while. When it was over she asked us home for supper. You see, they eat at 12 and tea at 5. With nothing else to do, we did. A nice clean house and a big dog, and I mean big, too. Her mother was big too, 200 lbs and a brother 14. At 2:30 the father took us to the hotel. The next day she got a girl and we took them to a show and then to her home for tea. Then she took us to her aunt's. We moved out of the hotel on Friday and a good thing we did for the bill was \$16.

There was a couple staying at the girl's home from London. They had lost everything. All of them were so nice to us and I am just waiting till I can go back in three months.

There is lots more to tell and I won't forget it. Will tell you when I see you.

The wind is blowing hard today. We didn't feel right working again, but all good things must come to an end, so I am back at work.

Well folks, I hope you get my packages. Let me know. All of you be good, take care of yourselves and write often.

Lots of love,

Heck

[The News-Sentinel, Tuesday, January 30, 1945]

### THIRD LETTER FROM KENNETH L. "TONY" MILLER

Sgt. K. L. Miller

Somewhere in Germany

Dear Mom:

I finally got time to write you a few lines. We are kept pretty busy all the time and we get very little sleep. I wrote you a small letter about a week ago and told I was in Germany. I forgot to tell you in my last letter that I'm in the Ninth army. But if I would of told you that in my last letter, then I wouldn't of had very much to say in this one.

Well Mom, New Year's Eve I was on guard and they shot down a German plane and the next day got the rear landing wheel off of it. Then that same morning they knocked down two more of them. It sure makes a person feel good to see them knocked down.

Well Mom, this New Year might be a victorious year for the Allies. I hope so 'cause I'm plenty tired of war and all its blood and filth. Well, Mom, I hope you are OK and feeling fine. I am OK and to top things off I think I'm gaining weight. Well Mom, I'll close now hoping to hear from you soon.

Your son,

Kenneth

[The News-Sentinel, Tuesday, January 30, 1945]

### SECOND LETTER FROM JERRY VAN LUE

Pvt. M. G. Van Lue

Somewhere in Southwest Pacific

December 28, 1944

Dear Sis:

Received your letters, was glad to hear from you. Sorry I didn't get the other one answered sooner so will answer both together. At the time I got your first letter we were so busy that hardly any of us were writing letters. Yes, I would sure like to run into Jot down here. Please send me his address. I have a good idea where he is but of course it is only a guess.

I met a boy from Rochester, Dick Young. Do you remember him? He is attached to the Marines in a medical unit. It was sure good to see someone from home even if he was in the Navy. H. Ha. I read in the papers where Dick Ginther was made a staff seageant. The Army sure puts out ratings fast.

I hear from the kids quite often but Dad is kinda slow in writing but that is just his way.

Must close for now and get to work. Write again whenever you can find time. I promise I will do better next time.

## SvcMen WW II Letters

With love,  
Jerry.

[The News-Sentinel, Wednesday, January 31, 1945]

### SEVENTH LETTER FROM ALBERT SWANSON

Pvt. Albert Swanson  
New Guinea  
Jan. 11, 1945

My Dearest Mother and Dad:

I'll try and drop you a line tonight to let you know that I am OK and hope you are the same as ever. I haven't got a letter from you this week yet. I heard from Ramona yesterday. It was sent Dec. 28. My last letter from you was wrote about the same time.

I should be getting some 1945 mail soon.

How are my letters coming? OK I hope.

I never did get John's Xmas package. It don't look like I will get it now.

Has Dorothy heard from Kenneth? Ramona said that his letters were coming back. Maybe he is on his way home. I sure hope there's not anything wrong with him.

So far my letters to him haven't come back. The last letter I got from him was wrote Nov. 28. Be sure and let me know about him.

Well Mom, it still is as hot here as ever and I am doing about the same thing as I was. I am still hoping to get home soon. I heard a few days ago that if I hadn't gone to the hospital last summer, I could have come home last September.

I think if I could back to the States the doctor could do something for my shoulder. One doctor told me if I was back in the U.S. I would have a good chance to get a discharge because of my shoulder.

Well I can't think of any more to write now so will close. This makes two letters to you this week.

Will close with lots of love,

Your son,  
Albert

[The News-Sentinel, Wednesday, January 31, 1945]

### LETTER FROM RAYMOND COOPER

Rochesrter, Ind.  
Jan. 31, 1945

The News-Sentinel:

Enclosed is a letter which we received from our son, Raymond Cooper, who is overseas which we would like to print in The News-Sentinel.

Thank you,  
Mr. and Mrs. Lester Cooper  
R.R. 3, Rochester, Ind.

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Raymond Cooper  
January 14, 1945

Dear Folks:

I don't know how this letter's going to look, for it's the first one of these V-mails I've written.

Last night we were relieved by another battalion and came back to a town for a few days. I guess we'll take it easy for a while here. We got clean clothes today, and four candy bars and one package of gum. We are staying in a civilian's house here with an old lady. She is a very nice woman, we think. It's hard to understand what she means sometimes, but a couple of boys understand her language a little so we get along OK.

## SvcMen WW II Letters

Here we get hot chow three times a day, instead of twice. I just saw four or five of the fellows from McClellan that we came here with. I also heard Bob's outfit was somewhere in this town, but don't know for sure. Sure would like to see him. A boy just came in our squad this morning that is from Winamac.

How is Lyman getting along going to school this winter? Has he missed any school yet from having a cold? I'll bet he hasn't, for he is too tough to catch cold. Well I'm nearly out of room and have nothing more to say so will sign off.

Love,

Raymond

The News-Sentinel, Thursday, February 1, 1945]

### LETTER FROM GENE REESE

Gene Reese

Somewhere in British Isles

January 14th, 1945

Dear Mother:

This sure has been a peaceful day, and the weather is swell for this time of year. It was warm enough here today that we only wore a light jacket and felt comfortable. The grass is still a pretty green and the spring wheat is growing. The birds are sitting around singing just as if it were spring. I think I have seen snow about twice so far this winter, so that should prove that this winter has been very mild.

Mother, I am doing something that I know you will not approve of, but personally I think it is a good setup. It is nothing more than basketball, but the way the thing is worked out I believe we will get a good deal. We played one game the other night and our team was recommended for the tournament. All teams in the United Kingdom that qualify will be there. If we don't win, it will be a lot of fun. We will get a good chance to tour all over England. Don't worry about me being hurt for there are 10 of us going and I will probably be the tenth man. We are supposed to go to London for a game some time soon.

Did I ever tell you about where we are located? There is a little town of about 7,000 located on the side of a good sized hill, and a castle sits on the peak. We are only about half as far as the house is from the crossroad from the statue in the middle of the town. I used to go in about every night, but it is limited now to once or twice a week.

I have received only the one letter from Wayne, and he is working in some air base, but he could not tell which island he is now on. The women around are doing their laundry and he thought that was just the stuff. He said he was operating anything from a cat to a crane. He said he was safe and not to worry. It was the most interesting letter I have received from anyone for a long time. I was surprised that he could tell as much as he did. He told about cruising around on the ocean and about his trip back to Sidney, Australia, on his 16-day furlough. He went down on a boat and the water was so rough that he became sick, but felt all right as long as he was lying down. His room for the 16 days cost him \$60 and he drank milk and ate ice cream from the time he got there until he left. He went back by plane, 3,000 miles, as he has probably told you. Then from New Guinea on to the Philippines he went on ship again and the water was still rough. He slept on top of a truck for a week and almost fell off one night as the boat rocked.

Since that is about all I know, I'll sign off and hope to hear from you soon.

As ever, Love,

Gene

[The News-Sentinel, Monday, February 5, 1945]

### SECOND LETTER FROM WAYNE REESE

Wayne Reese

Philippine Islands

Dear Mother:

## SvcMen WW II Letters

I hope this finds you all in the best of health, as for me I am OK. I am getting all I want to eat, and I am not working very hard. I have been running a Cat the last few days and the sun just about blisters me. I was never so red in all my life.

I received two V-mails from you today, dated Jan. 3 and 4. I also got two yesterday, (airmail). One of them was telling about the tractor, the other was Jan. 13. The airmail comes much faster than the V-mail. I got seven letters yesterday, one six-page letter from J. M. written on the same kind of paper you use.

The package you got from me was sent from Australia when I was on furlough. And I didn't kill the poor sheep. That was just about the only thing I could think of sending. The Red Cross sent it for me. I sure wish I could have stayed in Australia for about three or four months longer. It is a place that I would like to go back to some day. When I came back by plane (3,000 miles) I saw a lot of the country, and it sure was nice. I liked it all very much. In the northern part it is not much good, but a lot of beautiful girls came from there. They left when the Japs came. The most of them went to Sydney. Those girls in the picture that I sent you were all from the northern part.

The people in the Philippines can talk English rather well. We don't have much trouble to understand them. We can't buy much of any thing in the stores, and their buildings are not very much to look at. There are a few that are rather nice. There were a few roads here but not very big ones. We made them all larger and more of them.

They grow mostly rice, but there was a few farmers that can grow most anything. The Japs didn't leave them any thing to eat or any clothing. They even took all of their trucks and tore up their cars.

I had a date tonight but I didn't keep it. We make dates and break them just for past time. I have taken several girls to the show, but I don't care for them. They are too dark for me. I enjoy talking to them and they tell us a lot about the Japs. How they killed them and worked them so hard, but from what I have seen they sure didn't hurt themselves at work. They are about the slowest people on earth. They think we are all sick. They want us to give them food and clothing, which we have a little trouble in getting. The smallest pants we can get now is size 38 around the waist, but we get along just fine. We look rather funny with our big pants on, but after we leave no one will know how we looked.

Well, Mother, it is ten o'clock and time I was going to bed, so I will close for this time, but I will write again in a few days. I hope to hear from you all soon.

Bye now,  
Wayne

[The News-Sentinel, Monday, February 5, 1945]

### LETTER FROM HOWARD L. CARR

Cpl. Howard L. Carr  
Luzon, Philippines  
January 23, 1945

Dear Mom, Dad and All:

I'll write a few lines to say I'm O.K. and going along yet. I sure am tired though, don't get so much rest. We work from daylight till dark then stand guard at night every other night. Well, I sure know now how it goes in real combat action, and if I must say it, at times it is hell, so I am willing for it to come to an end anytime. We had quite a few thrills or scares coming up here to this place. They bombed, submarine torpedoed and about the worst was those crazy suicide plane crashes into our boats, but we got through O.K. ourselves. I also saw the bombardment on the coast before we were ashore, and when we did get there we got a warm reception from the Japs the first night, but they picked them off pretty quick.

The natives here are pretty nice. Most, or part of them, speak our language so we get along good with them. They do our washing, for food, cigarettes, and they also want clothes.

It is plenty hot here in the day time, but gets pretty chilly during the night. The blanket feels good. I have a cot to sleep on, also a nice fox hole to hop into. H. Ha. So, I guess I know now what it is all about.

## SvcMen WW II Letters

I haven't got any mail for a month now. The last I got was day before Christmas. Never got your package yet, but suppose it will be coming up now soon. My APO number is also changed again, it is 70 now.

How are all you folks. I hope O.K., and do you hear from the other boys and how are they getting along?

News is mighty scarce here the last month. This is also the first chance I've had to write, things are moving so fast. How are Delberts, tell them I will write them now soon. You will all have to read these letters together, as it is hard to write all, so tell all I said hello and to write. I sure am looking for some letters.

I got Aunt Ruth's Christmas card, and a letter from Stanley and yours all the day I got on the boat.

Did you get my watch, and also are you getting my allotments? I've been wondering about them. How is the weather at home, are you having much winter and cold weather. Well, folks, don't know much more for now, and will try to write oftener from now on, so this leaves me well and O.K. and write, all of you, and send me the news.

Well, it's about chow time so I'll ring off for this time. I am sending some Jap souvenir money, also two New Ginea bills. So, for now, I'll say goodbye.

Your son,  
Howard

[The News-Sentinel, Wednesday, February 7, 1945]

### LETTER FROM ELWYN BECKER

Elwyn Becker  
Key West, Florida  
January 28, 1945

Dear Folks:

Well, here I am back in Florida again and do I love it, green grass, leaves on the trees and a nice cool breeze blowing in from the ocean. Sure is paradise compared to the cold and desolate look of New Jersey.

Eight of us came down here and Roy and I are together in the same squadron.

We left Wildwood Tuesday afternoon and were to leave Philadelphia that night but there were no reservations for us so our draft leader, Jack Sheldon, called the Navy Yard there and we were to report the next morning. Jack invited three of us to his home and the other four to his wife's parents for the night. The next morning after we had breakfast, Jack's father-in-law took us to the Yards, a 45-minute ride. Still no reservations, so a special car was put on a train for us. It was a troop sleeper. We had a lot of fun coming down. Went thru Washington, Charleston, Savannah, Jacksonville, and Miami. I was still asleep when we passed thru DeLand. When we got to Miami, we caught a bus for Key West, was a four-hour trip over bridges most of the way.

Saturday we spent checking in and got the dope on what we are here for and what we are going to do.

We are going to be flying in PBM twin-engine patriot bombers, they carry a crew of five or six, two pilots, two radiomen, an ordnanceman and a mechanic. There is four times more gear in these planes than in an SBD but we have studied it all and we just have to refresh our memory on how to set it up. We also have to learn the other duties of a 2nd radioman, firing a single fifty from the waist hatch and also have to cook. These planes go out for so long as ten hours and can stay in air from 18 to 24 hours as they carry their own chow and have a galley to cook it in and there are bunks and we can sleep when we're off duty. I can't get over the size of them, they would make three of the SBD's but I like the SBD's best. Roy went on a hop yesterday. He took off at one-thirty and didn't get back until eight-thirty. He says the engines burned over a 1000 gallons of gas. If you figure it up, you will find out each engine burned a little over a gallon of gas

## SvcMen WW II Letters

a minute. It's no wonder gas is rationed. When you think of the hundreds of planes that fly each day, the gasoline runs up to the millions of gallons that they use.

These patrol bombers are a lot safer and from the talk we will be here from four to six months. The squadron just got back from 18 months duty around Trinidad and they are going through an extensive training course. This morning a chief radioman shows us new fellows how to set up some of the gear and a little about the procedure.

How is the weather. I'll bet you wish you had some of the warm weather and sunshine we have down here.

Love,  
Elwyn

[The News-Sentinel, Thursday, February 8, 1945]

### LETTER FROM ROBERT O. BARKER

(Editor's Note: Robert Barker attended Sunday School at Grandview church before he went in service. This letter was written to his Sunday school teacher, Mrs. Jessie Steininger. He is now on the Pacific.)

Robert O. Barker, E.M. 2/c

Mrs. Steininger:

I assure you your letter was very welcome. I certainly appreciate your remembrance of me and dropping me a line. It has been quite some time since I last attended church at Grandview, however, I haven't forgotten the young peoples' class, the pleasant study hours, as well as the many fine sermons.

My mother has a few pictures of our island chapel. I'm sure she'll be glad to show them to you if you stop in some time. We usually have a large congregation and a fine message from our chaplain. Of course our chapel isn't such as those in the States, however, it serves as a place of worship.

I do hope I get back in the good old USA sometime this year. No place like home, I'd say.

Regards to all,  
Bob

[The News-Sentinel, Friday, February 9, 1945]

### LETTER FROM HERMAN JONES

New Guinea  
24 January 1945

Miss Jane Haskett

Rochester, Ind.

Dear Jane:

I shall try to do my best to answer your letter asking that I tell you a little about this country. Everything here is rather strange, and in almost every case, very interesting. It would be very hard to tell you all about it in a letter so I'll tell you of a few things now, and then tell you all the rest when I get back home again.

I know that you would be interested in the little tropic fish that swim in the strange coral reefs looking for all the world like tiny moving jewels. There are fish so blue that the brightest blue you could think of would be dull compared to them. There are little poison fish, and fish that fly, and fish that go skipping across the water when scared. These little fellows crawl out of the water in the evening and climb up the roots and branches of trees to enjoy the cool breezes.

#### Many Strange Birds

There are many strange birds, unlike anything we have at home in our woods and fields. Here you will find one of the distant cousins of our own crow. His call sounds exactly like Donald Duck saying "Oh Boy." Great flocks of blue, red and green parrots, white cockatoos with fancy yellow crests, pretty little doves, these can be seen flying late in the evening and early in the morning. There is a little fellow called "Willie Wag-tail." A little black and white bird who can't



## SvcMen WW II Letters

seem to keep his tail from flicking from side to side and up and down. He really acts like a very nervous person.

If you care to walk along the beach you will find hundreds of pretty shells of almost every color of the rainbow. In some of these shells, whose original owners have long since been eaten by the fish, you will find a new owner called a "Hermit Crab," and well he might, for he chooses a vacant shell that just fits him and leaves no room for visitors to his house. In this shell he sets up light housekeeping. If the shell should cease to fit him as he grows he has only to find himself a next larger shell. You can see him traveling along the beach hunting for something to eat and lugging his house along with him almost any time.

And when the tide is out you can find little crabs, bright blue star fish, and little lobsters in the shallows. If you are especially lucky you might get to see a baby octopus stretching his arms in search of food.

### Giant Bats

Like any other place in the world you will find rats and mice here. The only difference is that the rats here are larger than the cats at home. Great fruit bats or flying foxes swoop between the coconut palms in the evening. These big fellows are really big. Their wingspread is sometimes from 2 to 3 feet across. How would you like a bat of that size to get into your hair?

One little animal here that I know you would like is called a "Cus-cus." The fellow is about the size of a big puppy and is covered with wool just the shade of coffee and cream. His naked pink nose and feet stick out of this wool and he looks for all the world like a baby snugly wrapped in a woolen shawl.

Most interesting of all is the small kangaroos which are called wallabys here. He isn't very big, and he is very shy, so it is very seldom that you see this flash of gray fur go hopping through the trees.

I suppose that the most interesting of all is the native people. They are very different from people any other place in the world. Perhaps I could tell you a little about a little native girl and how she lives.

To begin with, her family belongs to a colored race called Papuans (pronounced Pa-oo-ans), which means the frizzy-haired people. Their hair stands straight out from their heads and if possible is bleached with peroxide to make it sort of a dirt red. They comb it with an unusual comb that looks like a bunch of sharp sticks bound together at one end.

### Once Cannibals

Her grandfather and his father before him, were cannibals. They cooked and ate people as casually as you would eat roast beef. But years ago brave missionaries came to live with them, teaching the Bible and also better manners and diet. You don't have to worry any more about being captured and eaten, for these people in their own way, live very much as people do any other place in the world. But I promised to tell you about the little girl --

We shall call her Dawahra (pronounced da-war-a), and we'll say she is just six years old. Now she is quite grown up for her six years, in fact she will probably be married when she is 12. So she really doesn't have much time to play.

She learns very early to keep house, to cook, and to make baskets and clothes. If you don't know her home you would be able to find it by looking on her arm. The missionaries have tattooed it there when she was just a little baby so that they would always know her.

Her house is built of branches and palm leaves, and for all the flimsy look it is quite cool and comfortable. It is built up on the ground far enough to allow her parents to tie up pigs, dogs, chickens and cats, underneath. How would you like to have a barnyard under your house?

There is only one big room where everybody sleeps and eats. The stove is a sort of box of sand set on the floor where a small fire is built and carefully watched so that the house will not catch fire.

For clothes she wears only a grass skirt. She looks just like a little brown elf rising out of a tiny haystack. All little girls wear skirts just like their mothers. Their brothers wear a palm leaf for trousers until they are about nine when they are given a strip of bright cloth called a lap-lap. This they bind about their waist and legs to form a sort of trouser. This is all they use in the way

## SvcMen WW II Letters

of clothes. With the weather as hot as it is there is no need for any more, and no one cares about style.

Early in the morning Dawahra will rise, eat a breakfast of cold rice or grated coconut and be off to the mission to school. Yes, she goes to school just as you do. Here she is taught how to read and write in English and how to make baskets and clothes, and how to sing and pray. On Sundays she will go to church to learn about Jesus. She is very religious and goes every Sunday.

At noon-time school is over and she is free to go home. If there is not too much to do she may find a little time to play. Perhaps she will gather bright shells and stones on the beach and build villages just as her American cousins build sand castles on the beaches at home. With her friends she may play games that resemble hop-scotch and tag. Maybe she is lucky to have had a ball given to her by the soldiers. But she has no dolls, nor toys like you. Her playthings are the things she can find in the open and the trinkets given her by visitors to the village.

### No Stores

But then, she is almost too busy to play anyway. Together with her mother she will go to their "garden" in the jungle to gather taro, this is a vegetable very much like our own spinach. She will hunt for ripe pineapple and bananas or the papaya which looks like a big green eggplant and tastes like pumpkin. Ripe mangoes that look like pears and taste a little like a carrot, a peach, and a canteloupe mixed. Her father and brothers may have hunted the shallows for clams and mussels to provide meat or they may have gone fishing in the coral lagoons. There are no stores here. You go into the jungle or to the ocean and take just what you need. The only pay is the effort to gather it.

If it should be a special day there may be a feast in the evening. All the natives love those good times as much as you enjoy the Fourth of July and Christmas. In the evening all the natives gather in the village bringing with them all sorts of fruits and coconuts, they might even bring a young dog to boil and eat. If it is a real holiday they will have a young pig to roast over the open fire.

They like to sing and to dance. Some of the songs are their own, some are hymns taught by the missionaries, and others are songs they have learned from the soldiers. You should hear a bunch of them sing "God Bless America." They sing with all their hearts and lungs, and they do it very well indeed.

### Dances For All Occasions

Their dances express the way they feel. They have dances for sadness, for happiness, for sickness, in fact for almost everything. For instance in one dance called a "Baby Dance," they dance out the story of a little baby who is sick. The mother holds the baby and tries to keep away the evil spirits of disease, who are dancing around and singing, trying to take the baby away. She is able to protect the baby against all but one who steals the baby away from her. That is the baby dies. As the spirits take the baby away the mother cries and cries for her lost child.

When the feast is over and her tummy is stuffed to the bursting point, tired from all the dancing and singing she goes back to sleep on her little grass mat that is her bed. And who knows, perhaps she will dream of a kindly American soldier who will come to visit the village and to bring box candy and gum or give her money and take her picture.

The native children love the American soldiers almost as much as do the children at home, and the Americans have come to like these little brown cousins of yours halfway round the world.

I do hope that this letter will tell you just a little of the way things are in this strange country. It is a wonderful experience to be here and see these things, but better still I, and all the rest of the soldiers would much rather be back home with all of you.

Goodbye for now,

Herman Jones

[The News-Sentinel, Monday, February 12, 1945]

## SvcMen WW II Letters

### LETTERS FROM JAMES A. DEARDORFF

1st Lt. James A. Deardorff  
Philippines  
Jan. 18, 1945

Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Deardorff  
Akron, Indiana  
Dear Folks:

Just a few lines to let you know where we are, and what is going on. When you hear or read the news you will know the exact location.

The natives are very friendly and definitely pro-American. The first person I saw on landing on the beach was a Filipino waving an American flag and bidding us come on in. They read and speak English, and many of them are well educated. They have suffered much at the hands of the Japs. I enclose some Nip invasion money. It was given the natives in exchange for their pigs, chickens and other items of food. It proved to be worthless as far as buying any thing in return is concerned.

I talked with a Filipino who was with the Philippine Scouts under Wainwright in Bataan. This fellow managed to escape and joined the guerillas who have been fighting Japs since the surrender. These natives want to give us food when they do not have enough for themselves. We always refuse it.

Your loving son,  
Jim

-----

Jan. 25, 1945

Dear Folks:

We are still on the move southward and everyting is running along smoothly. We have captured several more modern towns, and right now I am writing this letter sitting at a table in an upstairs room of a two-story frame house. The Japs burned some of these towns and stole all the horses to help them to get away.

Inhabitants here are more educated and progressive than in the section to the rear. They have more modern homes and better living conditions.

I expect you are having cold weather in Indiana now, while over here it is mid-summer. We sleep on the ground with little or no cover.

These Filipinos use very primitive methods. They use carabou power and these animals are as slow as oxen. I hope to get some mail soon.

Your loving son,  
Jim

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Jan. 28, 1945

Dear Folks:

We have been marching day and night lately and are now stopped for a brief rest. Have left several good (dead) Japs and taken a few prisoners, on our march inland.

The Filipinos always warn us when Japs are close. This saves us a lot of trouble scouting around. Some of these natives have been hiding in the hills for almost three years, killing Nips with bojo's for their guns and ammunition and stealing from the Japs to keep alive. They display

## SvcMen WW II Letters

a weird assortment of captured weapons to prove their stories: a luger pistol made in Belgium, a German luger, an Italian pistol.

I expect you know more about this whole campaign that we do. All we can see of the overall picture is our own little area. We get very little news from the outside and I haven't seen a magazine in two months.

The Red Cross is doing a good job. They have a man with us all of the time. He passes out soap, razor blades and almost anything we may have lost. We sure got a good night's rest last night as we were sleeping around a rice straw stack.

Your loving son,  
Jim

[The News-Sentinel, Tuesday, February 13, 1945]

### SECOND LETTER FROM EVERETT TAYLOR

Everett Taylor  
Marianna Islands  
Feb. 3, 1945

Dear Ida and Charley:

I received your nice letter some time ago and am always glad to hear from you. I hope this finds you well and enjoying life as well as possible. The news last night said the Russians were 50 miles within Berlin. I have been thinking so much of Cecil lately for they have been having such hard fighting over there and the outfit he is with has a very dangerous job. He is in charge of a tank. I figure myself very fortunate enlisting in this instead of letting the Army get me. It is hard work and all that but I'll take that in preference to the front lines. There has been several battalions with heavy casualties but they happen to be in on the invasion. The snipers were bothering us some but it seems as though we have them cleared out pretty good around the outskirts of our camp now. They are making an attempt now to clear the whole island of them. They stay in the hills in the caves. There are some women also there. Some of the fellows, when we first got here, went up in the hills souvenir unting until a thing or two happened and now you couldn't get them up there. There wasn't a darn thing I wanted up there, and besides the dead Japs stink. We had quite a battle with some snipers in a cane field a while back and the result was three dead Japs. A kid took my camera over the next morning and snapped a picture of them but I know it didn't take for the sun wasn't up yet. I can't understand how the devils held out so good here in the Pacific. Seems as though they don't have any equipment. The Gooks, that the civilians here, just stand and stare at most of our machinery as cranes, bulldozers, etc. There are a few of their trucks and a few other pieces of machinery but they all seem to be old time stuff. The climate is good here in the winter months anyway. It is a little damp. There are always breezes and the days don't get too hot. I imagine it gets pretty hot in the summer months. Well, folks, I hope you both are well, I sure am glad my folks stayed as well as they have. I know it is quite a strain on them with both us boys being across. It will be a big day when we can celebrate in a world of peace but yet that won't bring back the ones that had to be left beyond. Give all my best regards.

As ever.

Kenneth Taylor

[The News-Sentinel, Thursday, February 15, 1945]

### LETTER FROM HOWARD ROBBINS

Sgt. Cyrus H. Robbins

Dear Folks:

I just returned from my wonderful trip to Cairo. How I wish I could talk with you and tell you all about it.

