

Fred Arnolt Letters, 1933-1945

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S.S. Steel Mariner

August 2, 1933

Dear Mother and Dad,

Well here we are only two days from Hawaii. I haven't written before since there hasn't been much news. After we left the canal the weather became much cooler and has been so up until today. Today it has become a little warmer as we are getting out of the Bering Sea current but up till now we haven't gone around in shorts with no shirts on, as we did in the Carribean. In fact one has to wear a heavy sweater at nite.

When we hit the Bering Sea current just out of the canal, the water turned into a dull blue and has stayed that way until now. It has turned again now to that beautiful blue as the Carribean was. We have seen some immense schools of porpoises Some schools seem to number thousands. One day we saw some whales spouting but they were to far out to make out their shapes. The flying fish are numerous and in the Pacific there seem to be a great number of white ones. They're by far the prettiest and seem to be quite a lot larger then the black ones. Some peculiar looking seagulls, large ones, two of them, have followed the ship all the way from the Central American coast. They roost on the crossbar on the mast at night. We have seen several sharks about but none terribly close to the boat.

The food has kept up its usual good quality. It makes the trip nicer to have good food at the meals.

About my work. I'm becoming a first class painter, varnisher etc. The second day out they put me in the Chief Engineer's rooms to (f) refinish all the furniture, mouldings, doors etc. To scrape, sand, shellac and varnish. He has a bedroom, office, and bathroom. After the wood-work was done I painted three coats on all the walls, ceilings, mouldings etc. Alumined the pipes radiators etc. Made some stencil designs on some of his cabinets (my own idea) And refinished the whole suite in general. I feel capable of doing any type of work in that line now. The Chief's very fussy but he commended me on the job. It has taken me about three weeks. Of course there have been some interuptions. I had to take an air hammer and chip the rust off the walls of his bathroom and then red lead it and paint it and I had to build a cement reservoir to use for his shower (to keep the water from running all over the bathroom). I've done some carpenter work. Made a bathroom cabinet and some drawers. There was lots of brass and glass to polish up. So you see I've had a lot of valuable experience and honestly I feel very very capable of performing any average painting or varnishing job. The Chief is a great guy to work for. Fussy and particular about having things done just right but very considerate and in general a darn good guy. The Chief Steward likes my work so much that they are going to have me do the same to the 2nd and 3rd assistant engineer's rooms. That should take up a good deal of the rest of the trip since I'll be working with the rest of the seamen in port straightening out the holds, handling lines in [port] docking etc.

We had to repaint our own room and we built new shelves etc and new large wooden lockers etc. It looks swell now and it makes it much nicer to live in. Of course we had to spend sat. afternoon and Sunday doing that.

The radio has been one of the biggest sources of pleasure on this trip. The whole crew comes in our "clubhouse" every nite to hear it. We get station KFI from Los Angeles very well. It has excellent programs and is one of the most powerful stations in the Pacific. They can hear it in Australia so I guess we'll hear it in Hawaii as well as the Hawaiiin station. One nite about one week away I sat down and from

10:00 P.M until 12:30 I received sixteen stations. Some of the one I got [where] were: Long Beach, Calif;; Los Angeles; San Francisco; San Pedro; Mexico City; Agua Calliere, Mexoci; Salt Lake City [Uhta] Utah; St Louis, Mo.; Chicago, Ill.; San Antonio, Texas and some Central American stations which broadcast entirely in Spanish. So you see the radio was an excellent investment and I certainly intend to get one when I reach home if inflation hasn't caused the \$8.59 to become \$12 or \$14.

While I'm thinking of it, Mother, please don't forget to send mu suit to the tailor to get fixed up because when I reach home I'll want to wear it.

I'll stop now and write some more in Honolulu and mail this. Till then

All my love

August 7, 1933

Honolulu Pier

Well, here I am in Honolulu. This certainly is a most interesting place. I have so much to tell I can't possibly tell it all but I'll do my best.

[O] On Friday nite (the 4th) after supper we had that pleasant feeling of spending one more nite and then being in port. Just before it was dark we could make out very dimly, the outline of Molokai and some other volcanic island. They were [immensely] very high and one could see the clouds below the level of the summit. When it was dark we went up on the flying bridge (took our radio up also) and sat there, the whole bunch, and talked and listened to Hawaiiin music. We didn't stay up there long because we had to awake early but it was mighty nice up there. The tropical moon was very beautiful and the air ideal.

At 5:00 A.M. we were turned out todock. It was just light and we could see everything rather plainly. Just ahead of us lay the rough uneven hills of Oahu. The foliage was a bright rich green and little brown patches show all over the hills where there isn't vegetation. The island seemed to be all a bunch of hills. I wondered if there was any level spot on it. As it happens the city of Honolulu and the immediate surrounding country is flat as ^a table but the jagged hills cover the island inland.

Directly ahead of us we could see some piers and one rather large white building with a tall tower thrusting itself up into the sky. This was the Honolulu municipal pier and on the tower is a large clock and the word[s] "Aloha" printed on the three sides of the towers that face the sea. This is the Hawaiiin greeting. Aloha means many things but [it] they have the same general meaning. You see "Aloha" on everything. When the radio programs sign off they use "Aloha" instead of Goodnite. As we neared the harbor, (It is a small but beautiful little harbor), we could make out the palms and unusual trees around the shore. There were quite a few native fisherman paddling around in their outrigger canoes. (Hawaii is very excellent fishing territory) There were a few steamers in dock there. One, the Lureline (?), a Matson line steamer was there and it certainly was a beautiful boat; all white. We went doen into the harbor a little ways and docked. The harbor is [about][is] shaped like an L only inverted - 7. It is a small place but there is \$120,000,000 worth of commerce from Honolulu per annum.

It was about 6:15 A.M. when we docked and after this we sat around until breakfast (7:30) at 8 we went to work but stopped about 10:00. I got my lettrs before breakfast and I certainly was happy. It was just like Christmas, mother and dad. I certainly enjoyed your nice letters. I'm glad to hear that you are all well and happy and that the kids have had a break. I hope your job panned out OK, dad. It isn't fair to have you struggle and worry when you are and always have done your best. If I can follow your example Dad and do as well as you have done under the circumstances I' be perfectly satisfied. I think that things are going to pick up and be much better. The One above that directs our course never forgets us.

I can sympathize with you ^ Mother when you mention how it is home (?) with us all away because I have experienced the same feeling here at sea. I'm glad Joe has found some work but I hope you don't miss his help, too much. [mother] Keep up the good golf, dad. I bet when I reach home the cups will fill the living room. But seriously I'm glad you're playing so well I know it means a lot to you.

Let me tell you a little about my letters. I received ten in all and the little souvenir Lillian sent me from the White Mountains I received 4 from Lillian, one from Edwin, two nice ones from Estelle, a nice letter from Nanny and yours and Dads. Of course there is a possibility that I may receive more since we'll be here about two weeks or more. I discovered in Panama that one could receive mail there and I felt pretty low when some of the boys got theirs but its ok now and I'm telling all the ones that write that they can mail 6 to me at the Canal. The address is the same except (Panama Canal) instead of (Honolulu.)

I'll get back to Honolulu again – after dinner we all went ashore. I think that Honolulu is a fascinating place. The population consists mainly Japs and half-breeds. Then there are the Philuppinos, Portugeese, Chinese, "Kanyaks" (?) (natives) and a few white people. When I went down to Waikiki I saw more white people and down there one sees their beautiful tropical houses.

Their houses are built low and rambling many in the Spanish mission fashion with stately palms, tropical ferns, hibiscuses and other tropical flowers, and very green grass ornamenting the yards. Down near the beach there are many many little bungalows all built up on piles. In Honolulu (the town) itself one sees many different and unusual things. They have quite a few cars but they are mostly small. In fact, the only good sized cars I have seen about the town is the governor's Packard phaeton. I spoke of the people. The Japs, many of them wear their native costumes (kimonos and sandals). The stores in the American section seem to be run almost entirely by Japs. Most of the policeman are Japs. There are many barber shops and the barbers are all pretty little Jap and Hawaiiin girls. The stores, many of them, are in the oriental bazar fashion. They display their goods on open front counters. There are so many interesting things to buy that one wishes they had a few thousand to spend. The curios and many of the Jap things are quite cheap but the American stores ----- oh boy. They just rob you. Import expenses push everything way up high. A bunch of us walked down through the native Jap section one nite and saw many interesting things. Opium smokers, Jap café's and by the way there are about 3 café's to every store in Honolulu. Some of them are just dives and others are nbetter. An engineer from the boat took us around and we went in all the dives etc. in Honolulu it seems. We went in a good [number] crowd so that we would be ok. We'd just go in and look around and maybe have a glass of beer but frankly I think the beer is like taking an unpleasant medicine. We got in a few arguments with drunks but there were about 20 of us and we had some husky boys too so nothing would happen. There's one thing you find out here. The Japs, Pilipinos, and Chinks have no use for white people. The Luet Smosse (?) case some years ago didn't help things much but the Japs are pretty square guys. It's the spiks, Chinks and half breeds that you have to watch. There is one thing about them though that will help if you always remember it. Those half breeds etc. are all yellow. If there are about 10 or 15 to one everything is [also] "ok.". But as soon as it becomes two or three white men to their 15 that doesn't suit them and they'll back off. However you must never turn your back to one of them if you have reason to worry about them. I'll give you an example of something that happened the other nite. Bob (Joerg), myself, and Charley Larnegie (?), who is a fireman in the engine room and a husky lad (He played fullback at Oklahoma U and was a boxer) were out walking. As we passed one of the lower class of café's down near the waterfront a fellow came running out. It was "Red" an AB from the ship. He was drunk but not completely. He said that one of the "oilers" from the ship was in a jam and to come in and help him so in we went. It seems that this oiler was very drunk and he was sitting down on a stool. There were about 15 "spiks" crowded about him. Every time he'd start to get up one of them would push him down. He was so drunk he was practically helpless. I guess he had said something to them and they [said] told Red

they were going to cripple him before he got on the ship and incidentally take his money. Well, we walked in and Charley, who is used to their breed said not to hesitate [ast] at all. We pushed through them and they all backed off jabbering. Charley shook the oiler and told him to get up and come back to the ship. He got up and we helped him walk out. Nothing happened at all. The “spiks” all stood back and jabbered to each other. When we got outside on the sidewalk one big fellow came out and started to walk towards Bob (he was the smallest) threateningly. Charley, who stands 6 2 (?) and weighs about 195 stepped forward in front of Bob and knocked that bit guy right back into the café’. He hit him so hard that the “spik” hit the top of the bar and slid down it’s whole length and fell on the floor at the other end. All the others ran back into the back of the café and stayed there and we walked back to the ship. We learned a valuable lesson from Charley. When you get in a jam like that, hit first and argue afterwards and you’ll make out much better. The real sensible thing to do is keep out of a jam and that’s what we’re doing.

Well mother and dad I know that this letter is not as complete as it could be. There is much more to tell. I’ll tell some more when I write aboard ship on the return trip and mail at Panama. Forgive this atrocious writing. I have to write so many and must write very quickly. Of course I can tell you my experiences much easier when I reach home. I’m having a fine time and keeping straight and well. I hope that you are all well and are having a pleasant summer. I’ll write again before I leave the islands and tell you our itinerary as well as I can find it out, so until then

All my love

Aloha

Fred

P.S. I had a bad blow the other day. The crew in the engine room got pretty drunk and one of them quit the ship. That left an opening. The Chief Engineer who likes me said he’d try to get me the job and break me in down there. Well everything was “ok” and I went down there the next day. He went up to get me transferred from OS and then he found out I couldn’t be transferred so I had to go back to OS again. I felt pretty low. It meant \$40 a month instead of \$26 but – Ill get over it. Worse things could happen.

Love – f

S.S. Steel Mariner

Honolulu

August 16

Dear Mother and Dad,

Since I last wrote I have been to many different places. We have been working very, very, hard; sometimes 10 and 11 hours a day and there hasn't been much time to write. We left Honolulu on Friday evening the eleventh. At 5:00 A.M. Sat morning we reached Hilo. Sat. afternoon we had off at Hiloo and so I went ashore for a short time. Hilo is by far the best town in the islands; the prettiest, most interesting and most inexpensive. I certainly wish that I could have had more time there. It is situated on the island of Hawaii which is the largest and the most beautiful of the "Islands". It is just the right size. Large enough to have plenty of interest in it and yet not too large. I think that if I were asked to pick a place for somebody to take a short vacation in that Hilo would be the choice. The climate of Hilo is ideal as it is in most all the "Territory".

At 8:00 P.M. we sailed from Hilo and arrived at Kahului on the island of Maui on Sunday morning at 5:00 A.M. After breakfast we (the gang) all went ashore. Kahului is a small, pretty town and rather dead on Sunday. [mo] We hired a car to take us to Wailukee about 6 miles away at the base of the Maui volcanic range. Here we looked around (this town is a little larger than Kahului but built on the same order) After having some sodas and looking in all the Jap's shops we hired a car for \$1.50 per hour and drove up on one of the mountains as far as the car would go then we got out and hiked for about one hour until we reached one of the lower summits. All about us on three sides towered the very tall peculiar-shaped volcanic peaks. While straight ahead lay the long Wailuku valley and the blue Pacific in the background. We could see the towns of Kalului and Wailuku and could make out the ship like a toy on the blue waters of the harbor. After taking some snapshots of the valley and the peaks and the would be mountain climbers, we started down and after about $\frac{3}{4}$ hrs reached the car and drove to town. After eating some chop sui here, we went back to Kahului and the ship where we got out bathing trunks. [Which} We spent the afternoon at the little known but excellent beach of Kahului and in the evening saw a show at the Kahului theatre.

We left Kahului at 5:00 P.M. Monday nite and arrived at Port Allen on the island of Kauai at 5:00 A.M. Tuesday morning. Port Allen is nothing but a warehouse and some oil tanks and little shacks. There is no dock so we anchored and the cargo was taken off in lighters. Kauai itself(called the "Garden Island") is very pretty but not much different from Hawaii. At 5:00 P.M. we left Port Allen and at 5:00 A.M. arrived at Kauilliuiilli (?) on the same island (Kauaii) We had no opportunity to go ashore since we took on 12 thousand cases of pineapples (canned) and left at noon. It is only a small place however and there is a very small town there. It is rapidly assuming importance however since it is a great pineapple place, The harbor is very tricky (hand drawn map referenced here) It takes about 2 hrs to get in.

I seem to have a little more definite information on our itinerary. We'll probably leave Honolulu (we're back again here) sat nite of Sunday morning the 20th which will bring us to the canal around Sept. 8. It takes 20 days on the return trip. That means you may mail to the canal up until the 5th. We then go to New Orleans; Norfolk,VA; Baltimore; Philadelphia; Boston; New Bedford; (Lynne?) and New York (maybe Port Newark also) I'm not certain of all these places. I'll try to find out definitely for you and let

you know from the canal. I am sure of New Orleans, Norfolk Boston & New York. I'll write a little more later folks. I'm pretty tired now. Had a hard 11 hour day.-----

Honolulu

August 18

(Friday)

I went to Waikiki with Bob (Joerg) and one of the sailors (Blackie) a peach of a fellow, yesterday afternoon. They gave us the afternoon off. We have been getting up every morning about 5:00 to shift the ship. Had a nice time and went to the theatre later. They knocked us off this afternoon at 4:00 so I've just finished my bath and am waiting for supper 5:00 P.M. This is the last letter you'll receive from me here but of course I'll write from the canal.

The "Chief" (engineer) is going to speak for me when this ship pays off in N. Orleans or N. York and I think I can get that wiper's job in the engine room. The pay will be \$47.50 a month with the new raise. The far-east trip is about a 5 months trip. If I can get that job and if Bob goes (he's my closest pal and a real one) I'll take the trip. Bob intends to take up navigation and is studying it now in his spare hours. If he goes he will go as seaman but I'll be able to room with him etc. just the same. I'm more interested in engines and the engine room and I am standing "watch" with one of the firemen that I have become quite chummy with. Of course the only time I'm able to do this is in my spare time. He is showing and explaining the engines etc. to me. Bob and Blackee are "going up" for their licenses as soon as they think they're able to pass the exam. That won't be for a few trips more. [Bob] I told you that Bob had flunked out of the "Point" Neath (?), didn't I? He hated it, there, so it's just as well. He's really interested in navigation and studies conscientiously every evening. Well folks, I wish I wasn't tired. I have been painting overhead all day and my hand is so tired I can't write. Its [rafter] rather easy to notice that I guess.

I received your nice letter, Dad. I'm sorry the heat has been so bad at home but I am glad that you managed to rent one of your cranes. I hope things will begin to break for you now.

I enjoyed the little clipping by Bruce Bacton that you sent me. It's now tacked up on our wall. It certainly is appropriate.

The mail service is rather good, I received that letter August 11.

Well I wish I could write more now but as you can see by this writing I'm pretty tired.

I'll write more from the canal. Give my regards to everyone and my love to Edwin and Estelle. I miss you all and certainly will be glad to see you again but I don't believe the ship will hit N.Y. until around the 25th of Sept. Until I write from the canal.

All my love.

Your son

Fred.

S.S. Steel Mariner

Pacific Ocean

August 22

Dear Mother and Dad,

Well we're finally out to sea again and things have become comparatively peaceful. No rushing around getting things done the last minute. No holds to be cleaned out on double quick tempo so that they may be loaded again immediately. No rising at 5 A.M. to dock the ship and then working on until 5 P.M. We're back on the good old "right hour" day again and it certainly feels great. We're painting all over the ship now and will be doing so the rest of the trip, except in ports.

Our course is a little different now than our trip over. We go about 800 miles south and then come straight across to the canal. It's easy to see on the chart. This is done to escape the Bering Sea current and headwinds on it. It will take us from two to four days longer going back than it did coming over. We will be sailing rather close to the equator as you can see on the chart.

This is the rainy season here in this territory and it has been raining since we left Hawaii. I understand that it will be that way a great deal on this return trip. When we hit the Caribbean Sea it will be hurricane season there so we may have some excitement.

It seems queer to be starting a letter now that [you] I won't be able to mail for 16 or 17 days. I have heard all sorts of rumors ^ on the subject but I do know that it will be well along in September before I hit home again. It seems queer.

I haven't said much about my feelings ^ on this sailing business. I did say that I feel homesick once in a while but that's about all. I've decided (not today but from all the trip) that if it wasn't for the money involved and the opportunity to see unusual things, I wouldn't take another trip. I know this may be a disappointment, especially to you Dad and I'm sorry that that's the way I feel but I do. I'll try to explain to you. It isn't just simple homesickness or lovesickness it's a little more complicated.

If I try to balance both sides it may be plainer. First of all, I realize and can appreciate the value of this opportunity to see these different unusual places. I've been very interested always in these things and also in sea life in general I just had to take a trip like this to learn my true feelings. Its impossible to do away with that one factor; It does give valuable experience and shows one many different and unusual places. It is educating. The work on ship is not very hard except in port. Its just like any other work one would do on land. If you're given an unpleasant job, do it as quickly as possible and try to make it interesting by doing it well so that when you're through you're proud of what you've done. If it's an interesting job – all the better. The food, as I have said before many times, is very good. My roommates and shipmates in general are a fine bunch. A much finer bunch than I have ever worked for and with before. I have made some fine friends and [O] one especially who is like a brother, - Bob Joerg.

You can see that I have given all the good side fairly.

On the other side I can't show quite as much very plainly. A good deal of it is abstract. First of all I miss home. You and Estelle and Edwin, the house and all the connections. It isn't just an idle homesickness but rather a severe case. And it isn't just right now but a great deal. So much that I could write at any

time, even in port, and honestly say that the times I have wanted to be at home overbalance by a great deal the times I have wished I were at sea, as I am.

I guess I'm just a land lubber or better yet, "land lover", because I miss the land, especially New Jersey land, terribly. I wish I were home and could walk around Maplewood[s] work someplace and come home at night. I wish I could be able to go out in the country once in a while. I miss the trees, animals, and streams. This may sound a little queer since I have only been sailing about a month and a half but it's very very true. I miss these things; house, family, etc. so much that it overbalances the other benefits that I would derive from sailing on.

