

22 June 45

Dear Mollie,

This is an innovation with me. I find that my leisure hours are so few and my list of correspondents so long that I must resort to something like this in order to continue receiving letters. And I like to receive letters. They have become the only things that remind me of the times that used to be. Too, they keep alive the hopes that the times in store will be as happy.

Since you all tell me about your adventures, I reckon it's about time I told you about mine. The following is a quick report on my travels.

It seems that the Army always picks the hard way to do a job. So, instead of sending us to Frisco for embarkation, we went to New Orleans. (There I immediately took off to see Eadie and Kal; in fact, I took off almost every night I was there). Leaving from New Orleans meant going thru the canal to reach our destination, the domain of General of the Army MacArthur. It wouldn't have surprised me had they shipped us around the Cape. Such strange things the Army does.

But back to my travels. I left New Orleans and after a few days we reached the canal, passed thru and were in the Pacific. The canal is really a masterpiece of work, or so if that statement is trite. Bora Bora was our first stop. That island is in the Societies and if you look hard enough at a very large map, you might be able to find it. We didn't get off, the stop was just for refueling. By this time I had bribed the steward of the boat and was eating with the crew. The natives came out to the boat in their canoes and brought along fruit and trinkets to trade for cigarettes. I got some fruit. The trinkets are available in any dime store. And so we set sail again. (Now I was 20,000 points ahead in our contract bridge marathon). And what a sail that was; we were on that garbage scow for 32 days. At long last we pulled into Milne Bay. I was lurching for two solid days. Nights I rocked in my bunk. Finally I learned how to walk on land once more.

Two weeks at the replacement depot trying to get out of details and they sent us to Goodenough Island to join the 24th Division. What a welcome we got. The old timers greeted us with the news that we were going into an operation. Some fun, huh? So we went to Hollandia and I didn't see a Jap, not even a dead one.

From then until October we stayed at Hollandia. Then the big push. There was only one place we could go, the Philippines. To make matters worse, we were spearhead the operation. This time we were really apprehensive. (To you, scared). And the Japs didn't let us down. It was no dry run. Leyte was plenty rough. We ran into the main concentration of Japs and the monsoon season to boot. However, the outfit gave a good account of itself and raised the grades of a lot of Japs, more than any other division. The Japs get a raise in grade if they die in battle. An awful lot of Japs, initially privates, became superior privates during the campaign. I was quite satisfied to leave that mud hole of civilization.

Off to war again, this time we went to Mindoro. There were no Japs left so we became base commandos. I shall remember that island particularly because of the lousy chew. It was quite comfortable with movies, PX and a swimming pool. A few months of that and we set sail again.

Mindoro was our next step. We caught the Japs by surprise. They expected us to land at an entirely different spot. At any rate, we raced across the island

in 17 days to set some sort of record. I don't think I ever bounced so much in my life. You can imagine the beating the jeep got. At present we have the Japs bottled up and ready for annihilation. Of course we have offered them opportunities to surrender but they seem too anxious to get that raise in grade. Could be they'll get it.

Life here is fairly pleasant compared to the rigors we have experienced. The ocean is only yards away; I went in swimming this afternoon. We have hot showers and now, I hear, they are building us a mess hall, a regular building. What next? Though we sleep in tents, we have them fixed up nicely; ours has all the conveniences. I even put in an electric light. We have had a beer issue and more is coming in I understand. The PX just opened. The cigarette situation was acute about a week ago but that has cleared up now.

Well, that should make enough chatter for one letter. More of the same in my next. Hope I haven't bored you? Now, let's hear from you.

As ever,

Ed

*If Silver can do it, so can I. Best regards to every one.*

Ed