## SvcMen WW II Letters

We left a week ago and planned going via Casablanca but the weather was so bad we came back to Naples for an hour, then went to Tunis and spent the night. I just about got sick because it was so rough in the air. The next day we took it very easy to Bengasi. The ATC has a very good base there. While there I bought two yards of OD officer's material for my jacket. At Bengasi you can have a jacket hand made for \$5.00, or one pound!

When you go with a general--or rather, two generals as I did--the radioman wires ahead to have cars ready, etc. At Bengasi they had a guard of honor. The boys on the crew who flew the other general said this was the first time they had seen this overseas. There were four of us enlisted men, two of the crew, the general's driver and myself. The plane was a new one, the finest any general has. The old plane the general used was given to McNary.

The next morning we went on to Cairo, arriving at 1 p.m. and of course they had cars for the generals and the rest. Cairo has a first class ATC field. That evening we got a hotel room--not a the Shepherd hotel because no EM can stay there. We then went out to do shopping because we knew we had little time. I bought a lot of flying boots for the boys. You can get anything in Cairo--whiskey, perfume, beer, gasoline (not rationed), clothes, American pure silk hose, \$8.00 a pair, the very best watches. If I had had more monty I would have bought you a watch that was out of this world--none like it in America or I never saw any. I even saw the Phillips Patch watch I always wanted.

You must bargain. They ask you three pounds and you must get it for less than one. These people are super salesmen. One Jewish salesman was selling me boots and I was telling they were no good. He said to me:

"Your mother fries chicken and it is good, isn't it?"

I said, "Yes."

He said, "The same as these boots."

All their shoes and boots are very good, even leather lined. Good 1941-42 cars are on the streets, also taxis, street cars, horse and carriages. Everyone in the shops speaks excellent English and some of the shops are very good. They ask you to sit down and have tea. I did at two stores. One owner had been to Hollywood and every place else. The next day we got a guide that one of the crew knew. You just about have to have a guide because they bother you so. This guide took us to a famous perfume place where Jinx Falkenburg, Joe E. Brown, etc. buy. We had tea and talked to the owner who once lived in the U.S. He is mailing you a nice red velvet box of perfume. They say all the bases of perfume in Paris come from Cairo. Tell Mother to take what she likes for her birthday present.

One day we left early and flew to Jerusalem. The airport is British and because of the mountains, is 30 miles out of town. We had a truck and guide to take us around. I will send you pictures of the places I visited, Bethlehem, where Christ was crucified, the wailing wall (and the Jews were wailing), the olive trees where Christ prayed. It was cool there because you are up on a mountain.

The new Jerusalem is a modern city and has some very good shops. We walked our legs off that day. Tell Marjorie Williams we have a good Y.M.C.A. in Jerusalem, built by the Americans. We had a splendid dinner with good service there. We did not have time to shop but I did see some beautiful hand embroidered velvet evening jackets. One of the WAC officers bought one for \$45. Purse was made to match.

I cannot tell you how much I enjoyed this trip. The general treated us very good and took us most every place with him. We ate at most of the places with him.

We got back from Cairo to Jerusalem at 8 p.m. The generals and colonels did not go with us that day. The next morning we were up at 5:30. We had good meals and service in Cairo and when we came out of our room at 5:30 our breakfast was ready--eggs, steak, butter, coffee and tea. They only serve brown bread but that was a good change for us. That day we flew over the Suez canal and the Nile valley to Luxer. Also all around the Sphinx and Pyramids. The general would have the plane fly around any place we wanted to see.

The Valley of the Kings is 500 miles from Cairo. We had a good guide here. I bought myself a real ivory elephant two inches high here. We took a boat across the Nile, then got on donkeys

## SvcMen WW II Letters

and rode a ways. The natives ran behind and beat the h--- out of the donkeys so they will go fast. The colonel and the co-pilot fell off. Tom would have loved to ride on one. We then got in carriages and rode six miles to the tombs of the old Egyptian kings. I cannot describe them but these people did wonderful carving in stone and had slaves working all the time, to bury in style the next king that died. We had lunch about two at the king's winter palace, now a hotel for the season and a lovely place. I would have enjoyed staying in that sunshine for two weeks. The service was perfect and the meat delicious.

The land along the Nile is fertile and they have good crops. They were harvesting cane and will harvest wheat in March. The fruit in Cairo is even better than California fruit. We had bananas, tangerines and oranges all the time.

After dinner we went to see the Seven Wonders of the World--Carnak Temple. We saw the lake where the people washed before entering the temple. As we came out the guide had a native with several cobras put on one of their snake acts. We got back to Cairo at 7:30 p.m.

The next morning at 7 we took off for Naples, arriving at 3 p.m. Because of the weather we had to go 15,000 feet one place. That is high without oxygen. I did get a bit dizzy. The plane is one of the best there is and has a good heater. They served us food and coffee, everything first class. I am a lucky fellow to get to go on the same order with generals!

Howard

[The News-Sentinel, Monday, February 19, 1945]

### LETTER FROM ERNEST FORD

Cpl. Ernest Ford

January 18, 1945

Dear Dean:

Just a few lines to let you know I'm getting along fine. I'm sitting here in a French or German house. I have a bed upstairs, but it's cold up there and there's a young married woman and her mother lives down here. I can't talk to them only a few words but we get along. I don't know where her husband is but I keep my gun with me all the time. Ha. They are real nice to me though. I can always get hot water to shave and clean up. I don't suppose we will stay here very much longer as we move about once a week. I got eight letters yesterday. Most of them were old.

Did you ever get that foreign money I sent you, and that Purple Heart. I sent a bunch of different countries' paper money. I will send you some more.

If you can get some film for your camera send it to me by air mail as it may get here and I would like to take some pictures of this country.

These people say they aren't German or French. They talk about going to France or Germany. We eat in a beer hall and can get a glass of beer for six cents, some class.

Well, so long for now. Write.

As Ever,

Ernest

[The News-Sentinel, Monday, February 26, 1945]

### SECOND LETTER FROM WILLIAM HARDACRE

Pfc. Bill Hardacre

Quarry Camp

Ahwaz, Iran

2-14-45

Dear Sis and All:

I got your letter yesterday so will answer it tonight while I have plenty of time. I started to write letters last night but only got one done. The trouble with writing up here is about the time you start to write some one comes in and starts shooting the bull and the first thing you know it is time to go to bed and you don't have any letters wrote either. I just finished a letter to Mom and Lee and I have to write to Dad yet tonight.

## SvcMen WW II Letters

The trouble with getting ratings in this outfit is that all the fellows have been in the outfit a long time gets them when there is an opening and I am just a newcomer and will have to wait for my turn. It is not what you do or know it is who you know and how well you know them. The army has certain ways of doing things that look and sound screwy but I guess they are right.

Well I will tell you a little about my wild boar hunt last Sunday. It was the fourth Sunday in a row that we had went and the last three times I came back with two boars. This time I really got a big one. He weighed about 400 pounds and sure had a big set of tusks. I am sure going to keep them for souvenirs. I will show them to you when I get home. We left here at 5 o'clock and were out to the hunting territory by daylight. We started out in the brush along the river and got an occasional shot at one as he ran out ahead of us but the brush was so thick that we did not get any. We wounded a couple but they got away in the brush before we could get another shot at them. Finally one of the boys got one and then we got the whole herd surrounded near an Arab village. When we got close to them they started running back between us at full speed and we were sure kept jumping to keep out of their way and to get some shots at them too. Two of the boys got one apiece and I shot a big sow. That made s four of them and it was only 9:30. We hunted until noon but did not get any more. We stopped for about half an hour and ate our roast chicken and then went back to our hunting. We had only went about a 100 yards from the truck when one of the boys kicked one out of a briar patch. He was excited and could not get his safety off his gun, so I ran over and started shooting at it. I missed my first shot and then he took a shot and missed, too. Then I fired again and hit him in the hip. He started to turn again and charge us but he changed his mind and took off again. This time I took a better aim and let him have it. The bullet pierced his back and broke the backbone so his hind legs were paralyzed, but he could still stand on his front legs. He faced us and was trying to get to us but could not move the rest of his body. About the time I was getting ready to shoot him in the head and finish him off an Arab dog came along and started fighting with it. We finally scared the dog away long enough to shoot the boar in the head. It was sure a big one. In fact it was the biggest that I had ever seen. I guess they get bigger but I have not seen any that big yet. We did not get any after that but did get a fox and a coyote on the way back. We always have a good time when we are out on these hunts and I would go every Sunday if I could. Another outfit is going this Sunday and they wanted me to go with them but I have to work so that will leave me out unless I can get some one to take over for me and knowing the guys in my outfit like I know them means that hunting this Sunday is out

Well I will have to sign off now for I have to write to Dot yet and then I am going to bed. Oh, yes, here is a picture of my little dog. She sure takes a good picture. I have several more negatives in town getting them developed, so I will have more of her later.

As ever your brother,

Bill

(Received by Mrs. Harley McClain, 335 Ohio Avenue, Rochester, Ind., from her brother, Pfc. William Hardacre.)

[The News-Sentinel, Wednesday, February 28, 1945]

### LETTER FROM R. B. RICHARDSON

(Editor's Note: The writer, eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Richardson, formerly of Rochester, but now of Benton Harbor, Mich., is a graduate of Rochester high school and of Purdue University. His wife and son are now in Benton harbor. He is a nephew of Dr. C. L. Richardson and a grandson of the late Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Baldwin.)

Lt. Col. R. B. Richardson

Somewhere in Germany

5th Jan. 1945

Dear Don and Inez:

Thanks so much for your Christmas card with the note so full of news of all the folks in the old home town. You said something about not taking the time to write but I have thought about dropping you a line many times and after receiving that card, I decided to take the time.

## SvcMen WW II Letters

Well, this is a pretty tough war, but we are going to keep right after them until we get them in a corner or on the run, then cut hell out of them and it will soon be over and then we can come back home and have one of those good old get-togethers again.

Say hello to some of my old friends and especially Kent and Carrie. Been a long time since I've seen them. As Grandmother Baldwin used to say, "Be good and love God."

Sincerely,

Bob Richardson

[The News-Sentinel, Wednesday, February 28, 1945]

### FOURTH LETTER FROM JOE SLAYBAUGH

Joe Slaybaugh

Somewhere in P. I.

Feb. 18, 1945

Dear Mother:

How is my little short sweetheart today? This is a fine Sunday and I hope everyone at home is OK. I am fine and dandy, well and safe at present at least. I do hope you are staying in bed like Dr. Dean tells you and take care of yourself. Take it easy, being a good little girl. Of course you know you are my best sweetheart, don't you? Well you should for haven't I told you a million times, that you were.

Mommy, when are you going to write your baby boy a big, long airmail letter? Soon I hope. Golly, those V-mails you can't say half enough on them. But I love to hear from you even if it would only be a postcard.

How is Doris and Johnnie getting along at Topps? OK I hope. How are all the kids and Dad. Does Doris hear from him often? How is Betty, Joe Allen and little Connie Rae, and all the others? Fine I hope.

Gee Mommy, I sure miss all of you very much and love all you too, very much too. I don't want you to worry about me Mommy. Because I am in a safe place right now, that is for the time being. I used the roll of film on my pictures. Now the question is to get them developed. Lord only knows when that will be but I hope very soon. I know you are anxious to get some of my pictures. I hope they are all good. I think they will be, but one never knows.

Gosh Mommy, this place is so dry. It doesn't rain here hardly at all. It has not rained as yet since I have been here. The rainy season ends in January. That is in the P.I. And it is sure hot here. Golly it about cooks a guy. I am brown as a Negro. You won't know me in my picture. You will think it sure is a Negro boy. Ha. Ha.

Of course my hair is much lighter. It shines like gold. This sun over here really bleaches it out. Well Mommy, last year this time I was in New Guinea and never thought we would be in the P. I. at the end of that year, but here we are sitting right in the heart of the Philippines. Fast workers, eh Mommy?

Gen. Douglas MacArthur is a real leader and good strategist, believe you me. He is OK. We have really pulled some fast ones on the Japs in New Guinea, Philippines and out in the central Pacific. I hope we can keep going on as good as we have been for the past year, because if we do the war will be pretty near the end soon.

Is there any news at home. If there is, let me in on it, please. I'll bet old Rochester is dead, isn't it?

Remember four years ago, Mom, how alive and happy it was until that Sunday, Dec. 7. All the boys were home and we were happy. Since that day everything has changed. Lots of peoples' hearts are broken. But some day all of us boys will be coming home, then we will be happy again, I hope.

Well, Mom, I have said about all I can think of or dare say. I will close for this time. I will write again to you soon. Be good, be careful, mind Dr., take good care of yourself and take it easy. Don't work any more. You don't have to for I will see to that. God bless you, Mommy. Tell everyone I said hello. Give them my love, tell them to write me. I love you very much Mother and pray for you, myself and all the rest of them all the time.



## SvcMen WW II Letters

Don't forget to write that big, long airmail letter or letters. Good bye Mommy. I love you a lot. Love and kisses.

Your baby boy,  
Joe

[The News-Sentinel, Thursday, March 8, 1945]

### LETTER FROM MERRILL WALTZ

Merrill Waltz  
Somewhere in Belgium  
Feb. 11, 1945

Dear Mother & Dad:

As you can see we moved again. It was a good move, believe me. We're out of the mud and living in a large Belgian chateau near a nice village. Our work will be mostly in a large factory that was a German occupied plant until recently. Wish you could know how nice the people are, how clean and honest. Their hospitality is wonderful. There's nothing like it at home anywhere, not even among friends, I'm ashamed to say. Everyone wants to do something for you or give you a gift. They want us to eat and sleep in their homes and share what little they have. They do have nice homes, are fairly well dressed, but haven't enough food.

For children over 3 years there is no milk, have no eggs, cheese, butter, meat, coffee, tea, sugar is scarce, bread is scarce, also potatoes, no gasoline, practically no tobacco and real soap is out. Fuel is also scarce.

Many wear wooden shoes as there is no leather. Yet they have beautiful shops, well-stocked with nice things, metal and glassware, clothing, except wool, and lots of things that are even scarcer at home.

Am getting along fine by brushing up on my French. Can understand the children and talk to them better than I can the adults. Don't worry about me as I am safe and comfortable and since I am here I am going to enjoy it as much as possible. Write often.

With much love,  
Merrill Waltz

[The News-Sentinel, Thursday, March 8, 1945]

### LETTER FROM WAYNE REDINGER

Pvt. Wayne Redinger  
Somewhere in Germany

I had a fine Christmas and New Years. We had an excellent dinner on both occasions. Some day I'll tell you what made both holidays so interesting. I don't like it over here, but we all have a job to do and I'll do my part and always a little more if necessary. I'd sure like to see this mess cleaned up by Spring. Then we can turn our full might against those yellow curs.

I have done much traveling since I left the States. First, I went to England. It was pretty nice there but regardless of where you go, your opinion will differ from any one else's. I didn't like England very well because it was crowded and everything seemed so bunched up. But I suppose if I were to stay there awhile and get used to their ways, I'd probably change my opinion.

France was a beautiful country and I liked it rather well. I was in Paris for awhile, but didn't find it much to my liking. But wartime has changed it a lot. My opinion is that it's a very beautiful place in peacetime.

Belgium was, much to my surprise, my pick of any country that I have yet seen. Beautiful hills with evergreens covering the hill sides, beautiful green valleys with rivers and streams running through them

Holland, too, was beautiful, but I have yet to see my first canal. Holland has lots of coal mines. Now here comes the pay-off. Germany, I don't want any part of it. When Adolf finds that he is whipped, I'll turn all my share over to some guy that thinks Germany is still worth having.

I am with the 9th army, but that doesn't mean a lot unless you look at your war map and see where we are located.

## SvcMen WW II Letters

The weather has turned to winter now but maybe peace will come with spring. I'll always be hoping and praying that it does. So here's hoping I get to see you and all the old familiar faces again soon. So until then I'll be doing my best to see that "Old Glory" doesn't touch the ground and she keeps going ahead. May God bless you and keep you well and safe.

---

(Wayne was a member of our Regional winner team of '43 and enlisted the following summer. We join in with the best wishes for him all the boys hoping that they'll be home soon.)

[The News-Sentinel, Thursday, March 8, 1945]

### LETTER FROM MAX E. KRANING

(Letter received from Max E. Kraning, who is with the American Red Cross staff overseas. Mr. Kraning is a brother of Dr. K. Kraning of Kewanna.)

Max E. Kraning  
Christmas, Dec. 25, 1944

Dear Mother and Dad:

Christmas here again and time has gone so fast. I've been busy as can be with my staff getting ready for this holiday season and it's no rest for me, I hope after the new year we can all breathe a little easier for awhile.

Last Saturday my big boss, Mr. Bolles-Rogers, director of A.B.C. club operations in Great Britain, visited me. I'd asked him out here when he was here on Thanksgiving and he accepted. As soon as Mrs. Bowes-Lynn heard he was coming she invited us both out to their estate a few miles out for dinner so we were there Saturday eve. I'd taken him to one of our children's Christmas parties in the afternoon which he enjoyed very much.

This year the American Junior Red Cross prepared many boxes of presents for our children's parties and I can't speak too highly of them. These boxes from children in the States in Junior Red Cross contained not only toys, toothbrushes, paste, soap, etc., but also things like ties, socks, light sweaters, caps, etc., which are on the ration list for the English children . . . even hankies. So that it was really wonderful to be able to present these boys and girls over here (most of them were orphans for whom we gave the parties) these fine boxes from the Junior Red Cross children of America. This will never be forgotten by the kiddies of Great Britain and will go a long way toward a lasting friendship and peace between our two great nations. I say God Bless the American Junior Red Cross! They also sent packages of candy to be given to the British children who get so little . . . it's on ration points over here and the rationing of sweets, food and clothing is what we would indeed call severe. I wish you could have seen the picture as I saw it of our soldiers taking care of these little tots during the party and then a Santa Claus, they call him Father Christmas over here, passing out to these wide-eyed youngsters of a country at war six years, such nice gift boxes and candy.

After that party Mr. Rogers and I went out to the Bowes-Lyons for dinner and it was a good one. We both enjoyed it at this rich English estate with really fine people very nice. Ferguson, the 16-year-old son, was home from school for the holidays. His school is the famous English preparatory school, Eton, where the boys all wear the top silk hats, which are traditional and I enjoyed having him tell of it.

The news of Glenn Miller being missing for two weeks on a plane journey to Paris was a real blow to those of us who knew him. He had gone four days ahead of the band to make preliminary arrangements in Paris and there has been no trace at all of the plane since. They all lived in my club here and it just doesn't seem possible.

We had a free turkey dinner for all our soldiers on Christmas Day and my chefs, both at the enlisted men's and officers' club did a good job. The clubs were all decorated with greenery, Christmas trees and lights, colored streamers, murals specially made for the walls and wreaths and posters.

I've paid all my 212 British staff double pay for the 24th and 25th and they've all worked hard. This evening the fog rolled in so bad that hundreds of men could not get back to their bases

## SvcMen WW II Letters

because no transportation was available and we were full-up all beds taken in the big dormitories and there were men sleeping all over every place.

It has turned cold, 16 above zero, and has frozen the fogs we've been having so that everything is white though we've had no snow. This cold has broken a record over here for many years, but I'm glad for it and much prefer it to the constant dampness which penetrates so, and the fog I'd much rather have it frozen and be dry than the palling and ever present cold dampness.

Thank you so very much for the wonderful parcels you've sent . . . they have really brightened my life, and I appreciate it so much. Take good care of yourselves and I hope next Christmas finds us all together again.

Love,  
Max.

[The News-Sentinel, Tuesday, March 13, 1945]

### SECOND LETTER FROM MAX E. KRANING

Dec. 11, 1944

Dear Mother and Dad:

Monday is a quiet day comparatively in the clubs, but a busy one for me in the office. There are the statistical reports for the past week to be perused and signed, time sheets for every day for all the staff to be okayed, hundreds of checks to sign to pay all the bills and in general it's the day for review of the week past.

This noon I was the guest of Sir Adrian Boult, conductor of the British Broadcasting Company Symphony Orchestra (the best in England) over at the BBC offices. I enjoyed it thoroughly and he told of his being guest conductor for six weeks of the Chicago Symphony in the summer season at Ravinia in 1939. The lunch itself was none too good, but Sir Adrian made up for it. He invited me to a party which I attended this evening of the BBC artists . . . the orchestra . . . chorus . . . administrative staffs and some of the dramatic groups.

It was one of those typical English parties where so many people are crammed into a room that it's well nigh impossible to move about and you've got to be a juggler to keep your tea and sandwiches from being knocked out of our hand, but it was fun and I met many of the orchestra members and others. There was plenty of interesting talk.

Sir Adrian has recently been awarded the Golden Cross by the Royal Academy of Music (I'm not sure just what all that means).

In America there are several large radio networks like NBC, Mutual, Columbia, etc, but over here there is only one and that's the B.B.C. The manager, Mr. Geoffrey Sieniking, told me that of the two Thanksgiving Day broadcasts to America, Westminster Abbey in London and ours here, ours was much more successful according to cables from his representatives in the United States.

Your good letter telling of your Thanksgiving Day plans to be at Tippecanoe camp today and I hope you had a good day.

Love,  
Max.

[The News-Sentinel, Wednesday, March 14, 1945]

### SECOND LETTER FROM GENE REESE

Pfc. Gene Reese  
Somewhere in Germany  
March 10, 1945

Dear Mother:

I have time for another letter and I hope it finds you feeling as well as it did when it left me. We are living in a large hotel and it is still pretty nice. There is steam heat and you should see how we are sleeping, mattress and some even have sheets and pillows. There are some floor carpets which makes it a little more like home. By the way, we are having mail call just about

## SvcMen WW II Letters

every day and there are a few packages coming in so I may get mine one of these days. We are having a swell time, Mother, and I wish you could see us at times.

We find white collars and bright ties and we stick on a black derby and what a time. We are always looking for souvenirs and by the time I get home my duffle bag will need sideboards. I certainly hope you are not worrying, for I am more or less just out sight-seeing. I have seen quite a bit of Germany by now and I don't see why they fight so hard to hang on but I guess we would do the same.

From the looks of things I'll be home eating turkey with you this fall, so get him fat.

So long, Gene

[The News-Sentinel, Wednesday, March 28, 1945]

### LETTER FROM PAUL L. MILLER

Pvt. Paul L. Miller writes his mother and father, Mr. and Mrs. Fred R. Miller of Talma, that his greatest thrill since arriving in Hawaii was to unfold the Honolulu Advertiser and find the following story about Rochester, Indiana.

Pvt. Miller says: Mother you know the people of Rochester can be proud of their town. I picked up the paper tonight and was reading it and there was an article about Rochester in it. It really gave me a thrill and made me feel good to see a piece about home in the paper. The next time you see Lee Moore you tell him he was mentioned over here in the Honolulu Advertiser and here is the clipping to prove it:

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### SHEEPSKIN DEED FILED

"Rochester, Ind. (UP) - A patent deed from the U. S. government bearing the signature of President John Tyler, dated April 1, 1843, was filed for record in the office of Fulton County Recorder Lee Moore recently, in an effort to acquire title to an 80-acre tract part of which borders on Lake Bruce. Moore said the deed was drawn on sheepskin in accordance with custom and was in good condition despite its old age of 101 years."

[The News-Sentinel, Thursday, March 29, 1945]

### SERVICE NOTES

Commander Milton Whittenberger, U. S. Merchant Marine, is here spending a leave with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Milton Whittenberger, South Monroe street. Commander Whittenberger has just returned from a year in active sea duty.

\* \* \*

Willis Nichols, S 1/c, has arrived home for a short leave with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Earl Nichols and other relatives and friends. He has just returned from active duty in the Atlantic.

\* \* \*

Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Lukens, R.2, Akron, have just been informed that their son, John Francis Lukens, has successfully passed the Radar test as a technician U. S. Navy.

\* \* \*

Cpl. Cecil F. Hudkins, son of Mr. and Mrs. William F. Hudkins, of Route 6, Rochester, Ind., was graduated last week from the Army Air Forces Flexible Gunnery School, Laredo Army Air Field, Laredo, Texas, a member of the AAF Training Command. He is now qualified to take his place as a member of a bomber combat crew. Along with his diploma, he received a pair of Aerial Gunner's silver wings and a promotion in grade at brief graduation exercises held here.

\* \* \*

The present address of Robert E. Kern, A/S, is Co. 419, Barracks 2802, USNTS, Great Lakes, Ill.

[The News-Sentinel, Friday, March 30, 1945]

### LETTER FROM WALTER FULTZ

Cpl. Walter Fultz  
France

## SvcMen WW II Letters

4-14-45

Dear Jo:

Just received your letter of Feb. 8 today. Was very glad to hear from you. I wrote Bob awhile ago. Maybe in a year or so I'll get an answer, suppose? Ha. I wrote him a couple of times when I was in England, but never got an answer. Perhaps he never received them as I didn't have his current address.

So you're working in Rochester, are you? Darn, I can't any more than keep track of you kids than anything. I don't take any newspapers now so I lost out in everything.

How far did Akron get in the sectional? From the latest gossip I hear they came out on top in the county tourney.

This isn't enough to consider as a letter, but there just isn't anything to write about, so will close, hoping to hear from you soon.

As ever,  
Walter

[The News-Sentinel, Monday, April 2, 1945]

### FOURTH LETTER FROM KENNETH L. "TONY" MILLER

Kenneth L. Miller  
March 23, 1945

Dear Mom:

I've thought of you lots in these seven months I've been over here, and I've wished I was back in the States where I could come and see you, but that is one of the impossibilities right now. Maybe this war will end soon, which we all pray and hope for.

Well, Mom, I'm O.K. and feeling fine and hope you are the same. I received yours and Eva's package all O.K. I enjoyed the pipe very much, but I'm running out of filters for it. If you can get some, please send them to me.

Well, Mom, I suppose you followed the news pretty close, so you probably know that I was in on that last push. I sure seen some sights that I'll never forget as long as I live and I hope I never have to see it again. But I do hope they will keep on pushing so we can end this thing once and for all. Well, Mom, I've earned another ribbon and a star with it. But as far as I'm concerned they can keep their ribbons if they will end this and send me back to good old Rochester, Indiana, at 711 1/2 Monroe street, right across from the Rochester Laundry or the Rochester Lumber Co. Just two blocks from Main street of the city. Just a skip and hop from town. Old Rochester might be dead now but just wait till us boys are home again, then watch it hum.

You don't appreciate it till you're over here. But there is many a boy that will now if he gets back, and I hope I do.

Well, Mom, I never wrote you a letter like this before. But I don't know why I did, it just turned out this way. I'll close now, hoping to see you and all my friends in the near future.

Lots of love,

Your son,  
Kenneth L. Miller

[The News-Sentinel, Tuesday, April 10, 1945]

### LETTER FROM CLINTON JOSEPH

Pvt. Clinton Joseph  
35972939, Co. D.  
Army Reception Ctr.  
Camp Atterbury, Ind.

Dear Dad and Mom:

Well, Dad, I am still working in the orderly room. I have to work all night again, but I get to sleep tomorrow. (Who said that there wasn't any night shift in the Army?)

This is Saturday, 1:30 in the morning, and if I don't ship out today, I will be home on a weekend pass tomorrow. But I may have to ship out for another camp any time.