I'm afraid this letter will be a disappointment to you. I'm sorry if it is. I intended to tell you how I felt, before this. You probably wonder why my other letters had such a different tone. During my trip from the canal to Hawaii I was going to write many times but I thought I'd wait until I was positive of my true feelings on the matter. I was certain while I was in Honolulu that I would tell you but Dad's splendid letter stopped me. I hate to spoil your hopes for me Dad. I do appreciate the opportunity but I just don't like it well enough to have it overbalance my true feelings. I work extra hard every day to try to forget that feeling but inevitably it comes. Without fail. Not one or two days but every day and it's hard.

I want this letter to be perfectly frank so I'll mention another very important reason. You know it. Lillian. You understand about her. It isn't just another childish crush. I can't imagine not being able to see her for another long trip.

There is a great deal more to be said on both sides but there's no use going into ^ it at too great length. The thought in a nutshell is this. Frankly, If I had some job or could get some sort of a job at home, no matter what it was; as long as it was a job that would keep me in spending money and clothes so that I wouldn't be sponging on you Dad, I wouldn't even consider another trip. I see no possibility in sight although things may be different at home. If I take another trip it will be just an unpleasant job to be [suffered] carried out as best as I can. This may seem like rather strong language but honestly, mother and dad, that feeling is very strong.

I[m] wrote this letter now. I have 12 days to deliberate on it and think about it and if my feelings changes any during this time I certainly won't mail this letter. I'm sorry I feel this way but I think you should know how I really feel. When I reach home we can have a serious talk about it. Please try to see my side also as well (up side of letter) as the "opportunity" side.

Please understand that I wrote this letter while my mind was in a normal, open condition not while I was laboring in a "mood" or an especially strong case of homesickness. The main thing is to understand that this feeling I have had is not just one or two days or just once in a while. It has been with me all trip. I guess I'm not meant for a seaman although I like the work all right. I have mentioned my intimacy with Bob Joerg. You probably wonder why he hasn't interested or influenced me is more sea trips. He intends to take up navigation seriously. You see Bob has no ties at home like I have. His father is an army officer and he and Bob aren't very close. He hasn't been home if 3 years (being at the "Point") and all of his life has been spent in traveling all over with his father and mother at his father's different army stations. His circumstances are quite different from mine in that line. If I don't take another trip, I'll miss Bob very much but of course it won't mean the end of our friendship since he'll be back in the "states" every once and a while and of course we'll writ. This feeling to stay on land near home is so strong it seems to overcome everything else.

I will not stay at home if I can't get some sort of a job but I'm hoping something will turn up and if you hear of anything at home let me know. You have some idea of my qualifications. I know it's a rotten time to try to get a job at home but I'm hoping and praying for a break that will enable me to stay at home and yet keep square with myself.

I count the days.

Give my love to Estelle and Edwin and remember me to Joe.

Lovingly

Fred

S.S. Steel Mariner

Pacific Ocean

August 30

Dear Mother and Dad,

Well here we are about seven days from the canal and almost at the end of August. My feelings are still the same as my first letter demonstrated. I'm getting along all right and not allowing myself to think too much of getting home but just the same I'll be glad when I finally hit New York and right now I'm counting the days.

My days have been pretty full lately so that they seem to pass fairly swiftly. Let me take you through a day. (It has been this way since I left Honolulu) First I get up around 6:00 A.M. I'm doing some special work for the Steward – painting in the pantry and store rooms and I have to do it all in the morning between 6 and 8 since they are working around in there after that. I get the afternoon after 1:45 off to make up for the overtime. After breakfast, (I eat at eight) I go on deck and so regular work there until dinner. After dinner (1:00 P.M.) I work on deck for 45 minutes and then knock off until supper.

One of the fireman, a darn fine fellow, is an ex-prizefighter and during the afternoon from 2-4 he shows me the fine points of boxing and puts me thru exercises (jumping rope etc) He is off "watch" at that time and thus has plenty of time to teach me. After this "workout" I take a bath and then a nap till supper (5:00) After supper I write and listen to the radio and talk with the gang until 8:15. Then I go down to the engine room where Charlie Carnegie, another fireman and a nice fellow, is initiating me into the mysteries of the Diesel engine and "firing" oil burners in general. I'm learning a lot down there and before I reach New York Charlie is going to let me "fire" a watch by myself. Of course he'll be down there but just to see that I do things right. This stuff is all educating and I may have some use for it all some day. But I can still say, mother and dad, that despite all this I still wish I were home in New Jersey. At least when I reach home, even if I stay there, I'll have this experience. It should be valuable on land as well as on sea. The boxing and the little "juijitsi (that I learned from the cook) should come in handy if I ever run into trouble while acting as deputy game warden. And all the other things – painting, varnishing, ^ handling air hammers, scraping metal etc, firing diesel engines, handling ropes, and many other things should be of value to me when I try to get a job at home.

It seems fairly certain that we'll hit New York on the 19th. We should be at the canal on the 7th and in New Orleans on the 13th. It's somewhat of a gamble how long we'll be in N.O.; you hear all sorts of rumors but the most likely one is that we'll only be there one day and then in New York on the 19th. Of course you can find out exactly by phoning Mr. Jump around the 17th or 18th. Whether we'll hit N.Y. on time or not depends of course on whether we hit any storms or not. It will be the hurricane season in the "Gulf" at that time and the Atlantic has been cutting up considerably lately. If we reach New York at nite or in the afternoon, the captain won't pay us off til the next day. If such is the case I'll come home on the tube that nite and come back the next day with the car, (if it is convient to all concerned) and get my dunnage. Of course if you can't to meet me in the car it would be awfully nice but it would probably be rather inconvient for you. If we get in in the morning (Mr Jump will be able to tell you to the hour) we'll probably be paid off in the middle of the morning and then I'll be free to come home with my stuff.

It would be very nice if you could drive over in the sedan and meet me, if this were the case, but if it wouldn't be convenient I could come home on the tube and then drive back for my stuff.

I have just heard that this ship is going to England and then to India next trip (Just a very likely rumor) This would make a seven month trip and that's too long to be away, for me.

Here we have been sailing just 10 ° from the equator right along and the weather has been very cool. – and rainy. It is getting a little warmer and will continue to become so until we hit Panama but up till now it has been very comfortable.

The radio has been dandy and the whole trip and has given us many hours of enjoyment. Tomorrow night KFI (Los Angeles) has a big program on for me. The "Chief Game Warden" of California is going to talk on California's "system" of propagation and game law enforcement. I'm waiting anxiously for his talk. He spoke while we were on the trip over and he certainly is interesting. I realize more and more how interested I am in this sort of thing.

I'm going to play a dirty trick on you mother but please forgive me since it really is the best thing to do. I have two pair of white ducks and a [blue] white (good) shirt that I am going to mail to you at New Orleans or Panama. I wish you'd please wash them and iron them for me so that I could wear them [w] as soon as I reach home. You see, we have to wash everything here in a bucket and we have no starch or blueing etc. I want to keep the ducks nice as long as I can. Especially the one pair of tailored "cadet" ducks that Bob gave me. You can tell them from the others. I'd like to wear those as soon as I reach home if I could. Neither pair is very dirty. Thanks a lot, mother I'm sorry I had to send them but I know I could never get them looking decent here on board. I am keeping a blue shirt and I think I can clean that up in fair shape (it isn't very dirty) so that I'll wear that when I reach New York. I can wear my blue pants too since they are in good press.

Only six more days and I'll be at the canal and the longest and hardest lap of the return trip will be over. And most important I'll receive letters there.-the letters help tremendously. If it wasn't for them the trip would be a lot harder.

Sept 1, (Friday)

Well here it is September all ready. Everybody is home now I guess. It seems strange. I won't be home for about 18 more days, depending on weather conditions and ports of call before New York. I've just been doing a little "shoemaker" work on my old sport shoes. The uppers were torn away and since I need to wear them as work shoes I had to sew them up. Used waxed thread and a "palming" needle just like a regular cobbler. I have had to do some other sewing also but it isn't very artistic. I guess I need practice in that line of endeavor. I made a mistake when I didn't bring some shirt buttons, I certainly need some. [we]

We are getting mostly Mexican reception on the radio now. They talk all in Spanish (or Mexican) and play a great many tangos and rumbes.

I heard the "Chief Game Warden" of California speak on California's method of conservation and propagation and game law enforcement. He certainly was interesting.

Sept 3, Sunday

7:00 P.M.

Back again. No work today or tomorrow. That is, except for washing and some sewing that I have to do. I did most of my washing to [mmorrow] day and tomorrow I'll finish up that and do my sewing. Just as I got my washing hung out to dry, it began to rain. That is not at all unusual though since it has rained 14 out of the 15 days that we have been sailing on this return trip. It gets rather tiresome seeing rain all the time but it won't be long now and we'll be where the weather is fairly normal.

I learned today that there is a very good chance that we will be at the canal Wednesday instead of Thursday. That is good news to me. The nearer –the canal the nearer New York and – the nearer home.
[i]

The radio is giving its usual sterling performance tonite but the static here in this region is pretty bad. One gets used to the static though after awhile. I didn't realize that there were so many radio stations in the "far-west". We have six from Texas alone, regularly.

This will be the last letter that you'll hear from me. Although I may have time to send you a letter from New Orleans. It depends on how long we'll be there. I'm pretty sure I'll be able to ^do so though if I can send my package (laundry) I'll be able to mail a letter. I won't write anymore now to mail from the canal since there won't be any more news and I never have any time to write while going through the canal. They keep us busy.

Well I don't know how things are at home but I certainly hope everyone is well and happy. I'll know somewhat when I receive your letters at the canal. I hope [dad] you got your break, Dad so that things will be a little easier for you. Please don't take my first letter too much to heart. It's perfectly sincere but perhaps after I've been home a month, I'll want to go out again but I have some doubts. I am counting the days until I can see you all again and until then and after

All my love,

Your Son - , Fred

P.S. Remember me to Joe

S.S. Steel Mariner

Gulf of Mexico

September 10

Dear Mother and Dad.

Well here it is Sunday nite and tomorrow morning we will enter "South Pass" about 5:00 A.M. and should be in New Orleans about 4:00 P.M. It takes about 10 or 11 hrs. to go up the river to the city. We have made very excellent time. The weather conditions have been ideal. The Caribbean and the Gulf have been as calm as the millpond in Old Essex. Since we left the "canal", the sun has been shining splendidly every day. It certainly is a pleasant change. According to latest rumors, we'll be in N.O. over a Monday nite and we'll probably leave there Tuesday nite or afternoon. This will leave time for us to see a little of that famous and notorious old [Co] city, New Orleans. I'm certainly thankful for that. I've heard so much about that place.

Tommorrow as we are proceeding up that old "Father of waters" I can think of all the kids going to [the] school. It seems strange and makes me feel a little funny but I know it isn't homesickness for the actual school itself --, just for the surroundings and events.

Tell Edwin and Estelle I certainly enjoyed their letters. It was thoughtful of them to write me such nice letters, I'm hoping that something's going to turn up so that I can get some sort of a job home so that I can stay home. At any rate if there is no such opportunity I'd like to be able stay at home for at least a few weeks before I sign out again.

We have been getting extraordinary radio reception since we left the canal. I just checked up and right now I can connect 20 stations clearly. I'll bet that will give our Stromberg-Carlson a run for it's money. Of course we have a very high [arial] arial (misspelled). Well, I'll stop now. Give my regards to everyone and I'll see you about the 19th. Would you let Lillian know just when I'll be home when you find out from Mr. Jump. Until then –

Lovingly – Fred.

S.S. Steel Mariner

New Orleans

Dear Mother + Dad,

Well here I am in N.O. and I have just time to scribble a few lines on this borrowed paper before getting back to work. We sail from here to New York at 4:00 P.M. Just as we are about to leave two hurricane warnings are up. The first mate says that we will undoubtedly run into one of them. It's coming up from Porto Rico and will just about meet us when we get well out. To back his word as to the authenticity of the statement, they are putting on storm lashings (?) all over and making everything extra well secured. Just across the river lies the S.S. Steel Farier of this line. She lies at anchor with her superstructure and bridge torn away and her captain dying in the hospital with his back broken and the bos'n in the same place with both legs broken. She was caught in a hurricane while coming from Galveston. Not a very pleasant reminder. Of course in a hurricane, they put the ordinary seamen etc below and they aren't permitted on deck so I guess I won't see much actual excitement. New Orleans is a wonderful place. The sailors all swear it is the best city (town to them) in the world and I can see their side. It is very inexpensive. One can ride 5 miles in a taxi for 25 C and food, etc is very cheap. I have never seen so many beautiful girls in all my life. One couldn't find, in the whole state of New Jersey, the beautiful girls that one sees here on one street.

Everyone is friendly here and their southern talk is pleasing to hear. I have seen no place anywhere that came any where near to this. I have always been fond of reading of the south and always have desired to come here. I certainly was not disappointed and at the first opportunity I shall hope to get back down here again. I can't tell you my impressions in full. There isn't time but I will say that if there is any place that I would like to be if I had to be away from home, it is La or Fla. Or Alabama. I have to stop. I hear the bos'n yelling for "Slim" and that's me. Love to all and I'll see you soon – Fred

P.S. I read your letter, Dad. It was certainly welcome and I enjoyed it very much. Thank Estelle too for hers.

October 22/33

Essex, Conn.

Dear Mother and Dad,

I feel very guilty for not having written before this. I have been busy most of the time and have been having a wonderful time. I love Essex – every thing about it and of course I have been ducking quite frequently. Monday, the first day, Bunny and I only got five ducks but we had a swell time. Of course the lab (?) wasn't off until noon so that really was only $\frac{1}{2}$ day. We went across the river and set out off a little island on the other side of Knot's Island. We were just above Lord's cove. We were set out about 11: A.M. and shortly after when the club members started out to set out their decoys, we saw thousands of black duck circling about over the cove. It was quite a thrill. None stooped to us however but promptly at 12:00 A.M., five blacks dropped right into the center of the stool. What a break. Bunny and I decided to try more wing shooting this year so we jumped them and dropped four aou of the five. Three of them were dead but the fourth was wing broke and he got away. I waded out in my waders and picked them up. Those waders were a great idea. We didn't have to use the boat at all except at high tide. Tings were quiet for about an hour. We saw lots of ducks in the air and the "club" did a lot of shooting but no ducks came near us. About 1:30 P.M. a single came and circled over the stool. We killed him just as he fouled his wings to sit down. Right after this a lone broadbill came by and we succeeded in missing him 4 times. Things were quiet until about 4:30 P.M. when a pair of blacks came over our stool. They circled over twice and the last time they were pretty far out and looked as if they weren't coming in so we chanced a few shots and dropped one.

Promptly at sunset (5:07) we picked up our decoys and came home. We set out 15 live decoys and 9 wooden ones Monday and Tuesday and yesterday. When Bunny went back to N.Y. I kept 8 live ones and 9 wooden ones to use. 15 being too many for one to pick up. Tuesday was our [!] red-letter day as you have heard. We left early and were set out (in the same spot) about $\frac{3}{4}$ hour before shooting time which was 5:30 A.M. When it became light enough to see we saw that three black had swam in and were feeding peacefully among our decoys. This was quite exciting but our big thrill was yet to come. About 5:20 we heard this peculiar and thilling sound. A wild goose honking. It was still quite dusky and we couldn't see very far bit it sounded as though it came from down the river somewhere. It only sounded 3 times and then all was quiet except for the clucking of our decoys and the wild blacks. We were totally unprepared for what happened next. We were keeping our heads down of course because of the 3 blacks and weren't looking out. Suddenly we heard a loud swishing of wings and a very loud splash. We held our breaths and peeked over the top of the blind and there was a great big Canada Goose serenely sailing about among the decoys. Our hearts began to pound. Gosh I thought that big goose would certainly hear mine. We were all set to shoot but Bunny's watch only said 5:25. We had decided to do everything right. We knew that the club would not shoot until 5:30 [so we] and we were very near to them so great as the temptation was we trained our guns on the big fellow and waited the longest four minutes I ever waited. From the minute that goose dropped into the stool he was covered by two very ready shotguns. The minutes crawled by. Bunny sat with one eye on the goose and one eye on his watch. At 5:29 someone over beyond the holes let off a regular barrage and out goose left the water. He only got about 10 feet above the water when two loads of shot just centered that baby and he dropped, very dead. On top of that we dropped a black out of the air also. When I went out and picked up that great big bird, and the black I was so elated I didn't know what to do. Bunny and I shook hands and did a

war dance around the blind. Boy-oh-Boy. About 20 minutes later four broadbill came over the stool all bunched up. Believe it or not Dad, [I] we both shot once and those four dropped and they were all stone dead. Some lucky shooting. But our shooting in the afternoon made up for it. Later in the morning a pair of blacks came in and we dropped them both. In the afternoon we missed 3 singles and walking in the meadow on Knot's island we jumped 15 blacks and shot 7 times and didn't do a bit of damage. Just before picking up time a lone black came over very [low] high and [but] by a bit of lucky shooting we dropped him. This ended our shooting for the day. Wednesday I rested and fixed up the boat. Thursday I went over to North cove for about two hours and didn't get set out until too late and thus didn't get a shot. I went with a man named Mr. Content who knows about as much about duck hunting as little Sarah. We had two singles come in and I told him to shoot. He missed them both on the water and also in the air. Like a darn fool I didn't shoot till they were about out of range [and] I was so amazed to see a man miss a duck sitting on the water. We picked up at 8:00 A.M. and he went to work. I spent the remainder of the day visiting. Friday, I left very early in the morning by myself and rowed across the river to our spot on the other side of Knot's Island. I think I probably had more luck and did more poor shooting on Friday than I ever had before. All sorts of crazy things happened. I should have killed six or seven easily but actually came home with two. A black and a beautiful drake Greenwing Teal. Coming back the tide went out so low (We had a down river wind) that I couldn't get up around the upper end of Knot's Island; I had to row all around down the lower end and up river against the tide and wind. It took me three hours to row from a point about equidistant with Ned's shack up to the Paint works. What an awful time I had and my arms were so tired I could hardly raise them. Saturday (Bunny came up Fri nite) we went over again but of course we used the outboard. We had a little trouble starting the motor and thus were set out a little late. We saw lots of flight ducks but, like every other day so far, it was warm and sunny and we only secured two beautiful little teal. Sunday we had the goose and in the afternoon I drove to Boston with Burdette while he drove his girl friend home. 260 miles to take a girl home. My Lord! We didn't get back until 2:00 A.M. and now 8:30 A.M. I'm all ready to go ducking. It's the most promising day we've had so far. A N.E. wind and cloudy and here I am at 8:30 waiting for Burdette to get up so I can get a lift down to the dock. It's going to be some row, across the river with this wind blowing but I'll be over there with bells on in a couple of hours. Late or not late.

Well I must stop now. I started this letter Sunday morn. I suppose you wonder when I'm coming home. Gosh I don't know. I'm having such a swell time and except for a box of shells that Bud bought me I haven't spent a cent. Of course I haven't gone out at all either Except once in awhile to the movies with Burdette. I'm keeping them supplies with fresh meat and I wash the dishes once in a while and they all want me to stay so – I don't know. Blanche's mother has been ill so Ned and Blanche have been at Tarrington and thus Ned hasn't had any chance to take me as he said he would. Blanche hasn't been able to go at all yet. Ned went the first two days. They have had some darn fine shooting at the club so far but no geese yet. I do envy their shooting though. Well I have 8 live decoys (darn good ones) here in one of Grandad's spare coops and 9 wood ones and a boat and [I] oars and Burdette insists on keeping me supplied with shells so you see it's going to be hard to break away and come home. I'm sending you a newspaper clipping that tells of Bunny and I getting the first goose of the year. Please save it and I'll put it in my scrap book. Drop me a line and let me know how things are and I'll write again soon. Give my love to Estelle and Edwin and until later – All my love.

