

Mindanao

July 30, 1945

My darling Mama:

Reals of thunder race from the clouds which overhang the beach. Rip Van Winkle and his dwarfs must be gambling in the mountains. A rising breeze rustles papers in the orderly room, and soon the rain will be upon us. I hope so for the past few days have been dry and dusty.

Yesterday's mail brought thru good letters from you (also a V-mail) and today's mail brought one from you dated 15th, 17th, 18th, and 20th of July. You had just returned from San Angelo on the 15th and I could tell you felt much refreshed. I am exceptionally glad you went and glad indeed that you enjoyed the diversion. I wish we knew someone in San Antonio whom you could spend a few days with. I don't mean to imply by my enthusiasm that you are in need of a change, but I just know that it is good for anyone.

Darn, but I was glad to get your letters. Have had few of them for the past two weeks. I felt happy and good humored as I read them.

Life rolls on. We are not very busy; in fact we are mere of leisure. Food has been better than I have seen it since being overseas. Chicken very frequently (not locally procured, but from the states and darn good too, it comes over in refrigerators) eggs pretty after for breakfast. Avocados galore. I eat them with salt and black pepper, canned fruit, peaches, apricots, pineapples (the rain is pouring in torrents) fresh ones also, fruit salad. We have also been having fairly good [illegible]. I can tell by the fit of my trousers around the waste that I am gaining a good bit of weight.

What think you of the war? We are all dreadfully optimistic. The muting of the Japanese cabinet to consider our unconditional surrender ultimatum was most encouraging, even if it was announced that they would fight to the end. They will be in a pitiful shape after 4 more months of bombing, and the intensity will double and triple as the months rolls by. They are not prepared politically to withstand the devastation. If the war were to end in December, I don't know just when I would get home, two months at the latest I would think.

I know that you could write along the view of that New Yorker article. I believe you could write just as interestingly, and that you could write much clearer, although I think you would have a freshness of point of view which most of those articles lack. Someday I may have your many comments apropos the many subjects included in your letters, edited.

You mentioned liking maw's letters and that you recognized she had a good bit of sense. She is the most intelligent girl with whom I ever went, and I like her rather well. I gave a thought or two to possibly marrying her, and she is still very eager to marry me, and I think she sincerely cares for me, but I got to thinking how difficult it would be for her to fit into Eden life. I suppose that is a form of moral cowardice. She is a good Catholic, but discusses the Church a bit critically at times. She doesn't seem to be too popular with women, and she doesn't get along with her mother very well. But then her mother acts a good bit like Lizzie. She is a good cook and rather practical. I believe she would quietly insist on having her own way pretty thoroughly despite all the agreements pro & con I like her rather well and had I been stationed in Australia for a longer time I might have married her.

In re Buna, Fischhaven, [illegible], and Ora Bay. On returning from my leave in Australia, our ship remained at anchor at Ora Bay for four of five days while it discharged. I went ashore at the base of Ora Bay and hitchhiked over to Buna (where I told you of eating lunch with the Aussies aboard the sailing vessel) I did not go to Sapna (I think that is misspelled) It is the sight of an Aussie American entirely which hold the Buna, Gona and Sanananda dead. Buna Beach (maggot beach) is one of the most lonesome looking places in the world. Shattered palms, broken Jap pill boxes, and old Jap tanks are the sole remainder of the Battle. The beach is not in an inlet but baldly faces the open sea. Our next stop was at Finschhafen where I received for three days and caught a plane out the following day and flew to Hallandea. I visited Nodsab one day while we were stationed at Lae.

Mother I receive few of The Standards mailed from San Angelo. The ones you mail come in record time, and I like to read them. I finally finished Slogum House. It dwindled off into absolute nothingness and made a very vague description of the old woman who was the tyrant. Think I shall start next on "Country Lawyer".

I had a long letter from Walter Pfluger today. He thinks he might be sent overseas but I doubt it. He said that Robert never complains about his health and that he certainly is not a neurotic. He seemed to be trying to convince himself. I like Walter pretty well. He has written me more consistently than any other friend I have, despite his Pfluger background, I believe he has a streak of kindness in him.

I awakened several times last night to the roar of the breakers. They were a bit too wild to sound comforting, but I like to hear them.

I wish my book George Washington would arrive.

I am enclosing a poem written by Sgt. Shannon. He is an indefatigable poet. I appreciate his efforts, poor devil, He is very proud that I send them to you so be sure and comment on it. My poem started thus:

Ships in the harbor & the sky is gray

Wars [illegible] lost still another day

I wrote it last July. T'weren't much.

I haven't heard the last two songs you mentioned.

Have you heard more of Minea or Jamie? Or Mary Anne Beck. I knew that she married. Where is Cecil Skaggs?

I am anxious to hear more about Churchill's defeat; his reactions, etc. I see where the Communist Party is being revived in America. On record though, I imagine Churchill will prefer [illegible] over Churchill for personal reasons and because a Labor Government should be more unamicable to Russia's interests than would the Conservatives. I don't feel that Churchill is at all irreplaceable in practice although he showed outstanding strength during the war. Moves tell me that the new Prime Minister of Australia is a Catholic, so was the Deputy Prime Minister For who did not get elected.

Well most darling person, I shall close and read awhile on "Country Lawyer", again I say I certainty enjoyed your letters. Glad shall I be the day I return home.

Your ever loving son,

J. Harrod

P.S. I am enclosing two snapshots taken in May in Mindanao.

The radio had just finished playing "I'm going to take a sentimental journey" It is very pretty.

Who is sweet? You.