## SvcMen WW II Letters

I have been getting along fine here. I really like the Army, what I have seen of it anyway. We get up at 4:45 in the morning here and I don't have any trouble at all to get up either, believe it or not.

Have you heard from Orve? Let me know if you have.

Well, Dad, I have to hit the hay now, so I will sign off (I am finishing this letter at 5 in the morning).

Love from your son,

Clint

[The News-Sentinel, Wednesday, April 18, 1945]

### SECOND LETTER FROM JIM GILLILAND

(Editor's Note. We publish herewith a story of the U. S. Cruiser, Vincennes, in her tour of duty around the Pacific. It was sent in by James Gilliland, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ed Gilliland, R. 3, Rochester, one of the several hundred Hoosier boys who go to make up the crew of this fine fighting ship.

The Vincennes was built with Hoosier dollars and is manned by Hoosier men. She was commissioned to replace the original cruiser of the same name, sunk in the southwest Pacific during the early stages of the conflict. That she is out to avenge the fate of her predecessor, is well established in this saga of war and sea.)

#### THE SAGE OF THE GOOD SHIP VINCENNES, AS IT HAPPENED TO A HOME TOWN YOUTH

The censorship regulations have been modified somewhat. So here begins the "Saga of the Mighty V". It shall contain as much as our censorship regulations, at present, permit me to say. It cannot cover operations within the last thirty days but I'll have my hands full bringing you up-to-date even that far. Here goes:

When we left Boston with blue skies, blue water, and even blue hearts, we wasted no time in reaching the Panama Canal--straight through her locks--then to spend one night in Balboa. From all reports, it was quite a night for those ashore, some liberty port! Remarks.: An interesting trip. Would like to make one in the opposite direction soon.

The next short leg of our journey took us to Diego for another one night stand. Our last liberty in the good old U.S.A. Visited Coronado, across the river. Remarks: Diego looks like Coney Island surrounded by a desert. Coronado is more pleasant.

Another short leg and we arrived in Pearl Harbor. During our stay, I saw many points of interest--Honolulu, Waikiki Beach, the Royal Hawaiian Hotel (which has been taken over by the Navy). Really though, the beauty of Hawaii doesn't show up until you ride up into the hills. Then the loveliness of Hawaii appears and we then began to appreciate its famed beauty. It's cooler there and the strange flowers are very pretty. The Fall is a striking sight, but the upside down falls were dry (the season, they say). Remarks: No grass skirts. Poi looks, tastes, and smells like mud.

The war couldn't get along without our services, so we left civilization behind and began the grind of beating hell out of the (censored) Japs! And we're still at it.

I think first I'll tell you about a few of the places where we have stopped for beer, softball, and recreation of a sort.

Majuro. Not much to say. Very hot (even the beer), very big, very little to offer, and very glad to leave when we did.

Eniwetock. Somewhat better. We "took over" one of the atolls for our playground, recreation parties, swimming softball. It's amazing what a shore bombardment can do, and to see an island that has been leveled off by gunfire--tree stumps stood, not trees. Those Marines must have had a time when they landed there.

Saipan. Something more than coral atolls; it's a real island. It was interesting to watch the planes dropping their loads of bombs on Garapan Town, and to see the artillery "shooting it up" in the hills. Another well done job by the Marines. Here's where I saw females (quite a novelty) four them. Navy nurses. They are the only girls I've seen in many months.

## SvcMen WW II Letters

Ulithi. Our fondest spot--the island (it's really an atoll) of Mog Mog. It's more like a tropical island of the story books than any others we've seen. The huts are still there. Swaying palm trees and the blue lagoon add to the tropical atmosphere. But it's hot, too! This is the least damaged of any of our island groups so far. When our boys moved in, the Japs were gone. They had left two weeks before, taking quite a few young native men and girls.

Now for our activities in general. The "V" has about 100,000 miles under her belt so far and that's a lot of moving around. We never sit still for very long at a stretch. During our roving, we've crossed the equator twice, but have never had an initiation, so the unfortunate thing is, we are still "polywogs." All of our sailing has made us salty. I recall everyone being seasick on the shakedown. The big typhoon in the Philippine Sea not so long ago was mighty rough; but we came through in fine shape. No doubt you have read of the three destroyers which were not so fortunate. The number of their survivors was small, but it's amazing to me how anyone could have lived in that water. It was nasty weather--strong rain, high winds, and high seas. Let's hope for no more such accidents.

It's time to start on our campaigns. Up until thirty days ago, there were eight separate engagements that we participated in. I'll take them in more or less chronological order.

Our first was the Marianas campaign. We started off with raids on the Bonins with the carriers and supporting the Marines on Saipan, later on Tinian. Not much shooting or excitement for us; but we were new and thought it was great stuff. Our first scraps with the Japs.

Then came the first battle of the Philippine Sea. We thought for a while that we might actually tangle with the Yellow "B"---- but they didn't want to fight. On June 19th, our carrier boys had a field day, knocking Jap planes out of the sky. We chased and chased, but to little avail. They wouldn't play. We began to settle down. It wasn't such "great stuff" anymore, we could see the long hard grind ahead of us.

Our third engagement was the Palau bombardment. This was our first chance to do some real shooting. It's quit a sensation to watch the shells from your own ship start huge fires and to know that you are leveling a whole town. We turned in a good performance and our spirits were high.

Off we go again, for our fourth engagement. This time with the carriers for air strikes against Mindanao. The fly boys did a good job against Devao and all the airfields. We got fairly close, could see Mindanao's mountains. Again no Japs for the "V" to shoot at, our fighters usually discouraged them.

### Most Interesting Tilt

Our fifth engagement was the most interesting for the "V" the Second Battle of the Philippine Sea. MacArthur was landing on Leyte, ably aided by the 7th Fleet. We were with the carriers just standing by, until we spotted the Japs in two places, west of the Philippines and northeast of Luzon. Our planes went zooming down on the Japs to west; then we headed north to nab a juicy prize of Jap carriers, battleships and cruisers. But the "V" was needed elsewhere. The Japs had come out and hit our CVE's, so we headed for the San Bernardino Straits, and arrived about one o'clock on the morning of October 26. It was a clear night, but dark, very dark. The sea was smooth with moderate ground swells. A perfect night for stalking, and our prey was a rare one, a Jap heavy cruiser attempting to make its way back thru the Straits. He never made it. I don't believe he knew we were anywhere near until we opened fire. Then the "Mighty V" really poured it on, and not one shot in return. He burned brightly, and he exploded violently numerous times, quite a spectacle to watch. In less than twenty minutes our work was done. He was still burning when a torpedo finished our job, one last explosion and down he went. Scratch one more Jap heavy cruiser! After our fight morale was very high. It had proved that we were an efficient fighting ship. I heard an appropriate remark: "It wasn't like a battle. It seemed more like just another drill."

From a chronological standpoint, our next two operations are intermingled. They are the Luzon air strikes and Formosan air strikes. Here again our fly boys did themselves proud, shooting up Japs at a ratio, completely in our favor and sinking tons of Jap shipping. When we are with the carriers there's not much left for us to shoot at, except a few planes now and then, but we have our share of them. Jap planes usually burn very brightly and they leave long streamers of

## SvcMen WW II Letters

smoke as they dive into the sea. I think the only time we've been very worried about the Japs was during an episode one night off Formosa. The sea was acting up and we had few flying clouds; again it was very dark. We had been attacked by planes all day and most of the night. Suddenly, the sky was lit up by flares. After the darkness, the light seemed brilliant; I could have read a newspaper if there had been one on hand. A Jap snooper had dropped his flares right over us. We were very effectively illuminated and sat expecting the planes to come. But they didn't show up. The flares died out and we breathed easy again. I wonder if Tojo ever knew of that few seconds when the advantage was all in his favor.

Our eighth operation, and the last I can report on at present, was the South China Sea raids. We went into this one with great expectations for plenty of action. We were disappointed. The supposed Jap controlled China Sea was all ours. We sailed up and down the China coast at our leisure, while our fly boys did their work. They added a considerable number of Japs to their score but even they were disappointed for they, also, expected much more opposition. One of the boys made an interesting bet: That we wouldn't fire a shot in the China Sea. He won!

That's it, a rather sketchy description of our part in this war through January, 1945. Naturally there is a lot that can't be told at this time, but I have covered everything in a general way. In a few weeks, when it can be told, I will continue with our story. Until then, we will all be hoping that I can soon start a new chapter "Heading Home."

U. S. S. Vincennes  
25 February 1945

Love,  
James Gilliland

[The News-Sentinel, Wednesday, April 18, 1945]

### THIRD LETTER FROM JAMES WALTON

James Walton  
April 3, 1945  
Germany

Dear Herman:

Hi, pal, have a couple of hours to myself this p.m. so thought I'd drop you a line. Hope my letter finds all going fine, and you in the best of health.

Everything is going O.K. with me. Korb, I'm in the pink and getting a good workout.

By now you know I'm in Germany. Have been here for quite some time. It is a lot different here than it was in England, France or Belgium. There you could get out on your spare time, take a walk, maybe see a movie if there was one to be found, and you always had a few beers every day! There you spoke to the civilians (shoot a little blarney, you know). Here in Germany, all that is over.

We're not allowed out of our working area, that goes on day after day--week after week--we are allowed to walk about two blocks away from our area to take a bath in a German bathing house. And that's a treat, just to get out for those few minutes.

We're not allowed to speak to any German, smile, say good day to them, etc. Even if we wanted to, which we don't.

If you're found speaking to a German, being in his house, you're fined 65 bucks, broken from your rating and other privileges taken away.

But I don't think they'll have to be worried about that anyway, for these German civilians hate our guts. You can fairly see it in their eyes. When we pass them, if looks could kill, they'd lay us low. But as we say in the Army that's just tough for their days of being able to do anything about hating us are over, and I mean over, too. We got these Germans right where we want them and they're going to stay that way. I never thought I'd come to the point where I'd hate a race, like I have these Bochs.

I thought I'd seen destruction and devastation in England, France and Belgium, but it's nothing, Herman, compared to what our doughboys have done to capture Germany so far. It



## SvcMen WW II Letters

gladdens a soldier's heart and I'm not kidding. I can tell you about what little I've seen in Germany, but it's that way all over.

The towns, villages, and cities are completely smashed, leveled to the ground. If you can just imagine a giant bulldozer moving across Rochester and clearing every building from the bottom, then you can get somewhat of a picture of what these German places look like. I've never seen anything like it. It will take the Germans years to dig out, let alone even to start rebuilding.

Hitler sure had a complete control over the people--on everything he had his picture posted, along with the Nazi party emblem. Everthing from baby carriages to marriage certificates--I've found quite a few souvenirs already--some I've sent home--get Mart to show them to you--Hitler stamps and so forth.

You know by now, in reading your newspapers and listening to your radio, that the Yanks have crossed the Rhine, reached through by today's reports only 150 miles from Berlin and have encircled the Ruhr valley (that encircling of the Ruhr valley is what decided Hitler's fate). We are also only about 150 miles from the Russians now.

I give Germany another 30 days to hold out--let's see if I'm right.

I am growing more confident every day--especially now since we are only about 300 miles from Japan in the Pacific.

This means if Lady Luck is with me all the way through, I'll be home by 1947. Seems like a long time, doesn't it, but it's best to figure that way.

But don't go telling my wife. I think that she'd have a fit. I hope I'm wrong about the time length.

Well, enough about me, Herman. I'll write more about local happenings as they occur.

Your friend,

Jim

[The News-Sentinel, Thursday, April 19, 1945]

### LETTER FROM VERN E. HERRELL

Pvt. Vern E. Herrell

Somewhere in the Pacific

April 18, 1945

Dear Folks:

Well, you have been wanting to know where I have been, etc. so here goes.

I came over on the USS General Patrick, stopped at the island of Hawaii for one day, but didn't get off the ship. That is where Junior said he had a couple of liberties. From there we went to the island of Pavuvu in the Russell islands. We landed there the first day of January. That is where I joined the 1st Marine Division. On Jan. 2 we went to Gu adalcanal. We were there for 12 days on maneuvers, then came back to Pavuvu. We were at Pavuvu until Feb. 23, then we went aboard the USS Renville and were aboard until April 1 at 4 o'clock when we landed on the island of Okinawa Shama. I am sitting here on the side of a small hill looking out over the bay. For the first 10 days we had to sleep in fox holes and cover ourselves with a poncho. One night it really rained and boy, was that miserable. But now we have hammocks and a blanket. Things are pretty nice here. Of course we get C rations all the time, we heat them up and they aren't so bad. There are cows and hogs and chickens on this island so we have been killing them for fresh meat. We just killed a beef this morning. It took about 45 minutes to get him dressed out and everything.

Well, we have been having mail about every other day, and I have been getting plenty of it, eight letters yesterday. I am not writing to anybody except you, so you can pass the word along. We have a shortage of paper.

With love,

Vern

[The News-Sentinel, Tuesday, May 8, 1945]

### LETTER FROM NELSON R. OVERMYER

Nelson R. Overmyer

## SvcMen WW II Letters

Wednesday, May 2

Dear Lavoy:

I received your gift and also your letter a few days ago. They were both very nice to get. Since I have been in the Army I have made lots of good friends, from all parts of U.S. By that book, I will be able to have their addresses, for a little later we will be split up some and go to different batteries and that way I can keep track of them. Letters are also welcome for I still think of you folks and wonder how things are going for you. Altho I like it here and get a big thrill out of this training I look forward to the time when I can enjoy private life and our home and friends. I am getting education and medical care here which I couldn't afford or obtain in civil life. I just got a new partial plate Monday, it sure is a good one and would cost me a lot if I had to buy it. There is just one sour note in the music, they don't pay us hardly anything \$10.10 per mo. I never knew how much a dollar was until now.

We are working too, sometimes we get 4 hours sleep a nite. Today we were lucky and got trucks to go out to the mts. to the firing range, but while out there some of the boys didn't do right so they gave our trucks to another outfit and we had to march back under full pack. It was hot too. Then when we got back we had 1 hour of ju jitsu. I am getting so when they throw me over their heads I can usually land without getting hurt much. I did crack a rib here sometime ago which is painful. In that instruction we got thrown about 30 times and we get to throw someone else the same number. My muscles are getting hard and I feel good, so I am enjoying life as mch as I possibly can and still be away from Helen and the kids. I am glad to have you folks for neighbors, for I know they need your help from time to time. Maybe this war will be over in a year and I can be back with you. They are training us for China I think.

So Rover looks after your barn now? I think he is a pretty good dog for a pet but he isn't good for much else. He sure does manage to live good tho. Today I heard from Gene and Shirley, they must be getting along O.K.

The weather here isn't so good part of the time, today we had a real dust storm, and they are really miserable. We almost freeze sometimes, then before we can get our coats in our packs we nearly smother. The weather can change in 5 minutes from one extreme to the other.

Thanks again for the book. I must get some sleep.

As ever,  
Nelson R. Overmyer  
35971091  
D-32 8-FARTC 1st Plt.  
Fort Sill, Okla

[The News-Sentinel, Wednesday, May 9, 1945]

### LETTER FROM FLOYD E. MOLLENCUPP

(Editor's Note: This letter was received by Mrs. Jack Olinger from her nephew, Pfc. Foyd E. Mollencupp)

Somewhere in Germany  
Tuesday, April 24, 1945

Dear Aunt Bess:

Just a few lines while I have a little spare time. I have been O.K. and feeling fine and hope you are all the same. I visited Saarbrucken, Germany and everything was really tore up by bombs and others was also rather beaten up, and some of the towns were pretty well standing. I do believe Germany is a lot nicer than France. I received a letter from Vivian, so tell her I said hello and I was glad to hear from her. I would write her but I don't have very much time to write tonight, so when I get more time I'll try to write her. I have seen the Rhine river. To me I think the war over here will be over soon. I hope so anyway. Well tell everybody on your way I said hello and for them to write. Well I'll close for now hoping to hear from you soon.

Love,  
Ed

[The News-Sentinel, Friday, May 11, 1945]

## SvcMen WW II Letters

### THIRD LETTER FROM WILLIAM HARDACRE

Pfc. William Hardacre  
Khonamshahr, Iran  
4-24-'45

Mrs. Harley McClain

Dear Sis and All:

I got a letter from you yesterday and another one today in which you said that I had not told you all about my trip to the Holy Land. Well you had better get set for here comes a detailed account of all of it.

We left camp here at Khonamshahr at 4 o'clock on the 8th of March. It was an hour's ride by truck to Basrah, Irak. There we boarded a narrow gage railroad train called the Basrah, Baghdad express. We called it the cattle train for we have better trains for cattle in the States. We rode all night and up to ten the next morning on it. We were sure glad to get off when we arrived at Baghdad. We stayed at a camp near town for a day and two nights. Baghdad! I guess everyone has heard of that city but no book ever described it as it really is. It is an ancient Arab town and smells like something that has been long dead. The new part of the city that has been built up in recent years is not so bad. The king of Iraq is only a boy and he lives in a palace near the town. We left Baghdad on Sunday morning and were once more on our way only this time in the back of a truck.

All that day we traveled and saw nothing but flat desert land. It was the same the next day until around noon. We had crossed the border of Iraq and were then in the waste lands of Trans Jordon. Soon we were passing mile upon mile of black rock as far as we could see in every direction was rock. They say in ancient days that a huge volcano near Damascus Syria had erupted and covered the whole country with lava. Late that evening we began to enter the foothills of Jordon and everything was green with grass.

The next morning we got up at 3 and were on our way by 4. We crossed the Jordon river at daybreak. It was the boundry between Trans Jordon and Palestine. We soon took a long rop down hill from several thousand feet above sea level to eleven thousand feet below. We were then in the fertile ground of the Promised Land. It was sure a contrst to the sand that we were used to. We saw orchards of oranges, lemons, grapefruit and bananas. It was all gentle rolling hills and sure a sight for sore eyes. We arrived at Camp Lel Litwinsky at 10 o'clock and were soon set up for our stay. Of course the first thing that we all had in mind was going to town. Tel Aviv is one of the most modern cities in the old world. It is a beautiful city and very much like any small city at home. We spent the rest of the day looking the town over. It is right on the shore of the Mediteranean sea and has a nice climate.

The next day I went on a tour and sure saw a lot of places mentioned in the Bible. Here is a few of them. We followed the path that Christ was supposed to have taken from the Golden Gate at Jerusalem to the top of the Mount of Olives. We were in a small shrine on the Mount that was built on the spot where Christ ascended to Heaven. We were in the Garden of Getsemane where Christ was betrayed. There are some old olive trees there that are supposed to have been there when He was there. In the garden is a large church called the Church of Nations. It is really beautiful inside and has a separate dome in the ceiling for almost all the nations of the world. It is lined with precious stones and gold. We also went through the Mt. Zion Temple. We also passed through the hills of Judea. The next day we went through the old walled city of Jerusalem. Inside the walls the people live as they did centuries ago. Outside the walls the new city is very modern and very much in contrast to the old. We visited Mt. Calvary where Christ was crucified. We also saw his tomb. We then went into King Solomon's quarry which is excavated out of solid rock under the city of Jerusalem. Next we went through the Mosque of Ohmar. It is built around the large rock that David was going to use when he went to sacrifice his son to the Lord. It is the second best and largest of its kind in the world and is inlaid all over the dome and walls with jewels and gold. We were also on Mount Moriah. There were so many interesting sights that I cannot remember them all.

## SvcMen WW II Letters

Another tour went to Bethlehem. There was the tomb of Rachel and also the manger where Christ was born. Another tour went up to Nazareth and the Sea of Galilee. I missed these two.

On the way back we came by the Dead Sea. There was little there of interest. One thing odd about it was it is the only large body of water in the world that has neither animal nor vegetable life in it. It is sure salty. The return trip was just a repetition of the one going so will not mention it only that we were glad to get back.

I think that about covers all the trip. Now to thank you for the pictures of the kids. The little girl is sure cute. Skeeter sure looks like you. Well I hope that Moine got a good girl for a wife. I would like to see a picture of them if you have a small one.

Must close for now and get ready for chow. I won't want to be late for that. Ha.

Your brother,

Bill

[The News-Sentinel, Tuesday, May 15, 1945]

### ELEVENTH LETTER FROM RAMON ALBER

Ramon Alber

April 27th

Somewhere at sea

Dear Mother, Father, Brothers and Gram:

I didn't get any of my mail before I left so there won't be much I can write about. Am okay in all respect. The air is so calm out I don't feel a bit sick.

Good relief.

April 28 - Rather cool today. Sea is still smooth out. Looks like our big wheat field at home before cutting it--wind blowing--the waves, level.

Have been working, getting all outgear ready (medical gear) hope we don't have to use it too much. Bye.

April 29 - Well today went by fast. Had a good breakfast. Then we had some excitement for awhile. Then a hearty chow. Noon.

After dinner--I am thinking of your dinner you are having and etc. if Rev. and Mrs. Lemart are there. Bet you have a swell time. Sure wish I could be there, than where I am. I'll never forget today. Beings to, your Silver Wedding dinner.

I must take some medicine for my "Sea Sickness." I am still bothered yet for awhile when it gets rough. It's been real rough since noon today. I am going to try to sleep tonight as I could not sleep any last night. Had so much on my mind of interference. Bye now.

April 30 - Not much doing today--just routine.

May 5 - Well Mother, this brings me up to the morning of May 5th. Been rather busy--more ways than one. Little sleep and very hot and that is besides just the weather. And no mail yet guess it doesn't come this far. But just like my kin folks in ways, they say "I can take it." I hope to get some before many days tho. Can't write often now. Took me this long for this.

And Mother, please don't worry. You are always in my heart.

Always our loving son,

Ramon

(This letter is from Ramon Alber, son of Mr. and Mrs. N. M. Alber and he has been "somewhere in the Pacific" for 18 months.)

[The News-Sentinel, Wednesday, May 16, 1945]

### LETTER FROM M. C. HUNTER

May 3, 1945

Okinawa

East China Sea

## SvcMen WW II Letters

Dear Mother:

Perhaps the above address will explain why you haven't heard from me for so long a time. I haven't had much opportunity to write sooner, we have been pretty busy as you have probably been informed by the newspapers. We are getting plenty of bombing and strafing, especially at night when some of the planes break thru, they don't seldom get away, but others always come back. We are mighty proud of our air force as they are so much superior to the Japs. I have been lucky so far, but many times I've wondered. My fox hole is pretty deep and I have spent a lot of time in it.

It is much cooler here but I like it a lot better for that reason alone. This is a very strange island. Many strange sights and peculiar people. They are small people, mostly Jap. They farm small pieces of ground of perhaps 20 feet by 50 feet and raise barley, sugar cane, rice and vegetables. They live in huts with straw roofs. A strange custom they have is of burying their dead which they do in tombs or vaults and then they put them in large vases or jars. They have walls built around their living quarters in which they keep their livestock if any. The walls are for protection from typhoons, etc. Well, Mamma, I am OK, so don't worry about me. Use my old address when you write, don't use the one on the envelope as I am here only for a visit. Say hello to all the boys and girls and children for me.

Love to all,  
M. C. Hunter

[The News-Sentinel, Thursday, May 17, 1945]

### LETTER FROM PHILIP A. PERKINS

To My Wonderful Mother:

You dear Mother are the wonderful woman in my life. You mother have never failed me where others have. How I wish I could be little and be around your feet again. Not to have to go through life again cause I have had too many rough spots to want to have to live them again. But if I was a little tot again I could sit on your lap like I did 30 years ago or a little longer. And now dear Mother mine, I will close to that wonderful woman of mine.

Love to my best Pal, Mother,

Your son,  
Just G. I. Phil

[The News-Sentinel, Thursday, May 17, 1945]

### PACIFIC BREEZES

#### "BEEZER" BENNETT RELATES HAPPENINGS NEAR TOJOLAND

May 5, 1945

Dear Rochester Folks:

Remember me? I'm that technicolored guy what sprawled behind a News-Sentinel desk a few months back doing my duties and getting paid for it out of sheer charity on the part of Mssrs. Barnhart and Van Trump. It has been an established fact in the memoirs of the Rochester daily press that my duties were of a reporting nature with extra curricular activities such as coke carrying, whistling at passing females and crudely etching news items on the window bulletin sheet.

So much for the who's who of yesterdayday--today we see me-- rugged (140 lbs) B-24 tail gunner deep in the heart of the Philippines! How this came to pass is a mystery to both the Army and to me. According to faint glimmers of recollection, that sometimes seep thru the Bennett cranial passages, it all began last summer. I had just "resigned" (leave us put it that way) my position with the AAF Radio School at Madison, Wis., when destiny threw me to the winds of Laredo, (on the Mexican border), Texas. After two hot months of aerial gunnery instruction I was awarded wings and sent on my merry way for a furlough that covered both Florida with Ma and Pa B. and Hollywood with a neat little hat check girl (but THAT is another story.) From there this Gl I. Eleanor Roosevelt bustled to Lemoore, Calif., to meet his bomber crew for the first time.

No Fag Shortage

## SvcMen WW II Letters

What an auspicious occasion that was! There we stood, pilot, co-pilot, navigator, bombardier, radio operator, engineer and four gunners trying not to look too disappointed as we scrutinized one another and as we laughed gaily (to show we were light hearted idiots) and passed cigarettes around like mad in a great flourish of generosity.

After that hurried ordeal was completed we moved on to the mountainous Walla Walla, Wash.-the land of fogs and rationed liquor. While in Walla ditto we became a true team flying some 200 hours in practice missions.

We were there for about four months and then our luck gave out. After much stamping and gnashing of teeth we patriotically condescended come overseas and end the war for our own America. (At this time the band will rise and play two bars of the National Anthem.)

The story at this point becomes one that has been told time and time again. P. O. E. with its amazing entanglements of military secrecy; new issues from quartermaster; trillions of shots in the arm and tons of baggage to be loaded, unloaded and reloaded before final take off.

“They’re Off!”

Then it came--on one of the darkest of nights--Goodbye U.S.! Goodbye Friends! Goodbye, Aunt Mabel and Uncle Zeke! Goodbye! Goodbye!

The Golden Gate slipped beneath our silver wings and in 14 hours we were encircling Waikiki Beach with the gleaming aqua surf set off by the pink stucco Royal Hawaiian Hotel. We landed near Honolulu and we were there long enough to spend a day in world renowned Honolulu.

The city itself is hospitable--all of it--in fact all of the island of Oahu displayed much courtesy to us even though they have been over-run with sailors, soldiers, marines and more sailors since the war began.

We rushed through the day having one last holiday in civilization. We swam in the Waikiki surf, drank rum and coke in an open air cocktail lounge under the swaying palms, feasted on our last steak dinner (with gallons of iced pineapple juice) and raided a few of the numerous curio shoppes that line the Honolulu streets. We couldn’t mail any souvenirs since we were in transit so I didn’t buy my Grandmother the jade hula skirt I would have liked to. However, on my return voyage I intend to buy it should we again touch Hawaii’s shores.

Yes, We Have Mosquitoes

Leaving Hawaii, our Liberator hopped from island to island with the crew getting a South Pacific lesson in geography at each stop. Some of the islands were mere coral reefs but as we drew nearer the equator they became spots of dense jungle undergrowth with malaria mosquito for each cocconut palm. It was here that we became acutely malaria conscious and began taking daily atabrine tablets, bathing in mosquito repellents and sleeping beneath complicated nets.