Fred

Essex

October 24/33

Dear Dad and Mother,

Today it is raining and rather unpleasant out. Since I didn't go ducking I thought I would drop another note since my first was so hurriedly and incoherently written. Yesterday was the first day that I haven't gotten any ducks and it was a most disappointing day all in all. I had a great many ducks circle over my stool just out of range during the course of the day but to my disappointment they would finally sail over to Lord's cove and promptly get shot. Honestly that cove is a regular magnet. This spot where Bunny and I go on the river is really a poor spot this time of year. The ducks seem to prefer the coves. It made me so darn mad. Several times I would have a nice bunch of blacks circling overhead and then off they would go, right down into Lord's cove. There would be a barrage of shots and most of them would stay there. It didn't seem fair. Those fellows shot all day long and I didn't get one shot. I was very well hidden and had good decoys out. The blacks just don't care to stool in the river. When I got back to the "paint works" I saw their bags. Only three of seven blinds were occupied. One blind (2 men) killed 20 blacks and 2 broadbill. One (2 men) killed 14 blacks and 3 wedgeon (?) and Mort. Johns killed 9 blacks and a canvasback. It has been that way every day however. This morning, about 10:30 I went down to the boat at the "Paint works" to get some shells I left there and Dyke Whetmore and Nora Wright had just come in from the cove. They each had their limit. Too bad. I had hoped to go over once with Ned but Aunt Mariah is very ill and Ned and Blanche are staying up there indefinitely. She had a left side stroke and from what I can find out, it's just a matter of time. It certainly is a shame that she is so very ill.

I had planned to go pheasant hunting today but it's raining a cold drizzle now. It's a fine ducking day but it's too heartbreaking to sit over there on the island and watch all the ducks go into the cove. If I go over very early in the morning, I can be fairly sure of one or two ducks at sunrise but after that it's just Lord's cove for the ducks. That place is certainly a gold mine. The other day Fat (?) Pearson and a friend of his shot 24 ducks (2 linute) (?) a cock pheasant and 4 snipe. Kind of a tough day's sport.

Last night Burdette took me down to Bill Sanksten's, who as you may know is Burdette's boss. He is a peach of a man. Quite interested in hunting and has some fine guns. One especially took my heart. A Remington 3 shot auto. 16 ga. An auto is really the only duck gun. Everyone up here uses them and I must admit that there have been plenty of times this last week when I wished I was using one. Of course the Parker is the only sensible gun for me because of the Jersey laws. But believe me when I make my first [milleen] million I'm going to buy myself a 3 shot 16 ga automatic.

But at any rate I'm having a fine time and I certainly do wish that you could both be up here and Dad could get a chance to go ducking. From the way the "club" looks it will be just as good shooting ^ there 5 years from now as there is now so you'll get a break Dad, sometime in the future. Please write and tell me how things are. Burdette asks me and of course I'm not certain so let me know exactly. It will make things clearer and there won't be that wondering and doubt all the time. Give my love to the kids and remember me to Joe.

All my love.

Fred

Next mail to:

S.S. Steel Mariner

%Norton-Lilly Co.

Port of Norfolk, Va.

(Isthmian Line)

Wednesday

[Thursday]

Afternoon

Dear Mother and Dad,

Well, I'm writing you from the water again. We are now in Delaware Bay and expect to be in Philadelphia about 8:00 P.M. There are huge floes of ice around us and lots of winter ducks. I am writing under difficulties as usual. The ship is almost empty and is very high in the water therefore the screw is partly out and the vibration is fierce.

There is little news to tell at this time. We left Wehawken at 10: P.M. last night and went on watches. I drew the 8 to 12. Consequently I am off watch now. All I have done so far on watch is work darn good and hard in the holds .But of course this coastwise business is just hard work and little fun but that's to be expected. As far as our itinery is concerned I know little. We go from Philadelphia to Norfolk and then there are rumors that we go in drydock at Newport for a week for repairs. I think we then go to Portland, ME and Boston and Baltimore. There seems to be a lot of doubt as to whether we will hit N.Y. again at all. The ship is slated for the West Coast and then England. India is very doubtful but we may hit Hawaii again in the course of the trip.

I tied a few squirrel tails last night. Some of the guys on here think I'm nuts, tying fur on little hooks. Oh well! I'll stop now. It's almost impossible to write. Drop me a note at Norfolk if you get a chance.

Give my love to the kids.

Love.

Fred

Thursday Eve.

Dear Mother and Dad,

Just a short note this time. We [our] are still in Philadelphia, much to our great disappointment. It started to snow heavily this morning, to our disgust, and it has snowed all day. The snow kept the longshoremen from discharging so we are held up another day. We are docked at a most unaccessable place and at any rate, no one has any money anyhow. I'll be glad when we move. We are working in the holds all of the time now, pretty hard and uninteresting but it's doing me good.

What I wanted to ask was this. I absolutely need boots. Now I'm not certain but I think my hip boots are at Roys. Would you write them a note enclosing a few cents for postage asking them, if the boots are there, to send them to you. When and if you get them, let me know. The sooner I get them, the better. I expected to get a pair of sea boots but I won't spend the money if I can get my hip boots. And please don't forget my "outdoor" section in the news on Tuesday and Friday nights. "Out in the Open". And "Outdoors" in the Sunday call. I will be my only way of keeping posted on that stuff. Thanks. Remember me to the kids and give them my love. I'll write again, as soon as there is some news.

Lovingly,

Fred

(next mail at

S.S. Steel Mariner

%Norton-Lilly Co.

Port of Portland, ME.

Isthmian Line)

We'll probably be there on

Thursday and leave on

Saturday(?)

S.S. Steel Mariner

Newport News

Sunday night

Dear Mother and Dad,

I am writing this from the Newport dry dock. We just arrived here tonight. We reached Norfolk on Saturday afternoon in a wet driving snowstorm. I received your two very nice letters there. The stevedors discharged what cargo there was today and we shifted to Newport this evening. The three ordinary seamen had to stand watch in the holds to keep the longshoremen from smoking, so we'll probably get most of tomorrow off. I'll go up to the Sears Roebuck store and get some underwear, a pair of work gloves and a few other things I need I got my much needed haircut on Sat. nite in Norfolk.

It was quite interesting coming from Norfolk to Newport (about an hours run) We came up through Hampton Roads where there were some of the battleships lying and up the James River past all the ship yards etc. In one yard they are building a big new air craft carrier. The darn thing has six smokestacks. We aren't actually in the drydock itself but tied up at the entrance. We go into the dock tomorrow morning at six oclock. It should be very interesting. The James River is a big clean beautiful place. Just above us about a half mile up the river is that big viaduct five and one half miles long. It looks very impressive.

We were unable to get out to Blackie's home, much to our disappointment. Working the cargo today and shifting ship made it impossible. We leave Newport on Tuesday for Portland, Maine. "Brrrr!"

I'm glad my hip boots are coming. I hope Mr Roy mailed them right away. They'll be forwarded to me here if they don't come too late. Hearing about your ventilation problem on the White Tar job was very interesting, Dad. And I certainly was sorry you cracked yourleg so. I hope it heals up quickly. It's too darn bad that pile-driving job went "floey." Contracting is still certainly tough but spring is near and perhaps things will pick up in time to do some good.

You mentioned having my leader material. You just might as well hang on to it. I'm so darn busy and so tired at night that tying leaders is out of the question now. I'm way way behind in my laundry now. It's so hard to dry anything in this weather on board the ship.

I feel pretty certain that the ship will hit New York. I think it is scheduled to sign out of there for the West Coast Trip. And if it does reach New York, I'll get home for a little while somehow. If we get any kind of a break, we should be there overnight.

On the trip in general, I'm not particularly enjoying myself. In fact I dislike this sea and sailing business heartily, I know much to your disappointment, Dad. But I feel that in view of the fact that I can not secure employment home, that I need some physical action vitally (?), that I lose a great deal of self respect ^ loafing around home doing nothing and that I have some real friendships here on board that I had best stick to it and hope that things will change so that I can get a job at home, at least on land. I'm working hard. I like the bosn! The new mates, first + third, are great and they seem to like me so I could be worse off even though I am only worth 83 [cents] a day + \$1.00 worth of grub. Drop me a note at Portland, ME. Love to all – Fred

S.S. Steel Mariner

E'Route to Portland

Thursday Aft.

Dear Mother + Dad,

We're now getting a taste of the famous North Atlantic weather. Boy oh Boy! We left Newport finally; at ten last night and now we're running up the coast bucking a real old snorting "norther". It isn't terribly rough, - yet, but the wind is icy cold and it drives the snow right into your skin. On lookout you almost freeze to death. I'm off watch now, thank goodness, but I have at least two hours lookout tonight to look forward to. Oh well, it ought to make a man of me or something similar.

The biggest rub is that we are heading north all the time. Brrrr! Now I know how the old Maine codfishermen feel. This writing is poor and wavy but the ship is pitching quite a bit and we're light. Every time the stern kicks up, the screw comes out of the water and vibrates the whole ship. That also makes writing difficult.

I missed my boots at Newport but I imagine they'll be forwarded to Baltimore, where I can get them.

We are due in Portland on Saturday morning in the first watch, that is if the weather doesn't get too dirty. We'll probably sail on Sat nite since there is rarely much cargo there. This should bring us in Baltimore around Tuesday evening or Wed. morning. I don't know how long we'll be in Baltimore but we come to N.Y. and are scheduled to leave there on the 25th (Sunday). I hope I'll be able to get home. It depends of course on how long we stay in N.Y.

I'm going to play a dirty trick on you, mother. I have some underwear and socks that I am going to send to you at Portland if I get a chance. They need to be washed. I don't want to appear lazy but there isn't very much and it's awfully difficult to get them washed right now. The main difficulty is in drying them in this dirty weather. Another thing, I'm so darned tired when I get off watch that I just fall in bed and sleep. There's nothing that needs ironing and there is really little to do. I'll be awfully grateful if you would do them for me and then mail them to me at N.Y. just in case I can't get home. I'll find out what Pier we are going to and put it in the letter later.

I hope I am able to get home as there are some things I want to leave home before I go on the long trip. No one is sure where, yet but the West Coast is certain/ And I want to see you all.

Well I'm going to turn in now. I'll write again soon on this letter./next mail at Baltimore (Same address)

Friday afternoon

We had quite a surprise this morning when we turned out at 7:30. The sun was out bright, the wind warmer. The water is now that good old blue color instead of a dirty grey. We have been in sight of land all day, on the port side. Long Island, Block Island, Martha's Vineyard, Cape Cod, etc. It is quite interesting. We are due in Portland at about 6:00 tomorrow morning and when I imagine we'll leave at night.

I spent two of the most uncomfortable and coldest hours of my life last night standing lookout but today the sun is out again, so hooray. We have little cargo coming on in Portland and we're empty now so

there's a lot of cargo coming on somewhere. I only hope it's New York. Well I must stop now. If I get a chance to send you the laundry, don't mail it! Hold it until I reach N.Y. I'll get over home somehow. Give my love to Edwin and Estelle and I'll write again as soon as I can. Lovingly – Fred

Friday nite

6:30 P.M.

Dear Mother + Dad,

I just heard a bit of rotten bad news. Blackie heard it on the bridge and I believe it to be authentic.

It seems we are going to pay off and sign on again in Baltimore not New York. The ship is going to New York but only for half a day. It will get there on Sunday morning and leave there on Sunday afternoon. I feel rotten now. I did want a chance to get home again before I left and see you all again. They'll probably have us pretty busy on Sunday carrying stores on etc. so I guess my chances of getting home are pretty small. Of course there's always a chance of them changing the orders again but I doubt it. And I also found out that the old 3rd mate is coming on again. He's a pain in the neck. The one they have now is swell. Gosh, I feel low.

I don't know just what to do about the gear I want to leave. I guess I could send it by post but I don't like to. It's heavy and all my good stuff. Blackie says I won't need it on the West Coast. My high shoes, breeches, leather coat, one heavy shirt, heavy underwear etc) ^overcoat. I'll just keep one heavy shirt and the suede jacket for leaving N.Y. and emergency. I'm also in some doubt about that laundry.

Dad, I wondered if there was any chance of your getting over to the ship on Sunday morning (that is the 25th) I think it would be pier 17. Of course I expect to send you the money to get over and back. That's only fair. I would have spent it if I came home anyhow. You could bring me my laundry over and take all that heavy stuff back. You would want to bring a duffle bag to carry it in the back of the car.

Think it over and let me know if there is any chance. Let me know at Baltimore I'll keep you posted on what the probable plans are. Perhaps you could bring Helen, and one of the kids over too. Of course you'd have to get passes. Please let Helen know the bad news as I have already sealed her letter.

Love.

Fred

Baltimore, Md.

March 21 /34

Dear Mother & Dad,

Things look a bit brighter on my chances of getting home. As I mentioned before, I have a day off tomorrow. This afternoon I saw Mr. Lanier, the chief mate and a swell AAANo.! Fellow and asked him if I could trade my day off for a little time to go home in New York. It sounds like a fifty-fifty proposition but it happens that they need all the men to take on stores at N.Y.

However the mate came through and gave me the best break possible. It seems we are going to sign on in New York instead of Baltimore and of course I have to be on board for that. He said we're due in New York on Sunday or Monday. We may sail the same day we get in and we may possibly be there a night. He said that when we reach New York he'll let me go just as soon as I've signed the articles .So I'll get home for a little while, anyhow. If we're there overnight, I'll be home for then anyhow. Please tell Helen this for me. I'll let you know what day (text moves to opposite page) we are due in N.Y. as soon as I find out which should be around Friday. At any rate it won't be necessary to come over to the ship because I'll get home, if only for a few hours. The mean part is that if we whould get in on Monday and leave Monday I'll miss seeing Helen as she will be working.

We've been loading what seems like miles and miles of pipe, tubing and casing. It ranges from 2" stuff up to 20' and there's plenty of it. Some of the big stuff is for that new tunnel project in California. Most of the pipe is for some place in [Cal][Caf] California. We also have a lot of sheet tin (for cans) for Portland, Oregon. Here's a funny one. We loaded asbestos in Maine that was from Provincetown, Canada and it's to go to Vancouver, Ca. I'm really in a great state of mind and am getting better physically every day and I'm working very much harder then I did on the last trip. Having such good bosses makes a world of difference. Some of the men have gone and new ones have come on, all for the good. This mate believes in American sailors on American ships and it looks like we're going to have a real American crew. Well, I'll see you at the end of the week or beginning of next. And write again first to let you know. – Love F

Baltimore, Md.

Mar. 22, 1934

Dear Dad,

It seems I must write every day to get this matter of coming home straightened out. This morning when I came on deck to turn to, "Boats" said that the mate said for me to take my day off today. He said that we'll be in New York only a part of a day and it is extremely doubtful whether there will be any chance at all for me to go home. He did add that if there is a chance (very slim) for me to get away for a couple of hours, he'll let me go anyway. But my chances are practically "nil". I am hoping you will be able to get over. The ship is due on Monday. I think you could find out the time at the office when you write or phone for passes. Also, if there should be any chance at all of the day being changed they would let you know. I hope the fact that it is on Monday won't prevent you from coming over and bringing Estelle and Helen. I don't know about Helen though. She works on Monday I think. I do want to see her. If it is impossible for her to come perhaps mother would like to. [Edwin] I would like to (text on opposite page) see Edwin too but there wouldn't be room in the car and he has seen the ship before.

You had better dig up a duffle bag and bring it along so you can carry my heavy gear home in it and please bring my laundry and magazines, if any. And any second or first class mail that may have accumulated.

If it is going to be impossible for you to make it. Just drop me a line at N.Y. and I'll know when I get in. You could mail my laundry there anyhow if you can't make it. I do hope you can and I do hope [you] Helen can come. I'm anxious to see all of you and I wish there was room enough in the car. I think it is possible by phoning to Mr. Jump to make arrangements to sign the passes at the dock and so save you the trouble of going in to get them if you don't have time to get them by mail. You could find out at any rate. We haven't been payed yet but we are due this afternoon and I'll mail this then. I have sent a little money for you to use for expenses. This is only fair. Please consider the money yours to use and don't dare think of bringing me any change, if there should be any. Well, I certainly hope to see most of you all on Monday. Until then – Love to all.

Fred

S.S. Steel Mariner

Off coast of Lower Cal.

April 12, 1934 (Eve)

Dear Mother and Dad,

We are now about three days from San Diego. I think the mat said we are stopping there first. The weather has been really tropic up until today although there has usually been a cool breeze blowing. Today it has been a bit cooler but we still can wear shorts. I have a real tan. The sun feels so good after those winter months. The verdict is still "West Coast and return" and I kind of hope it remains that way. I would like to see England but I'd rather be home this summer. Especially if I can find some sort of work, which I suppose is rather doubtful.

I think of you all at home very often and wonder how you are getting along. I do hope things are, at last, a little better. It doesn't seem possible that they can stay so poor much longer. I only wish you could all get away and be on the trip with me away from everything.

Pan tells me in a letter [from] at the canal all about his fishing preparations. It makes me feel quite homesick to go. This will be the first opening day I have missed in years. We have been trolling behind the ship but [h] so far have met with little success. The gear isn't right for this sort of trolling. And at any rate the day is a little too full for much attention to fishing. I have been trying to correct some of my bad habits this trip. (Biting my finger and slouching when I stand) You'd think I was in the Army the way I walk about forcing my shoulders back and my stomach in. I keep at it constantly and during my four hours wheel every day don't relax at all. The first few days it made me very tired but now I'm getting used to it and am really getting results. No finger chewing either. Maybe you'll be a little surprised when I get home.

One of my days at sea goes about like this now but it will be quite a bit different when we start hitting the ports. Get up at 7:30 A.M. Wash and breakfast. Take the wheel for two hours. Then work on deck til 12 N. After dinner I take a bath and then take a sunbath till 2: P.M. After this I take some stomach exercises and then come down and take a little nap. After supper (5:00 P.M.) I write, sew make flies, read etc till 8: P.M. when I go to the wheel again for two hours and then lookout til 12 M. It's very nice on lookout now. Cool and pleasant. The water is very phosphorescent and it looks very pretty at night. Porpise play around the ship's prow and you can almost reach down and touch them when they leap and leap. Their bodies are all outlines with phosphorus and look [awfully] very unusual. Pardon this writing please since I'm writing under difficulties as usual.

2

April 13, 1934

Today if Friday the 13th but the ship is still afloat and no accidents have occurred as yet. I've just finished my supper and have been discussing sailing in general and the possible future for a sailor. It was quite interesting. About one out of a hundred A.B.5 ever get as far as Chief Mate and very few get any mate's berth at all. Every sailor in my roommate's experience and in fact every sailor that any of the A.B8 on here know and themselves included would much rather work ashore if they could get a decent job. The mates on here would all rather be working ashore. They say sea jobs aren't worth the candle. It is

known, of course, that after a period of time at sailing it is hard to stop. It seems to get in your blood they say. I have certainly learned a great deal of interest about sailing, sailors and shipping in my short period at sea. And although I certainly have no desire to go to sea for a living, I think my time that I have spent here at sea has been very valuable in experience and in giving me an inside view of one of the world's greatest industries.

We are due in San Pedro sometime late Monday morning. For the last two days the wind has been blowing pretty hard on the head. This cause for this is the fact that we were crossing the mouth of the Gulf of Lower California. It is always windy here for some reason. My watch is a racket. The 3rd Mate is only a kid from Annapolis and Charles (Foley) my watchmate and roommate, and I, get along great with him [though] and it's well known that the 8 to 12 watch on here is a soft spot. We work hard on our two hours day work and of course steering is monotonous and the wheel is very stiff but pleasant and interesting conversations make the watch hours fly.

My other roommate just came in and said that he just heard on the bridge that we are going to get 2,000 tons of ore at Tacoma and that there is some extra, extra fine trolling for steelhead trout and salmon. This also means that we should hit Baltimore on the return, for discharge and that hit's Blackie and Bill and I just right. I think I have some true friends in Baltimore. [I think] The kind that would be right there to help if you ever got in a jam and needed help badly. That kind of friendships are always well to cultivate. If we don't hit Baltimore and don't get to see Brownie and the family, Blackie and I are going to try to get down to Baltimore somehow and visit for a couple of days. Of course this depends more or less on how things turn out in general. When I get through buying clothes that I need there won't be much money left to spend in Baltimore.