One of our most to be remembered stops was on the coral island of Tarawa where scores of Marines died in the infamous battle to take the strategic Japanese stronghold. The beaches still show signs of the November, 1943 battle and near the main beach head is a most reverent and impressive cemetery where the rows of silent graves are marked by white crosses. The grave yard is very near the Tarawa landing strip but when one is standing in the cemetery there is a hushed reverence like none I had ever experienced. The white crosses seemed to be whispering to the living of the cause for which the dead gave their lives!

Eventually our destination--New Guinea--was reached. We were there for a number of weeks and flew our first combat missions against the enemy and rose above the class of “combat virgins.”

And now, as I have said, we are in the Philippines in our permanent overseas squadron. As a bomber crew of the “Bomber Barons” the 5th Bombardment Group (and the best damn bombardment group in the South West Pacific I might add) we will become combat veterans . . . But that is another story and it will come to you as fast as my carrier pigeons can relay it. Watch for it!

Robert “Beezer” Bennett

[The News-Sentinel, Friday, May 18 1945]

## SvcMen WW II Letters

### SIXTH LETTER FROM HAROLD DEAN CLEVINGER

Pfc. Harold D. Clevenger  
Burma  
May 19, 1945

Dear Mother:

I received our letter the other day so I will answer it. I am feeling fine and I hope you are feeling fine. Well Mother I have two combat stars now and I hope I dont get any more. I guess you have heard about the men getting out of the Army with points. I have 54 points. I have a pillow cover that I bought back in India. I have been carrying it for a long time, but I will try and send it to you. It isn't in very good shape.

I don't know when I will get back to the States, maybe ten more months.

If I stay over here much longer I will get jungle happy. There is going to be a stage show here Sunday and a week from Sunday there is a Rodeo. We have movies about three times a week. There is a boy in my troop from Indianapolis. Well Mother, there isn't any more I can think of so I will close. Tell Dad I never heard of the outfit. It may be over here, but I don't know.

With lots of love,  
Harold

[The News-Sentinel, Saturday, June 2, 1945]

### PACIFIC BREEZES

By Beezer

The Philippines  
May 16, 1945

Editor of The News-Sentinel:

Much to my amazement the Philippines are surprisingly civilized compared to the scads of other islands in this theatre.

Flying over these countless islands one can easily imagine that he is above the mid-western states. The plots of ground of the Philippine farmer are much the same as those regular, well-planned gardens of Farmer Jones, U. S. A. Their produce too is much the same as ours even though it isn't quite as plentiful. Corn, tomatos, potatoes, cucumbers, and yams to mention a few are grown here. Most of these vegetables are for Filipino use only, but their sugar cane, pineapples, cocoanut oils, and hemp ar money-making exports. In fact, the most and best hemp in the world comes from the Philippine Islands. Some of the nicest gallows in the universe use rope made from Philippine hemp--so you can see it is essential.

Our own particular camp on our own particular island is deep in the heart of a huge cocoanut grove. All of the nuts (those on the trees) have been extracted either by the first G.I.'s here for their consumption or by someone thinking of our safety . . . a falling cocoanut can raise quite a bit of havoc when bounced on a head or through a tent.

#### Old Sol Bears Down

The tent we call home is in a ravine surrounded on all sides by ridges some five feet high and even though the cocoanut palms are abundant overhead the sun hits hot and heavy from ten o'clock in the A.M. until five o'clock in the P.M. seven days a week. The monsoon season ended in March so it looks like Old Sol will continue to knock himself out radiating heat upon us for some time to come. Salt tablets are some protection against his efforts but heat fag is with us most of the day. For that reason our "sacks" are our best forms of between mission entertainment.

Usually we stay in the sack until at least ten o'clock each morn unless our crew is scheduled to run a bombing strike. Of course there are some eager beavers amongst us who meet breakfast but my theory is that no history has ever been made before noon so why get up?

After we do at last wake up there is usually an hour of moaning and groaning about how porley we slept--the camp cot was too damned hard--the crew's parrot next door screeched all

## SvcMen WW II Letters

night--we had terrific nightmares--of course we still slept a solid eleven hours even with all of these inconveniences!

### Plenty of Sack

Finally, however, we do get up and it's dinner time so we gather up our mess kits and shag up the hill to that long, long chow line. After we've griped and grumbled and at last consumed our Spam and dehydrateds we lumber back again to--you guessed it--good ole sack!

Then there comes a few hours of literary endeavor . . . I've read more books in the past few weeks than I've read since I entered the Army I do believe. After a few hours with Ellery Queen, Amber, Horation Alger, and the other masters we nod off into a mid-afternoon siesta. It's a rough life!

Eventually we swish to the showers and wash off the dust of the day's labors (?) and then it's chow time once again. After the supper hour (Spam and gripes it was to be sure) there is a brief rest on the sack and then our open air theatre (see Terry and the Pirates for pictures) presents its nightly flicker.

### Ancient Movies

On the average our cinema attractions are ancient and we've seen them before at least once but still we can't afford to not see them again. The two movies that have won the croix-de-merit in my mind for chasing us from island to island the most number of times are "Roughly Speaking" and that terrifically lengthy "Wilson." For those two I can repeat the dialogue line by line--but backwards!

After the movies our tent lights up, we wake up, and a two to four hour bull session begins. Religion! Politics! Army! Navy! Airplanes! People! Wham! Bam! Crash! Until midnight the words fly thick and fast until at long last our tongues peter out, the lights go off, and as the mosquitoes form their assault forces every crew member dwindles off into the land of steaks, ice cream, cold beer, and clean white sheets.

My day is did!

With apologies,  
Robert (Beezer) Bennett

[The News-Sentinel, Monday, June 4, 1945]

### LETTER FROM DEAN J. RANS

Pvt. Dean J. Rans  
May 22, 1945

Dearest Parents,

Thought I'd drop you a few lines tonight, hoping this finds you all right.

Well I got a couple of letters from you folks tonight and was sure glad to hear from you folks.

So they say now that they don't inspect our mail any more. It sure seems funny, nothing that no one reads our mail. This is the first I've did any writing that hasn't been censored for about 21 months. Now you can say as you please.

Well I may get home before too long, but not for sure. I don't have 85 points. I only have about 65, so you see it will take a little time for me to get back. But don't worry for I'm safe and sound. I suppose by some of my letters you can tell that at times I had it pretty rough. Well, I was in the first bunch to cross the Rhine river and also the Ruhr river. We put bridges across both of these under plenty of dam "fire". I have seen the time when I wouldn't have given a nickle for my own life, but I guess I'm just plenty dam lucky.

I have slept plenty of places that I never thought I would, I have gotten so far two Battle Stars, and maybe another one. The last six months has been plenty of Hell. I'm just glad it's over here in Germany.

The Pacific is going to be much rougher I'm afraid of. But I don't think I have to worry too much about the Pacific.

I have a couple of German pistols, if I can only get them home now. I want Dad to have one. They are honeys, too.



## SvcMen WW II Letters

Well another thing I may add is that I got me a "Jerry." I haven't been in Berlin yet, but am expecting to see it in the near future. I have seen things that would turn your stomach for a week. This 18 months over here has sure taught me a lesson.

Well I think that's enough of that suff for this time. I'll keep telling you a little each time.

I'm taking a short course now in "General Mechanics" school, learning a few new points. Because that's what I'm going to do after this war is completely over.

I can sure thank God for one thing and that is that Donald wasn't in this war.

I went to church last Sunday. I go when possible.

Well Mother, it's getting late, so will close for now. I can let you know the straight stuff now that they don't read our mail. Hope to hear from you soon.

Love,

Dean

P.S. - Tell everyone "Hello."

[The News-Sentinel, Tuesday, June 5, 1945]

### SECOND LETTER FROM DALE SMILEY

#### SGT. DALE SMILEY REVIEWS EXPERIENCES UP TO V.E. DAY

(Editor's Note: The following letter, one of the most interesting and comprehensive we have yet received was written by Sgt. Dale Smiley, of the U. S. Air Corps to Rev. William J. Schroer, pastor of the Lutheran church, this city. Don is the son of Earl Smiley of this city, who has five sons serving in the service of their country. The letter is lengthy and will be run in two or possibly three installments.)

Germany

25 May 1945

Dear Reverend:

Late again as usual but that is getting to be the standard trend of a certain individual; namely, yours truly. Gosh, so many things have happened since last writing to you that I hardly know where to begin. Let's hope the above letterhead will help to explain the great delay. First of all, many thanks for the very interesting letter and the Easter card from the congregation.

Now, for the latest even--yes, it's VE Day and thanks to God that this part of the struggle ended as quickly as it did--now, if the other theater would just coincide, the world would have a lot to be thankful for. With the coming of VE Day in Europe, the men as a whole were not overenthused. There were no elaborate celebrations probably because the memories of death, hardships, and sufferings were too fresh in their minds and in addition to this factor, the unfinished job that awaits a majority of us in the other theater. On V-E night, the commanding officer gave a brief talk describing the terms of the surrender and afterwards, some of the fellows brought life to the party by discharging the various weapons on the base--I think they expended more ammo on that night than our planes did during the entire month's operations--and we even suffered casualties. The sky was lit up with tracers and warning flares. However, after the first night's celebration, the men gradually settled down to the routine day's work. Now, the main question is--what's in store for us in the future, but at the present, no one seems to know. I'm sure we all realize the demand for a hotshot tactical air force in the other theater so we can draw our own conclusions.

#### Meets Joe Callahan

Before starting on the subject of Germany, I want to tell you about our last excursion trip in France. We visited many sites that were famous landmarks in the last war including the St. Mihiel Memorial and cemetery, the Meuse-Argonne Memorial and cemetery, the famous war monument at Verdun, the city of Nancy or better known to the Frenchmen as "Little Paris," Saarbrucken, or I should say, the remnants of it, and many other places that were characteristic scenes of this war and the last. While in Nancy I met Joe Callahan from Rochester--what a treat that was and it all happened by a mere accident. Several of the gang and myself went there on a day off and while walking around in the Red Cross club, someone yelled, "Hey, Smiley," and of all people, it was Joe. Gosh, he sure looked swell and hasn't changed a bit--in fact, he even looked healthier than

## SvcMen WW II Letters

when I last saw him which was at least two years ago. He was the first person that I have met from home for a heck of a long time, that is, other than Bob Cessna. On another occasion, I went on the mail run and stopped off at an airfield near Metz where Bob was located. Thus far we have been extremely fortunate in remaining comparatively close to each other since our arrival on the beachhead of Normandy many months ago.

As for Germany, I can't mention much in the way of beautiful cities as most of them lay in battered ruins. In my estimation, however, the countryside is admirably beautiful and the farm land on the picturesque hillsides makes a wonderful sight. The main industry seems to be farming with a few orchards, vineyards, factories and mines scattered here and there. The towns, those left intact, are very clean and the buildings are fairly well modernized. Thus far in our travels, we have crossed the historic Rhine and even though the sight was an inspiring one, the treacherous and costly operations fought there will always be remembered with its beauty and splendor. Oh, yes, my first trip into Germany was made in a C-47 while taking gasoline to General Patton's tanks--what a thrill and the view below was a most unusual one with the landscape forming many colorful and geometric designs. Also from the air one could more readily see the scars of the former skirmishes fought along the route such as: Foxholes, anti-tank ditches, burned-out vehicles, pillboxes, dragons' teeth, destroyed bridges, railyards that lay in a mass of twisted wreckage, the Siegfried and Maginot lines, and the once-famous cities of Germany that are now only a pile of rubble and debris; namely those of Frankfort, Mainz, Kaiserlautern, Saarbrucken, Wurzburg, Hanau, and many others.

### Cities Demolished

Several times during the past weeks we have visited Nurnburg which was previously the hot seat of Nazism. Today, hardly a building or an installation remains untouched from the destructive bombardments that were released on it. On another occasion, we visited Munich--or better known as Hitler's old stamping grounds. The city, like Nurnbrg, is mostly demolished and the engineers would gain more time in rebuilding, if they started reconstructing the city any place outside its perimeter. The trip was not complete without a walk through the famous beer gardens but sorry to say, it only had a faint resemblance, as the bombs really played havoc with it.

While in the same vicinity we viewed one of the most horrible sights that I have ever seen in my life--that was the Dachau Concentration Camp--maybe you have read about the mass murderings, starvings, and torturings that took place in what was known to the prisoners as the camp of death. We also saw the bodies packed in the railway cars, on wagons, and some that were still in their cells--they were stacked just like one would pile wood. The smell was horrible and just about made evderyone sick--maybe that is why most of the fellows will not forget the whole ordeal. German civilians were hauling the bodies to the burial grounds in wagons and we happened to be on the same road. One of the bodies accidentally fell off the wagon in front of our vehicle--that proved it wasn't a dream. How any living person in their right mind could commit such horrible atrocities, we will never be able to understand. The camp was located just a short distance from the center of the town and the people, when questioned about it would say they never knew anything about it--if that is the case, they must be blind and lost their sense of smell. The railway cars, containing thousands of bodies, were parked on some of the best streets of the city. If the German people get away with such fiendish crimes this time, they will have to do a lot of explaining to someone.

### Visits Pilsen

Yesterday I had the great pleasure of visiting the renowned city of Pilsen, Czechoslovakia. Upon entering the city we were quite disappointed as the buildings were heavily damaged by previous bombings. However, the main portion of the Czech city escaped damage and considering the long years of occupation and hardships of war, it was in comparatively good shape. The buildings were surprisingly attractive and contained many modern features--even movie theaters. The other members of the party were not satisfied until we visited the famous Pilsen beer factory and from the final outcome, I think that they will agree to that effect. Our visit was very brief and just our luck, it was raining so most of our sight seeing was curtained. We are hoping for a return engagement there in the near future. Oh, yes, that is fraternizing country. (As you know, the no-

## SvcMen WW II Letters

fraternization rules are very strict in Germany so we have lost out on all contacts with civilians. There are a few exceptions to the rule, however, if a person feels rich enough to pay the \$65 if he is caught.)

(to be continued)

[The News-Sentinel, Saturday, June 9, 1945]

[continued]

The main question that I know you have been wondering, "What have we been doing since leaving the states and where have we been?" Due to recent events, we are now able to mention a few of the highlights of our exploits since bidding farewell to the Statue of Liberty way back when. We will start from Wacross, Georgia, as that is where I reported to after my furlough which was in July, 1943. After completion of our training there, we went to the Port of Embarkation at Camp Kilmer which is located just across the river from New York City. Maybe you will remember the letter that I wrote about our short but very joyful stay there. After boarding the Queen Elizabeth on the 2nd of November, 1943, we arrived in Glasgow, Scotland six days later. From there we proceeded to Newbury, England by rail and after a very short stay, moved to Colchester. That was our home until the following spring. The set up was not too bad but the mud and rain didn't make the winter any too pleasant. We had very good train connections to London so most of our off-time was spent there. Most of the experiences we had there, I have cited to you in previous letters--there was one occasion, however, that I didn't mention and that was while we were on a three-day pass during February, 1944. That was when the Luftwaffe started the Second Battle of Britain on London and after going through only three days of it, we were very glad that we hadn't participated in the first one.

Several bombs hit next to the Red Cross Club in which we were staying but thanks to God, we made out all right. In the spring, we moved down to an advanced airstrip in the Dover area which is in the southeast corner of England or better known as "Death's Corner." On the 15th of June, the flying bombs started coming over our bivouac area every 15 minutes on the second. The anti-aircraft fire was terrific and the bullets flew in all directions. Some of the buzz bombs were shot down by the ack-ack guns and others downed by British Typhoons and our own Mustangs. At the time, we didn't realize how powerful they were and each time one passed, everybody ran out to watch the excitement. When the planes started shooting them down, we really hit for our foxholes; that is after a couple landed in our area. At that time, our foxholes were approximately four feet deep but prior to departing from that station, they were at least 8 feet deep with a good two foot thick roof overhead. I still have a big dent in my helmet where one of the fellows hit me squarely with his steel-spiked invasion shoes because he was in such a big hurry to seek protection that he didn't allow the rest of us time to get out of the way--thank goodness I had a helmet on. (Please note that I was already in the foxhole--nothing slow about me, especially with one of those contraptions around).

Two days after the Vbombs started, we headed for the marshalling area. While passing through London, another doodlebug hit only a block from the station--boy, were we ever glad to get out of that place as one can never tell where the next one was going to hit. From there we went to Southampton and boarded another troopship for the channel crossing. It was an English vessel so you can imagine the conditions of the crossing, especially with all the equipment that accompanied us. Due to the storm that you have probably heard so much about, we didn't disembark until the evening of our fifth day on board or the evening of the 21st of June. What a sight that beach was--not from the results of the initial landings but because of the damages incurred by the storm. Going to shore in the little assault boats seemed like eternity, and after hitting good old terra firma once again, we started out on the long march to our grouping area. For the next few days very little work was accomplished but the hours were packed full of excitement just by being on the small beachhead--I won't go into detail as this letter is going to be long enough anyhow.

I think that was one time we were all badly mistaken as we sure didn't anticipate our outfits would be hitting the French coast that soon after D-Day because of being Air Force Units--however, we surprised everybody (including ourselves) and made out OK. If you remember, the

## SvcMen WW II Letters

beachhead was pretty small at that time--they had just completed the cutting off the Cherbourg Peninsula.

On the 25th of July, we witnessed one of the greatest mass of aircraft power that was ever assembled in one formation--that was the great attack preceding the breakthrough at St. Lu. From there, we followed General Patton's forces down to the Brittany Peninsula and on several instances, passed through towns that were announced as liberated two or three days later. After the fall of Brest, we made the long hop to St. Dizier which was approximately 300 miles away. Some of the gang went by air, others by vehicle and just for the heck of it, I volunteered to take the first train ride across France. (Did I say I volunteered--the Commanding Officer said he wanted five volunteers for the trip and pointed at us and said, you, you, and you.) It proved to be quite a trip and even though very tiresome, we had a good time helping the Frenchmen celebrate their recent liberations while the train stopped at several cities along the route. Five days later, we arrived at Vitry la Francois after passing through Rennes, Lemans, Charters, Versailles, Paris, Epernay, and other popular cities of France.

### Airfield Under Attack

The new airstrip was located near the Marne Canal and the countryside was very beautiful. This is the station where we made the acquaintance with the French family that I have spoken of on numerous occasions. After winterizing our tents and making this lucky friendship, we were ready to settle down for the winter, at least, we thought so. Then the rains came--the river broke its bank and the entire area went under water including the airstrip. We evacuated to Bar le Duc and for the following three cold months, had our headquarters there. Whenever possible, we hopped on the courier and headed for St. Dizier to visit our friends there as compared to camp life, it was time spent in solid luxuries of home. On Xmas Eve, after touring the area singing Xmas carols, we joined the Squadron's party. While some of the men were pulling the corks from the champagne bottles, we heard several additional pops which later proved to be a nice strafing job by a German plane. The same action occurred for the next three nights--in fact, we had quite a bit of excitement during the three weeks following due to the break-through in Belgium. Our fields were continually under attack which could only be expected as an airfield always provides a good target.

Spring finally came and we again moved--this time to an airstrip between Metz and Nancy. During March and April, our planes really made hay while the sun shined--the results of which have probably amazed the world and I am sure you have read of the Ninth Air Force's accomplishments during that period. From Nancy, we moved into Germany near the bend of the Rhine at Mainz. After a short stay there, we moved to a field that was previously an advanced pilot's training base--in other words, a swell layout with good barracks, hangars, electricity, and water. Compared to former stations, this was paradise so as per usual, we moved again to our present location which is just a few miles north of Nurnburg. Lately, we have assumed the name of the roving gypsies. Then, came the anxiously awaited VE Day. There are a lot more incidents that occurred but it would take a book to describe them and besides, most of them would only be repetition to you.

Thus far, we have four battle stars (to some that isn't even a drop in the bucket, but those four are enough if we have to work as hard and as long for the next ones as we did for those), the Meritorious service Plaque, and three hershey bars for 18 months overseas (the first of June makes 19) but I still need two children in order to cash in on the discharge as set forth in the Points' Plan.

The Fighter Group which we are servicing (the famous Pioneer Mustangs) has a total of just under 1,000 pounds destroyed (the record in the ETO), the Presidential citation (we were put in for the award with them but didn't receive it as the award is given to combat units only), and the record of making the first fighter escort with the heavies while they were over their target in Germany.

In addition to the above, we have had three break-ups of our Headquarters, which included a large percentage of the men going to the infantry as replacements. Guess I was lucky on that deal.

Has Plenty of Trophies

## SvcMen WW II Letters

With the present activities on the field, one can sure tell that hostilities has ceased. At the present time, the planes are lined in a straight row across the field which is quite irregular as they are generally dispersed over the entire area. There is very little flying activity; that is, other than the German planes flying around (by our pilots, of course). Prior to VE Day, everything from a Piper cub to a big German transport, (JU 52's) were landing on the base and the crews surrounding. Our pilots even went to Austria and Czec. and flew back several FW 190's (German fighter planes). Most of the personnel have piked up some type of contraptions--it's either a motorcycle, an automobile, and naturally, a few have airplanes. As for me, I wasn't one of the lucky ones--average 6 GI's and after making the last move, I am beginning to agree with them.

Well, Rev., I guess that just about concludes my travels for the past two years. Hope you get as much enjoyment out of reading it as I did while typing some of the above incidents--they sure hold a varied type of memory. Please pardon the typing but it is the only outlet for my catching up on my far-behind correspondence.

Oh yes, in regards to Church Service--previously, we had services every Sunday morning and on any special occasion which happened to come up. With the recent breakup, we are now authorized a Chaplain solely for our group. Maybe this will create a better drawing attraction for the men as most of them feel they have been neglected because the only time they get to see the Chaplain is while attending the Sunday morning services.

Am enclosing some pictures and a few samples of our new money. Will once again say goodnite as it is getting late and there's plenty of work stored up for tomorrow. Give my regards to the congregation. Write soon as your letters are appreciated very much.

As always,

Dale

[The News-Sentinel, Monday, June 11, 1945]

LETTER FROM JOE CALLAHAN

Ulm, Germany

Saturday, May 19, 1945

Dear Bob Scheid:

Enclosed you will find a label that I found on a good ol' can of Rochester corn. I was fixing dinner for a bunch of men the other day when I ran across this can in my rations, the only trouble is I scorned every one that was connected with the corn, as I was going around showing the label to all the fellows and bragging that it came from my home town, I burned the corn. Boy did I get the horse laugh.

All kidding aside this just goes to show that Rochester is really in there pitching all the time. You might say this can of corn was 100 per cent Rochester, as it was canned in Rochester, grown in Rochester and prepared by a Rochester fellow. Even though I did burn it a little it was still good.

I just wanted you to know that your product ws getting around and that Rochester was right on the ball even though it is a small town.

I am living in an old German fort, near the city of Ulm. Ulm is located near the Swiss border in the southwest part of Germany. The fort is all underground, the only good thing I can say about the fort is, it's plenty cool in these hot days we are having.

My relief is here so I will sign off, keep up the good work, keep the corn and peas coming and the boys will be coming back, too.

Joe Callahan

P.S. - Please excuse the stationery as it is German and is all that they left, or probably had to leave. I am back in my room now and I'll be darned if I can find that label. Anyway I had the corn.

Joe.

[The News-Sentinel, Tuesday, June 19, 1945]

FOURTH LETTER FROM JAMES WALTON

Cpl. James W. Walton

## SvcMen WW II Letters

Saturday Morn.

June 2, 1945

Germany

Dear Korb:

Morning Herman, and early morning it is, too. It's now 2 a.m. Saturday as I write. Just came off my shift, had a bit of midnight lunch, came up to my room and decided before hitting dreamland I'd drop you a line or two. I owe you a letter so it really is about time I got it off.

I'm tired as all heck tonight, or rather should say this morning. But it is a tiredness you get, but where you're not sleepy. I've been pounding the teletype for about 10 hours straight and my fingers are a bit numb yet. These dam electrical machines vibrate clean up to your shoulder blades and leave you with a good case of St. Vitus dance for about an hour after you come off shift. If you think Longcliff contains a few with ragged nerves you ought to see a few of these signal boys. Ha. Mart will want to ship me off to Logan when I get home.

We are more than rushed for work now. We are working in conjunction with the transporttion corps and you know what that means in Europe today.

Now that there is no more censoring I can say just about what I please. I can tell you where I am now. I'm located in Fulda, Germany. Fulda is a city about the size of South Bend. If you look upon a map you'll see that Fulda is located about 65 miles northeast of Frankfurt. We are all living in German homes right here in the city. This one I'm living in is practically a mansion.

I have a whole room to myself with a big four-posted bed and I sleep on a real feather mattress. The best I've slept on in over two years.

When we arrived in Fulda we scouted around and picked out the best homes, and then gave the Germans four hours to move out. This they did and left us all this beautiful furniture.

The home I live in has big marble halls, huge winding staircases; something strictly Hollywood. We also enjoy Herr So-and-So's wine cellar. Ha.!

Fulda is situated about 1,300 feet above sea level. Gets very cool here in the evenings and rains quite a bit. From this big huge desk I have in my room to write on, I can look out of my French windows and see snow up on top of the mountain peaks. This place is strictly from a story book and is one of the most beutiful spots I've seen in Europe. And to the left of the city stands a majestic old castle up on one of the mountain ridges. I want to explore that place one of these days, if I ever get time.

Here in Fulda is said to be the oldest cathedral in Germany. It is a Catholic church and one of the most beautiful I've ever seen. I've seen, complete, Notre Dame Cathedral, and the cathedral at Rheims, but this one far surpasses them in beauty, construction, etc.

I went clea through this church three days ago and can't begin to tell you all I saw. The interior is bedecked with gold and jewels. Tile altar is very beautiful and contains gold that I couldn't estimate the value of. From the entrance, which is two huge massive oak doors, and they must be three feet thick, 30 feet high and 16 feet wide, it is almost a half block to the altar. Right above the entrance is this huge pipe organ, with pipes running the whole width of the building. This must sit at least 40 feet up in the air. The ceiling is about 125 feet from the first floor. You can hear the organ when played almost two blocks away from the church.

Underneath the first floor is a second floor which contains burial shelves. There all the notable are buried.

The place is packed with history, Herman, its something I want to remember to tell you about when I get home.

I can tell you now that I was at Aachen, a while, also Bonn, Frankfurt and even made a trip down to Munich. From Munich we came back here to Fulda. At Bonn I saw the home of Beethoven, and I also saw the home of Wagner but forget the name of the town just now. These two men's homes I especially wanted to see because of studying so much about them in school.

One of the most picturesque cities I've seen was when we crossed the Rhine river. You have heard of the "Castles on the Rhine," well, I got to see one of those. It looked so old it seemed if you would have touched any part of it, it would have crumbled. The river was as Wagner made

## SvcMen WW II Letters

you think it was. I kept looking for some of his Rhine maidens but there was none to be found. Ha!

In the last few weeks I've seen hundreds of Russian soldiers, in fact one of them today gave me a real Moscow hair cut, and tonight I look like "Ivan" himself. Ha! If I've an inch of hair left, it's a wonder. My wife would never recognize me.

These Russians are jolly fellows. Short and stocky, and they laugh all the time. They love only three things, food, women and music. Incidentally they bring their women right with them. And you never saw such women in your life. Practically all of them are big or bigger than the average man, and are just as rough. They seem to do two men's work a day. Then play and dance all night. They'd make three of our American girls. Nothing dainty about these Russian females, and I'm thinking they are homely as sin. Herman, if I ever own a farm I'm going to get about three of these husky Russian gals to work the place for me. Ha. You couldn't lose.

Well, golly, pal, I've gabbed away enough for one night and a half of an early morning, so will close and go have a chat with Mr. Sandman.

By the way, Herman, please don't have this put in the paper this time. These wee hours make my English, etc., a bit on the rusty side and this one will surely convince the public, if you print it, of just how dam ignorant I am.

Tell Jack hello for me, and I'm getting the Coronet magazine now. Will write him soon. Tell also Seymour and Bud hello from me.

Hope you are in the pink, Herman, and I hope I'll be seeing you soon. So long, for now.

Pal, Jim

[The News-Sentinel, Wednesday, June 20, 1945]

### LETTER FROM JUNIOR G. RUEDE

Pfc. Junior G. Ruede

Zell, Germany

May 28, 1945

Dear Family:

I started to write yesterday, but didn't finish and I lost what I had written so I have to start all over again.

The censor kept me from writing a lot of things but now that it's over, I can write and tell you what I have been doing. I will start from when I left Rucker, I don't remember the date. I went to Camp Shank, N.Y., It is about an hour's drive from the center of N.Y.C. I got to go to town about three times. The passes were only for 12 hours and in N.Y. that isn't long enough to do anything. I had a chance to call you up once but it took too long to get the calls through so I didn't even try. I left Shank on the fourteenth of November, and got on the boat, it was the George Washington, it was a pretty big ship. It was a German ship, built in the last war. President Wilson crossed on it to go to the peace conference in 1918.

I got my first look at England the morning of the 26th. I got off the boat early on the 27th at Southampton, from there I took a train ride to Dorchester. It was just a little place, with nothing going on other than one show. I had one 48 hour pass to London while I was there. The town was pretty well beat up in some places. It wasn't as bad as I thought but I didn't see near all of it. In the downtown district it was in pretty good shape. There isn't much to do other than look around. I saw some of the main points of interest but didn't get to see near as much as I would have liked to. They really have good subways there. There were still beds in some of them. The people used to stay down in the subways all night. Those people suffered more than most of us will ever know. If the French would have had as much spirit it would have been over long ago. I got along pretty good with them.

I left England two days after I came back from London. I went the same way I came only I got on a Belgium boat. The name of it was the Leopoleville. I got on about 3 o'clock in the morning and pulled out about 5 that morning. During the afternoon I went to sleep. I was a little sea sick. At 6 o'clock the boat got hit. I woke up on the floor in about six inches of water. The compartment below us were full by the time I got to the door, which took only about two minutes.

## SvcMen WW II Letters

Only one man got out from down there. My compartment was just above water line, that's why I am here today. Some of the boys in my compartment were pinned under the tables and never did get out. When I got up on deck I was sick from some of the salt water I got when I hit the floor. I was all wet, too, and it was pretty cool. In about a half hour I was feeling O.K. again. The ship's crew took off with the life boats and a few of our wounded. There wasn't anyone around to tell us what to do. She started to sink pretty fast after 8 o'clock. The water washed me off of the deck about 8:25. The last of the ship was seen at 8:30. I was pretty lucky and got a life raft after a little while. There were three of us on it. I got to know one of them in the hospital. I never knew who the other was. We floated around for about 40 minutes when a P.T. boat threw us a line and pulled us aboard. I was almost stiff when I got on the thing and really sick from salt water. I got rid of all of it after I got down into the sleeping compartment. Those navy boys really took care of us. The P.T. took me the rest of the way into Cherbourg. The boat was hit about 10 miles from port. When I got off the P.T. boat all I had on was my combat boots and my dog tags. I still had my pen and billfold. I was taken to the Hospital because there wasn't any other place to go. I was there for two days. That's where I had my Christmas dinner.

I stayed in Cherbourg for about two weeks, from there I went to Brittany to a place called Rens, was there for a week or more and from there I went to the line of the St. Nazaire pocket and stayed there until just a week ago when we came up here. This place by the name of Zell is about 50 miles south of Cologne. I don't think I will be here for long. I guess I will be going to the Pacific soon. I lived through this war so I guess I can live through that one, too.

I will finish this letter tomorrow as I am going to a show now. It's a German picture.

May 29, 1945

Well I saw the show. I couldn't understand a word of it. It was nothing like an American show.

I also had a few drinks of German wine, it isn't so bad. I haven't had any of their beer yet. There is n't any around here right now.

Well I guess I have written enough for once! Will write again whenever I think of something.

As ever,

Junior

P.S. - I have my Purple Heart medal now. I will try to get it sent out today.

[The News-Sentinel, Thursday, June 21, 1945]

### LETTER FROM CLARENCE CARR

[Letter is from Clarence Carr, son of Police Chief and Mrs. Fred Carr.]

Philippines

Kime 8

Dear Folks:

How are you all? O.K. I hope. Well did I turn out on my birthday or not--hope everything is O.K. I have been working pretty hard. I got today off so all I did was lay in my sack, sure was good. Sorry to hear Bill is 1-A. I don't know what the hell they want any more men in the army for, especially married men with kids. My 18 months are up in September. I don't know when I will get home on furlough from here. I hope real soon. I don't think I will have to come back, but probably have to stay in a while. Maybe they will lower the age limit or points. Anyway I hope these next three months flies. I guess there is a notice on the bulletin board that I can say where I have been below the equator.

Well I left the States March 6th on a freighter, only 34 soldiers aboard so we had a pleasure cruise for 28 days--good eats, two kinds of meat each meal and ice cream, was two weeks out, I landed at Espirien Santo in the New Hebrides. Did a big job there. I think we left in December, we then took an oil tanker to New Caledonia. I think it took four days, very few G.I.'s on the boat. Landed at Nomean, the capital, stayed there a couple of weeks then went up the island to Tontuta for a while then up the island for a week then back to Tontuta, we left there by air. We flew to Guadalcanal, stayed there about 12 hours then flew to Bink, New Guinea, then flew to Hollandia, New Guinea, stayed there for about two weeks then go to Australia, flew from



## SvcMen WW II Letters

Hollandia to Ipswitch, Australia, which is close to Brisbane. Coming back we took a longer way, we stopped at Toonsville, Australia, Rock Hampden, Australia, Cooktown, Australia, Port Moresby, New Guinea, Finchshaven, New Guinea, we stayed there all night, then up to Hollandia, to this point I have flown over 7,000 miles, we then left Hollandia for the Philippines where I stopped at another before I got here. I can say I am in Manila. I have done quite a bit of traveling. Well you can show or tell the rest of the folks about my travels. I'm sending a couple Filipino stamps you might want or know somebody that would want them. Hoping to see you all real soon.

As ever,  
Your Bro. Clarence.

[The News-Sentinel, Saturday, June 23, 1945]

### SECOND LETTER FROM VERN E. HERRELL

Pvt. Vern E. Herrell  
June 21, 1945  
Thursday Evenine

Dear Folks:

Today I am celebrating my 20th birthday here in Oakland, Calif. Last year at this time I was in San Diego going through boot camp.

I had two letters written for me while on Okinawa. Since then I came to Guam on the hospital ship Relief. I was there for four or five days, then caught a plane for Pearl Harbor. I stayed there for a week, then caught a plane for Oakland, Calif. I arrived here a week ago last Wednesday.

In the letters I had written from Okinawa, I told you I got hit in the arm and leg. I also got a piece of shrapnel in the right eye. I believe that's why they brought me to the States so soon. The reason I didn't tell you about it on Okinawa was I thought you'd worry too much. But it is really nothing to worry about--for as I know now, they are going to [incomplete sentence]

After my eye is fixed up there is a chance I might be sent to Great Lakes.

I hope this finds you all well and feeling fine. I imagine you have been pretty busy during the past months. I hope you get the peas and hay made alright.

I heard Okinawa was secured this morning and that sounds good. I'd like to have been there when the last shot was fired.

Yesterday I ran into an old boot camp friend. You probably remember me telling you about him about last September. We had some pictures made together, and I think I sent one home. He's in a different ward, and I walked down to see him.

Take it easy and don't work too hard. I'll write again in a few days.

With Love,  
Vern.

[The News-Sentinel, Tuesday, June 26, 1945]

### SEVENTH LETTER FROM GEORGE D. HOLLOWAY

T S George L. Holloway  
13 May 1945  
Germany

Dearest Mother:

Today is a special day set aside for our beloved mothers. This day is your Mom, and only wish I could be there with you this particular day. I feel quite certain that the next one will find me home. I'm hoping so any way. I wish that I could have sent you a Mother's Day cable but was on the move and couldn't.

This morning I went to the Mother's Day program that our chaplain had and it was very nice. He certainly hit the right subjects and knew what he was talking about. Everything we ever do in childhood is over your guidance which we didn't think about at the time. As we grow older we learn just what you had to contend with all the time.

## SvcMen WW II Letters

Now that I'm no longer a kid any more, I look back with appreciation and thankfulness for all you've done for me. You were wonderful and I love you dearly for all. Just being away makes one think of all those younger days and each time it is Mother looking after us and how many worries you have had. Ever since I came overseas you have worried but for certain now, you can relax. It can't be too long before a return trip will be ready. I feel sure so keep the chin up.

Today has been a beautiful day and a hot one at that. I layed out in the yard for a couple of hours, taking a sun bath, and really feel warm now. It's just too nice to stay inside although I had a lot of work to do. One thing I've learned is not to let anything worry me in the Army.

Today went by without any mail of any description. That leaves a bigger field for tomorrow and am hoping for the best. It wouldn't surprise me if in Conde's next letter he's on his way. Sure hope that isn't so but hoping for the best.

I'm going to close this for tonight until a little later. Hoping this finds you well and taking care of yourselves.

Your loving son,  
George

Dear Mrs. Granville Holloway:

Yesterday was Mother's Day. It was a beautiful day, the kind of a day that Mother's Day should be. Church services were held in one of the cities of Germany. To us it was a significant service. We gave thanks to God for victory and that bloodshed had ceased in Europe. We were grateful to be alive. But more than anything else, we remembered our Mothers. We gave thanks to God for our Mothers. Our prayers were in their behalf.

Your son, George, attended service yesterday to honor God and you. I wanted you to know that he was there and joined with us in the worship.

We thank God upon every remembrance of Mother. May the Lord bless you and give you many more fragrant years. We trust that the time shall not be far removed when you may have your son in your home again.

Yours in Jesus' name,  
Henry Wall, Chaplain

[The News-Sentinel, Wednesday, June 27, 1945]

### BOMBER BARONS' BREEZETTES

By

By "Beezer Bennett"

With The 13th AAF "Bomber Barons," Somewhere in the Philippines. - Little Nancy R. Byhrdbrain, 15-year-old Hunger, Neb., semi-illiterate high school student, wrote recently that she would enjoy reading an article on a typical 13th Air Force mission. Naturally I cannot refuse this gracious little lady so to her this column is dedicated.

It has been said before in this space that my crew and I are at times rather indolent "sack-time heroes." That is true occasionally, but we are also over here to do a job (as the War department would say) and when the time comes for us to do our job we are forced to labor . . . and our bombing missions are our labors.

The first we hear of a forthcoming mission is an announcement on the squadron bulletin board the afternoon preceding the raid.

#### Briefing for Raid

That evening there is a briefing for all the crews participating in the attack. We are shown enlarged maps and charts of the approach to and exit from the target and of the target itself. The weather man gives us the next day's weather forecast. The intelligence officer tells us how much flak and fighter opposition to expect and what are the safest escapes and evasion routes out of the enemy territory in case we are forced down. Briefing concludes with an order concerning take-off time and the time of arrival over the target.

## SvcMen WW II Letters

After briefing we retire to our tents and collect our flying equipment--parachute and harness, flight jacket, Mae West life vest, first aid kit, helmet and goggles and our 45 automatics in preparation for the next day's flight. These items are stacked inside our cots and then we are ready to douse the lights in order to catch at least 39 winks.

The squadron charge-of-quarters awakens us before daylight. Bleary-eyed and still more asleep than awake we get up, dress, and carrying our flying togs we stumble through the darkness to breakfast.

### Make Final Check

After we've eaten, we board trucks that take us to the flight line and as daylight crawls over the horizon we arrive at our assigned B-24. The ground armorers have already installed the bombs, guns and ammunition so our duties consist of making a last minute check on their work. The pilot and engineer check the plane from nose to tail to ascertain its flying ability. The bombardier looks to the bomb load while the radio operator tunes and tests his radio sets. The gunners pre-flight their guns and turrets, almost always finding that the ground crews have taken out all discrepancies. Those ground crews are a careful group and credit is due them for the ship's repeated good performance.

When the plane has been completely examined it is time for take-off. The engines are warmed up--slowly at first and then faster. The bomber taxis onto the strip and as it taxis it gains speed. Before the sun has more than taken a glance at this side of the world we are in the air.

As the plane pulls its wheels up and gains altitude each crew member goes to his specific position. The pilot and co-pilot, of course, are already in the pilot's compartment. The bombardier and nose gunner go down into the nose of the plane. The navigator and radio operator take their places behind small desks on the flight deck. The engineer has no particular spot (except in case of attack when he mans the upper turret) so he continually moves about the bomber to make sure that all's well.

The ball turret man crawls down into the ball located in the bomber's belly and the tail gunner goes to his lonely "last man over the fence" position. The waist guns are fired by the armorer and the radio operator should there be a need.

When every man is in his position and on inter-phone he begins to watch the sea and ground below and the sky above and around him for signs of enemy opposition. Also in case a comrade B-24 gets into trouble, or should someone in distress in the ocean be sighted, an immediate report would be radioed in to assure their safety.

Before the target is sighted the pilot instructs the gunners to test fire their machine guns. We fire a few short bursts in the sea and are then positive that the guns are in a good working condition.

After so long a time the target is reached and the armorer readies his camera to photograph the bombs as they fall. The bombardier gives the "Bombs Awa-a-a-ay" call and our job is finished. We head back towards the home base.

As the wheels come down and the landing is made our fellow traveler, Mr. Sun, is also beginning to sink in the west.

Our first thought upon landing is of food because the only edibles since breakfast were sandwiches in the air that the cook had prepared for us. Before we can eat, however, we must go back to the Squadron for Interrogation.

Interrogation is conducted by S-2 or Intelligence. An S-2 officer asks us what we saw, how much interception and flak we encountered and general questions pertaining to the mission's success. At the interrogation tent Red Cross girls serve us cold drinks and cookies while we talk.

Then it is chow time and we eat heartily. After a shower we generally go directly to bed for while the mission is finished for the officers we six enlisted men must rise early next day to clean our machine guns.

[The News-Sentinel, Friday, June 29, 1945]

BOMBER BARONS' BREEZETTES

By

## SvcMen WW II Letters

By "Beezer Bennett"

With the 13th A.A.F. Bomber Baron--(The Philippines) May 27.- Cpl. Paul Francis Aloyious Bartholomew Sullivan, radio operator supreme, Irish "hard Likker" consumer deluxe, and the man who sleeps 24 hours daily in the cot next to mine, reared his ugly head from his pillow one hot day this week and surprisingly suggested we venture to the native village some four miles distance from our aerodrome.

At first I smiled and answered, "Yes, leave us dwell on the thought," thinking that Sullivan, being usually of a sane mind and sound body, must now be jesting.

But no--the lad was actually serious. Even after my persistent explanations that the hot dusty road thru perilous, F.F.A.B.S. still demanded that we trek to the village.

At last I flew the white flag and surrendered to his whim. About two o'clock we started down the road feelin' hot.

Due to various pick-ups by G. I. trucks and jeeps we finally arrived at the Philippine metropolis--population about 395.

### Filipenos Prematurely Aged

Personally I have no idea how these Philipinos lived before the Japanese invaded but I imagine that their living conditions were lowered greatly by the enemy. Their homes even now show signs of the harm done during the three years that the islands were under ruthless Jap domination. Even the people themselves have a pathetic look of fear and discouragement on their faces that still hasn't been completely erased. When the Japanese were chased from these islands they left behind a people--many of them old before their time--that finds it hard to forget the harrowing times between the fall of Corregidor and the invasion of Leyte. We could see this as we entered the town. Indeed, the sons of the setting sun have left their mark on at least this generation of freedom-loving Philipenos.

As we wandered idly into the business district of the hamlet the street was lined with dingy souvenir shops. Behind the crude counters old women and thin gaunt children sat watching us not seeming in the least eager about the selling of their wares. Some of the curios were attractive in their simplicity--the hand carved bolo knives, the tiny wooden sandals, the shell necklaces (perfectly matched) and the more intricate hand-sewed needleworks and hand-painted pottery. They would add much to one's future travel chest but the mementos were all priced so highly that their idea of "Americans beeg money spender" just didn't apply to Sully and I so we decided to forego the pleasure of buying souvenirs.

At the end of the "Main Street"-- there in the midst of all this poverty--there arose a building so entirely different from the others that it seemed as from another world.

### Magnificent Cathedral

It was their cathedral. Since the time of its Spanish rulers all of the Philippine Islands have revered God and the Roman Catholic Church so devotedly that all of their hardest labors and most beautiful works of art are turned toward keeping their temples of worship a place of divine beauty--whether their homes are pigstys or not.

This church was a shining example. Its mighty belfry, towers, spires and walls were cut from white coral about a century ago and even though in places it is now crumbling it is still magnificent.

We entered the chapel through a door finely carved from pure ebony. The dome of the holy citadel--some 160 feet high--was painted with Bible pictures that descended from the peak of the dome to the base of its walls.

But the most beautiful thing there--in fact, one of the loveliest things I ever had the pleasure to behold was the sanctuary. The altar was of solid silver with infinite etchings carefully tooled into the sides. There on a throne in a palace it rested--a vastly expensive altar that would have done justice to any city cathedral in America. Surrounding this thing of enthralling magnitude were statues of Christ and the Mother Mary and resting on niches in the wall behind the altar were statues approximately four feet tall of the patron Saints.

We stood breathlessly looking at the artistic triumph of this edifice for many minutes and as we left the chapel to return to the appalling humble settlement it made both of us wonder how

## SvcMen WW II Letters

these poor natives could have constructed such an edifice. Whoever or whatever led them at the time of its construction and still seems to lead them in its upkeep wasn't easy for us to understand. They have done something here in the jungles that even the Western world would find hard to approach in majestic greatness--particularly if it were compelled to build it with the scanty tools and slight bit of artistic initiative that seems to prevail with these people today.

Possibly it was the missionaries who led them; possibly it was the early Spanish priests who are legendary in our own great West; but I think that the most controlling force behind this great cathedral's construction was the power of their God.

[The News-Sentinel, Tuesday, July 3, 1945]

### BOMBER BARONS' BREEZETTES

By

By "Beezer Bennett"

With The 13th AAF "Bomber Barons," Somewhere in the Philippines. - Our crew is a composite of most of the Yankee States. All of us are from either the great Middle West or the East.

Our interests and personalities differ as much as our home states do. We're all in our twenties and the six enlisted men of the crew and two of the officers entered the Army in mid-'43. For those reasons we find plenty of material for bull sessions and still the whole crew can live, work and play together without any great dissensions in the happy family.

Our pilot, First Lt. Milford Peck, is above all else an army officer. He enlisted at the Rochester, N.Y. station before Pearl harbor and intends to stay in the Army after V-J Day. He was a coast artiller officer before entering pilot's training and as our crew commander he expects plenty of discipline from us. Believe me--he gets it! Anyone who would refuse to obey stern, erect, military Lt. Peck's authority would suffer the consequences. Even so we respect him as one of the best of airplane drivers and when we are in trouble wrongfully it has been proven that our pilot will back us.

Lt. Dick Schilbilisky, the co-pilot, is a dark, rather handsome Polish boy who goes by the nickname of "Sleeping Judas." He comes from Beaver Dam, Wis., and his poker playing is infallible. Dick and another officer plan to establish a casino in Reno come postwar. I for one would never play their games--not with Schilbilisky dealing.

The crew's navigator, Capt. Fred Degregerio, is a cheerful little guy from Boston. He's lost some of his B-aah-ston accent in his four army years, but you can still tell that he wasn't brought up in Georgia. He entered the Air Force shortly after obtaining a chemical engineering degree at Boston college. After graduating with one of the first classes of commissioned navigators, this lover of "Momma's Italian spaghetti" ferried bombers to Europe and North Africa. Later he taught navigation to Air Force cadets and finally he joined our B-24 outfit as a final resort to get into combat. The captain's daily smile and good word has made all of us accept him as a likable comrade.

Pittsburgh's gift to the crew--Lt. Robert Wycoff--our bombardier, is the type that wears a uniform that the ladies admire. When we were in the states Lt. Bob had more feminine playmates than the rest of the crew combined. He can also, I am happy to add, blast a Nipponese target as nicely as he does a lady's heart.

The other crew guy from Pennsylvania is John "Deacon" Devan--our engineer. He got the nickname of "Deacon" years ago because of his definite dislike towards liquor and smokes. He's a swell joe, however, and we enlisted man, due to his age--29 years, consider him the daddy of our crew. In fact, come August, his wife back in Uniontown, Pa., will make him a "daddy."

Radio Operator Paul Sullivan is a "little boy" (5 ft. 7 in. high) from Omaha, Neb. He got married last Dec. in Walla Walla, and the whole crew celebrated his wedding for a month. From Sully's Irish ancestors he has inherited a gift of gab that would do justice to a Fuller brush salesman. His imaginative qualities also make us sometimes think that "Sullivan is lying through his teeth."

## SvcMen WW II Letters

H. L. West, a sharpie from Chicago, is second oldest enlisted man on the crew. At the age of 28 he is still well preserved though and some of us (including H.I.) class him as the crew's glamour boy. He's our armorer-gunner and since I'm his assistant, "Uncle Harry" is usually preaching to me the facts of gunnery, bombing and life. His little woman, Eleanor, back in Chi. thinks H.L. is tops. I met her before we came overseas and I think she's tops so maybe she is right about Uncle H. (She has subscribed for this paper so I had to get her name it--forgive me.)

Irwin Stanley Dockery, nose gunner, is one of the few remaining Missourians not in Washington . . . and he is a typical Missouri lad if ever I saw one. Dock is silent as the Sphinx unless he actually has something to say. His humor is of the subtle Will Rogers variety and his philosophies are so darned practical that they are almost genius. He thinks I talk too much--see how right he can be?

Our ball target gunner, Dick Paul, from football famous Massillon, Ohio, is the one whose name upsets orderly room clerk typists. They refuse to believe that "Paul" is the last name and consequently he usually has to produce dog tags to prove he isn't joking. Paul and I are the crew's youngest members so we are the best of buddies. I call him "Tubby" due to his Falstaffian physique and he calls me "Meatless" for some unexplained reason.

Since I am the tail gunner there needn't be much discussion on my character. Besides, Dockery put it very well when he said I talk too much--so leave us let it go at that.

[The News-Sentinel, Saturday, July 7, 1945]

### BOMBER BARONS' BREEZETTES

By

By "Beezer Bennett"

With the 13th Air Force "Bomber Barons" somewhere in the Philippines. When the last bomb has been dropped and the last bullet has cracked in this war I will still be remembering my friend, Jerry Cavanaugh. In fact, as long as I live I shall remember him.

I will long recall our lengthy talks in various bars, post-exchanges, barracks, and tents from Texas to the Philippines. I shall remember how fervently he spoke in pacifism. He could never understand why he or any other civilized person should hate and kill his fellowman. He spent the last months of his life thinking about why he wasn't still in the Columbia School of Music learning more piano instead of in the army learning the mechanisms of a machine gun.

Talented Pianist

I met Jerry when we were both gunnery students in Laredo, Texas. He was my bunk-mate and from the very first we were close friends. His home was in Boston and he had devoted his life to becoming a concert pianist. He didn't look the part in the least--he was tall--rather gangly, and not especially handsome until he smiled his heart warming Irish smile. When he played the piano then his face would light up like never before. His eyes had an incandescence and a faraway look similar to the look of a day-dreamer who has just stumbled onto a dream of golden castles and streets lined with silver. His favorite compositions were from Grieg, Chopin and Bach. At times when we were in the Laredo Service Club he would go into Gershwin melodies and for me he invariably played my favorite "Clare de Lune." One night in particular he played it in a tiny Mexican restaurant. When he had finished the customers were applauding and heralding him in both Spanish and English.

Sister Stages Party

From Laredo we went to Lemoore, Calif., for a month. Lemoore is only 200 miles from Los Angeles and one week-end Jerry invited me to his sister Jeane's home in Beverly Hills. We were there for one of her Saturday night parties--a "rout" she called it. Her apartment was typical of the artistic Cavanaughs. She was a portrait painter and was quite good at it. Her canvasses lined the studio walls. Her friends--writers, publishers, undiscovered starlets, and as many of Hollywood's bizarre and nondescript characters as could be assembled in one place were present.

Cav seemed quite at home amongst them. I felt left out somewhat at first but his sister took me in tow, introduced me as a pre-army up and coming journalist and after a few martinis even I believed it!

## SvcMen WW II Letters

From California Jerry went to Tonopah, Nevada for his combat training and I went to Washington. We wrote occasionally and both of us hoped to come overseas together.

That didn't seem probable but when I arrived at San Francisco there Jerry was--in the Service Club of the P.O.E. base and as usual he was playing the piano while G.I.'s crowded around to listen and encourage.

We spent one evening together in 'Frisco. We went to The Top of the Mark at the renowned Mark Hopkins Hotel and over vodka highballs we discussed the past and most of all, our coming adventures in combat.

He wasn't opposed to coming overseas. Neither of us were. We had been in the states long enough and U.S.O. commanding had lost its appeal long ago. All both of us wanted was to get our tour of duty over and return to civilian life.

### Reunion in Philippines

I arrived in the Philippines in April. Two weeks later Cav arrived. It was a grand reunion. We talked of the island spots that both of us had seen since we left the U.S. Jerry had picked up a ukelele in Honolulu and we annoyed the dickens out of our crews--him plunking the Hawaiian mandolin and me yodeling at the top of my voice!

Life went on like this for two months until last week. We were both assigned to a rougher than usual mission and the night before taking off both of us were sort of jittery. After the movies we sat up talking until time for breakfast at one a.m. Sleep was impossible anyway and both of us were in a talkative mood. Funny, as I remember it now, how we discussed what difference it would make if one of us failed to return on the morrow. All flyers think of it at times but Cav seemed more obsessed with the idea than usual. He wondered if the people back in the states thought about the guys over here very much now that the European war was over. He imagined that they didn't--he said that if something should happen to him and his "magical piano fingers" no one would ever know, much less care, except possibly his immediate family.

Then he laughed and said, "Well Beeze, if anything does ever happen give me a write-up in that column of yours."

I promised him I would and this is my endeavor.