April 15, 1934

Well, here's the opening day. I woke up this morning about 3 o'clock. No kidding. I lay here in my bunk thinking that all over Jersey, fellows were just getting up and getting their tackle together and getting a hurried breakfast. It's the first opening day for years that I haven't participated in. I thought of Pan and Clark Beam and Ed, and the Swartzenbacks and Eddy Hoertz and lots of others just starting out. But I suppose it's cold as the mischief at home and probably quite unpleasant so I shouldn't feel too bad. Just the same I wish I had a jumping belt so I could jump home in a split second and then getting all my tackle, jump up to Big Flatbrook.

We reach San Pedro, Cal. Tomorrow afternoon around 4 P.M. and we will be there about three days. Then we go to Frisco for about three days. Then Portland and Seattle where we will probably be quite some time unloading and loading. They make the Jantzen suits in Portland and one should be able to get a good one quite cheaply. It is quite a coincidence but here they also make those Hersch-Weis Stags and breeches that I wanted so badly. Of course I can't afford to get them, but I do think I'll pay a visit to the factory and at least see them and how they're made. It's hard to figure out the time of this trip but if it should turn out as per schedule, and if it looks as if it will, we should arrive back in New York around June 15th. Perhaps I'll be able to do a little trout fishing then. Maybe we can make a couple of days of it together, Dad. I certainly hope so. But most of all, I hope things look a little better at home. It doesn't seem fair that you should get all the bad breaks.

Well, I'll have to stop now. Writing right here, is almost impossible. Please write me and let me know all the news from home and how you all are etc. I guess if you send the next mail to Portland it will reach

me. (Care of same people) As I mentioned before, if things run as per scedhule, I'll be around Portland and Seattle for about three weeks. Give my love to Estelle + Edwin and tell them I'll write them from California but that it's very difficult to write on the ship this trip. She rolls and vibrates so.

Don't forget to write me the news.

Blackie sends his best regards.

All my love

Fred

Off to right side what appears to be a wavy line with arrows and caption

Trying to draw a straight line.

S.S. Steel Mariner

San Francisco, Cal

April 20, 1934

Dear Mother and Dad,

I received all your nice letters in San Pedro. We were there from Monday (April 16) till Wednesday. We left there Wednesday Evening and arrived here in San Francisco very, very early this morning. I haven't been ashore yet but I spent quite a little time ashore in Los Angeles (San Pedro). We didn't go to San Diego. Your letters were forwarded.

California is a most wonderful place. No wonder Californians rave. They have a right to. I liked San Pedro (Southern Cal) as well as any place I have ever been. Even New Orleans. The climate is really wonderful and they claim it is the same all year round. There are palms etc. and lots of flowers all around. I think it would be a swell place to live in. Fresh fruit and vegetables are very, very, cheap. We bought a large double case of oranges for \$1.25. And they were positively the sweetest oranges I have ever had. Of course they were tree-ripe. The people here are very friendly and cordial. They are mostly Americans. They seem to be most happy and satisfied. Business isn't booming but the ease of living and the pleasant atmosphere make up for a lot of things. It is like New Orleans in one special respect. Most of the girls here are beauties and there are lots of them. We didn't see the "fleet". They must have passed on a little different course. There were lots of sad girls left alone in San Pedro when the fleet left. There are two cruisers there now. The Arkansas and the Chicago. The Arkansas is a battleship – my error. The Chicago is a new cruiser and, as yet, has no armament. I'll tell you more about Southern California when I reach home. I can talk for hours on it.

San Francisco seems to be a nice clean place with large modern piers. The buildings, of course, are not tall because of the earthquake hazard. I'll write you later about Frisco when I get ashore.

I'm glad to hear that it has warmed up at home and you are playing some golf. I hope you and Edwin get a chance to do a little fishing, Dad. I'll be home in the early part of June to catch some myself. Tell the kids, I'll write. Really, and give them my love. I'll write you more, probably tomorrow.

All my love,

Fred

S. S. Steel Mariner

Alemeda, Cal.

April 21, 1934

Dear Mother and Dad,

I have just returned from an afternoon spent in San Francisco. It is Saturday and we had the afternoon off. It's only a ferry ride from here. We shifted over to here at 5:00 this morning. I can't begin to tell you everything I would like to, because I'm so crazy about California that I would talk for hours and hours.

San Francisco is a well kept, modern city. It is much, much pleasanter to go about here because everything and everyone is calm, courteous, and cheerful appearing. It has none of the ~~chaos~~ chaos and nerve – racking noise of New York or Newark. The big thing is that 90% of the people you see here in the streets, on the buses, etc. are Americans or, at least, American in appearance.

This is excepting Chinatown and some of the other foreign sections. The people out here all look so healthy and the new cars seem to predominate. Lots of new Chryslers. An old car (3 yrs) seems to be an oddity here. And also, the people don't try to run you down and drive you off the streets. They are most courteous.

I spent my most interesting times in Chinatown. There are scores of souvenir etc. shops that sell all manner of imported Chinese and Japanese goods. Lots and Lots of pretty and unusual things. I almost went crazy with Blackie – window shopping. We spent what money we had with us, in no time at all. I wished I had "hundreds" to buy things for everyone with. The shops are similar to Honolulu except that things are a little more expensive. But compared to prices in the East Coast for the same thing they are really cheap.

I bought Estelle a birthday present which I got in Chinatown. I hope it fits her, but it should. It isn't a particularly expensive one but I thought it was pretty and she ~~should~~ might like it. Japanese Kimona. It should reach you before May 7, if I am able to get it mailed in time. Please save it till the morning of the 7th so it will be sort of a surprise. You could open it before hand ^ yourselves and look at it and you might wrap it in nice paper if you would. Please let me know if you receive it "ok" as it is insured. I bought some other "doo-dads" in Chinatown but I'll save them till I reach home.

Last night Blackie and I went window shopping in "Frisco" on the main street (Market St.) and again I almost went crazy. Every third store is a sporting goods store and huge signs are in all the windows announcing the fact that the California trout season opens on May 1st. And one window had a tank of mixed California trout. I'm just about crazy. And I saw "field boots" all over the town for \$7.95 and \$9.00. They wear them a lot out here. Well, I'll end this now and write the kids some notes. Keep well and happy.

Lovingly,

Fred

S.S Steel Mariner

San Francisco, Cal.

April 24, 1934

Afternoon

Dear Mother & Dad,

I just received your very nice and newsy letter, mother. It just came in time as we are leaving here in about an hour. I'll have to mail this in Portland as I won't be able to get a stamp and mail it before we leave here. I don't believe your letter had a lot of news from home and it had an optimistic vein. It made me feel much happier. I have been thinking a great deal about you-all and hoping that things are better for you. I do certainly hope that Dad's prospects turn out satisfactorily.

I guess house cleaning was quite a big job especially without Joe's help.

I received a nice letter from Nanny and she mentioned about Aunt Marion's visit also. She also said that Estelle was going to pay a little visit to Essex. I hope she has a nice time.

So the boys didn't have much luck on the opening day. I wonder what the trouble was. There were certainly plenty of trout put out. It must have been weather conditions or stream conditions.

I hope Edwin gets a chance to go fishing with you, Dad, and I certainly hope you have a whole lot of luck. When I reach home I hope to make a couple of trips with you and Edwin.

San Francisco is certainly a hilly place. There are many many steep hills. Some of them are so steep that they're hard to imagine. One hill in particular looks just like a high wall from a distance. ~~W~~

We are going to Vancouver, B.C. but the second mate says it doesn't mean we will go to England. He says we should be in New York by the middle of June. There is some nice miscellaneous salt water fishing around Vancouver. Perhaps I can have some fun there. I'm going to try for my AB ticket and "lifeboat efficiency" certificate in Portland but I'll tell you more about it from there. Well perhaps I can get this mailed before we leave so I'll close now. Give my love to the kids and best of luck, Dad, in your prospects.

Lovingly.

Fred

S.S. Steel Mariner

Port Angeles, Wash.

April 29th, 1934

Evening

Dear Mother and Dad,

It's Sunday evening and I'm finally finding time to drop you a little note. You have absolutely no conception of how extremely hectic and rushed these last few days have been. We have been working all hours and day and night. Fifteen hours a day has been rather the rule. We're due ~~from~~ for some days off when things quiet down.

I can't begin to tell you all I have to tell, in my letter. I would like to tell you all my different feelings and minor thrills I have experienced coming into this absolutely magnificent country but I will tell you all about it when I reach home. I worked today and am very tired tonight but I did want you to realize that I'm thinking of you all and to tell you a little of my doings.

We sailed from San Francisco on the 24th and arrived in Portland, Oregon on the 26 at 1:30 A.M. My impressions of Portland, Oregon were many but I'll just have to give you a short summery. Hundreds of ducks along the Oregon Coast, the beautiful Columbia with it's deep rich green foliage and distant snow capped mountains; mountains all over in fact. The fragrant smell of pine, cedar, and fir trees really seems to fill the air. Portland --- huge, friendly men; clean harbor on the famous Willamette River. The salmon season is not on yet (the annual run) so that was out, there, and at any rate we had no time to troll. But we had a few spare hours and did catch some huge 15 and 20 lb river carp on pieces of boiled potato. Not game fish but heavy and fun on a light rod like mine. We also caught some nice looking silver fish about 10" - 14" long which must belong to the dace family. They were excellent eating.

We left Portland the same day at 11:00 P.M. That was one long hard day. We arrived here, Port Angeles, Washington, this morning at 4:00 A.M. This is just a small lumber town in real, wild, beautiful country. The natives say that the woods are full of deer, elk, bear, and mountain lion and the woods and mountains certainly look wild enough. Plenty of wild ducks here too. For that matter, we have seen hundreds of ducks every day since Frisco.

Seeing all these ducks is certainly hard on my nerves, and my steering. I must be steering some courses these days with rafts of scoters, broadbill, canvasback and coot all around the ship. At night you can hear the rafts of ducks leave the water as the ship nears them. No duck depression out here. There should be good fishing here but we won't have any time.

Tommorrow we leave for Port ~~Townsend~~ Townsend, Wash. It is a two hr. run from here and we'll probably leave here about 10: P.M. tomorrow night. Tuesday night we leave Port Townsend for Seattle, another short run, and the next night we leave for Vancouver, B.C. Canada. From Vancouver we sail to Port Alice, B.C. Canada, an insignificant little Canadian lumber town in the wilds of British Columbia. It is on 5 / Brrr! (Three hundred miles north of Vancouver) After this our scedhule is rather vague. In Fact it's darn vague anyhow. It is practically certain that we'll hit Seattle again so you can send your next mail to here. If we don't hit Seattle, it will be forwarded to me, anyhow. But you had better send it airmail if it is convenient. We may hit Frisco on our return to the East Coast but it is quite doubtful. But we sure

will have to go through the canal. It is very doubtful that the ship will return to New York at all. It looks like we'll only hit Boston, Portland and ~~Ble~~ Baltimore. I guess that will mean I had better pay off in Boston or Baltimore and come to New York via bus or train. But that's all in the future and very, very, indefinite at any rate. It really looks like we'll be back to the East Coast at least by June 5th.

I'm sorry to hear that bidding is still so lousy, Dad. I hope your Washington, N.J. job comes through oke. Thanks so much for all the clippings and news that you sent. You have no idea how I appreciate reading those little bits from home and the trout fishing. I hope you and Edwin were able to make your little trip and had some luck. Please do send me a picture of Estelle, Edwin and Mother. It would be very nice. If you get take a a snapshot of you and Helen too, I'd be tickled also.

Now about the mail sent to me. I have received, I believe, all the mail that you all, including Helen, have sent to me except mail sent to me at the canal which I will receive on my return trip. The agent at the canal is very poor about forwarding but all the other agents are very considerate. In Portland I received a letter sent to San Pedro dated the 7-17 from Newark and forwarded to Portland. This letter contained several very interesting clippings about the opening of the New Jersey trout season. I also received a letter, sent to Portland and dated the 23 from Newark. This contained a brown sheet and told all the latest news from home. (White tar work, Joe's leaving etc) =This is all the mail I received here from anyone. Joe certainly is a most inconsiderate cuss.

~~My~~Your letters are darn interesting Dad and very newsy and don't you worry about your writing "too much junk" as you suggested in the letter of the 17th. They're fine. And I also enjoyed your letter, mother. Very. Very, much.

Well. I'm getting very tired as you can see by the writing. Please give the Seattle address to any of my friends who might ask for it. I'm going to try to get a letter written to Helen tomorrow morning before breakfast and work. Tell the kids, I'll write them as soon as I get a little time. I'm really, really, working. Give them my best love and I certainly hope you all stay well and happy.

Lovingly,

Fred

(Over)

P.S. Don't forget to let me know if you receive Estelle's little remembrance ok. And in case I don't get a chance to drop her a line before then, wish her a happy. Happy birthday for me.

F

S.S. Steel Mariner

Port Alice, B.C.

Canada

May 7 12:30 A.M.

Dear Mother and Dad,

Well, this morning at 5:30 A.M. we will leave Port Alice, one of the most fascinating little places I have ever visited. I really feel absolutely helpless for language, time, and space to thoroughly describe my feelings and activities here. I have been on night watch since arriving here and so, have had all day to see the place. One can always snatch a few odd hours sleep here no night watch to keep going. I'm on night watch now. It's just a bit after 12:30.

We arrived here Thursday night about 7:00 P.M. (The beautiful little sound on which Port Alice is located is called Quantisimo Sound (Spelled wrong), It is a deep canyon with towering mountains on both sides and very blue water which, by the way, is 150 FT deep at it's shallowest places. The sound is quite narrow. No sign of any habitation on our trip up – just wilderness. Port Alice is a little tiny town (526 inhabitants) It is run and governed by the "British Columbia Pulp Co." It's sole police force consists of one of the famous Northwest Mounties who has charge of a huge territory here. The town is a compact little place on about a half square mile of the only level spot around anywhere. There are no cars here at all, no horses. It is too absolutely wild. There is no way to get anywhere except by boat. No trails any distance inland. The inhabitants are French and English Canadian. Nice folk, and some Japs which the company imports for cheap labor.

There are very few dogs here, no horses, and one or two cows which are kept fenced in and now I'll tell you the interesting "why" of all this. It seems that this territory is infested with cougar (mountain lions). The people are actually afraid to go out at night. The cougars have eaten all the dogs in town, chased all the deer away and even attacked a man here in broad daylight. Boy, it's swell. There are two government hunters here but since the Canadian government (for economic reasons) lowered the bounty on cougar from \$30 to \$10 they are not killing as many. (Bear are also very plentiful. Anyone here can go out any old day and shoot a bear. We were unfortunate in not seeing one because they certainly are plentiful. Of course cougars are not seen much in the day time though you can hear them shriek at night. There is excellent fishing here for cutthroat-~~the~~ rainbow and speckled trout in any of the many lakes around here and fine steelhead fishing in some of the small rivers, in season. Out here in the sound or bay there is excellent cod and ling-cod fishing and ~~real~~-real salmon fishing in season. The season on bear is open all year except for the month of July and cougar of course are quite unprotected. I have never been in a place where I would rather stay in. (It rains here a great deal this time of year but the climate is quite comfortable.)

The first night on arrival, we went ashore and found the only store in town where we bought some candy and had a chat with the storekeeper. On the next day, Saturday, all the A.B 9 had a day off so Charles, Blackie, Tafel (Taffail or Taffy) and myself went on an expedition. Charles (Foley) and Tafel are my roommates you know. We got permission to use the workboat and launching her (we started for the head of the bay (a three mile row) where a river empties in. We arrived there after catching several ling-cod on a metal squid and tied the boat securely and started up the bank of the river by foot.

The river was a beautiful trout stream about like the So Br. At the Gorge only much wider and deeper with bigger pools. The only fish they have in these rivers however are steelhead and salmon, in season. We were not fortunate enough to locate any steelhead but we had a wild walk through the thickest bush I'll ever hope to go through. We saw spruce grouse, very similar to our partridge but so tame that you could hit them with a stone if you desired. We also saw lots of ducks along the creek and signs of deer, elk and bear. I'll tell you more when I reach home. I'll also have to go on. We arrived back at the ship at supper darn tired and wet but I certainly enjoyed the day. Oh, before I ~~could~~ forget, we caught lots of rock cod etc. right off the ship at the one dock the town (?) had. Today, Sunday, Yesterday now. Charles and I went for a 7 mile hike up to a small lake (12 miles long; but small here) We enjoyed the hike very much and saw a beautiful trout lake, crystal clear. You'll probably wonder why I didn't go fishing. It seems that this happens to be the one time in about 2 months that the "Mountry" was around and I didn't want to take a chance on a fifty dollar fine for a few hours fun. He has a reputation of being rather "hard".

We see lots of ducks here and while I'm talking about ducks, we sailed right smack through rafts of broadbill in Seattle and Vancouver harbors and they were so close one could about reach down and grab them. They didn't seem a bit alarmed. Was I thrilled. I hate to leave here. I met ~~alot~~ a lot of native sons who have offered to take me hunting if I can get back or fishing too. One could certainly have a cheap vacation here. I have it all figured out. Of course it's out of the question now but for about \$100.00 one could come here and have a month of real sport. Board and room here is about \$30.00 per mo. And one could get a workaways (?) job on a ship most of the way here to pay for passage one way. Fishing license is ~~not~~ \$10.00 and hunting for cougar and bear – nothing. Oh [??] Oh, I'm dreaming.

Well I'm getting tired and must stop. I received your nice letter and Edwin's in Seattle, mother,. I'll tell you all about Seattle later. We'll be there again late tomorrow night. We are going to Everett + Portland and Frisco again so you can send your next mail to Frisco. Please tell Helen. I'll write again soon. Forgive the atrocus scribble but I'm awfully tired now. Hope you are all happy and well,

Love to all,

Fred

(over)

I bought myself a nice cougar skin today for a souvineer of Port Alice, I could have gottn a bear skin also and my cougar skin much cheaper if the government hunter had been home. He was in the interior for a few days. The cougar skin which isn't particularly large but ^ in very nice shape cost \$3.00. It is cured but of course, not tanned. It measures 7 ½ ' from nose to tip of tail. That's small around here from what they say. If the govt. hunter had been at home I could have gotten my cougar skin for about \$1.50 and a large bearskin for about \$2.50/ Some prices, eh.

Love

Fred

(couger – pronounced – cooger)

I always used to wonder.

Seattle, Wash, May 8

Noon

P.P.S. Opened the letter for this. Have decided it best to mail cougar skin to you to have tanned, Dad. Am mailing it to office. Please take it to Taxidermist for me. Just have it tanned and fur cleaned. Not lined or mounted or anything. \$3.00 would be a fair price for tanning I think but perhaps you can get it done cheaper. I'll get it when I get home as I have no money handy to send now. Recd. A letter (~~MY~~ Apr. 30 from you and a letter (May 1st from Mother. Will write tonite.

Seattle, Wash.

May 8, 1934

Dear Mother and Dad,

I received your two letters (May 1st and April 30) here today. If you sent any here after these, I shall probably get those soon too since these two that I did get were picked up by the pilot on Saturday. We will probably leave here for Everett Thursday (May 10) and then leave Everett for Portland on Saturday. We should be in Portland about Tuesday and will probably leave there the same day for San Francisco where we should be on Friday (May 18). [Of course this is all guess work but very likely] We probably will not be in Frisco more than just overnight and will leave there about Saturday (May 19) From here to the canal is twenty one days, or thereabouts. This would put us at the canal about June 9th. And eight more days would put us in New York about June 17th. But we are due to hit Portland, Maine, and Boston first. At least it looks that way. This would be unusual procedure though. It would bring me home however around the end of June. It's still rather vague as to what port we will hit first on the East Coast. We will stop for oil at San Pedro, Cal. Or Balboa but that will only be a four or six hour stop. I guess you can figure out when and where to send mail from this indefinite schedule. If it isn't exactly correct, it is very near so. I think that you can still reach me by airmail ~~from~~ at San Francisco.

I'll mail my cougar skin tonight or tomorrow when I get a chance. I stuck a little note just inside the first wrapping, Dad. I mailed it to your office and you should get it fairly soon since I sent it "special Handling".