### Meets Death Over Japan

Sgt. Jerry Cavanaugh, tail gunner, pianist, lover of peace, my friend, was killed by Japanese flak last week over enemy territory. The flak was thick around us and from my tail turret I saw one burst hit his B-24 broadside; then another hit squarely in the bomb bays which hadn't has yet been emptied of their missiles.

His Liberator with ten men aboard was blown to nothingness before my very eyes.

Now, at night, as I toss and turn trying to sleep, I wonder why it was that no one could ever explain to Jerry why there had to be wars. You see--none of us really know.

[The News-Sentinel, Wednesday, July 11, 1945]

### LETTER FROM ED WILSON

Tinian  
July 10

Dear Korb:

Received my 2 pair of Topps coveralls today and boy, they're really swell for my purpose. Thanks a million Korbie. Received your letter a few days ago, so thought I would wait until they came before I wrote. Thought you might like to know I dedicated my whole load of bombs to you on July 4 on Takamatsu, Japan--so you were well represented that night. Guess you know about me being a pop by now. I'll sure take you up on the use of that cottage when I get back.

Guess that is all for now. Write me soon.

Always,  
Ed Wilson

[The News-Sentinel, Wednesday, July 18, 1945]

### LETTER FROM MYRON BERKHEISER

## SvcMen WW II Letters

Pfc. Myron Berkheiser  
England, 1945

Dear Folks:

We went to Camp Kilmer in New Jersey, which was the P.O.E. about 40 miles south of New York City. We stayed there for two weeks and on the 23rd day of June we boarded a train and arrived at the harbor and boarded a ferry and rode across the harbor and got off onto the docks and waited there to walk up the gangplank onto the ocean liner. While waiting on the dock, the Red Cross served us coffee and doughnuts and also candy bars. It was about 8:30 when up the gangplank we walked carrying duffle bag, pack and gas mask. We were shown to our compartment, which was to be our living quarters for the trip. We ate, slept and spent part of our time there during the day, but we always spent as much of our time on deck as possible.

On Saturday morning, June 24, we pulled out of the harbor. While leaving the harbor everyone stayed down below and were allowed to come up on deck about the time we got near Ellis Isle. It was quite a sight, the sun was shining and real warm. The sea was calm and planes were with us flying overhead. The name of our ship was Large Bay, an English boat. The food was terrible. After we were out for a day there were boats in front and back of us. I counted as high as a hundred boats. We could see soldiers on deck, airplanes on other ships. For several days it was real warm and then towards the end of the trip it was so cold that everyone wore their overcoats. I remember on the Fourth of July I wore my overcoat on deck. There was no excitement coming over, we had destroyers but never saw any subs. It was sure good to see land again at Scotland. There was a Scottish band, men dressed in skirts, played for us and again the Red Cross served us coffee and doughnuts. We then started out for another ride by rail. I stayed up until midnight and watched the scenery. About six in the morning we were in London. Someone said an air raid was on. We were then stopped and backed up into a tunnel. We waited in London for about four hours. It was a V-bomb raid. The railroad was hit up ahead of us, so we had to go another route. We saw houses along the track that had been hit that morning. Things looked pretty bad. We got to our camp that afternoon in southern England. We lived in tents out in the country. Up on a hill, it was called Wind Whistle Hill. It was known as Lord Nelson's estate, a beautiful place, down at the foot of the hill. We stayed here 12 days and were issued our rifles, which we took to France.

During the 12-day stay here we did a little training and made some road marches. We had good eats and slept in tents, eight to a tent. We were processed and most of our clothes taken away from us. Then the word came we were alerted and the next morning we got up at 3:00 o'clock and about 8:30 got on busses to go to the train. We rode on the train until about noon and got off somewhere near Southampton, at this place we ate dinner and were given ammunition and then loaded on trucks and moved again to a marshalling area. This was in a woods enclosed by high barbed wire fence. Here we spent the night and the next morning again boarded trucks and then rode for a long time through Southampton to the docks. Here we took off our packs, ate dinner and waited to again walk up the gangplank. Along about the middle of the afternoon we boarded the ship and pulled out of the harbor before dark and were on our way to France. That was Wednesday and we were on the Channel until Saturday noon. The water was so rough we couldn't get off. There sure was a mob of boats in the Channel where we got off. To get off we slid down a tube from the large ship to the landing craft, which in turn took us ashore.

It was about 1:00 o'clock Saturday, July 21, 1944, when I set foot on French soil. We landed on Omaha beach, which you have read about, and from there walked about two miles in and ate dinner. It was a cold rainy day. We stayed here until dark and then again boarded trucks and rode in blackout to the depot until about midnight. We were so tired that when we arrived at the depot we spread our blankets out and shelter halves and laid down on the ground to sleep. I went to sleep at once and heard nothing until morning. The other fellows told that before they were asleep German planes came over and dropped flares, but could not see us and then left. I slept through it all. The next day, Sunday, we dug fox holes close to the hedge rows and then pitched our tents and we were warm and had protection that way too. It never got dark until about 10:30 and almost every night as soon as it was dark, here came the German planes. Every field had anti-aircraft guns



## SvcMen WW II Letters

and they would shoot at them. We always called him bed-check "Charlie." Nothing ever happened, it was just a patrol to see if he could find us. We could see artillery fire that was about 2 miles away on the front lines. Then came day when the 3,000 planes came over, that was a beautiful sight. I never expect to see anything like it. You probably read about the break-through at St. Lo. While we were at this depot here in France for two weeks, we took short road marches for an hour every afternoon down along the beach. That was a bad place, pillboxes, barbed wire and lots of German guns and stuff. This had all been captured for several weeks.

Then one Saturday morning at mailcall, certain men were called to leave at different times. It was here that we became separated, friends who had become buddies in the past two months. We rode until along in the afternoon. We stayed here until Tuesday evening and again went for another truck ride in the dark. About midnight we stopped and slept till daylight. Then we rode some more. Wednesday night we slept back with the kitchen and moved up again the next morning. Then on Thursday at noon we again moved up to the front lines. This was by truck and then marched up and was assigned to our outfit. It was here on Thursday afternoon, Aug. 10 at about 3:00 o'clock I joined the 134th Inf. Regiment, Co. I., of the 35th Division. Here we were on the front lines, what a funny feeling. It was pretty quiet, no shooting, so we dug in and our officers talked with us. That space in front of us was no man's land. We stood guard for an hour at a time. This wasn't so bad, nothing really exciting here. Here I was making history. The folks back home were reading about the front lines and I was on it. We went to bed and slept until 1:00 o'clock and got up for two hours guard duty. It was a beautiful sight, the moon was real bright and a person could see plainly. It was cold out as the nights get very cold.

I have always got a laugh when I think back how scared my buddy got that night. He was only a short distance away, and he thought he saw something move on the other side of the fence, or hedgerow. It was quite a drop off down to the next field. Everything was real quiet and he called to me in a whisper to come over to where he was, as he thought sure he saw a German crawling on the ground. I went over but could see nothing, so I went back and pretty soon he fired two shots at the object. When our time was up we went back to bed and I forgot about it until along the middle of the morning, so I asked him what he shot and got no answer so I went to look. All it was was a long branch of a tree that in the darkness looked like a man and the longer he watched it the more he thought he could see it move.

Friday morning we shaved and the morning papers came and we read those and everything was quiet. Once in a while a shell would go over, but not often. The cooks brought our dinner to us and then in the afternoon the word came down that we would move out to another location and dig in again. We had been holding this position against the Germans in case they would try to make an escape. This was in the Fallise Gap, which we closed and trapped so many Germans in August. Along about 3:00 o'clock we packed up all our equipment and moved to another position and started to dig in again for the night. After we had dug for an hour or so, the order came down again, pack up everything, we were going to move again. We waited then and ate supper in a sunken road, and also took enough canned rations along with us for at least three meals. It was about 6:30 or 7:00 o'clock when we started out on a road march. We had no opposition for a long time. We marched to the town of Donfroust and then turned left or west as we came from the north. We kept marching and stopping for a long time and then came to a place where several trucks were burning and a farm home. Here we left the road and turned south through an orchard past some farm buildings, chickens and rabbits were everywhere and the people had left. From these buildings we went through the fields away from the road toward the hills. It was now getting late in the evening. For awhile we waited in a woods and then about dark we went into a field and stayed for the night. I took guard duty from 11:30 to 1:30 and tried to sleep the rest of the night but it was so cold I couldn't or didn't very much. At these times it seems that morning will never come.

It was now Saturday morning and just getting daylight. It was rather foggy and cold out. Everyone was cold and stiff, but it was better as the sun got higher. The ones that wanted to or felt like it ate breakfast of C rations. I wasn't hungry so didn't care to eat. In a little while we put on our packs and were all ready to go and boy, what a load. We were to advance and take the hill,

## SvcMen WW II Letters

which we started up the night before. The command came down and we moved out. We marched up and over hedgerows, single file a short distance between each man. We walked and walked and met no opposition. In a little while we met the 137th Infantry Regiment bringing some German prisoners down the hill. They had gotten there ahead of us and had taken it. We went farther on and then dug in for to hold our position against a counter-attack. After we had gotten dug in, they started shelling us and that lasted for a long time. I ate dinner in this fox hole, and stayed close inside of it too. Then about 2:30 word came that we were to move out. Then we pulled back and went around this hill to the left and down through a lane. There was a lot of companies ahead of us and the moving was slow. We came up beside some buildings and down another lane. The sun was hot, the ground was dry and dusty. The sound up ahead sure wasn't too pleasant and I was pretty sure someone was sure to get hurt. Well then we pulled back beside the buildings. I felt pretty good only hardly knew what to expect next or what to do. Some of the fellows were picked to move around and try to knock out the tanks that were holding up our advance. I was left with our squad, for which I was thankful not to be picked to go on any mission.

We were alongside this French building and the order was given for us to move out and cross the road to our front and turn left and advance up to some buildings and clean snipers out of them. The scouts crossed the road and two mortar shells were dropped at the far corner of the building to our front. I was right behind the squad leader and he said "Wait a minute." While we were waiting two more mortar shells dropped to our right and too close. The next thing I remember I was trying to get on my feet and get inside the building. Everyone else was gone except one and he never knew what happened. I was more or less dazed, but there was a consciousness that someone was at my side, my right side. I was being helped, I was being lifted, help was there. I looked around, but no one was there. There was help from Above. I had a feeling that I had not been forsaken, but we are promised that Angels will bear us up. I got into the barn or building and laid down on some hay. There were six or seven men in there wounded and an old French woman, who had been hurt. There was several other soldiers who had not been hit there too. With some help I got my shoes off and took my wound tablets and bandaged my knee and arms. I had very little pain only my left leg from the knee down was numb and asleep and felt cold. This happened about 4:15 and the medics came about 7:30 and gave me and everyone else a shot of morphine, and about eight or after we were taken to a first aid station. Our squad leader had died in the meantime, sitting in the doorway between the two rooms. He didn't seem to be hurt bad, but the medics said he had died from shock.

At the time we were taken in the jeep to the first aid station they took our name, bandaged me up, put a splint on my left leg and gave me a pint of blood plasma, but it seems as if all night I was riding and going in and out of hospitals, we must have stopped at three. I woke up and found that I was so cold, seemed as if I would freeze. I had lots of blankets over me, so the nurse lit a lantern, regular kerosene type, and put it under my cot. This was the 41st Evacuation hospital. One of the ward boys got my clothes off and gave me another pint of blood plasma. Then they took some X-ray pictures and about noon I was taken to the operation room and then given my first ether. I don't know what they did. I was then put in a large tent with lots of men. I ate my first meal, supper, Sunday evening, since Saturday noon. I had no appetite. Every four hours I was given a shot and some pills. Then a pill to go to sleep. I sure had some crazy dreams. I'd chase the Jerries and they would chase me. That kept up for a week or more. We had good care here. The ether never made me sick at all, I guess I didn't have anything to get sick on. I never suffered from much pain, only my left leg felt so much as if it was asleep. It was hard to turn over as both arms had bandages on as well as both my legs and back and some on my hips.

I stayed at this Evacuation hospital Sunday, Monday and Tuesday afternoon was taken to another hospital or large tent and left here for an hour or so, ate supper and then moved to the airstrip. The weather was too cloudy and no planes were able to fly so we stayed Tuesday night and until Wednesday evening. About 8:00 o'clock we were loaded again and put in C-47 planes and soon were on our way to England. It was cloudy when we took off, but we were soon to a height above the clouds and the sun was so bright and those clouds looked like big snow banks. I

## SvcMen WW II Letters

was lucky to be by a window over the left wing and could raise up and look out. A flight nurse and a ward boy kept check on everyone to see that they were all right.

The flight from [sic] England had a lesson for me and a beautiful picture to look at and one to compare with life. The ground was dark and cloudy, the sun hid from us, but as we climbed up the picture also changed. Here we are to life, everything looks so dark and dreary we can't see the sun, but we never look up. If we only look up and see beyond the clouds, God will roll the clouds away and our lives can be full of sunshine. It was a very good comparison of life today.

As soon as we landed in England we were taken to hospitals and how good beds looked with clean, white sheets and white blankets. I could hardly sleep. I stayed here Wednesday night, Thursday and Friday after dinner I was taken to the 192nd General hospital and from there I wrote the second letter since I was wounded. There were 28 of us in a ward and I stayed here for four weeks.

[The News-Sentinel, Saturday, July 21, 1945]

### SECOND LETTER FROM EARL EDWARD WHEATLEY

(Editor's Note: The following letter was received from Pfc. Earl Edward Wheatley a few days ago from Germany, where he is in Wire Communications in the Field Artillery. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. William G. Wheatley, route 1, Box 46, Monterey, Indiana.)

Germany

Dear Mom:

We moved today to the most German city in the world, according to the defunct Adolf. This is Nuremburg, birthplace of the greater united third German Reich; and a slightly destroyed monument to the 8th Air Force. One night a thousand or so bombers paid the city a social call and fifteen minutes later there was no city of Nuremburg. Only piles of bricks frosted with broken glass. The bull-dozers cleared the streets for army traffic and piled the trash on the sidewalks. So everyone walks on the streets and hence the traffic is still tied up. Today the PW's (prisoners of war) were shoveling trash into trucks, trying to clean up the place. Looks like a hopeless job to me.

### Germans Orderly

In case you have not guessed already I can tell you now that I am in the 3rd army. We are now almost in garrison. This is a sort of inn, beerhall and theatre combined. The town is well populated, seems to be quiet and orderly. More people live here now than before the war and the streets are crowded. The neighboring grocery shop has a line of customers all day. They start to line up at 6 a.m. and similar lines form early in the door of the creamery on the next street. The street in front of our barracks is very wide and is used as a motor park and a parade ground. Above the kitchen is an auditorium for plays or movies. Four of us live in a room in this house. We are quite comfortable. Tonight we had a party, beer and sandwiches and a band.

The flashlight you sent me came through safely and it was a very good idea to put it in that tin with the lid fastened on with screws.

The German concentration camps were without parallel in history and the prisoner of war camps were not pleasant places either. Most of the men did not starve to death but they had damn little to eat from the Jerry. Red Cross feed packages kept a good many of them from starving. I think most of the Jerry are glad that the war is over but of course desperately sorry that they did not win it.

I have 40 points which is not enough. One of our men has only 2 days to wait. Slight change. Now I have 50 points, two more battle stars. Some of the boys who had 80 or so points are really happy now. One of the crew had 84. He was really hunting until the extra stars were announced.

Anywhere the fight was hot, the group was. We were in the 9th for the September 16th jump-off, in the 1st for the Bulge battle and for the drive for the Rohr River Dams and the Remegan bridge-head; in the 9th for the Rohr pocket and with the 3rd when they crossed the Main, the Isar and the Danube. The only time we had real trouble was the Bulge. I spent the worst week of my life from Christmas Eve to the 1st of January. We took over the wire net of the 1th [sic] Airborne Corps on top of our own wire; had a total of 230 miles of wire to install and maintain. The wire crews were out all day and all night for 2 days getting in communications. And one knew what

## SvcMen WW II Letters

the score was. Jerry tanks came through the "lines" with our own tank columns; our planes were shot down by our own AA. I saw a plane shot down by AA on the day before Christmas. The U.S. shot down a flying forts in broad daylight. That hurt us. How the Doughs lived through such bitter cold weather in nothing but a hole in the ground will always be a mystery to me. We wire crews lived in a hayloft after the wire was in and nearly froze to death.

### Has Narrow Escape

One night the Jerry dropped a bomb about one hundred yards away from our barn. (That was the night I was opening some of my Christmas packages in the dark, as we did not dare have a light). The bomb blew a hole across the road that would hold a 2 1/2 ton truck and of course broke all our telephone wires. Ten minutes later all the wiremen from my outfit and several other crews were trying to sort out the ends of the 50 more or less different wires. Jerry of course chose that particular time to get rid of the rest of his ammunition. Everybody promptly left and let him have the road for a target. Well no sooner had we started work again than he came back again. That was the time when Cpl. Mulgrew fell down the road embankment and wrapped himself around a tree. Jerry left and Watson walked over to Mulgrew, "Hay, John what are you hugging that TNT for?" The tree he was using for cover had 20 pounds of blasting powder tied to it. There are a good many shattered tree stumps along the Belgium roads where the Engineers made hasty road blocks. Staff finally found the ends of two of our lines and gave them to the Commander. "Hold these while I find the other ends." But when he finally found the matching ends, Rocky was gone. "Where were you when the plane came back the second time, Lieutenant?" asks Staff next day. "Why, ha. ha. or, I had some work I just remembered I had to do," says Rocky.

Time to stop for now and unload the C and R Car. That is command and reconnaissance car to you. See you later.

Love, Earl

Mrs. Wheatley writes:

Last week we received a box from Earl containing a Russian gun taken from the Germans. It is a very odd gun with a strange, very long sharp and pointed bayonet. Not at all like the bayonets of the German army, it is not much larger around than a pencil. He also sent a beautiful, double-barrelled shotgun with silver trimmings. This makes eight guns that Earl has sent from Germany.

We live in the Leiters Ford vicinity and Earl graduated from the Leiters Ford High School.

Earl's letter was not dated, but I think it was written some weeks ago.

The shotgun was made by the Krupp Company of Germany.

[The News-Sentinel, Tuesday, July 31, 1945]

## BOMBER BARONS' BREEZETTES

By

By "Beezer" Bennett

With The 13th Air Force "Bomber Barons" Somewhere in the Philippines, July 20. - Ernie Pyle once wrote that the two worst enemies of a GI in the Pacific are distance and time. As always, the late friend to all Yanks was right.

The distance between this island and Indiana is approximately 9,000 miles, but to us it's much further than that. It's 10 letter days away. It's many moons of waiting and working away. It's a memory of spring, summer, autumn and winter away. At times when the odds of combat look bad--it's too far away to even think about.

There are, however, some bridges that link the distance between the Philippines and home to keep reminding us that home is still there awaiting our return.

### Mail Buoys Spirits

The chief bridge that opens the numerous miles is mail. Without it our spirits hit a low that no civilian can perceive. It is mail that renews our fading memories of home, families and friends. In all branches of the service out here it is mail that keeps the men going, keeps them happy and keeps reminding them that back there on the other side of the world there are folks who think of them and anxiously await their safe return.

## SvcMen WW II Letters

The other enemy --Villian Time--links hand in hand with Monster Distance. It is the time that army, navy and marines have on their hands that leads to a gnawing indescribable boredom that in extreme cases sometimes creates psycho-neurotic or "pineapple crazy" cases. You see, while each of us has a job to do that job only comes in spurts and sprints. In the Air Force, for example, we may fly missions daily for a week and then be grounded for a month while the other crews fly.

### Idleness Nerve-racking

It is those long spaces between combat sorties that make us tired from doing nothing, irritable with our buddies, and at time so disgusted with the palm trees, jungles, etc., that we could scream.

In the European theater there was less boredom and homesickness, I imagine, due to the relativity between Europe and the United States. There, the service guys found cities and villages similar to our own, with women precisely the same as Jane Doe, U.S.A.

Here, the females may appeal to the boys from Harlem, but to us--uh! uh!

Therefore, to add diversion to our hum-drum lives and to keep us off our "sacks" at least part-time we either entertain hobbies or find jobs to do that appeal to us.

Harry West, for instance, has gone into the souvenir business. He collects shells along the Pacific beach and with a big shell for the body, smaller ones for the feet, tails and heads, and using pipe cleaners for connections Harry has made some sharp-looking shell turtles. He paints "Piliippines--1945" on their backs and sells them to the guys at a neat profit.

Another sergeant we know salvages plexi-glass from downed aircraft in our airplane "grave-yard" with which he makes plexi-glass hearts and inserts (by means of heating and tempering) Philippine coins of the present year. They also sell well.

### Engineer a Gardener

"Deacon," our engineer, has charge of the crew's Victory garden. It's a teensy-weensy affair about 10 feet square, but "Deacon" has already given us some tasty radishes from it and his tomato plants, onions, and lettuce are doing nicely too. He's also planted some sweet peas that entwine on a string trellis beside our tent's door. They add a touch of home, believe me.

For my personal escape from boredom I have a more athletic field since God didn't endow me with the talents of a gardener or gadget-constructor. My chief job between missions is "wire editor" (that's what they call me) on the Bomber Baronet, our group's daily mimeographed four-page newspaper. For an hour each morning and each evening I type the news as it comes from San Francisco via short wave. As the announcer talks very slowly for men all over the Pacific who await his dictation-speed broadcasts so it isn't too hard a job. I like the work because it deals with news and my typing is slowly improving, which is definitely good! The rest of my spare hours are usually spent reading and sometimes I trek to the beach to play and fight with the surf.

My reading has advanced somewhat over here . . . thanks to our library that contains for the most part books that the USO collected from you people some time ago. In my school days I thought Dickens, Emerson, Victor Hugo and other classical writers were rather on the dull side but, would you believe it, they've actually become interesting and in such a short time too!

The Army Institute also offers many of us a chance for diversion and education at the same time. My course, "Better News Writing" is a splendid one in basic journalism prepared by Northwestern's Medill school of journalism. There are numerous courses and a number of GIs and officers here take advantage of them.

These are just a few of the ways that soldiers fight Enemies Time and Distance. It's a tough battle at times but even though we lose ground occasionally, for the most part we are winning THIS war too.

[The News-Sentinel, Thursday, August 2, 1945]

### LETTER FROM DUSTIN GENE LOWMAN

Rome, Italy

July 19, 1945

Dear Mother & Dad:

Right now I'm pretty much keyed off, in fact I'm burning up and I believe I have every good reason to be! I have been sweating this day (July 19, 1945, time 2:40 p.m.) out for over a week

## SvcMen WW II Letters

now. The day and time came, but it all ended up as a great disappointment to me. Because I still can't help but believe that someone messed up the whole deal for me. Well, that is what its all about and I'm afraid after you read this letter you are going to be very disappointed also. This is what happend.

A little over a week ago I came into Rome, sweat a line out and finally made an appointment for today. I came into Rome this morning to keep that appointment feeling all smiles and sunshine. I spent most of the afternoon in a Rome telephone office waiting room for them to place a call for me to Mr. and Mrs. Donald A. Lowman living in Rochester, Indiana. It seems as if everything went wrong. First there was a storm somewhere between here and the States. They couldn't take any calls until the middle of the afternoon. Then finally at last they started putting them in and they even got around to your call. But it seems that Mr. and Mrs. Donald A. Lowman no longer have a telephone. Now what I want to know is that right. They even tryed for the call a second time but the answer was the same. I just couldn't believe it as I'm sure Dad needs some kind of a phone for his business, but it seems that you aren't listed there any longer. So now you know why I am so very disappointed. They were to even cable you a day or so ahead of time to be sure you were on hand for the call when it came. Let me know if you ever got any cable.

In a day or so I may try to put another call in for Mary. But I don't know if I want to spend another day like this one or not. I think I was even more nervous than the expected father. Anyway, I think I did as much walking up and down the hallway as a father would do. Well, anyway, it was rather fun trying. Maybe I'll have better luck next time. I sure hope so anyway.

Its getting rather late so I had better be closing this letter and heading for the bus. Be sure and give me the dope on this telephone business and if you really have a phone how about droppng around to there office and getting acquainted. Also if you have a phone please send me the number. And another thing, if I get back there and I find out you should have gotten that call I'm sure going to let them know who I am. And I'm not kidding.

Your Loving Son,  
Dustin [Gene Lowman]

### SEVENTH LETTER FROM HAROLD DEAN CLEVINGER

China  
August 5, 1945

Dear Mother:

I received your letter and I was glad to hear from you. How are you and the kids. I don't know whether I should say kids or not, I guess they are pretty big. I got the picture and the cards you sent me. I won some money with them playing poker. There is a rumor going around that we may get home for Christmas, but I don't think there is anything to it.

I am living in a barrackes now but it won't last very long, everything is out-of-bounds.

How is everything around home? I suppose it is all dead. Oh yes, I have been getting a paper from home.

I was in Kuming, China, for a while and I liked it, it sure was a nice place. If I don't get to go home I would like to go back there. I drove a truck while I was in Kuming, an Army truck, - 6x6, 2 1/2 ton. I haven't heard from Sis for awhile. I should get a letter from her before long.

How is Jack and Gertie getting along? Did you tell Jack I was in China? I am going to get my teeth fixed up in a day or so. I am feeling fine. Well, in two months and 10 days I will have three years in the Army, then I will get \$3.00 more a month. I get \$64.80 a month now, that will make me \$67.80. Well, Mother, I can't think of much more to write so I will close for now. Tell Bob I said write me a line or two. I like to hear from him.

With lots of love,  
Harold

[The News-Sentinel, Monday, August 20, 1945]

### THIRD LETTER FROM EARL EDWARD WHEATLEY

Editor News-Sentinel

## SvcMen WW II Letters

Dear Sir:

The W. G. Wheatley family of the Leiters vicinity received the letter following from Pfc. Earl Edward Wheatley this week.

Offenhausen, Germany  
August 7th, 1945

Dear Mom:

You never had a little kid tell you all about his folks being killed in an air raid, did you? All the hate gone, just bewilderment and a desperate attempt to keep from crying. Didn't help much to tell him or myself that his people started this war. After all four year old boys do not start wars. War is hard on children no matter where they are.

Crops here are being retarded by cold wet weather. This is the coldest summer I ever lived thru. The farm people now have plenty of food but already the people in the cities are hungry. Europe and Germany also will starve this winter if the USA doesn't help them. Also freeze. There is absolutely no coal for anything except the electric plants. Even vital canning plants are stalled for lack of fuel. Europe is sure going to be hungry this winter. City people are hungry right now.

Oxen are quite common draft animals all thru Europe and in this section they are much more used than horses. There are no fences. The women feed the cows by cutting the grass with a scythe and raking it by hand also. A field of grass cut by them is so short and so even that you would be willing to swear it had been cut by a lawn mower. Wheat, rye and oats are grown in tiny patches, no larger than our tomato patch usually is. Almost all grain is cradled and the bundles are tied with a twist of straw. Belgiums wagons were 2wheeled. And so are those of North Germany. Here they are four wheeled but often are drawn by only one animal. Liqueid manure is always collected and hauled to the field in a long barrel. The stench when it is being scattered is beyond comparison.

The fishing is good and there are deer in the woods 5 miles from Nurnberg. Hunting licenses cost 800 marks and were good for 2 years. One violation and goodbye license.