I enjoyed both of your letters very much. I note by a clipping in yours that the "trout bill" went through, Dad. I certainly was glad to hear that. I was also very, very pleased and happy to read that things are a bit easier now and that they look more promising ahead. Let me know all about the events; bidding etc. I hope Estelle enjoyed her kimono. I thought it was rather pretty. Don't you worry a bit about not sending me any money for my birthday. It was a nice enough present to me to receive your nice letters and to hear that you are all well and happy. And anyhow I have spent more money now than I intended to. It's hard to hold onto your pay after working so hard for it. Especially when there are so many interesting things to buy here. Seattle is the best place in the world to buy used firearms. There are about 20 such stores here on one street. I have a great time window shopping etc. though I have bought none.

I'm getting very, very, anxious to get home again. Although this trip has been very interesting I guess I just get tired of ship life. It is rather monotonous and boring and tiresome at times even with pleasant shipmates. Also, the first mate has turned out rather poorly and the whole crew is mutinous and rather discontented. He works us 15 and more hours a day and then gives us no time back for it. As far as "squareness" is concerned the other mate on my last trip was 100% better. It is rather good experience though to be in such circumstances and is especially interesting to see the different psychological moods of the sailors. The mate is actually only hurting himself, however. The last ship he worked on was manned by a great many foreigners (Philippinos + Spiks) This crew are almost entirely American and the "stare" tactics he is employing will not work here. Most of the crew are well educated and some are college graduates. It is interesting to note how the labor, at sea, is "exploited" in comparison to labor on shore. I was thinking especially of your treatment of your men. There is certainly a great difference there. The trouble broke yesterday after working up to a climax. We have been working very, very, hard

shifting ship from place to place and rushing, cleaning up the holds. When a couple of men asked for a day off, he refused and then it was fairly obvious that he intended to give us none of our time back. We sent a delegate to him yesterday to ask about it and he would not listen to him and in fact got quite hot about it. So to punish us for protesting he took away our 15 minutes coffee time each day, which is an old, old, timeworn ships custom and then gave orders that the man at the wheel was to ~~we~~ have no relief for coffee. Of course this was very petty and small and is of no value since any member of the crew is entitled to demand relief for sanitary purposes. So we get our coffee time anyhow.

And now he is really working himself into trouble. The ~~crew~~ crew are too well educated and sensible to become radical and refuse to "turn to" or anything like that so we are all biding our time till the ship is started on the return voyage. You see, the ship must be all painted before we reach New York and the mate, who is really inefficient) is way behind in his work. The only possible way for the ship to be all painted before reaching New York is that every man work hard on it and really "put out" work on the return voyage. Painting is one of the easiest jobs in the world to "soldier" on so I'm afraid the ship will hardly be a quarter painted by June 2-7 or thereabouts and of course the mate is responsible if it isn't. The mate is really a joke. The whole crew laughs at him. He's like a spoiled child and is about as efficient as one. All the work must be done over and over again four or five times before it's done right. After several weeks ~~of~~ this it's not hard to imagine why the men have ~~not~~ no respect for him.

But this is all, just interesting, to me. No one is going to be radical so it will be interesting to see how sharp the crew's "only weapon" is and should be valuable experience.

I just had supper a few minutes ago and ~~intend~~ am now finishing this letter. Another letter of yours was just handed to me, Dad. It was mailed from Newark, May 4. It is very optimistic and makes me feel better about you all. Thanks for writing me so often. It makes things much less monotonous to receive nice letters from home. Your letter was very nice, mother, and your birthday greeting made me feel very happy. I'm glad that the kids are having a fairly happy time. Tell Edwin not to get too big as I still expect to tell him where to get off "every once in awhile. Tell him, Blackie took care of me on my birthday all right. Well I'm getting very tired as you can see by the increasingly poor writing so I'll have to stop. Please give my love to Estelle and Edwin. Tell Helen my probably mailing address. Try to drop me a note at Frisco. Keep Well.

Lovingly,

Fred

S.S. Steel Mariner

Seattle, Washington

May 8, (Evening)

Dear Sis,

This is a rather belated birthday greeting. I have been working so darn hard lately and have been so tired at night that it has been hard to find time to write. I hope you had a nice birthday, Sis, and that you enjoyed my little remembrance. I would have liked to have spent my birthday at home but instead I spent it working, at sea. I'll have to celebrate it when I reach home. Blackie sends his very best wishes also.

We are taking on 2,000 tons of manganese ore here at Seattle. It runs down a chute into the hold. It is going to run all night and as it makes a hell of a noise I can see that sleeping is going to be fun. But we are used to lots of noise here while we're trying to sleep. It will certainly be a relief to get home in a good bed with a decent room all to myself and a chance to get an uninterrupted sleep. And a decent place to wash without having to use a bucket and a little privacy. I am very anxious to get home anyhow ~~First~~ This sea life is very tiresome and monotonous most of the time. Of course there are interesting hours in new ports but as a general rule things are pretty darn boring. And then, the facilities are so lousy. Washing, eating, sleeping etc. Oh well, I guess it's doing me lots of good and then, June 15 or 17th and home isn't so far off.

I did enjoy myself in Port Alice though. It was so wild and beautiful.

I guess you are counting the days until school is over. And then you graduate. I suppose school will be over when I get home.

Well, Sis, I'm pretty tired and I think I'll try to sleep although the noise is terrific. Write me at the canal and let me know all the news from ~~the coast~~ home, school and Maplewood generally. Blackie is ashore with the gang or he would probably have some wise crack to tell you. Keep well and enjoy yourself.

Lovingly,

Fred

S.S Steel Mariner

Seattle, Wash.

May 11, 1934

Dear Mother + Dad,

You have undoubtedly heard the important news but I'll tell you a little from our side of it.

Wednesday morning, May 9, all the stevedores on the West Coast went on a coastwise strike. Of course you know how much this affects us. Just what the ship is going to do is largely a matter of conjecture. The strike may only be temporary but it doesn't look particularly bright for an early cessation. Wednesday the office called down and wanted to know if the crew would work cargo. Naturally the crew said they would rather not. It wasn't an order but under these articles they can order us to work the cargo and we would either have to work it or quit but it isn't likely that they will give us that order. Of course we would receive 85¢ per hr., stevedores wages, but that doesn't make the project a bit more enticing.

There is big talk of a sailors strike also and we have had lots of agitators and propaganda come aboard. Of course it is the logical time for the sailors to strike but East Coast sailors would be crazy to quit over here. I'll strike when I'm back home or, at least, near home. The sailor's strike is imminent and really necessary but would be hard on we east coast men while we're over here so far from home.

We are all three here but are at the Norton-Lilly dock where there is no wharfage so I guess we'll remain here for awhile. The latest news from "midships" was that we would visit here until Saturday to see what developments. What we shall do after tomorrow (Sat) no one knows. We are due to go to Everett for lumber but can't very well get lumber without longshoremen to load it.

At any rate I imagine you could find out any developments in our plans from the Isthmian office.

I wish we would leave here for the East Coast within the hour, personally I think this is a very interesting place, etc. but I'd much rather be home and am darn anxious to get there as soon as I can.

I received another letter and clippings from you yesterday, Dad/ Thanks for the news. I'm certainly glad to hear that the "September trout fishing" bill passed the Senate and was signed by Moore. It is an excellent move I think.

I'm glad Estelle liked the kimono. Helen told me in her letter yesterday about her uncle. That is a shame. He was a nice fellow. I met him two or three times. I guess the whole thing must have come very suddenly.

I was sorry to hear about the jobs that you bid on. It certainly is tough when you are trying to do a little honest business in this country. If you're not up against grafters and politicians and labor exploiters you're up against some nut that can't possibly do the job under his bid. Perhaps eventually all those "nuts" will be put out of business and then perhaps there will be a little chance on putting in a luck (?) bid.

It made me feel very blue to hear that they suspended you from the club. I know how much it all meant to you. It seems almost unfair although I suppose it was quite necessary in the club. Your only

consolation, and that not much, is that many went before you. Perhaps things will pick up some, so that you can get back in.

I feel rather ashamed of myself. So far this trip I have drawn all the money I could and have spent it. When I need clothes etc. and things are so hard with you at home. But I have finally learned that it is just about impossible to save your money here on the ship unless you are abnormal. Conditions, environment, and very hard work make you want to spend what little you earn as soon as you can. At that, I have only spent \$35.00. It does seem extravagant though. I do have a little to show for it, but no clothes. It does seem extravagant though. I do have a little to show for it but no clothes.

Be sure and give my love to Grandma Arnolt. I do hope she has a pleasant visit with you.

~~Well, Dad, I have another little favor for you to do for me if you have the time. As I may have mentioned before, Seattle is the best place in the States to buy hunting and fishing goods especially firearms. In one of the large gun stores where they handle used guns I have found a peach of a Colt target revolver. They will give me an allowance on my 22 auto. That should pay most of the price on it. I wish you would freight it to them for appraisal. Instructions on separate sheet. I'd be very grateful if you would do this for me. I must stop now. Remember me to the kids and Grandma Arnolt.~~

Lovingly

Fred

(P.S. is up side of letter.

P.S. Guess I'll wait until I get home to send it in. May change my mind by then.

Dear Dad,

Thought I'd send you a little account of my finances. I had kept a strict record of every cent; It might be interesting although I'm a bit ashamed for having spent so much. (Just since March 28)

(Following is in a series of boxes across letter)

Earned	Spent	Spent for Amusements etc.	Otherwise	On Books
36.32	35.00	\$14.00 Dates, candy	21.00 Dinners	1.32 May 10
		Movies etc.	Necessities	

Of course I have a detailed record. I find it very interesting to look back over. If we get in New York about June 15th and I don't draw any more money, I'll pay off with about \$30.00. Some big wages, eh? And do we work for it.

By the way the mate came around nobly. The "soldiering" and strike threat made him most congenial. Of course we still work like the devil but not such long hours.

I hope the cougar skin reaches you "oke". It ought to. It cost me almost \$1.00 to send it. Let me know if you get it to a taxidermist all right and if what the charges will be for tanning. Perhaps if we get any more money, I can send it to you and you can get the skin before I get home. I guess a letter should still reach me at Frisco unless they have some radical plans for the old "Mariner".

Love.

Fred

S.S. Steel Mariner

Sunday morn.

Dear Mother + Dad,

I just received your letter and clipping, Dad, Thanks very much. I know Bill Titman, that Bevans (?) man who was apprehended for illegal shells. He's just an old native and is always violating. He lives across the road from Mrs. McKeebe's in Berans center and he has about a hundred dogs running around his place.

We left Portland last night about 6:30 and should arrive in Baltimore about Tuesday morning. The weather in Portland was a big surprise. It was warm + pleasant. One of the natives told me that up till last week the temperature had steadily averaged 18° to 20° below. We were lucky of course standing lookout was (continued on page 3 of 4) as cold as ever. The wind was very very strong last night and it was a headwind which made it meaner. Your letter was full of good advice, Dad, but I know you will be glad to hear that my state of mind has changed greatly for the better. For a spell, my mind was full of conflicting emotions but everything is straightened out now and I am having a much better time of it.

The third mate, a swell fellow has been teaching me steering the last two nights for ½ hr. stretches and if I do say so myself, I do pretty well. Very well for a beginner, he says. I'd be steering some this morning but the "old man" is on the bridge now. I have to "stand by" till noon to run any errands etc that they (goes back to previous page) may want done on the bridge. I can write while waiting though.

I'm not so sure that we won't get a ~~de~~ night in N.Y. We took on some cargo for Manilla via N.Y. at Portland and if we don't go there ourselves it will be transshipped from N.Y. We also took on cargo for Honolulu, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Seattle but of course there isn't any great amount of it and any of it could be on for transshipment. The cargo that comes on in Baltimore will tell some of the story.

We have all done a lot of overtime work and ~~that~~ the "Bosn" says that we are all getting a day off in Baltimore. When that time comes I'm going to ask the mate if I can have it off in New York instead. I don't know (continued on page 4 of 4) just how good my chances are since there are a lot of stores to come on there but the mate (1st) is a good egg. At least I'll find out then just how long we'll be in New York. I'll let you know as soon as I find out.

We have three swell mates on here now but the third mate is from the Lakes. He's a Chief Mate there in this company and he's going back there from Baltimore. I'm certainly sorry of that. But we'll have two good ones anyhow and a fine "Bosun".

I'm certainly sorry that your leg has caused you so much trouble, Dad. I hope it heals quickly.

Well I'll stop for now and write more later. Love to you all.

Fred

(Page #ed 2)

Thought I would add a bit since there is some news. I received your very nice letter today, mother. It certainly was nice to hear news from home.

We learned today that this trip will probably be just an inter-coastal trip. Going to about twenty different West Coast ports up as far as Vancouver and then returning to New York around middle of

June. Of course this trip is always subject to change when you reach the Coast. The orders from there might send us to England and India. It will be a nice trip at any rate and will do me a lot of good.

The other news I heard was bad. We're not going to leave here until Saturday night and this will get us into New York on Monday morning and we will probably sail from there Monday afternoon. I did want to get home. I get a day off on Thursday and I'm going to see the mate about getting some time in N.Y. instead the chances are slim though. I'll try to find out tomorrow just what is what and I'll let you know right away. It seems you can't make any plans ahead in this shipping game. Will write tomorrow. All my love

Fred

S.S. Steel Mariner

Honolulu, T. H.

May 26, 5:30 A.M.

Dear Folks,

Well at 4:30 this morning, an hour ago we sailed into Honolulu's beautiful but diminutive harbor. What a "mystery" ship this is! We seem to have no ultimate or certain destination. I suppose you must have heard from the office of our sudden change in plans and perhaps the reason.

It was caused of course, by the strike [stevedore] but our suddenness was caused by Va rising seamen's strike in which we had no desire to participate. ~~It~~ You made have heard of our refusal to strike on the West Coast; of the striking faction threatening to pull us off the ship and put us into the hospital if we didn't strike; of our still remaining adamant in refusal; of a mob of strikers coming down to carry out their threat; of our holding said mob off from the ship's side with fire hoses until the "Steel Mariner" could get under way. It is quite an interesting story and was quite a thrilling, to say the least, experience. I'll save the details until I reach home. Nine days ago, we left Seattle and after sailing through a lot of very wet weather – here we are in the land of palms, pineapples, and proverbial sunshine.

I think a little description of my impressions of Honolulu harbor would not be amiss now. I described it last summer in a letter but it left another very pleasant impression on me again this morning. Honolulu's tiny harbor is noted all over the world for its beauty. They turned us out at 4:00 A.M. and it was just beginning to get light. ~~A~~The horizon was a deep red and the ocean a deep blue and the air had a very rich fruity smell. Not the sort of a dank, sickening-sweet smell as one gets when approaching Panama. Ahead of us about a quarter – mile lay the harbor with its few docks and many palm trees and of course that high white tower on which one can make out the word "Aloha" [welcome]. In the background rose the high peaks of Oshu with a lace work of morning mist around the summits. Everything was very quite. On the right, stretches Waikikei Beach and huge rollers are coming is but they seem to be muffled and one can't here the sound of them.

And just beyond Waikiki, the mighty "Diamond Head" rises above the surrounding land. As you may remember me telling you before, the town proper is quite hidden by palm trees etc. and the whole scene looks very wild.

From news, overheard this morning on the bridge, we are going to lay here in Honolulu until Tuesday and then are going, in turn, to Hilo and Kahului [my little grass shack]. This is news to me since we are about ½ loaded all ready [4,600 tons] and I didn't think we had room to load that long. At this rate we should be getting away from the Islands about next Friday which would get us at Panama about June 17 and home around June 25, that is if we go straight to New York. There's a chance of our hitting the Gulf Coast [New Orleans] but no one is certain as yet. I'll let you know in a later letter, just as soon as I find out definitely.

I had an "extra-swell" surprise this morning. They had forwarded three letters from the West Coast, here. One from you, Mother, (dated May 11), one from you, Dad, (dated May 16) and one from Helen (May 11) It was certainly grand to receive these letters. I did want to hear how you all were and if things had picked up at all and I wasn't disappointed. Mother's letter was forwarded from San Francisco, Dad's

from Seattle on May 17, and Helen's from San Francisco. And furthermore that big Matson liner, the "Lurline", which bought the letters here, is now here at her dock. This is one of the ship's (passenger) that makes all those interesting South Sea ports: Australia, Philippines, Samoa, Borneo, etc. The Steel Traveler is also here. That's the largest ship of the line, and she is big. The other ships near us are: a Jap freighter, some "Inter Island" ships, an Export Line ship, and of course the ever present CG-101 [Coast Guard].

Your letter was certainly a tonic to read, Mother. It made me feel about 100% better. It was so full of good news and was so optimistic. Receiving that and also yours, Dad, has made my mind much, much, easier and shall make my long 25 day grind back so much the nicer. I know I shouldn't worry because there is absolutely nothing I can do about it but I can't help thinking and wondering about you, a great deal.

I felt just a little homesick when I read of the little "family" birthday party you had. I wish I had been there. Gosh, I bet I could have ~~been~~ blown all my candles out. How can I afford three children. At the rate I'm making money now, I won't be able to afford a half-one after I am married, If ever. And about Dad's job. That was wonderful news. I certainly hope it turns out satisfactorily.

I'm going to give up worrying about spending money for a little fun and sightseeing. I had figured out the clothes I needed and I can't quite see now how I can make the ends meet. So I'll worry when I reach home.

Just had breakfast

7:45 A.M.

I enjoyed the clippings very much and especially the picture of the "cougar". Their life certainly fascinates me. I expect to do a little research on them when I reach home and see what I can learn about them. The tanning of the skin will cost about \$5.00 I guess, instead of three. I underestimated it a bit. It would be nice if you could line it Mother, but I think that the materials would be rather expensive. They usually use green felt for the lining. I don't think a "cougar" skin would be padded as I don't intend to use it for a rug. It would probably be quite a chore to line it.

The situation with the mate all turned out fine and was explained. You remember my telling you how much we all thought of the mate at the end of the coastwise trip. It did seem strange that he should change so radically. The second mate, who is everybody's pal, explained things to us and the mate himself spoke a few nice words in effect. It seems that the old man "was riding" him pretty bad (he was a new mate on the ship) and he gave him all sorts of work to be done in a cramped period of time. Thus, the chaos. Now everything is fixed up and everyone is happy and the ship really is fine to live on. A little monotonous, that's all. Well I must stop now. ~~I~~ I've got to ~~right~~ write Helen a nice letter now. She'll be sending me a rattlesnake in a box or something. Give my love to Grandma. I certainly hope she is enjoying her visit. Love to the kids also. I'll write again before leaving.

All my love,

Fred

S.S. Steel Mariner

Honolulu, Hawaii

May 28, 1934

[8:30 Monday Eve]

Dear Folks,

I'll start this second letter now but won't end it and mail it until just before we leave the "Islands" so I can give you the very latest news.

Today (blue Monday) wasn't a bit blue for roommate Charles and I. We were both in bed last night about nine o'clock so consequently we felt quite "chipper". The mate knocked us off in the middle of the afternoon because we were the only two men (follows on pg 3 of 4) working. This is an absolute fact. All the other men were quite "pieyed" except for the other ordinary seamen Bill Pye, who was visiting some friends and Blackie who was up at the hospital. More of that later. Perhaps I forgot to mention that Bill Duke the "ordinary" from the West Coast, got off in Seattle so consequently there are but two ordinary seamen. Even the "bosn" was up in a beer joint today. He was around for awhile early this morning but when he saw that most of the A 3s were ashore he got the fever, he was half tight anyhow, (follows on pg 2 of 4) so he handed me his storeroom keys and said "Here Fred, you be bos"n today. I'm going ashore. If anyone wants me I'll be up at the "Anchor" [café]" So Charles and I painted up the ship's side and when the mate came around he complimented us and said that we had painted enough for four men. Honestly! So, he knocked us off at 11:15 in the morning and 2:30 in the afternoon. I went ashore tonight and had a plate of ice cream and picked up a few souvineers and now (follows on pf 4 of 4) I've had my bath etc and am good and tired because I really did "put out this morning and an hour and a half this afternoon.

Blackie isn't seriously sick. They think it was severe indigestion. I think it was more or less excess "alcoholism". But at any rate they have him under "twenty four hour observation" and we'll know tomorrow what is what. But I know enough inside dope to know it isn't serious.

This crew, except for Bill (ordinary) and Charles (follows on pg numbered 2) are certainly a run-dum bunch. At sea they're fine. Just ordinary sailors but good hearted. But ashore – Well, since we arrived here Saturday and received a "draw" at noon they have been drunk and in the cafes etc. all the time. I don't see how they stand it.

Well I think I'll turn in now and write some more later; perhaps tomorrow.

Goodnight and love to you all.-----Fred

I hope this letter doesn't sound too bragging.

(follows to pg 3 of 4)

This is probably the last letter you will receive from me since the mail at Panama would reach you about the same time as I did myself unless I used the ultra-expensive Panama airmail and I doubt if I'll be able to afford that.

Of course if we should go elsewhere but New York on our first stop, I'll write, certainly. But I'll know all the "dope" before we leave the "Islands."

May 29 (6:15 P.M.)

At sea (notice writing)

Well we just left good old Honolulu. Blackie was left there also. They don't know what is the matter with him. He seems to have pains (like gas pains) in his side. At any rate he is in the observation ward and I took his gear ~~with~~ up to him and had a talk with him, this afternoon. He didn't feel particularly bad and he had a pretty little Jap nurse so he didn't feel very low. He is taken care of by the company and they put him on a company ship when he is "oke" and send him back to New York. He receives the pay due him now, and also the pay which (follows to pg 4 of 4) he would receive if he finished the trip. In other words his pay doesn't stop until this ship pays off the crew on the East Coast. We'll miss him, of course, but it won't be long before he'll be coming back himself and of course I'll see him then and also hear from him before then. The whole thing is rather a surprise but he has been hitting the bottle etc. and going it pretty hard the last month.

Pineapples! Pineapples!

(continues at top of pg #ed 3"

Forty thousand cases for New York and lots more for such places as: Boston, Worcester, Lyman, Mass; E-Hartford, Conn. Bridgeport, Conn, Portland, ME Quebec. Of course the ship won't go to 1/3 of these places. Also cargo for Nova Scotia. I suppose this will be transshipped from Portland ,Me.

Well, they changed the watches all around. I'm now on the 12 to 4. The hours aren't so hot but of course the 2nd mate (mate on watch) is swell. I did like the 8 to 12 (follows on pg 3 of 4) though and the 3rd mate.

We had a bit of excitement tonite while getting away from the dock. This harbor is very small and the tug on our bow whose job was to pull our bow around gave the towing cable too much strain. It parted just about in the center and the end nearest the tug whipped back and knocked the side of a lifeboat in which was on the tug's ~~nearest~~ upper deck. Lucky it didn't kill someone. (follows on pg 2 of 4) The end nearest us whipped back also but as the tug was pulling our bow at right angles, it did no damage. Just whipped across in front of the focsle' head. Then the tugs crew had to put out a new cable and in the meantime we, being too large to manuever in such cramped quarters, drifted towards the jetty (store) The cable was hooked up to us just in time but there was some fun there for awhile.

Saw another rather (follows on pr 4 of 4) unpleasant occurrence last night. (Told of one is a letter to Helen) Two sailors from the "Gold Coast" just, in from Austraila, got in an argument about the merits of striking when they reached "Frisco". They were both very drunk and, as the argument got hot, one of them picked up a long piece of iron pipe and before any one could stop him he socked the other fellow right smack on the head. He actually cracked his skull right around the front from one side of his ~~ferk~~ fore-head to the other. (follows on pg #ed 4)

You could tell right away that is was fatal. The ambulance and a police car came down and the ambulance interne pronounced the man dead. So, because of a little argument two sailors (shipmates) are staying in Honolulu. One is in the morgue and the other is in jail facing a murder charge. Some life!

Charles and I weren't twenty-five yards from it when it happened ~~and~~ although they didn't keep us as witnesses since there were several others also (follows on pg 3 of 4) nearby.

This isn't particularly pleasant but since it is true and rather close to this whole sailing and café' business, I'm telling you about it.

A new AB and ordinary came aboard today. They seem nice although the OS. Certainly likes himself. Well, the writing is difficult so I'll stop now.

To Hilo

May 30 // 5:30 P.M.

We left Kahului at 9:00 A.M. after arriving there at 5:00 A.M. Tonight at eight we will reach (follows on pg 2 of 4) Hilo where we pick up a cargo of "Kanex" for Port Newark. We may leave Hilo tomorrow night and may stay over until Friday, the 1st. At any rate we'll soon be on the high seas heading for New York and you can expect us there June 26 or 27. Of course you can follow our course in the "Tribune" and the last few days Mr Jump will know the exact data.

I certainly wish you (all of you) could get down to the ship when it gets in so I could show you all around. It may be the last (follows on pg 4 of 4) chance you'll have to look over the old "Steel Mariner" since I hope I won't have to or I mean ~~rather~~ rather decide to, take another trip later some time because of the lack of anything else to do. I'm glad I took this trip v though. It has done me a world of good and I appreciate the fact but sea life isn't for me.

Well, I'll have to end this letter now. If we are two days in Hilo I'll try to write you again but anyhow – Love to you all. I can hardly wait hose long 25 days until I will be home again and see you all.

Fred

Hilo, T.H.

May 31st, 1934

Dear Mother and Dad,

Tommorrow we will start steaming towards the East Coast. We are taking about one thousand tons of "Beaverboard" on here for Port Newark~~the~~ and it is almost certain that that will be our first stop. This is wuite a break as it will simplify matters for getting off. And it will make a better opportunity for you all to get down to the ship to see it, etc.

Mr Jump of course, will be able to let you know just exactly when we'll arrive and where (for certain) we will go first but I think it is fairly accurate to tell (follows on pg 3 of 4) you that we will arrive at Port Newark on the 26th or 24th.

I certainly am anxious to see you all and will find it hard to wait those long 17 days until I'll receive some more mail from you and those long 25 days until I'll see you. But, after the last 3 months, 25 days isn't so long. You know, I've just thought. When I return I will have spent four whole months, sailing which should hold me for a while.

I hope I can find some work to do to keep me busy after I reach home. I guess I'll be glad to have a little vacation first, (follows on pg 2 of 4) though.

We were given the afternoon off today~~ten~~ to make up for our many Saturday afternoons and Sundays we'll spend on watch at sea. It will only be four weekends, though. Went swimming at a little beach near by. ~~Afe~~ Actually had those pretty Hawaiiin fish, which were portrayed on that folder that I sent Edwin last summer, swimming around quite close by. They are really prettier then those pictures and very numerous. Had the thrilling experience of swimming inside a steel wire enclosure on the outside of which we could (follows on pg 4 of 4) see those unmistakable cycle(?) shaped fins of sharks occasionally cutting the surface of the water. Hilo is a notoriously bad place for sharks.

Also observed some native Hawaiiin fishermen netting those pretty little fish to eat. What a shame! They'll eat them alive and raw for you v too. Gives one a peculiar sensation. Well, I'll end this final letter now so I can get it mailed tonight. Tommorrow will be a busy, hectic, day preparing ths ship for the open sea and there'll be little spare time. Keep well and happy, all of you.

Remember me to Grandma. I'll see you about the 25th. Lovingly, Fred

S. S. Steel Mariner

Panama Canal

June 20, 1934 (mailed)

June 12

Dear Mother and Dad.

I managed to collect twenty cents worth of stamps from various members of the crew so I am writing you this last minute note which I will mail (airmail) from Panama, a few days hence.

Up until yesterday we have had rather rough weather, bucking the N.E. "trades". The sun has only been able to peep out at intervals and we have had rain frequently. We have been sailing on the "great circle" route instead of the "southern" route as we did on my last trip out here. The weather, consequently, has not been as perfect. However, we have had no weather as rough as that night we went on the outside of Vancouver Island. What a nightmare that was. All hands out in the middle of the night to lower and lash the booms.

I'll be able to give you our "arrival" data quite accurately in a few days. At any rate you may follow ~~my~~ our positions, daily, in the Tribune and as we average about 270 miles a day, running up, you can figure out pretty accurately the time of our arrival. And, of course, Mr. Jump will be a reliable source of last minute information. There is little chances of our being delayed by fog this time of year.

I impatiently count the days till our arrival at Newark. I am so very anxious to see you all and be home again.

The 28th of this month will terminate a four months voyage counting "coastwise" and it certainly has been a trip ~~of~~ full of experiences. However, I being just a "land lubber" at heart as you know, am now finding things very monotonous and I shall be very, very, happy to reach home. The food has not been in the same class as it was on my other trip. The stewards and cooks are punk and the food has been the same so it will be a very pleasant experience to eat at home again.

I had been thinking what a thrill it would be ~~to~~ for me if you could get down to see the ship dock. Of course I don't expect that you would want to get up too early in the morning. Should we arrive first thing in the morning we would dock about 6:00 A.M. That isn't so bad. Perhaps you and Edwin, Dad, would like to come down and I could show you around. Mother and Estelle and perhaps Helen, if she could make it, might like to see the ship dock and I would certainly be happy to see them there. There would be [heavy cross out word] little on board for them to see, though. If you can get ~~et~~ down and I certainly hope you can, look up at the very bow of the ship, the "focsle head" and there you will see your son who helps with the bow lines. Port Newark is much easier to get to then Brooklyn and you might find it interesting to see the ship dock.

I like my new watch (12-4) very much. The second mate is one of the finest fellows I have ever had the good fortune to meet. He lives in Mountain Lakes as I think I once told you. He and I have splendid, interesting talks and the watches pass swiftly. I happened to mention to Mr. Lindgren how interested you were in sailing, dad, and what did he do but take two Charts (North Atlantic and N. Pacific) and plot out our entire voyage on them for you to see. Our position every day of the trip is on them and of course

we are keeping them up to date now every day. They are very interesting and it took him about two hours and he did it all on his own initiative. We will probably be payed off in Newark on our day of arrival thank goodness.

June 14

Sunday

We will go through the canal first thing Wednesday morning and barring any thing unusual happening, should arrive at Port Newark first thing Thursday, following week. If you do get down and I certainly hope you can, you'll see me looking very, very, anxiously and eagerly for you. [Thursday, June 28 about 6:00 A.M., but Mr. Jump can tell you for sure.] Give my love to Estelle, Edwin and Helen. Also Grandma, if she is still there at the house. Tell Helen to forgive me for not writing but I couldn't get stamps enough to write at all except to you. She'll understand. She better, because if ~~yo~~ she doesn't I'll give the souvenir "gadget" I got for her to some other girl and on top of that I'll paddle her good. Also tell Edwin not too think he's getting hard because I'll have to take him down a few steps if he does and just because Estelle's 18 doesn't mean she's getting as pretty as her brother is goodlooking. (Meaning Edwin, of course.)

Waiting very anxiously till I see you.

All my love

Fred

P.S. Forgive writing! Old man "vibration" is ever present and makes writing quite a chore.

F.

P.P.S. Mr Lindgren is very anxious to meet all of you and said he would be glad to show you around and explain things to you if he has the time.

(Up side of letter)

June 20 P.P.S Enjoyed letters very much. Latest data is "likely arrival at Pt Newark Noon Thursday (28)

British West Indies

April 23, 1942

Dear Folks,

I am going to send this letter from here if possible by regular mail since they say that the air mail service is rather sketchy. I am trying to send mail in as many different ways as I can so that some will be sure to reach home. There will also be a repetition of many of the facts since I do not feel too sure that the two former letters I have mailed to you will reach you. I sent one airmail and one was via a ship that stopped in here on the way to New York. That last letter will be mailed in New York City and if the boat gets there you should certainly receive that one.

I am still pretty well, but sick of the delay. The relief ship is due here any day now and I guess it will take almost a week to transfer all the men and cargo over. Colds are very prevalent on board at present. I have one and that extremely hot humid climate we have here makes it difficult to shake a cold off. I believe fifty per cent of the men are afflicted with colds at present. This is the twentieth day we have dragged through here in this port.

I met several men yesterday who are with the other company going to Africa that have connections with me of some sort at home. Four of them were from South Orange. One of them is a fellow named Harold Foran who is signed up as a mechanic. He worked for the S. Orange water department seventeen years and to top it off he is the brother of Ken (Sticks) Foran, master mechanic for Utility at Fort Dix. Another of the four lives on Walton Ave. about four houses below Lenox. I knew none of these fellows personally before I met them here but naturally we still have much in common. Another young lad (a bulldozer operator and member of 825-A) worked in Fort Monmouth with Johnny Onder and talked with Johnny about this job before he left. This same lad ran Parkhurt's R5 for him in Jersey City and Perth Amboy. He lives in Allendale, N.J., where that is. This other company seem to have a great many men from the East. Few bulldozer men etc. however, since their's is more of a building project/ Our company has a preponderance of Westerners especially the cat skimmers. I have met many of the skimmers and engineers and only one skimmer was from the east (N.Y.) Most of the shore men etc. are from the West also although there are a few from Connecticut and New York. These western skimmers have really had some experience and I think I will have to do my utmost to keep from being shown up on the job but we'll see – I still feel fairly confident I can hold my own with them.

I met another lad that lives in Newark. His wife or fiancé, I forget which, named Quin teaches in West Side High and he thinks that she must know Florence since they were both there at the same time.

3

Looks like we might get a shower. I hope so. The last time it rained I got my first freshwater bath since leaving Charleston. It has rained just that once during the time we have been stuck here. At least the money should be coming in now although it's the hardest money I ever earned. If we don't leave here pretty soon a good portion of our year will be up before we even get to the job. I hope we get the chance to make plenty of overtime and I guess we will. The biggest thing I hope to get with the results of this job is a nice little house in Metuchen or vicinity and I hope I can stick it out and stay long enough to make the money for a substantial portion of it's cost.

We are pretty soft from inactivity and poor food so that the first few weeks on the job will be pretty tough. I guess some of us will want too much overtime work the first two weeks or so. But I guess we'll have far better care when we get on the site. It shouldn't take long to get into condition again with plenty of good food and exercise.

April 26, 1942

Still in Freetown harbor, Sierra Leone.

Well I guess I waited a little too long to mail this. They have cut out all shore leave and sending of mail as of today. Rumors are that we are finally pulling out of here tomorrow. The water tanker pulled alongside last night and loaded us up with 600 tons of water. It seems certain we are headed for [heavy crossout] our destination when we finally do pull the anchor. ~~but~~

4

Monday, April 27, 1942

Sierra Leone, Br. W.A.

Made my second swimming trip this morning. It was very hot on the beach but the water was very pleasant. I would have enjoyed spending the entire day there however the few hours we did have there were certainly appreciated. A big group of native men and women were there with souveinir baskets, horns, and miscellaneous other articles many of which I suspect came from Japan, Germany and the U.S.A. They also had many coconuts, limes and mangoes so I swapped some dirty towels and an old pair of work pants I had brought with me for some coconuts, a few limes and about twenty mangoes and a West African 2 shilling piece.

We receive an allowance of a dollar a week now and spent my dollar this week for four chocolate bars (nickel bar size in the U.S.A.) The chocolate is made in Capetown (Buchanan's) and is not as tasty as U.S. candy. However, it is my first candy since I left so it tasted mighty good to me.

I really didn't bring enough cash with me. I'll know better next time since a little more cash could have made my trip and particularly the stay here far more comfortable, Although I cannot get ashore, there are a few fellows who have access to the stores here through medical and dental care passes etc. and they bring various things back to the ship – candy, fruit, etc. The fellows say however that the town is really a mess. Dirty and smelly with few white people, little to but and drink, little to do. Everything is very expensive. A poor meal costs about \$1.75 and of course as I said before a nickel chocolate bar costs \$.25.

5

~~Well I managed to dig up some fountain pen ink. It is a little difficult to get ink on here.~~ Certainly would be interested to know some of the true facts about the trend of the war. All the war news we receive aboard here is carefully filtered out and we can grasp no real picture of the Allied progress or reverses. When you write me from time to time as you are able be sure to send me all the little domestic news from home that might be of interest since news from home is of more interest to me now than most of the war news. Tell me what you can about the progress of your job also, Dad.

In regard to earth moving with tractor equipment I have learned many interesting facts in regard to methods and preferred equipment in the west from the fifteen western skimmers I have met and talked with. These men seem to have ~~ex~~ had extensive experience on really big jobs (12,000,000 to 15,000,000 yard jobs) The first universal preference in regards to equipment is Caterpillar tractors. These lads just

don't think twice of any tractors except Caterpillar. Le Tourneau scrapers and rope blades are hands down favorites. The only other scraper they seem to think anything of is a western make – Woolridge. This Woolridge is a three cable scraper and although it falls far behind Le Tourneau in popularity a few of the lads say it is a real earthmover. La Plante Choate seems unpopular. They don't seem to care for the C-84 and other La Plante Choate cable scrapers and, from what I can find out, about 90%

6

Of the bulldozers are Le Tourneau rope blades. About 5% of the remainder are Isaccson and Woolridge rope blades and the other five percent consist of miscellaneous hydraulic outfits including La Plante Choate. The western skimmers say that hydraulic bulldozers and scrapers are obsolete and are used only by small newcomers to the earth moving business. I was quite surprised to find this fact out because, although I realize rope blades were popular in the west, I did not think that they were almost 100% in ~~over~~ popularity over hydraulic bulldozers. These skimmers all claim that a rope blade in the hands of an experienced skimmer will dig material just as hard if not harder than will a hydraulic outfit and these skimmers have worked all over the west, in Panama and South America in all kinds of soil and material. They all hope sincerely that there will be no La Plante Choate or other hydraulic bulldozers over on the Persia job – just Le Tourneau.

I have also learned one other interesting fact in regard to scraper work and that is that most of the big outfits out there including Atkinson never run their Cat. Tractors hauling scrapers etc. in any gear higher than fourth (once in awhile fifth but never in high or sixth speed) They say that a couple of years ago everyone pushed the machines to the limit but gradually through tests and records found out that the high speeds actually didn't pay, due to the much increased wear on pinions and tracks. Another interesting fact

7

Was that none of them do their own greasing. Of the fifteen skimmers from California and other western states here ^v that I have met there were none that greased a tractor since 1937 or so. They say every outfit, even small ones with five or six rigs, have their own truck mounted electric or air greasing outfits that tend to the maintenance of the tractors. They claim that it doesn't pay to try and maintain the machines correctly by having an operator who puts in a hard day's work tend to his own greasing, oil changing etc. Most of these skimmers claim that they wouldn't work for anyone who wanted them to do their own greasing.

April 29, 1942

Still here in Freetown

We had a trial trip around the harbor yesterday so perhaps our ship is ready to go. When they raised the anchor and started to move it looked good but we're still here anchored again in almost the same spot. However I really think we are going to leave here soon now. Sure hope so. Well I'll close this now. I understand that I'll be able to mail this regular mail from here until we leave so I'll turn it in now. You probably won't receive it for a long time. Best love to you all and remember me to my friends that you might see. Write to me as often as you can find time because a "letter from home" is worth many times it's weight in gold to me now.

Best love to you all,

Fred

April 29, 1942

Freetown, Sierra Leone

British West Africa

Sweetheart,

This is the twenty sixth day we have been anchored here in this godforsaken spot but I really believe that we are soon to move, perhaps before the week is up. It has been very tiresome here. The weather has been generally very hot and humid. Except for two swimming trips to a secluded beach here I have spent every hour right here on this ship and I sure am sick of her.