The house and barn are still under one roof. Pine needles are collected for bedding. A large number of the people here are homeless. The Displaced Persons are still in the Camps here just the same as when they were prisoners. The Camps are infested with lice and bed bugs because the people have neither soap or insecticides. Even fuel for heating hot water is very scarce. I saw an old man work 2 hours the other day digging up a charred stick about 6x6x3 feet. It is very cold and wet here, feels like fall instead of summer. Mom, I pity the little children.

Love,  
Earl

[The News-Sentinel, Tuesday, August 28, 1945]

### BOMBER BARONS' BREEZETTES

By

By "Beezer" Bennett

With The 13th Air Force "Bomber Baron" Somewhere in the Philippines. - I started out to write a very serious article on something or other but then I Noticed the letter "L" on the typewriter I use and decided to tell you about it.

This letter "L" is without a doubt the most eccentric "L" that the Underwood folks ever riveted (or whatever they do to attach letters) to one of their machines. In the early mornings when I come here to the news room to type the morning news for The Bomber Baronet this letter "L" refuses to budge. Somehow the morning air affects it and only through the most diligent pleadings, hammerings, and cursings can I talk it into working for me.

However, this same letter "L" works beautifully in the evenings. There's never one flaw when I type this patter after dusk has fallen!

Do you get the picture? Is this neurotic "L" a split personality? Does it hate--just as you and I--to wake up in the mornings? Is it a decided night-owl whose only desire is to burn the midnight candle? Does it have pent-up passions to go night clubbing? Is there, possibly another letter "L" (or maybe a Corona machine) who it romances with when the shades of night descend?

## SvcMen WW II Letters

If there are any readers who have keys like mine with a mind of its own I do wish you'd write to me. Tell me what vitamins you put in your key's oil or what explanations you give to your keys to make them lead the good Jack Armstrongish type of life. I, personally, am at wit's end with this "L'ish" critter!

Now that that's settled did I ever tell you about our first night overseas? One day last March we were into a New Guinea transit camp after our 9,000 mile flight over her.

There we were--greener than green--assigned to a battered old tent that looked like it had been General Washington's command post at Valley Forge! Naturally it began to rain just after the Spam hour and our tent leaked like the proverbial sieve. In New Guinea, I might explain, that "rain" is just the term used to name it. Really it makes a good Yankee rainstorm look like a San Francisco fog! The New Guinea rain not only falls sideways--it doesn't catch you on the downward and sideward fall it hits the ground below you and catches you on the UPWARD swing!

Our tent's floor was of dirt and within an hour after the "rain" began to fall it looked like the Mississippi in the spring of '39. Before I could stop them my shoes had floated down to the mess hall and were being used for evacuating purposes!

To make the situation more snafu we hadn't checked out on the erection and general usage of the mosquito net yet. In the movies it may look simple to see a brawny Frank Buck casually cast aside one corner of his net and crawl into bed. Like the devil it is! First you have to figure out a way to hang the thing. On the tent's sides there are sometimes straps to connect one end of the net cage. Usually they're too high or too low but sometimes they're almost usable and you have one end connected. Then if you have more luck than brains you may be able to construct a wooden "T" shaped affair on which to hang the other end.

Sooooo after a good hour's labors and much panting and sweating you have the unprintable thing up--at least for the nonce. Then there comes the time to squirt insect killer inside the net and all over yourself. Sneakingly now you crawl into it--much the same way you did the night Moose had a big party and the "little woman" was waiting for you--brick bat in hand. After you're in with no major calamities you find you haven't tucked the ends of the net in around the blanket's edges. This you do--slowly and methodically--hoping against hope that you don't pull the thing down at this late date! Well, I got the net tucked in (Maybe you would have too. I doubt it.) and layed back a beaten and tired soldier.

Just when Morpheus began to grab me to her bosom there was an unmistakable buzz--a whirl. Lying on my stomach I peeked back to see a P-40 Jr. making a strafing run at my posterior! With one mad jump and slap I swatted! I missed! The net's sides however received my sounding blow and as the whole blankety-blank thing fell on me I positively heard that mosquito give me the raspberries!!!

For the remainder of the night I let caution, mosquitoes, and everything go to the winds. The rain soaked me and the mosquitos dive bombed me. Even today I still consider a night in the black hole of Calcutta as a treat compared to B-Night in New Guinea.

[The News-Sentinel, Friday, September 14, 1945]

### EIGHTH LETTER FROM HAROLD DEAN CLEVINGER

[Editor's Note: The following letter from Pfc. Harold Clevenger, who has served three years in the army, has seen 18 months service as a truck driver on the Burma road in China.)

China, Aug. 19th, 1945

Dear Mother:

I received your letter the other day so I will answer it.

How is everything around Rochester. I hear that the war is over. I may be on my way home by the time you get this letter. I hope so, now I can tell you where I have been and where I am at. I have been in Cageton, South Africa and the Island off the coast of Africa. I was in Bombay, India and Ramgarb and Laeo, India, Myithyina, Burma and Hhamo. I was with the first American troops to fight on the Burma road. It was the mars tank force. I have another ribbon, the Prsidential Citation. I was in Kunning, China for a while. I drove a truck when I was there. I am in the town



## SvcMen WW II Letters

Yunnan Province now. I may be home for Thanksgiving dinner. I will send you a picture in this letter.

How are you and the rest of the family, fine I hope. I am O.K. right now, and I hope I stay that way. If I land in Calif. I can say I have been around the world.

Well, the sun is shining out right now. We are in a valley. The barracks is about 30 yards from the Burma road. I have driven a truck on the Burma road. The road is like a country road back home, but its all mountains.

Well, Mother, there isn't much more to write about so I will close for now. Tell Bob I wrote to Pat that girl that lives in Muncie and she answered my letter, so I wrote to her again and sent her a picture of me.

I will be home soon.

Harold

[The News-Sentinel, Saturday, September 15, 1945]

### SECOND LETTER FROM DARREL L. CHAPMAN

Yokohama, Japan

Setp. 6, 1945

Dear Dad, Mother and Sister:

Yes, I'm in Japan and by the time you get this I will be in Tokyo, move in Friday.

We have waited for this moment ever since we came over. Our outfit has been picked to be the first in Tokyo. As soon as the war neared an end we started loading up. The night they started celebrating back there, we were busy standing by. Then we loaded on at Batanga, Luzon. Only a picked bunch of us came on the advance, 13,000 I think the news said. We were two days out and turned around and went back and laid over two days, in Manila Harbor, due to the Typhoons ahead. Then we came on steaming into Tokyo Bay in the early morning of Sept. 2nd. We were not far from the Missouri when the peace terms were signed, and hardly before the ink was dry we were docked and were unloading at Yokohama. It was a grand city. The Japs don't pay much attention to us. They don't smile but don't give any trouble, we go about our business and they theirs.

They have electric trains and street cars running. Everything is very modern. Crops are very good and green.

We are living in a Jap Army Camp, lights and running water don't know what we will have when we get to Tokyo.

Rec'd Mother's letter and also Sis's today, my first in Japan. You said you were going to be with Estil's at the fair, on the 9th. I will be in Tokyo thinking about you. How about saving some clippings and some pictures and maybe you can get some news reels of our entry, as the photographers will be as thick as flies.

Now since they are recounting up to Sept. 2nd I have 85 points and eligible to come home, but being here will slow it down a little. Maybe by the end of next month I can be one of the lucky ones.

I will cut this short and write a big one soon. No more censorship. Have to drop a line to the rest.

Keep writing often and to Willa, too, please.

Loads of love and God Bless All.

Your son,

Darrel

Please call the Beck's and tell them where I am.

My address is:

S/Sgt. Darrel L. Chapman

1st Signal Troop, 1st Cavalry Division,

APO 201, San Francisco, Calif.

[The News-Sentinel, Friday, September 21, 1945]

BOMBER BARONS' BREEZETTES

## SvcMen WW II Letters

By

By "Beezer" Bennett

With The 13th Air Force "Bomber Barons" In The Philippines. - Sept. 8. - Always on the alert to catch the trend of local developments we hitch-hiked to our nearby native village again today. This time it was to capture a few photographs with our Brownie, Jr., of the curio shops, the chapel I've already told you about, and of any other sources of photogenic interest.

My aide-de-camp on this afternoon's trek was one S/Sgt. Lee Stancoff, an exciting lad from Texarkana, Texas--out whar men are men and women are proud of it, podnar!

We snapped a few choice pictures of him standing near the Filipino cathedral, of me standing near an open-fronted souvenir store holding an earthen jug and smiling the usual unnatural leer that one reserves for such occasions. After posing all over the place we discovered a large building behind the chapel that neither of us had noticed before.

Like the chapel it was constructed of ancient, crumbling stone. There was a stone wall around the building with a delapidated gate that couldn't possibly have been closed due to rust. The iron grill-work on the gate showed evidence of another and more artistic Island Age. We entered the gateway and read on a recently erected signboard that this two-story affair was the Philippine version of "the little red school house." We read further and found that the Catholic mission ran the citadel of knowledge and that it was parochial.

The school door was open so naturally we climbed the stone steps and went inside. As we passed thru the door a drone of teacher's voices, chalk talks, students shuffling feet and chairs assured us that this was truly a school and that it was now in session. The hall in which we stood smelled musty like an old, seldom used museum. Over a century of decay in the stone walls and floors plus inadequate ventilation was probably the cause of the musty odor. On the school bulletin board (a single sheet of yellow paper) we noted that the morning classes were for the primary and lower grade children and that the afternoons were set aside for the high schoolers.

Suddenly from a small door directly across the hall a small Filipino nun came smilingly to greet us. She was well in her sixties but the years of doing good for others had left her face lined only with wrinkles of happiness and cheer. She wasn't over four feet tall and in her black convent robes she resembled a Dresden doll that one might find on exhibit in an art studio.

She introduced herself in English, as Sister Teresa. Then she asked us if she might show us around the school and, of course, we accepted. With pride in her voice she told us that her higher grade pupils (she was the principal, I gathered) were being taught English, Philippine government, world history, algebra--even as you and I--science and national language--which is the correct Philippine tongue spoken in Manila and the other more learned island cities.

As Sister Teresa spoke she led us past the class room doors. We checked the over-crowded rooms with two students per desk and some students were standing. All of the students were so earnestly engrossed in their studies that they scarcely noticed us as we passed down the corridors. How different from the usual United States high school classes!

After our tour the benevolent old Sister explained the answer to my question of why the girls and boys weren't in the same class room together.

"Boys and girls together--no goot. Girls fine," she twinkled, "but boys with girls cause trouble!

After school they can see enough of each other but in school--no goot!" She laughed then with a face wrinkled by time just as the building was crumbled by time. She showed us to the door and bade us a fond farewell.

When I come back to school again I'll remember this remote century-old building with its tiny old school marm. I'll also think of that "girls with boys in school--no goot" business. Maybe the old gal had something there!

[The News-Sentinel, Friday, September 28, 1945]

LETTER FROM JOHN HELT

Korea

Monday, Sept. 10

Dear Folks:

## SvcMen WW II Letters

Well, as I've nothing to do at the present I'll drop you a few lines. So far that eleven letters is all I've gotten, but I'll get some more pretty quick, I imagine. Well, I left Jack for awhile. He's going to stay on Okinawa for awhile yet, I think about a month.

Well, this doesn't look like such a bad place. It's rather hilly but there is some pretty good farming land around. Their main crop is sugar cane and rice. There sure is plenty of that. There is quite a bit of soy beans, they look like them anyway, and a little sweet corn. I guess the climate here is almost the same as there at home.

We've got a good layout here if we can get the place cleaned up. I guess we'll sleep in pup tents for the present. Last night about everyone froze as there weren't any blankets but we got them today so we should sleep pretty good tonight. It wasn't quite cold enough to frost but we had a lot of heavy dew. I imagine you have about the same weather as we'll have. A little about this place we're staying at.

It was a Jap cavalry unit when we took over. By the way we came in without a shot fired by either side. Well there are a lot of horse farms here with several horses around.

The Japs hadn't moved completely out yesterday morning so we have a few hanging around here yet. The place smells pretty bad partly on the part of the horses and partly on the part of the living quarters. Well next you'll probably wonder where I am. If you'll get a map and look up the capitol of Korea. Well, we're just on the city limit of that city. I think there are around nine hundred thousand people there. I think everyone of them came on the streets to watch us and welcome us. They had U. S. flags and really showed us how grateful they were for us. Of course most of them were pretty busy plowing. They sure were happy. Well the city is fairly modern. It has street cars and trains just like ours. They have a few cars. Most of them U. S. made. The steering wheels are on the right side though and the people drive on the left side of the road. The streets are in pretty good shape compared to what I thought they'd be.

This cavalry unit (Jap) is really on the ball. Their uniforms are really clean and look good. They really walk straight. It's about as good a unit as I expect to see. The Jap soldier salutes us but doesn't get one in return. They have some pretty nice buildings in towns in spite of the fact that the Japs ran all the factories. I guess the people have had some pretty tough times here. Some of them speak broken English and we learn a little from them. They really had a couple nice colleges in town. Red brick buildings that looked pretty good. Gee, we're going to have inspection so I'd better clean up a little.

Oh, yes, I got the Jap a real flag that was up here at this outfit; We had quite a scramble to get it but I guess I was a little luckier anyway it'll make a good souvenir for me.

Say about that camera if you haven't gotten one already try to find a nice small one like those which come in the small leather cases. Not a box camera. If you can't get one though try to get some 620 film. Also you can send something to eat in the way of fudge candy or anything that would keep for a couple weeks. Pack it pretty good though. I can get some pretty good pictures of things around here. Another odd thing around here is the enormous amount of kids. About one out of fifty was a girl and the rest boys that we saw. Maybe the girls were a little bashful though. I don't have any idea how long we'll be over here. But everything seems to be under control.

I might add that I didn't see any action. We went out on patrol about every day back on Okinawa and made some good Japs out of some though. Well, I guess I'll see if we get mail today and finish this. If there is anything you want to know let me know as our mail is not censored any more.

Something that would interest Donnie some was the rickshaws or something. The people pull these two wheeled carts. Another the oxen they have, they look about like a Guernsey bull, rather small. They may be Guernseys for all I know, also you've seen where about eight people carry these litters that are decorated up which carry some big-shots. Lots of these things. Also some ponies which pull the carts aren't over two feet tall, which is pretty small. Their riding horses are about the size of Herrel's horses. Also the people carry large baskets on their heads which are really heavy.

Well, here's hoping I hear from you soon.

Love to all, Johnnie

## SvcMen WW II Letters

Pvt. John Helt

[The News-Sentinel, Monday, October 1, 1945]

### LETTER FROM BURL REESE

To: Mr. and Mrs. Fred Reese

Sept. 15, 1945

Dearest Mother, Dad and All:

Hello folks, received your two letters of Sept. 3 and 6 and they were certainly more than welcome. No more censoring and what a glorious feeling to think that no one is reading our mail. Of course we are on our honor not to disclose any ship movements, of the present, but the past can now be told. As you know we were in Hawaii for awhile and from there we went to Wake Island and gave the Japs plenty for one day of bombardment. There were several destroyers, one large battleship, and an aircraft carrier, and believe you me, each and every one enjoyed it plenty. As usual the "Mity Champ" gained more glory for himself, but for right now I guess that had better wait. We then headed for Saipan and from there to Okinawa and there too we were lucky, as that is where we were when peace was declared and our duty could have turned out pretty hazardous, except for that. Right at present we are at sea and headed for a history-making destination, during the past two weeks. Will be able to tell more later on.

Will now try to give you an idea of the life we lead aboard a DD in the Pacific and of course to let you know I'm okay and hope this finds all of you the same.

Well, this was another day for inspection. I can't understand why we have them, about all we have to do is keep clean; at least that is the biggest job. We never have any liberty here. On the other hand the officers must give us something to gripe about or we couldn't be satisfied. As an example of griping, I'll tell what a U.S. correspondent told us, while we were at Tokyo. They had taken 640 prisoners of war out to a hospital ship, that was the first day of occupation, anyway these guys ate over 400 dozen eggs, averaged eight cups of coffee apiece and one pound of turkey was enough for five slices of bread. Then for supper they had all the steak they could eat and a clean rack to sleep in, which was the first in three years for some of them. Next morning there were a few who thought eating was more important than sleep and some vice versa, but those who felt eating was important, thought the chow wasn't sufficient, so they turned in their gripe to the doctor, and in turn the doctor said, "Well, those men are okay, as they are able to gripe." To us that was very amusing, as we feel, as all other units do, that we have the worst cook there is.

We had the opportunity to go ashore for a couple of hours a few days ago, and it was a small island off Okinawa--whoever says the Japs were not prepared is wasting a lot of energy in speech, as they had all kinds of gun emplacements and they were really big babies. The above-mentioned correspondent told us that all along the highway leading into Tokyo was lined with caves, and that every cave was packed full of war equipment. Japan and her former possessions are really demolished and "Thank God" for giving the Allies the power to do it.

The heat still persists and of course we are still suffering. A good night's sleep is something we all dream of and have our hopes high it is not too far off. Of course we all think it is pure "scuttlebutt" (a Navy word for talk), but they say we are supposed to be in New York for Navy Day, well, if we are we will be heading back in a few days, so don't be surprised if I'm home in November, but don't plan on it too much. I feel quite fortunate to have 42 points as they are leaving some men out here with less than 35, and they sure have all my sympathy.

Has the ole hometown changed any in the past few months. I suppose not and better if it don't as the "Berg" is okay and everyone from there has at one time or other made his brags about it.

Well, I didn't tell much about a D.D. or the life we lead but maybe the next one will be better.

I'm hoping to be home with you, Dad, and my family for Christmas, as for that matter, I wouldn't know of a better place to spend it than in Rochester. Will sign off now and secure, send you all my love and best wishes.

Your loving son,  
Burl Reese

[The News-Sentinel, Thursday, October 4, 1945]

## SvcMen WW II Letters

LETTER FROM PAUL STEININGER

Dairen, Manchuria

Sept. 5, 1945

Anchored

Dear Folks:

How's everything down home? I'm o.k. and what a place this is. Our ship is the first American ship in this harbor since the Japs got it in 1904. We were supposed to cover the landing on Korea but we were chosen to come here to evacuate some American prisoners of war. We came in Sept. 1st, but no one seems to know where they are. I have charge of second section landing force party. We were ashore Sunday afternoon well armed. But no one could speak English. There is sure a mess of people over there, Japs, Chinese, Russians and natives (Korean). The Russians kill about 30 to 40 Japs a day and just leave them lay either to rot as they do to many, or the natives dump them into the bay. The Japs had a wonderful production town here. Factories of all kinds, all labor free, all kinds of resources. There wasn't one bomb hit here.

The captain sent us ashore to look around. Our party consists of three Tompson sub machine guns, 3 rifles, 4 pistols and me with a pistol and all the mine locating equipment. After we were ashore about an hour they were all afraid of us, because when the Russians came they were so mean and rough to them. We got acquainted by giving them cigarettes and candy, which we carry as supplies for such purposes. Mom, we had them carrying us all over town in a Victorian, howling to us and everything else. I haven't been back ashore since, but I would like to. Will probably go over when they bring the prisoners here which they say they have located them now 180 miles inland and 1500 of them. We have notified a hospital ship to come here from Okinawa.

Our mail won't go off the ship until we get back to Okinawa about Sept. 15.

The weather here is like ours at home, four seasons.

Some natives were treated and beaten so badly by the Russians. They took to living in some boats and looting the town at night. They come along side our ship and we throw food or anything they might use.

I spent two days and one nite in our small motor whale boat ahead of our ship searching for mines as we have no locating equipment aboard. We blew up six mines that would have hit our ship. We were hit once by a mine off China before the war was over. Only a few men were injured. I was bounced off two walls and hurt my back and I was sore for a while.

Boy, Okinawa is sure a hole--if there ever was one. We went ashore several times but of course the army and marines had it well in hand.

Dairen is in the most southern point of Manchuria. Way up her is a bay. Almost impossible to get in here by boat in war time. The town has no defense at all.

We have a News Correspondent aboard so he will relay all the news to the states. "Look" magazines will probably carry a lot of pictures of Dairen, because he took a lot. I'd give my life saving for a picture of us over there last Sunday. No kidding, we told the guys here about it when we got back. Two of them tried to swim ashore. They won't last ten minutes over there unless they're armed and there is several of them.

Well, what is new, around home. I suppose it is pretty chilly nites like it is here, and hot in the day time.

Well, I can't think of much more to say right now. Answer soon.

Paul Steininger TM 2/c

(son of Arlie Steininger)

E. Paul Steininger TM 2/c

USS Evans DDT54

[The News-Sentinel, Saturday, October 13, 1945]

LETTER FROM JOHN W. DAVIS

Austria

Oct. 3, 1945

Dear Mom:

## SvcMen WW II Letters

Well I got here at last. We rode clear from Southern France to Salsburg, Austria in box cars. What a trip that was! I wasn't really so bad, only it rained a couple of times and the roof leaked on us.

We are now near a little town, Bruck, Austria about 80 miles from Salsburg.

This is really a beautiful country up here.

It is very mountainous and the towns are so much cleaner looking than in France. There is a lot of snow on top of some of the higher mountains, and it is pretty chilly. It has been raining here, too.

How is everyone at home? Just fine I hope. I am OK. We live in a building at an Airport. It is a pretty good building.

I am the Service Co., Clerk now.

Well I guess that's about all for this time so I'll close. I'll write soon again.

Love and kisses, your son,

Jack

Pfc. JohnW. Davis, 35845776, Service Co., 242nd Inf. A.P.O. H 11, c/o Postmaster, New York, N.Y.

### LETTER FROM ROBERT M. MOW

September 15, 1945

Dear Mom & Dad:

I am getting along ok. Everything is alright except the time, and it is going a little bit too fast. It seems like I have been in England three or four days instead of two weeks. It is sure going to be tough to leave England this time and go back. I was so tired of those hospitals the other time, that it was really a relief to get out of here. This time is a little different though, it is just like being out of the army in one sense and a civil in another. We get up any time we want to in the morning and we don't even have to go to school if we don't want to, but it is the best thing to do.

Another fellow and I didn't go to school today. We took a trip up to Stratford-upon-Avon where Shakespeare and Ann Hathaway was raised, educated and lived most of their lives. It is really a nice quiet town. I think the whole town depends on tourists for its living. Everytime you go into a place, you pay them a sixpence, which is worth about a dime. I asked a fellow today how many people visited there in peacetime and he said close to 20,000. I spent about fifty cents there today and all I did was go to each place and come back. I saw his tomb at the Holy Trinity Church. Right on his tomb is written in his own words--

Good friend for Jesus asks forbear

To dig the dust enclosed here

Blessed be ye man that spares these stones

And curse be he that moves my bones.

The reason he said this, I guess, was that in those days, they were always digging people up and moving them to another place. The church and graveyard altogether comprise about three acres and there are more than 30,000 people buried there. The fellow said all we would have to do was raise up the sod and we could find bones. We took him at his word and went on our way. As you go in the church you look up towards his tomb and the altar; in another section there is an offset of about five feet. I mean the building in that part, is leaning to the left to symbolize Christ's head hanging on the cross. They really did some nice building work back in 1600. I always thought he was buried in Westminster Abbey in London, but I don't think anybody knows for sure.

We also have seen the building where he was born, the Anna Hathaway cottage, a museum and a tomb along the Avon river, which lost its name. After Longfellow came there and wrote some poems about the river and such they called it "Longfellow Beach."

I haven't heard anything about you all lately but I hope everything is okay. I sure hope Bill does not have to come over here again. If they hold things off much longer I don't think he will have to the way they are cutting down occupation. As for myself, I don't think anybody should be over here only somebody to run the administration; something like they are doing in the CBI. That is probably what it is coming to, I hope.

Well, I have to close. I think I have written about enough for one night.

Love

## SvcMen WW II Letters

“Bob”

Note: Bob's address is

Sgt. Robert M. Mow, 35845768

Co. C 317 Inf. APO 80

c/o P.M. New York, N.Y.

[The News-Sentinel, Thursday, October 25, 1945]

### SECOND LETTER FROM ELWYN BECKER

Coco Solo, C.Z.

Oct. 18, 1945

Dear Mom, Dad & Sis:

You may have been wondering why you haven't heard from me in over a week. Well I've been waiting for some good news and it finally came today. I took a squadron final test for advancement in rating and today I found out I made the schedule. I'm now Aviation Radioman 2/c. When we make a rating we get thrown in the bay, clothes and all. That will probably be Monday when I have clean cloths on.

I've got some other big news. Crews 1, 2, 4 and 6 are going to the "Rock" (Galapagos Is.) next Saturday and then four more crews are coming down about Monday, four crews are going to stay here at Coco Solo. We will be down at the "Rock" a month and we will also operate off a Seaplane tender a few days. As you know I'm on Crew 4. Sure will like the change as it is cold enough down there to sleep under a blanket at nights, and I need some cold weather. Those crisp frosty mornings back in Indiana is what I need to pep me up.

Scuttlebut going the rounds is that fellows in the Squadron who haven't had leave for a year or more will get it when we get back from the "Rock." So I may get home sooner than I thought.

The squadron is going to have a personal inspection so I'd better close as I want to shave and then shine my shoes before "lights out."

Love to all,

El

Elwyn E. Becker, ARM 2/c

VPB No. 24 c/o Fleet P.O.

New York, New York.

[The News-Sentinel, Thursday, October 25, 1945]

### LETTER FROM CHARLES CLEVINGER

(Mr. and Mrs. Walter Clevenger received a very interesting letter from their son, Pvt. Charles Clevenger, who has been in Okinawa for some time. He wrote the customs on how the natives bury their dead.)

"I will tell you how the natives bury their dead," he says. "They have a cement cave or room built into a side of a cliff. On the inside the ceiling is about 20 feet high. That is I'm taking the rich boys tombs. Nothing but the best, Ha. It is about 15 foot wide and 15 ft. across. It has steps the whole length on the inside. The opening to this is a hole in the cement about 2 by 4 feet. The outside is built like a half moon. When a member of the family dies they wrap him up like a mummy and sit him up right on the third step. They also put food and water by him. So he can eat on his way. Ha.

"After his body has decayed and only his bones remain. A girl of the family around fifteen or sixteen years of age who is suppose to be a Virgin girl goes into the cave and puts the bones in a vase.

"The vases are about three feet high and I would say about twelve inches square. The neck of the vase is about six inches in diameter. They usually have a lot of designs on them. Anyway she puts the bones in the vase. If there is any flesh on the bones she is to pick it off. Sometimes, there are four or five centuries of bones in the vase.

## SvcMen WW II Letters

"That is their custom. I have seen several of the tombs and also the vases.

"Your loving son, Junior."

[The News-Sentinel, Saturday, November 3, 1945]

### LETTER FROM WAYNE J. KELLEY

Okinawa

Wednesday, 24, 1945

Hi All:

How is the States? And especially the family. I got your letter that had my new address. I'm sure glad you got my letter.