I am sending this letter by regular mail; first, because I'm just about broke but mainly because we are told that the airmail service is none too good and that in some cases the regular mail reaches it's destination almost as soon as airmail. I have sent several via airmail to you, honey. I hope you receive them all. I should have brought a little more cash with me. It would have eased the stay here considerably but of course I had no idea we would be here so long. Here we are about one quarter of the way and enough time has elapsed to be five sixths of the way if we had gone according to scedhule. We are given one dollar per week for about three weeks but now they claim to have run out of cash so we can get no more until we reach our next port. The canteen has been reopened (the commanding officer U.S. Army on board having commandeered some of the cargo stores) and beer, gingerale, lemon soda and pepsicola is sold twice a day. It is quite expensive, however, it sure hits the spot. I have hoarded my eager funds pretty carefully but I guess I'll soon have to do without soda. Seems funny to be making \$100.00 per week and not have enough money to buy a 20¢ soda every day when desired. Of course I did get a little extravavent on a "dental care" pass purchased four chocolate bars for me. They were nickel size bars but the four cost me about \$1.00 American money. Let me tell you they were a real treat, honey. They were made in Union of South Africa and although they were'nt as tasty as our American chocolate they tasted mighty good to me – my first chocolate since I left the U.S.A. The fellows who have been ashore say the town here is a mess. Very dirty and smelly and having few white people. Everything in the few shops they have is very expensive and inferior.

2

My second swimming trip two days ago was very pleasant. The weather was extremely hot and the water certainly felt good. About thirty native men and women were gathered at the beach with baskets of fruit, coconuts and souvineer baskets and other trinkets. Some of the so called "native jewelry" they offered for trade had a strong similarity to that of Woolworth and Kress's and I have a deep suspicion that the native baskets were "made in Japan" I traded some dirty (ship's issue) towels for seven coconuts and several limes and mangoes. The women are far sharper traders than the men and since these daily swimming parties started about three weeks ago a sort of inflation has taken place and trading has become a real bargaining proposition. One native offered me a pound (about \$4.30) for my \$1.50 watch but Lord knows when and where I'd get another watch.

The swimming is finished now and from the other preparations that are taking place here on the ship I gather the thought that we are really going to leave here soon. Tommorrow is the last day any mail may be sent.

I'm still pretty healthy and am about the color of a dark Indian. We have plenty of opportunity to get a tan on here. There has been little to do to pass the time naturally and I'll be very happy when I can get

on dry land and get to work again. I think of you all at home constantly. Let me know what everyone is doing and how you all are at the first opportunity. Have you gotten your old job back, darling? What do you do with your time. I guess you find a good deal more to do then I can. Are you well, Honey? Getting slimmer every day I guess. Sure wish I were with you.

This letter is dull but I can't think of anything to write about. So little happens here on board that I can tell about. The days just pass slowly by – one after the other. This is a hell of a way to build a road or win a war – anchored here for almost a month – but perhaps it's for the best, somehow. Give my love to our folks and remember me to my friends.

All my love, darling,

Fred

May 3, 1942 (12:30 P.M.)

At Sea

Sweetheart.

I am starting this letter under pleasant circumstances. At 10:45 this morning we finally raised the anchor and by eleven o'clock were past the harbor net and once more on the Atlantic headed south. Just thirty days have passed by since we entered Freetown harbor and those were thirty mighty drab dull days, believe me. Everyone is pretty well keyed up about being on our way again and I personally hope I never see Freetown, British West Africa again – especially from the deck of a ship. No one knows just what lies ahead but it is far better to be going somewhere than rotting away in a dull, hot, muggy place like Freetown.

May 4, 1942 At Sea.

This evening we should be very near the center point of the surface of the earth – on the equator a little west of 0° longitude. After tonight we'll be going downhill and may be this old tub will make better time – coasting.

2

It is cooler here on the ocean even though we are nearing the equator every hour. This morning at the dawn lifeboat drill we had a hard rain squall – good ducking weather. It will seem funny to be running into autumn instead of spring from now on. I'll be glad to get to Capetown. It's a big city and if we have to lie there any length of time we'll probably get shore leave. I wonder if the company sent you my Capetown mailing notice in time for you to get a letter to me there, I hope so, honey. I certainly am anxious to receive some word from you. It seems ages since I last was with you.

Our food on board has improved considerably in the last few days since one of the army officers decided to really do something about it. It helps a great deal to have meals fit to eat even though we are on short rations. I weighed myself the other day and made 165 lbs. much to my

3

Surprise. I thought I had lost considerably in the last month but evidently I'm still a little ahead of schedule since I only weighed 160 on leaving home.

May 5, 1942 – On the South Atlantic

Some time last night we crossed the equator. The initiations and ceremony in honor of the occasion were held today. The initiates were chosen by drawing names from a hat. I wasn't one of the unfortunates. The old "shellbacks" presided over by old "Neptunes Ref" himself gave the initiates egg and flour and evaporated milk facials and shampoos and shaved their heads and beards in weird designs – ending up by ducking them in a large makeshift canvas tank rigged up on the boatdeck. At the conclusion of the ceremonies the fire hoses were turned suddenly on the assembled crowd. Everyone had a soaking and a good time.

The weather has been perfect so far clear blue skies most of the time and a cool breeze. The ocean has been comparatively calm all the time and no one has been seasick – and every day takes us nearer Capetown.

(NOTE – Page 4 missing as well as 15 days in narrative)

5

May 20, 1942

Marine Hotel

Muisenberg, Union of South Africa

Darling,

We are quartered in little summer resort towns in about a fifteen mile radius of Capetown. Our accommodations are very nice and the food is excellent. We'll be tied up here for an indefinite period. The people here are friendly and pleasant. Although the climate now is about like our late May it is actually the winter season here and so these resort places are rather deserted and quiet.

I had to wire you for some money. I hope the cable didn't alarm you. I have been so long on the way and have so much further to go that I have to stock up again on many things such as Agarol, Serutan, hard water soap, etc. and these items are very expensive here although they actually are available. The company has granted us a very small allowance due to the numbers of "stub bums" we have with us and my laundry and cleaning bills just about cleaned me out. Not having a checking account has been quite a disadvantage on this over-prolonged trip but naturally we didn't foresee this kind of a trip when I started out.

6

Capetown and the adjoining suburbs are pleasant places. Modern, up to date, and clean (cleaner than U.S. towns) Everything seems very American – like. American automobiles predominate – Ford, Chevrolet, Plymouth, Studebaker, Olds, and Buick are seen everywhere. Of course they all have right hand drive since they drive on the left here. A Ford like ours costs L500 (500 pounds) here – that is about \$2000.00. Gasoline runs about 50¢ a gallon and some persons are permitted twenty one gallons a month (semi-official) I'm getting quite used to the money prices now – one pence, three pence, six pence, shilling note (or bob) 2 shilling (or Florin), 10 shilling note and one pound note. A pound is worth about \$4.00 (20 shillings to a pound – 12 pence to a shilling). I'm still a little slow counting change though.

Some of the fellows are willing to stay here for the duration. It is pleasant but I'm anxious to be on my way again. I hope it's soon. Give my love to our folks, sweetheart.

Thinking of you always – all my love,

Fred

Marine Hotel

May 24, 1942

Muisenberg

Union of South Africa

Sweetheart,

I am now, temporarily, a gentleman of leisure. We are quartered in resort hotels here is a small coastal town about fifteen miles or so from the city of Capetown. This is the off season here now (winter) although the weather is very pleasant – similar to our late May. There are few vacationers here now but quite a few refugees from the war areas are staying in the hotels. There is a fine bathing beach here but the water temperature runs around 52° at present so there are few bathers.

Our hotel is rather old fashioned – European style plumbing etc. but the food and service is excellent. Jim Ausmus(?) and I are rooming together. About seven thirty we are served coffee in bed and then have three good meals during the day; also tea at four P.M. There is no end of fresh fruits and green vegetables available and the South Africans go in for candy in a big way. After what we have been through this is a regular paradise. A lot of the men would like to stay here for the duration, I guess. The only real drawback has been the lack of funds.

2

The company has made us a very small allowance. I imagine the main reason for their holding back any reasonable amount of money is the fact that about half this gang drink all the money up as fast as they receive it and make a lot of trouble for the company while they are doing it. Many of the fellows are making use of their checking accounts in the Central Hanover from time to time on this over prolonged trip but I have been out of luck in that respect and have had to borrow a little. I just sent you a cable for eighty dollars. I hope it didn't alarm you unduly. It is much more than I need or expect to spend but since there is no way to see what lies ahead I'm going to have a reserve fund for emergencies. This trip has turned out a great deal differently so far from what I expected. There have been many hardships some of which could have been eased if I had bought along a little more cash but any how – now I know better. I must now replenish my Serutan, Agarol etc. and those items are expensive here. We have no idea how long we will be tied up here and when we do finally leave we will have several thousand hard miles of travel ahead of us.

As far as the Union of South Africa goes, I am crazy about it. The climate is pleasant. Flowers and foliage are beautiful. The people are

3

Friendly, quiet, intelligent, clean and courteous. They are of Holland Dutch and English extraction and except for the common use of the Holland Dutch language and peculiar accented English they seem like Americans. In fact their methods of living, travel and eating are very American. American automobiles are about 8 to 10 over British makes. Chevrolet, Plymouth, Ford, Chrysler, Buick, Studebaker, Oldsmobile are common – and many many 1942 models. The cars all have right hand drive, since they drive on the left side of the street here and the cars all have leather upholstery for some reason or other. The police ride bicycles and some Harley-Davidson motorcycles. They have fine modern buses similar to Fifth Ave. buses in N.Y. (double decker). They also have fast electric train service. The city of

Capetown is a modern up to date city. It is cleaner by far than our cities. No one throws refuse on the sidewalks or in the streets. There is far less hub-bub and noise. No unnecessary hornblowing and shouting. Everyone seems very courteous. The traffic police are polite and efficient. The large stores compare very favorably with large N.Y. stores except that prices in general are higher except for fruit and vegetables. The stores are cleaner. The window displays are not as attractive as the American stores.

4

The little town we are in is also neat and clean as can be. The people are friendly. Practically all of them speak both English and Holland Dutch. All signs, railroad tickets etc are in duplicate (Dutch and English).

Last night a service dance was held here at the Pavilion (similar to a U.S.O. dance) for us. There were many service men there also. The girls were naturally quite outnumbered but everyone changed partners during the course of the dance so all had a good time. The dance started at 8:15 P.M. and ended at 10:30 P.M. Things close up early around here. Refreshments were served also. I didn't do much dancing but I got a kick out of watching some of our fellows trying to teach the So. African girls N.Y. jitterbugging.

The railroad cars are continental style – doors all along the side. There are 1st, 2nd, and 3rd class cars and fares but all whites travel first class; colored – 2nd and 3rd. One sees far more whites about than colored people. The colored people are treated about like those in our South except that they are perhaps treated with more kindness than are our Southern negroes. No white people do servant work here.

There are some half breeds (mulattos) I guess but I haven't noticed many about.

5

I wonder how many of my previous letters you have received – perhaps none. I think of you most of the time, honey. I really miss you. If I could be working the time would pass so much quicker. Even though we are now living under very pleasant conditions I am still anxious to be on my way again so I can get to work. I have gained six or eight pounds during the few days we have been here and I feel fine.

We haven't received any mail from home here yet but I heard this morning that a ship had come in yesterday that might have some for us. I sure hope so. I am sending this by ship's mail since they keep telling us that the airmail service is very uncertain from here.

We have no idea how long we will be tied up here. It might be two more weeks and it might be two more months. I'd just as soon be on my way in two more days. Give my best love to our folks and wishes to any of my friends you might see and write to me as often as possible using the address the company office gives you.

Looks like I'll be the best part of a year getting to the job site, the way we're going now.

Thinking of you always – all my love.

Fred

May 26, 1942

Muisenberg, Union of

South Africa

(Marine Hotel)

Dear Mother and Dad,

We are quartered here for an indefinite period in little summer resort hotels scattered all along the coast twenty miles or so each side of Capetown. I am in one of the best. The accommodations don't compare with the modern American hotels but they are very comfortable. The food and service is absolutely perfect. Better food than ~~after~~ any hotel or restaurant I have ever been in before. Of course the service is European style and I guess it can't be beat. We are awakened about seven thirty by a maid who brings us a cup of hot coffee at that time. Breakfast is served from 8 A.M. to 9:15, lunch from 1 P.M. to 2:15. At four o'clock in the afternoon we have tea and cakes in the lounge and from 7 P.M. to 8 supper (dinner) is served. After the things we have been through in the past two months, our existence here seems like Paradise. If Flossie were only here it would be perfect. I feel fine now and am fast gaining weight. I room with Jim Ausmus, the California cat skinner who has been my roommate and closest companion up to now.

The climate here is warm and pleasant, the only drawback being that the winter season is just starting and it rains almost every day from now until November, which is the first month of their summer here. Blue skies are visible often and the sun comes out but it keeps right on raining just the same. Of course we have some clear days.

Yesterday was a national holiday here. Empire Day, Dutchman had a bowling contest out here on the green alongside our hotel.

2

The South African people are very friendly and intelligent and except for their British and Dutch accents could hardly be told from Americans. We have some interesting people staying here in our hotel – refugees from the Netherlands, London, and the Far East. Also have a bunch of the cutest little chubby blonde kids you would ever want to see. The people here are very fond of America and American automobiles, watches, swing, and styles are quite in vogue here. American cars outnumber the British makes about 80%. Ford, Chevrolet, Plymouth, Studebaker, Chrysler, Olds, and Buick are common sights here and they have modern dealer's agencies and service stations. There seem to be many 1941 and 1942 models here. Of course all the cars have right hand drive since they drive on the wrong side of the street. The cars also all have leather upholstery. Gasoline costs about 50¢ per gallon (2/6 on So. African money) and it is rationed in proportion to the car's horsepower. A car like yours, Dad, would allow you twenty gallons per month. A Ford like mine costs about \$500 here (\$2000.00). Your Chrysler would cost new about \$3000.00 (American money)

They have excellent black top roads here with a modern traffic light system. The police ride ~~by~~ bicycles and a few motorcycles. There don't seem to be many traffic police. Speed limit (maximum) is thirty miles per hour.

We are on a modern electric train line here. It is about fifteen miles to Capetown and a round trip ticket costs two shillings or 40¢. The company has let us have an extremely small allowance here due to the fact that many of our gang just get drunk and raise hell when ever they get a little cash. Things are generally expensive here except for fresh fruit and chocolate candy both of which are produced here in the Union in large quantities.

3

We have no idea how long we will be here but it looks as though it would be quite some time. Nice as it is here, I would rather get on with the trip and get to work. As long as I don't have to repeat the conditions and hardships of the past two months, they can send me on my way anytime. A lot of the gang are young American fellows and a lot are carefree lads who care more about a good time than anything else and these men are just having a grand time and they would just as soon stay here for the duration – more power to them. Personally, I miss Flossie and all the rest of you and I'm anxious to get busy so I'll have less time to think. There isn't much to do here but of course it's a thousand times better for us than it was a month past.

I had hoped we might have received some mail here but to date have not. Perhaps the company never sent you our Capetown mailing address as they told us they did or perhaps the mail just isn't getting through. I'm sending this by Air Mail although they tell us that very often regular mail gets through before the airmail. After May 30th they are taking no more airmail from here – service discontinued. So from then on I won't have that decision to make.

I think of you all very often and wonder what you are all doing. I wonder how the war is affecting you all now. I read in the paper here that gasoline is finally rationed in the eastern states. They don't have news broadcasts and newspapers like we do home. All news is very general and accounts are sketchy. My best love to you all – Mother, Dad, Flossie, Estelle, John and Johnny and Eddy. Take good care of yourself. I'm doing that much for myself. Write when you can – Fred.

June 16, 1942

(redacted)

Sweetheart,

Much has happened since I mailed my last letter to you from (redacted). Many of the events can not be narrated here since the censor would surely not approve. Between the time I mailed you the last letter and now, I spent several days with the rest of the men on another greatly overcrowded ship on which the conditions were worse than those encountered on the old tub that brought us finally to (redacted). Believe me, those "several days" were some experience. One that I hope will never be repeated. However, that is now all past and gone since fate has smiled on me now and placed me in an enviable position compared to the lot of most of the fellows who came down from the U.S.A. with me on that first "poor excuse for a ship."

I am one of a small group of company men who have been placed on a brand new fast modern freighter with first class passenger accomadations. I was separated from my California buddy, Jim Ausmus and from some of the other fellows with whom I had become fairly intimate but by some stroke of good fortune Jolly is here on this ship with me. I don't know exactly how Jolly and I happened to get this swell break since most of the other men here on board are supers, foremen and office personell but I'm certainly not worrying about it.

We have comfortable bunks, clean linen, large bathrooms with tub and shower, hot and cold fresh water at any time of day and three square meals a day of the best food I have had since leaving home. Real American food, cooked perfectly, and all the "seconds" you want. When I left the Marine Hotel (redacted) I weighed 180 lbs. I may have lost a little on that other "tub" I was on but I'll sure gain it back on here.

2

I feel swell now but I'm afraid I'm pretty soft. By the time I reach the job I will have been 110 days or so since doing any work and a lot of that time I was living under pretty tough physical conditions – for instance – when we finally pulled into (redacted) after (redacted) (redacted) on that rotten old tub I weighed 154 lbs and felt lousy – tired and weak etc. No doubt I will sweat many of these newly gained pounds off on the job but at least I am enough over my normal weight now so that losing some pounds won't make a scarecrow out of me.

Our first couple of days out of (redacted) it was stormy, rough and cold but now (five days out) it is warm and sunny and in a few more days we can put on our shorts for good. We have a pretty nice sundeck on here and I can go back to work on my tan again. It has been a month now since we were in a climate where we could bet a sun tan and some of mine has faded. Of course it could be that these hot fresh water baths are finally getting the dirt off that was accumulalated on the other two ships. Speaking about ships, darling, you can bet a week's pay of mine that when I finally return home we won't be taking any ocean trip for a vacation – so don't set your heart on one, sweetheart. I'm not sure I'll even want to go to the seashore where I can see the ocean waves.

3

Naturally I cannot tell you the exact speed of the ship or give a description of her but she would certainly pass my little boat even if I were alone in it with the outboard wide open. Empty life rafts make one stop and think a little when they are seen floating along out here in the middle of the ocean.

We are starting to see fly fishing again, sure signs of tropical waters and the giant albatross that have followed the ship since passing the (redacted) turned back yesterday for cooler climates more to their liking.

Honey, don't forget, if you are able to get any decent snapshots of yourself (alone) please send them to me so I can carry a picture of you with me all the time. I sure wish I could see you in person. I wonder how many, if any of my letters you have received so far. I hope I'll have one or two from you waiting for me when I reach my destination which should be in about twelve more days. The mail situation is pretty darn problematical now. Well its time to get one of those excellent meals again. So long, temporarily, sweetheart. I'll tell you more later on. Wish you were here so I could demonstrate some of the feelings I have that are hard for me to tell you about with paper and pen.

June 23, 1942

(redacted)

Only three more days, darling, and I'll be safe at my port of disembarkation, probably (redacted). Its very warm now and I've gotten most of my tan back again. I'm pretty well keened up about finally getting on the job and naturally my mind is full of speculation about my work, who I'll see there that I know, the living conditions and most important – if I have any mail there from home. I'm sure hungry for news of you all.

4

June 24, 1942

(redacted)

This is a day I just couldn't forget, darling. The anniversary of the happiest day in my life. I only wish we were together so that we could really celebrate it properly. You know, sweetheart, fate must have surely been watching out for me to throw my life together with as swell a little wife as you. It seems that when I'm so far away from you, honey, I realize more and more how lucky I am that you fell in love with me instead of some other more desirable guy. I guess I better stop talking like this – you'll think the sun here has affected me. However, I mean every word of it, sweetheart. Well we are now only about two days away from our disembarkation port in (redacted) and soon I'll know what its all about and I'll be able to stop speculating for awhile. Its very very hot now even though the ship is moving. Just a taste of what's to come. We are arriving here in this country at the hottest time of year.

I wonder if my cable ever reached you from (redacted). I hope it didn't now since it might have caused you a little unnecessary worry. The cable authorities said that it might not go through. I wish I had never sent it at all. A half hour after I walked out of the cable office I met a friend who was able to lend me L3, which amount was enough for my needs then. Before that I didn't see where I was going to get any money. After I get to the job I'll contact Barclay's Bank (redacted) just in case the cable did go through and you wired me money there. I left word with them to hold my money that came there for me until I sent for same. About 300 fellows cabled for money while in (redacted) but they had Barclay's send

official cables direct to their banks. Not having an account I couldn't do that and I was informed that few personal cables were getting through now.