I'll send the money for that place as soon as I draw my next pay. I'm going to send \$100.00. You can take the rest of it and have a good Christmas. I sure hope you have a swell Christmas. For Tom and I will have as good of a Christmas as we can have and that box sure will be welcome when it gets here. As you know. The last one you sent, I never got it. Oh! Yes, I have a box for you. I'll send it about the 10th of next month. Wash the whites and put all of the clothes in moth balls. You asked me if I was in the storm. Yes, I was. I slept in a tent, and the next morning there was a broken 2 by 4 on the side and one in the rafters. And it blowed about 1/2 of the camp down. It took us about 3 days to build it back up. And it raved here for a week before it struck the worst part of it.

It started at 3:30 on Saturday you see it wasn't such a bad storm at that. I never saw a storm as bad as it was. There never will be such a storm in the States as it was here. First I'll tell you a little about Hawaii. They grow sugar cane for the cash crops. They run a train through the fields when they gather it. Before they cut the cane they burn the whole field off. It really does look funny, when they do that. The railroads there are really funny.

The day that I had liberty in Hawaii I rode out to camp on it. If they go over 20 m.p.h. the darn thing shakes so bad that it almost jumps off of the track. The track is only 2 1/2 feet apart. The town in Hawaii is just a big amusement park. It isn't anything like the town back there. It's like a fair back home.

Now for Okinawa as much of it as I already have seen: Now last Sunday I and two of the boys went for a walk in the hills and we found a few caves and some huts where the Japs used to live. When I tell you this you probably won't believe it. I took a scarf of a dead Jap the body was in a box about 3 feet long 1 1/2 feet wide. You can still see the muscles on the hand so you no it hadn't been dead long. There are quite a few fields of rice they are covered with water just like the pictures. I have seen rice on stalk. I'll get some more and send it to you.

There is one place where the road runs where we are fielding that is sofled [?] coal for three miles. That is about all that I have seen of this island for now. I'll let you know some more about it later. I'm doing K.P. now for 30 days It isn't such a bad job at that. I wish you could do them for me.

Your loving son,

Wayne

P.S.- Tell Leah that if she was in my place she wouldn't care if Mutt was as short as Jeff. Ha Ha.

Wayne J. Kelley, S 1/c 20406-10

71st Navy Const. Batl.

c/o F.P.O., San Francisco, Calif.

[The News-Sentinel, Saturday, November 3, 1945]

### LETTER FROM M. LEONARD GARNER

(From Capt. M. Leonard Garner {former deputy county treasurer} now stationed in Okinawa, to his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Garner, Bruce Lake, Ind.)

October 18, 1945

Dear Folks:

It is nearly 11:00, but I'm going to write a few lines to tell you that all is well over here in this part of the world. I just got back from seeing a picture here in our area, Betty Hutton in "Incendiary Blonds." It wasn't bad entertainment; the movies are about the only amusement available at



## SvcMen WW II Letters

present. The Typhoon and other events have temporarily destroyed all of my reading material, but I'm sure more will be along soon.

We had fresh fruit (oranges) and hamburgers for dinner tonight, plus celery and fresh cabbage. It is the first we have had in ages which made all of us very happy. We're always very thankful for small favors.

I got mixed up in a little accident yesterday, and lost my pants. It is all over now, and I came out with just a little scratch on my left knee. All of us involved can really be extremely thankful that we lived to tell the story, for we truly were in God's hands. I and three others of our group were to move on up north by air yesterday. We got over to our C-46 about nine o'clock yesterday morning, but didn't take off until a little after ten o'clock. It was about 10:13 according my my Elgin. I don't know the total weight on the ship, but there was several thousand pounds of equipment, plus two jeeps. When we got ready to take off the pilot instructed us to fasten our safety belts. This was quite a difficult task, because the space between the jeeps and the seats was so small. I held my legs up above the seats to keep my legs from getting caught in case we had any difficulties. We got about a mile down the strip and about forty feet in the air when a strong cross wind caused the pilot to lose control of the plane. We hit the strip in nothing flat, and skidded for about seventy-five feet before we finally stopped. A part of the left wing and the left engine dropped off about fifty feet from the remainder of the plane. These C-46's have a nasty habit of bursting into flames when they crack up, and this one was no exception.

I ran to the back door as soon as I freed myself from the safety belt, but I didn't know the combination on the door; the flames were leaping at us from both sides of the plane which caused me to have no desire to stay in the plane a moment longer than necessary. One of the other fellows understood the combination and three of us jumped out from this door as soon as it was opened. Another one of our group who got out first through an escape door near the front was "sweating out" all of us still in the plane, but he heaved a sigh of relief when he counted seven all coming out on their own power, he knew that all were accounted for. Two of the crew received minor cuts, but we were all very fortunate to get out as we did. It all happened so suddenly that one didn't have time to get scared. I'm very happy that those jeeps didn't slide over and pin us in the plane.

It didn't faze me any to see everything I had over here go up in flames after such a narrow escape. I'll be able to replace most of the clothes without cost through supply, but there were a lot of little things I hated to lose. I had a collection of Philippine coins, a knife, and a pipe which I was saving for you, Pa., a letter openerr for Dick, some silk handkerchiefs, and various other odds and ends. I was very happy to have a captain bring me back two pictures I had in a fairly large plexi-glass frame; on one side I had a large pricture of Van, and on the other the large picture of my Daddy and Mother. The frame was bent and burned, but I believe the pictures will be in fair condition. The shock of the initial impact caused my watch to stop, and it doesn't look as if it can be repaired until I get back to the States. But I repeat that I'm very thankul that we were all able to get out safely. Another plane of that same type crashed up yesterday. It exploded immediately; those inside didn't have a chance. I've definitely decided to go by water when we move again.

I haven't heard any recent news on points; so I have no good rumors about an early return to the states, although I'm convinced that it can't be too much longer.

I'll close now until later. Take care of yourselves.

Love,  
Leonard.

[The News-Sentinel, Monday, November 5, 1945]

### LETTER FROM ARNOLD MURRAY

(This letter was received yesterday by Mr. and Mrs. Ralph L. Murray from their son Arnold Murray F 1/c who is with the Navy in Japan.)

Kure, Japan  
Oct. 31, 1945

Dear Mom and Pop:

## SvcMen WW II Letters

Even though we haven't received any mail for a month now, I still feel like I just have to write to some one. Since this is Hallowe'en I thought I'd write to you.

I just finished my shower and made up my sack so after the movie I can hit it right away. Say you should see my mustache. Boy! It's a lulu. Ha! Say you better not send me those glasses I sent for you to get repaired. Just keep them we may be coming home so then I can get them.

I sure will be loaded with bars this time. I can wear the following bars: American Theatre, North African and European Asiatic and Pacific Philippine Liberation and a bar for being in Japan for a month. Nice huh? Phooey, I'd rather be home.

The movie tonight is "Jam Session," with Ann Miller. Out here it doesn't make any difference what the name of the movie is we go anyway, its raining or if it is not. It sure would be nice to sit in a theater, even without some nice girl by you, and just sit back and relax without the rain pouring down our back and down on your glasses.

The officers have a special place for their movies. They like this outfit and they can have it as far as I am concerned. This is really a dirt outfit. There's all kind of fellows in here. I'd sure never let anyone come over here in peace time, in war time of course its different. Although there is a lot of nice fellows I've met since I've been in here.

You know folks its going to be awful hard to get me out of the State of Indiana. We have a recording called, "Home Again in Indiana." Boy! Does it make me homesick.

If I were home tonight I would probably be Hallowe'ening. Would you mind. Huh. I guess if I were really home I'd stick around with you and dad.

Well the first movie is over so guess I'd better get my chair and head for the movie.

Tell the boys I said, "Hello" and to write when they can. I hope they're getting along O.K.

I have your box all ready but Mr. Thompson's signature. Guess I'll try to get it off pay day, Nov. fifth.

We were out all day in the officers gig carrying officers and army nurses around. Boy! Those guys really get along.

Well good night folks. Good health to you all.

Love, your son,

Arnold.

[The News-Sentinel, Thursday, November 15, 1945]

### LETTER FROM DONALD D. KILMER

Donald D. Kilmer M.MM 3/c

September 27, 1945

Dear Clarence Hill and Hi---- Mayor.

Bob Barker and I are still together, he gets the paper (once in a while in a bunch) so we keep fairly well up on the latest, though a little late.

I am sending you a few items I picked up on Japan. We were the first ship to enter the harbor at Sasobo, Japan, 40 miles north of Nagasaki. We were part of the task force taking in the Fifth Marines. The things I am sending came from the underground machine shops; a little book on tap sizes, a board which is a tap time card of some sort, drills and taps are probably German, English or American make. You would be surprised at the American tools and machinery we saw. By the way, they had plenty of steel of all kinds and of an apparent good quality.

There weren't so many Japs around but what there were, were very friendly and begging for American cigarettes, which they generally get; they bow and salute all of our men and will give us anything we ask for. It was remarkable, how different it was from what we had expected--no resistance of any kind, not even passive, for they actually try to help. A Jap harbor pilot brought us in and did a very good job of it, too.

I was in a patrol boat all night every night and talked (?) to several Jap tugboat sailors; they were scared stiff but as soon as they see that they aren't going to be killed, they act darn good. I was ashore every day (via fantail) for four days. I was dodging in and out of the caves most of the time but did get to see quite a bit. Their machine work is atrocious but the German and other foreign

## SvcMen WW II Letters

stuff is plenty good. Everything they make themselves is a cheap imitation, but contrary to what we hear they seem to have plenty of it and I did not see any suffering from malnutrition.

When you open the box, notice the peculiar odor; that is Jap smell and everything smells that way, including their opium pipes although I don't know if it's opium or not. I was in deserted offices, warehouses and mess halls, they all have it.

I won't describe what I saw of their living habits; to say they live like animals is an insult to most animals. As I write this we are in the China sea heading for the Philippines, Subic Bay to be exact, then back to Japan again. I don't know how many trips we will make, we passed very near the China coast, Formosa and Okinawa. We came out here this time from Hawaii via Saipan. We were off course out before, as we went at Leyte and Samar in the Philippines at Pelelieu and Augar in the Ralao group, Eniwetok in the Marshalls and Uliethea in the Carolines. (The spelling is a little questionable.) We've got around fairly well with no accidents of any kind so that's something to be thankful for. I was ashore at all of those places and they aren't nice and the guys that had to stay there for so long deserve plenty of credit. I was DARN glad to be in the Navy then. This ship when loaded generally carries 200 to 400 troops (crew of 350) and all of their equipment, which is generally mechanized. We carry 24 small boats to carry them to the beaches, and I am in the small boat crew. When we are at sea the "motor mecks" repair the boats and stand gun watches. We have 18 20 mm four 40 mm twins, one 5-inch and .38 cal so there are plenty of watches. The watches were especially bad because we were never in a convoy nor even with another ship until we went to Japan this time.

I've no idea when I'll get out and there isn't much use to worry about it out here. I am rather enjoying myself right now and I would like to go to China, then around the world back to the east coast, but I doubt if I will get to. I also hope to see a little more of Japan and the people; they have plenty of faults but they are playing a smart hand in cooperating to get rid of us.

I imagine you are plenty busy now with the extra work you have but if you can, drop me a line and let me know the latest. I'll go for now as I have probably held up the administration forces of the local government too long anyway. Ha.

So long, As always,  
Don

[The News-Sentinel, Saturday, November 17, 1945]

### LETTER FROM HAROLD W. WILSON

(Editor's Note: The following letter from Harold W. Wilson with the U. S. Engineers at Kure, Japan, and addressed to his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Walter W. Wilson, Kewanna, describes in a very interesting and informative manner the effects of the atomic bomb on the Hiroshima area. It is well worth reading.)

1 November 1945  
Engr. Tech. Kure Base  
APO 994  
c/o P.M. San Francisco, Calif.

Dear Folks:

Got your letter of about 11 Oct. so glad to hear from you. Mail is coming through pretty regular now though it takes about 16 days. Hope it speeds up.

I'm happy now since I've plenty to do. And they really pour it on too. Have charge of the construction of two hospitals, maintenance of 25 miles of main roads plus no end of small construction jobs. It keeps me jumping. Have a grand bunch of fellows to work with. We have good enlisted men. One master sergeant has an Illinois architects license.

I visited Hiroshima and saw the bomb damage. Its quite impressive. A captain and myself drove all over the place. The streets are cleared of debris. Even trolley cars are running. However, the trolley wires are about all that have been replaced. The city is a vast lifeless desert of rubble. The bomb destroyed mostly by radiating tremendous heat and setting everything on fire rather than by shock or explosion. They say that the bomb exploded at an elevation of 1500 ft. Hiroshima is in a flat valley that is fairly wide for Japan. The main destroyed area is flat and covers about six

## SvcMen WW II Letters

square miles. There are a few stone and reinforced concrete buildings still standing. They are gutted of course. The windows are blown out and any thing burnable inside is burned. But the buildings are intact with the concrete undamaged. That is what makes me think that the bomb destroyed by fire rather than by concussion. The rubble there looks just like that in any Jap city destroyed by fire bombings. Most Jap buildings can be completely destroyed by fire. Only the roofing tile remains. At Hiroshima the ground is littered with roofing tile. The streets surfaces and street car tracks are undamaged. Concrete power line poles were blown over. There were lots of stunted pinetrees in the city and they are still standing. They are dead and only the trunks and heaviest branches remain. In the center of town there is a Jap graveyard with many granite tombstones. They stand undamaged amid the rubble. The dead were not disturbed. On the outskirts of town where things were not set on fire there is quite a bit of evidence of concussion. Tile on roofs is scattered. Some walls are caved in. Many windows are broken. As we approached the center of town the amount of damage increased. The large six square mile central area is uniformly damaged. The center of the town of Kure is pretty thoroughly destroyed by fire bombs. Yet here and there a stone or reinforced concrete building has escaped. Either the bombs missed it or fires were put out right away. However, in Hiroshima nothing escaped. Near the point of the bomb explosion street cars were blown off the tracks to the curb and were burned. They were made of steel and weren't caved in. There is nothing to the report that buildings instantly disintegrated to dust.

One of the hospitals I am in charge of building is located six miles away from the center of the atomic bomb explosion. We are not building everything new but are covering the barracks which formerly housed the workers of the Nipponese Steel Works. Over here workers living quarters are right on factory grounds. The set up is this. The U. S. Government is requiring the Jap government to build the hospital according to our plans. I have the job of directing the work. The Jap government has hired Jap contractors to do the work. The Jap officials concerned are the former superintendent and assistant superintendent of the Nipponese Steel Works. Of course I have to work through an interpreter. The steel plant is somewhat damaged. Windows are knocked out and some walls and roofs are caved in. But the atomic bomb damage there is not great. The interpreter was born in Hawaii and moved to Japan before the war. He became a member of the Jap army and became a sergeant. He still wears his uniform though he is a civilian now. He was in the outskirts of Hiroshima had never been bothered by American planes. The B-29 went over in the early forenoon and dropped its bomb with a large parachute attached. Everybody poured out of the buildings to watch it float down. The first explosion produced a cloud of black smoke. This suggests ordinary TNT. This was immediately followed by the atomic explosion which was a tremendous blinding flash. The Japs don't know much about what happened after that. Those who were not killed outright were knocked unconscious or very badly stunned. The loss of life must have been enormous. I don't see how anyone in the main area of destruction could have escaped as the whole area must have burst into flames all of a sudden. Well, its bedtime so goodnight.

Love,  
Harold

1st Lt. Harold W. Wilson  
U.S. Army Engineers

[The News-Sentinel, Tuesday, November 27, 1945]

### BOMBER BARONS' BREEZETTES

By

By "Beezer" Bennett

Palawan, P.I., Nov. 15. - Okay, so I've got a bit of moanin' to do. You say I could tell it to the Chaplain, but that old guy has his own moanin' to do so the only thing left is for me to cry on YOUR shoulder, or understanding reader, about the sad man I am this day.

It's a long story so best we begin at the Beguine and let me explain that I should be enjoying steaks and French fries in the Berghoff now . . . but as any fool can plainly see . . . I'm not! The

## SvcMen WW II Letters

Bomber Barons de-activated themselves some two weeks ago. All of our bombers flew home carrying eight men from each B-24 crew. For "safety" reasons the Air Transport Command ruled that only eight men per bomber could fly home soooo all tail gunners and armorers-gunners were left on Samoa to come home by boat. After our crews flew home we gunners dallied around waiting for orders while the outfit was burned to the ground and final preparations were made to end the history of the Bomber Barons. When the orders finally came it was with no little malice that we learned they had been completely screwed up and in typical Army fashion! Some of us who had numerous missions were transplanted to other outfits and some of those guys who Providence shines on were sent to Leyte to await a homeward beat.

For that so and so reason our Sad (He's looking more and more like a coconut each day) Sack writer is now nestled snugly between palm trees and ocean breezes on the Philippine Isle of Palawan . . . awaiting new orders to send him home and gnashing his teeth at the mention of the word "draft" and "board".

The outfit I'm now sweating it out with is a Supply Group. In time of war they loaded bombs on bombers, gassed and oiled bombers, etc., etc. At present they are nervously doing not much while they await either a boat for home or a rumored jaunt to Korea--reasons occupation!

Me--I am assigned to a job and WHAT a job it is! One of the outfits in this unit has broken up, but until they are deemed so by Washington, they are still assumed to be here as a complete Squadron. All of the men have gone home except for one point-short Lieutenant. And my job, this is honestly no lie, is as FIRST SERGEANT of that outfit! The Lieutenant is the Commanding Officer and I am the complete roster of enlisted men! I make out a daily morning report for the two of us, sit at a desk in another outfit trying to look intelligent, eat and sleep with another outfit and still I'm a whole darned Squadron by myself! I'm everything from the Top Kick to KP (except we haven't got a kitchen in "my" outfit) and do I ever have trouble explaining to various chums just what the devil I'm doing around here! Frankly, I think I'm the only one-man Squadron of enlisted "men" that the Army ever had and I'm wondering if it's legal. My commandant, the lieutenant, seems to find the situation rather abnormal too. . . . but at least we have plenty of time to take sunbaths.

The sunbaths are delicious here too. We live right on a white sandy beach that Billy Rose could promote like a billion dollar resort if it were stateside. The palms, the mountains beyond, the sea breezes, and the super surf are ideal . . . even for the Pacific. If I didn't want to come home so badly I could fully appreciate the beauty of these sun rises and settings and of the full moons lighting up the ocean. As it is, I just sigh and wish for a blizzard day in Hoosier Land. Really though, an artist would find this a paradise. He could never capture on canvas, however, the completeness and depth of this natural Eden.

Palawan was the site of one of the biggest Japanese air bases when they held the Philippines. When we retook it we bombed it so heavily that it took the Engineers an exceptionally long time to repair the air strip for operations again. Palawan is also the spot where the Japs committed their last horrible atrocity. It was here--not over a mile from where I live--that they herded 150 American prisoners of war into a trench, poured gasoline on them and burned them to death. The graves of the men are a solemn and thoughtful sight to witness.

It seems odd, now that the war has ended, to think of this place as being a chamber where torture was an understatement. This quiet island with its Filipino peoples, some still wearing Guerilla uniforms, just doesn't fit into the horror of war that existed less than a year ago. However, those graves and wrecked Jap planes are mute evidence that this was not always a sleepy island.

There is a family here that has a strange story to tell; in fact, a series of stories. Some 45 years ago a young man named Clark left Chicago and came to Palawan to seek, I presume, peace and quiet and his fortune. He planted, with the aid of the natives, coconut palms all over the island. They prospered and from the money he made from them he became a reasonably wealthy man. He married a Filipino woman and she bore him four daughters. They were happy and lived in the quiet seaport village of Puerto Princess on the other side of the island. Their home was most comfortable. . . built of cement blocks to withstand the yearly typhoons with the iron grills and

## SvcMen WW II Letters

Spanish interiors that predominate in this sector. He sent his four daughters to the university in Manila and they returned here to wed Filipino men of their same social and educational strata.

He had his family, a prosperous business, and the beauties of a Pacific Island to live in. What commodities that couldn't be found here he could buy from the ships that docked regularly at Puerto Princess. He was proud of his children and of his grandchildren.

In 1941 Palawan was taken by the Japs. The Clarks fled to the mountains to live with a band of Filipino Guerillas. The daughter's four husbands joined the guerillas to 5th columnize the invaders.

When the Americans arrived on Palawan last April they learned that two of the four husbands had been killed by the Japs and Mr. Clark had died of jungle diseases while in hiding. His home and the homes of his children were leveled by the Japs upon their retreat.

Now the daughters live with their families in tents down the road a piece. They intend to rebuild their homes and their lives as soon as supplies are available. I talked to one of the daughters whose husband had been killed and although she had spent the last four years in a veritable hell, she was still cheerful and fully prepared to carry on her share of the rebuilding of Clark's home and cocoanut exportations. She is a very intelligent girl, speaks good English and finds us GIs "veree Funneey". She will be sorry, she says, when we leave, but then things can again return to normalcy for her and her people. Talking to her was very similar to talking with any young U. S. wife except for her dark skin and her eyes that still show traces of nervous fear at times. I asked her how bad it was when the Japs were here and all she would reply was, "It was, as you Yanks say, Verree 'rough'".

And so we say goodbye to Palawan and to this First Sgt. (without an outfit) until the next time. Frankly, I hope that next time I can tell you about stuff like this --not write it!

--The Beezer.

[The News-Sentinel, Saturday, December 1, 1945]

### LETTER FROM ROBERT WAGONER

(Editor's Note: This letter was received by Mr. and Mrs. Clarence McIntire from Robert Wagoner son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Wagoner, Rochester, R.R. 1. Bob has written his friends and relatives about 500 letters in one year of service.)

21 November 1945

Dear Friends:

Just a few lines to say hello and let you know that I am still thinking of you. I have been quite busy since I've been here in Japan doing a lot of sight seeing. This experience over here is going to be one that I never will forget as long as I live.

I have been in Toyo twice, since I've been here at Utsunomiya. The first time that I went was the rodeo held about three Sundays ago at the great stadium in Tokyo. We had a nice trip that day, but the long train ride was what was very tiresome. The rodeo was made up of first of all an air show by the 19th Air Force. They had all types of planes flying over us in formation and also they gave various demonstrations with the P-38 with its great speed and maneuverability. Then they had a regular rodeo with horses, steers, cow punchers. The animals were brought in from Australia and they weren't very fat. The cow punchers were made up of fellows from the Cavalry and other outfits. The grand show of the day was the act put on by "Byran" with the Jeep. They had a platform built up about 4 feet and had a Jeep drove in between the platform and where he would land as it leaped through the air. Well, it turned out to be pretty exciting. This Byran while a civilian was very famous with his motorcycle.

The second trip to Tokyo, was more or less of a sight seeing trip, as I was on my own that day. I spent time sight seeing the ruins of Tokyo, but there is a few city buildings still standing. It was a nice day, and so I did a lot of it on the old hoof. Visited the Red Cross and also the famous, of today, Tokyo PX. The PX is a nice building with the lower part with souvenirs for the GI and the top with regular sales part. The Red Cross building is a very nice building as it has some rooms, lounge rooms, lunch rooms and a nice auditorium. The remaining buildings of Tokyo are built on

## SvcMen WW II Letters

the same order as a lot of our big buildings in the larger cities of the US. Tokyo, also has subways, electric trains, street cars, and other various means of transportation.

I also have been to the tourist city of Nikko. It is famous here in Japan for the Emperor's famous bridge, also for the beautiful shrine built for him. The shrine is really a work of art as it has a lot of gold engraving, and the statues and other images are fine pieces of work. About two miles from Nikko, are several mountains, in fact Nikko itself, is up in the mountains. One of those mountains has a lake at the top and also has a very huge water falls. These falls are supposed to be about three times as steep as the Niagara falls. Of course the Niagara falls is not noted so much for its steepness as for the immense volume of water that pours over it. These falls don't have too much width, but they really are very steep.

To get up to this lake one can either drive up the mountain road in a Jeep or can ride the cable car up. The cable car is very nice and it really took a lot of skill to build it. Once after you get to the top, they transfer you over into a bus, and you go through two tunnels to the lake. At the lake near the falls, is an elevator which takes you down to the bottom of them. Looking up from the bottom is a very nice scene. At the lake they have a nice resort with a nice hotel where people come for their vacations. Some of our fellows get to go there to stay for a 6-day trip. I have seen these places twice now, and if I ever get the chance to go again, I think I would take the opportunity. Nikko, is a very modern city as it has street cars, electric trains, and the buildings were never touched by bombing. The country side between Utsunomiya & Nikko, is also very nice. The trees are quite thick and they are mostly evergreens, cedars, and pines. The people in the country seem to be all busy with their crops, but they will have time to stop and wave at us as we pass by. The Japanese motor transportation is very poor as the trucks are getting old because of the gas scarcity here in Japan, they have converted the trucks, busses, motorcycles, etc. which originally were run by gas, is now run by a coal or steam engine. And about every vehicle on the road is always on the bum.

We have a nice camp here at Utsunomiya, and just as soon as I get the chance to get some film for the camera, I will get some pictures taken of it. We, being the Engineers, have the equipment, tools and so we have fixed up one of the nicest camps around this area. The buildings of this camp is laid out in a rectangular shape with a huge field in the center. We have landscaped this field with the bulldozer and the carpenters have built a board fence around the field and it has been painted white. We are getting the barracks fixed up in pretty good condition now, and also have a fine mess hall and day room. I have a good warm job here in Headquarters and when the snow finally comes I will probably be lucky to work here. The only thing that I'm praying for now is that the outfit doesn't break up and part of it go home to screen out low point men. As that is one thing I really hate in moving around so much. I only hope that we all stick together and when the time comes to deactivate we will all come home as a unit.

I had a very nice Thanksgiving dinner last Thursday. We all ate so much, that we were all feeling quite miserable the last few days. In fact, I haven't been in the letter writing mood to write to anyone until today.

Well, I hope to be seeing you soon. I must close for now, as it's about time to go to church. I have been attending quit regularly lately, as I think there isn't any harm in it. And also it will help make a better civilian out of me again. So for now its goodbye!

Your old neighbor,

Bill Wagoner

[The News-Sentinel, Friday, December 7, 1945]

### LETTER FROM LOYD HERRELL

Tokyo, Japan

Nov. 29, 1945

Dear Folks:

Just a line to let you know I am well and doing the best I can. How are you all by now. I guess you got that letter where I was all riled up about coming home, but I found out different. So this

## **SvcMen WW II Letters**

leaves me here in Tokyo not knowing when I will get home except it will be some time next spring.

I am one of General MacArthur's guards. We have to stand outside of his door and walk around through the building. It sure is a good deal 'cause we don't even get our hands dirty. The funny part is I walk around carrying a pistol and I don't know how to use it. I have never had training with a pistol.

We get two days off every week besides we can go on pass the 12 hours we are not on guard every day. We live right in the center of Tokyo in one of the largest buildings that is still standing. Boy, they really did a job bombing this place.

How is the farm, did you get all the crops in this fall? I sure hope so. I hope to get home in time to start the spring work. I will know more about it in January or February. Must close now.

Pfc. Loyd Herrell

[The News-Sentinel, Thursday, December 13, 1945]



FULTON COUNTY INDIANA

# HANDBOOK

Service Men, World War II, Letters  
1944-1945

By

Wendell C. and John B. Tombaugh

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