I certainly feel soft and lazy now. I guess I'll lose this newly gained weight in about a week after I start working again. About the only thing that keeps us here on the ship from sweating away plenty of weight is the fact that we drink gallons of ice tea and limeade every day. Had two cold showers today which cooled me off temporarily. We're still just wearing our underwear shorts and slippers. I wonder if you have been swimming yet. I wonder about a lot of things but I'll have to wait until I reach the job site before I can find out what your letters might tell me. It's hard to try and write something interesting that will pass the sensors at the same time.

June 30, 1942

(Redacted)

Well, darling, we finally have arrived in (redacted) today after a trip of about (redacted) days. It's very very hot (110° to 130° in the shade.) It's so hot in the sun that its hard to breathe (175° in sun) you sure would hate it here, sweet. Its hot, dirty and smelly. The natives are all in rags and are extremely dirty with their own "far from delicate" aroma. I haven't gotten to the camp yet so do not know if there is any mail there for me from home. I'm certainly anxious to hear from you, honey. I haven't located Jim Fish yet. I'll write as soon as I see what letters I have from you all and give you all the dope I can. Right now we're just sitting around sweating and waiting.

All my deepest love, darling. Fred

(up side of letter)

P.S. I'm numbering enveloped 1,2,3, etc. of letters I'm sending from here from now on.

June 18, 1942

On the (redacted)

Dear Folks,

I am a first class passenger now on a new fast modern freighter along with a small group of other men from our company. I am separated from Jim, my California friend, and some of the other fellows ~~that~~ with whom I had become friendly on the trip so far but Jolly (Jollife from Bernardsville) by a happy circumstance is on board here with me.

Many things have happened since I last wrote you from the Marine Hotel, Muisenberg. Much of this cannot be told in a letter home. The conditions on the old tub that brought us down to (redacted) were mighty mighty tough but for six long days I was on another old rat trap jammed to overflowing with other unfortunate fellows. This ship which was all ready occupied by considerable "livestock" (rats, bed bugs, lice, cockroaches etc.) before we boarded her gave me some real discomfort to think about. However, we finally succeeded in getting off her and a few of us had the swell break to be placed on this modern ship. We are now eight days out of (redacted) and with ordinary luck we will be at our destination in one week from today. It seems hard to realize that after all this delay and hardship and kicking around we are finally really going to get to the job. About (redacted) days or so en route.

I feel extra fine now. Have gained much weight and imagine I'll tip over 180 lbs right now. When I boarded that first old tub at (redacted) I weighed 165 lbs. When I disembarked at (redacted) I weighed 154 lbs and felt rotten. I picked up in (redacted) and just before boarding that other old "rat hole" weighed 184 lbs with slippers, pants, and shirt on. I may have lost a little weight on the ----- but know I have gained it all back and possibly more since getting on this swell "packet."

2

I miss all of you at home very much. I hope you have received some of my letters to date and I sure hope I'll hear from you when I reach the job. Naturally I'm hungry for news of you all ___ how you are and what you are doing. When we boarded this ship I saw my latest New York paper (Herald Tribune of May 8) It had a picture of your gas ration cards in it and I also noticed an article telling of the possibility that the government might have to requisition some private automobiles. That paper, May 8, contained just about the latest real bona-fide war news we have had to date also, believe it or not. The (redacted) (redacted) papers tell of little but generalities and individual cases of heroism. They really carry no real war news. I guess they're heavily censored. When you write tell me about some of the conditions at home now. (no war news, however). Tell about your work, what you are able to tell, Dad. Are many of the operators etc. I know in the army now? Is little Johnny talking yet, the little rascal? I certainly wish I could see you all bit I guess it will be a long time till I do.

We've changed time so much it's wearing my watch out. We're now about eight hours in advance of your time. Its 6:30 P.M. here --- just finished a swell supper. I guess you're just about getting into full stride on the job now, Dad, and Mother's having her after - breakfast cigarette.

Is Eddy still in school or has the Army claimed him. Possibly he's working on Dad's job now. All the working we've done on this trip so far has been via "hot air." If talk could do a job we could be on our way home now because that project has been done and redone several times.

June 23, 1942

(redacted)

Every hour brings us nearer and nearer our final destination. This fine ship just slips along seemingly without effort but every day puts several hundred miles behind us. We should reach (redacted) our probable point of disembarkation, about Friday afternoon, (June 26/42). For the past two days we have been pushed along by a strong tailwind and a heavy following sea. The ship rolls considerably in the heavy seas and we have been keeping our ice tea glasses etc. upright on the supper table. All of us are pretty experienced sailors by now and we should have a real "rolling gain" our first few hours on land.

It has been pretty warm the last few days and now the wind has almost died down so its really hot. We were all given little duties here on board (voluntary preference). I have been on "sub watch" four hours a day (2 on and 10 off – 8 to 10 A.M. and P.M.). I had about all the kitchen and mess room detail I wanted while on the other ship coming down. We have a shuffleboard court here on the deck and many of the fellows are avid fans. I play some but I can't seem to get very interested in it even though there is little else to do. I'm not very good at it, anyhow. Jolly is oneof the "champs" here on board at shuffleboard. The biggest occupation is card playing. Poker, contract bridge, and pinockle are the three favourites in that order. The poker and bridge are played fyr money and since I have none, I play not. I do play a little pinockle once in awhile. We also have a few chess and checker fans.

In regards to money spent, I have done pretty well so far (of course I was unable to get much and I had little to start with) I spent about \$35 – while in (redacted) and the average spent about \$150-. I know of many, personally, who spent \$300 – to 500-. Jolly didn't do so bad. He says he only spent about #120 – (Don't let that get too far)

The people there were so friendly – especially pretty girls and there were plenty of bars and places to spend money. Of course some of the men did spend money on souvineers. By the time I purchased a new stock of necessary medicants, had laundry done etc, and bought chocolate, friut etc. (I had a regular spree on candy and fresh fruit I'm ashamed to say) and traveled around a little to see the sights, my #35 – was about gone. I have no checking account and the company only gave us \$10.00 while we were there. The majority of fellows cashed checks or bank drafts freely and wired to their banks for various sums. I'm glad not that I couldn't get any money but while I was there it was tough sitting around the hotel or walking around the countryside too broke to really go anywhere or do anything. Probably was all for the best because after those two months of real hardship on that first old tub we were all really set to drop everything and "go to town" with all the trimmings on landing at (redacted) and most of the fellows did nobly. I was just a quiet convalescent thinking of home most of the time. I borrowed about L5 (20.00) from some of mu buddies otherwise I wouldn't have had enough money to get the things I really needed.

June 30, 1942

Arrived (redacted) Iran yesterday. In an old tumbledown hotel here in (redacted) now. This afternoon we have an 85 mile ride across the desert in trucks to the main camp. Situation here is very

disappointing in general. I found out that Jimmy has been placed in charge of an entire section of work 170 miles from here in another country. I guess I won't see him very soon. Country is hot (130° -140°) dirty and smelly. May be things will look more cheerful later on but I don't paint a pretty sordid picture. I'll write soon and tell you more when I find out what is what.

Love to you all – Fred

June 6, 1942

In Camp

Dear Mother and Dad,

Well I have been here several days now and have just about formulated an opinion of this country in general, however the opinion is certainly not one that can be broadcast among polite society. It is very hot here now. We have arrived here just about at the beginning of the really hot weather. During the daytime the thermometer climbs to 120° - 130° in the shade. At night it goes down to about 90°. The terrain is flat and there is very little foliage. In effect it is nothing but a desert of dried earth. Once or twice a week there are dust storms. The dust seeps through the smallest cracks and puts a one quarter inch layer of dust over everything. The dust is so dense that it is hard to see to drive or even walk.

However, that is the worst of it. Our food is good and so are our sleeping quarters. We have fresh water showers and a fairly nice recreation hall here with victrola, ping pong table and library. There are native house boys who do the household chores around the quarters – clean up, make beds etc. The camp grounds in general are kept very clean. I feel fine and surprised myself the other day when I found that I weighed 182 lbs. stripped. Of course a lot of that is just fat since I haven't done any real

(over)

physical work in almost four months.

At present I am not doing the work for which I signed on as are few of the men who came here in my group. I'm working under a roof where it is comparatively cool and although I put in eight hours, it's a tough day if I work two. Jolly is doing a little truck driving but I Haven't seen a (redacted) although there are rumors about that there are a few actually being worked around here.

When I arrived here a few days ago I received my first mail in 3 ½ months. There was one letter from Dad dated April 15th, one from Mother dated May 6, and one from John Hugg, also seven from Flossie the last being dated May 18. It was certainly swell to hear from you and I hope some later letters come soon. I gathered from Flossie's letters that few of my letters were reaching home. This is a darn shame because I wrote many and mailed them at different ports of call. I was much interested in your jobs, Dad. You certainly must be busy. Good luck to you on all of them. You have more work there by far than we have here and If you are short of operators – its just mighty damn ironic.

I'll bet little Johnny is getting cuter by the day. I suppose he won't even know me when I finally get home again. Give my love to him and John and Stlle.

2

I cannot get too interested in the local color here. The natives live just like pigs. They have mud houses or tents and live under extremely filthy conditions. The streets in the towns are just narrow alleys, very smelly and dirty. The natives sleep right on the ground. One sees them lying all about. They dress in rags and about 75% of them are diseased. There are many many syphiletics and crippled beggars. I went through the town near here just once and that was sufficient. Now I spend my spare time around camp. We had a long hot trip across the desert to reach the camp from our port of embarkation and saw a few

gazelles and jackals. Aside from that I have seen no wildlife except for bugs, jackasses and (word on other side redacted).

There are some very nice fellows here and naturally that helps to pass the time. I am playing quite a bit of ping pong and have become fairly proficient. We arise at 3:30 A.M. breakfast (heavy) at 4, work from 4:30 until 8, breakfast (light) 8 to 9, work from 9 to 1:30 P.M. Light lunch at 2:00 and have the rest of the day off. Supper is at 6:30 P.M. as it is too hot to do much.

We have our laundry done by a native women. Cost (?) per piece (about 6 ¢. The only native money here is the (redacted). There are (redacted) to the dollar. A small brass coin worth (redacted) is the only metal money. Everything else is paper. A big wad of paper notes like cigar coupons might be only worth a few dollars.

We have excellent medical care here (Army) and are cautioned constantly to take plenty of salt pills with the drinking water, take it easy in the sun etc. We must wear a pith helmet at all times in the sun. They cost about 75¢ here at our fairly well stocked canteen and are the same type that would cost \$8.00 or \$10.00 in Abercrombie and Fitch.

Tell Eddie I expect to see a finished "blade" man when I return. He's doing a damn sight more road work than I'm doing right now. There's just (redacted) here and (redacted) with cable blades. Flossie says Keat is working for you, Dad. Do you still have Johnny Onders and Kaczmarek around or did the army catch up with them. Give my regards to them all – Jack Caeser, Smitty, Dick^VPete and all the rest. Tell them I'm having one hell of a good vacation with pay and am getting fatter every day. Write whenever you can squeeze in the time. I think of you all often and it will be a mighty pleasant day when I see you all again. I'll write again soon. Jimmy, who (redacted) another camp, wrote (redacted) nice note and sent me a news clipping about Ginny's wedding. He is fine and well. Best Love to you

Fred

Frederick M Arnolt

A.P.O 816

July 12, 1942 – Sunday

Camp

Sweetheart,

I finished up one letter and sent it off this morning and then, since I'm not working today, I decided to hike to town (about 2 miles) and look the town over. The town isn't much to look ~~out~~ at because of the dirt and the smells but nevertheless there is much of interest to see. Of course the most common mode of travel is by foot but there are also hundreds of little donkeys to be seen on the streets carrying loads and also men. The donkeys are so small that the men's feet almost reach the ground. They sure look silly riding around on them swinging their legs to and fro. There are also many camel caravans plodding along. Camels are certainly homely "critters" and they have the most supercilious smirk on their homely faces. They also smell far from delicate. Of course, as I mentioned in some of my previous letters from here, the natives dress in dirty tattered rags. The men and women both wear skirts of a sort and sometimes it is very difficult to tell male and female apart. Every small child and many men and women follow you around in the streets whining "Bakshisk, sahib, bakshish" (or "gimmee"). They are very persistent and annoying.

2

I went to a local barber shop and had my haircut. The shop is patronized by many soldiers etc. and is more or less modernized, but the haircut is still quite a sensation. The barber tools are extremely dull and the clipping process is fairly painful. They cut the hair fairly "square around the edges" and I don't think you'd care much for the results – I didn't. The real sensation however, is the shampoo. They fit a two piece metal bowl around your neck and you still sit upright in the chair while they pour on water and soap. The soapy water runs down over your face and in your ears and of course some leaks down your neck past the metal (stock) collar affair. Lots of fun, all right! A haircut, shampoo and shave costs ten (redacted) thirty cents complete.

I am still trying to send you a cable but they are not accepting any yet. Perhaps I'll be able to send one a little later on. I hope some of these letters get through to you, darling. Your letters mean so much to me and I know mine must mean a lot to you.

I don't think it so bad here now as I am becoming more used to the heat and barrenness of the country. Of course I'm just putting in my time and making my money and thinking how swell it will be to get home again and hold you in my arms once more. Naturally as I mentioned before the job is not at all what I expected and it seems to be just a question of working out my nine months here and returning home.

3

You can tell Elmer that I am rapidly being forced to believe that the "Chevie" is the toughest damn automobile in the world. There are a huge preponderance of Chevrolets in use out here and they really take abuse. The roads are little more than trails – full of chuck holes and ditches etc. and they are

usually traversed at 60 to 80 miles an hour, the occupants of the car holding grimly on to the seats, the roof and anything else that provides a solid grip. In addition to the rough terrain the heat of course is tremendous and clouds of dust are in the air all the time. The Fords, I am sorry to say, give poor service out here __ overheating is one of the biggest problems. The general opinion around here is that they "stink". What a letdown! I had a 90 mile ride across the desert the other day in a '42 Chevvie station wagon and believe me, it was a real sensation, or should I say – thrill. Some of the time we were on the so-called road, a hard baked dirt affair with pot holes and ditches 1 to 2 ft. deep and some of the time we ran right across the desert (looks smooth but is damn rough) but most of the time we were in the air. The speedometer was kept around 70 or 80 and often we would hit a bad hole or irrigation ditch so hard

4

That the engine hood would unlatch and fly open whereupon someone would step out slam it closed and hop right in and go it again. Lots of times all four wheels would leave the ground and when we landed you would swear all the springs must break but at the end of the trip the car didn't look or sound any the worse for wear. The Chevvie is definitely proving itself aces high out here. The ones I am talking about are not any special army models but ordinary passenger cars right out of the stockroom.

Some of the native businessmen have much abused Chevvie trucks and they are seen bouncing along a high speeds with native workmen hanging on for dear life. The few natives that have cars or trucks blow the horn about 80% of the time they are driving. I guess they are just showing off the fact that they have a truck instead of a donkey or camel. It sure adds confusion to the crowded streets in town.

The "taxi" in these parts is a four wheeled buggy usually drawn by two horses. They have a hood for sun protection and a single seat that holds three. For about 25¢ (American) you can ride into town. At night in the streets of town "the sporting ladies" ride around in them and call out to any men that look like prospects. The "taxis" are

5

Called "droskas". The prostitutes are mostly dark skinned although some of the fellows say that, after ~~one~~ you are here a couple of weeks, they all look "white" to you. I don't think there's much chance of any of them looking "white" to me if I'm here a hundred years. They're real hags and about 99.9% of them are diseased as many of the boys have painfully discovered.

I just can't get over the pitiful poverty here. Everything has value here - - old tin cans, rusty nails, broken tools, bits of scrap wood and even manure. It sounds queer but you always see little girls or boys walking around the streets with a basket on their heads half full of horse droppings that they are picking up from the street with their bare hands, for what purpose – God knows. Some of the stores are full of junk that a regular "junky" at home wouldn't even stoop to pick up. We see no (redacted) rugs here in this section but they do some silver engraving here in the bazaars. Some of the fellows have bought engraved silver bracelets, rings and vases etc. but the work is much inferior to that done further north and I intend waiting before making any such purchases as I might get some place where the work is superior.

6

Sure is hot, darling. I have to put a towel over the lower half of this sheet to rest my hand and forearm on since I am just dripping with sweat. Makes writing quite a problem. One of our houseboys just showed me a live scorpion he caught outside the barracks here. He has it in a Pepsi Cola bottle. It looks like a miniture lobster with a pointed stinger in its tail – its about four inches long overall and in my opinion doesn't look too friendly. We see practically none around the camp here, however, and I haven't talked to anyone who has actually been bitten by one.

I guess my trunk is not going to get here very soon. The last time I saw it it was about 7,000 miles from here on a ship that was headed for another country. We are hoping the trunks will eventually be shipped here but are not too hopeful.

Well, sweetheart, I'll close now. Take good care of yourself and keep up that thinning process. I expect to hug a bundle of slender glamorized pulchritude when I get home. My love to your family and mine. Regards to Lorraine and all the rest up there in Nwk.

All my very best love – forever,

Fred

FREDERICK M. ARNOLT

A.P.O. 816

July 19, 1942

Camp

Dear Mother and Dad,

I have been here, in the place I started for, about two weeks now and despite the heat and other unpleasant features of this barren poverty stricken country I can truthfully say that I feel fine. I don't think I have lost a pound of that weight I gained while sojourning in (redacted). As I mentioned in my previous letters I weighed 182 lbs upon disembarking here a short time ago. Although one sweats here all the time in this heat of 120° - 140° in the shade much water is consumed to replace it. (around 2 gallons or more per day) I have just seen Jimmy for the first time and he looks and feels fine also, and Jolly, Jim's Bernardsville friend who has been a pretty close companion on my trip, looks like a million dollars. He's almost fat and is really enjoying himself. He's a good mixer and gets along famously with everyone, including the bosses.

Now, since I realize that a large percentage of my letters are not reaching you, I am going to repeat a few facts I have included in previous letters. Also, you and Flossie

2

Should repeat any important news or information about the happenings at home in several letters since I am now certain that many of the letters are never delivered.

#. To date I have received one letter from Dad (April) and one letter from Mother (~~late~~ early in May-dated) and eight letters from my Flossie, the latest being dated May 18th. Jim just received a June 23rd letter from Aunt Grace and I am sure that Flossie wrote me since May 18th. A lot of mail just isn't getting through. On my side of the ledger – Four letters to you at various ports while en route and four postcards – also sent you 2 letters since reaching here. To Flossie 6 letters and some postcards while en route and eight letters since reaching here. Have also sent 2 letters to Edwin and 2 to J Hugg, one to little Johnny and many other postcards to friends and relatives. I gathered from Flossie's letters that she has heard very little from me. The fortunes of war, I guess. Some fellows here have received twenty five or thirty letters and some none. Some lads have letters now dated as late as June 25th and some have their latest mail bearing March dates. Just a matter of luck, I guess.

3

As you will realize, if this or any of my later letters have reached home, my journey here was more then over prolonged. It was some experience but the details will have to wait until I reach home again.

I'm now working out in the desert on a rig like Delano's, only brand new. It is pretty warm but we work under a top and that helps a great deal. The dust is really something and I wear those goggles you gave me, Dad, constantly while "skimming" I am getting a few good insights on equipment maintenance but of course cannot narrate them in a letter. We have had practically no overtime yet, however, eight hours can be a pretty tough day at times. We start work at dawn (4:30 P.M.) and are usually finished for the day at 1:30 P.M. We have an hour out for a supplementary breakfast 8 to 9 A.M.

The job in many respects to date has been a disappointment but time may change many things and I have only been here a couple of weeks now. The living quarters are fairly comfortable although hot and the food is satisfactory and pretty well balanced for the climate.

4

I certainly think of you all at home very often and wonder how the war is now affecting your life. I suppose Eddy is an old "died in the wool" blade man now. How is all your work coming along now, Dad? It seems so long since I left you all but there are still many months ahead to go. Johnny is probably talking like the dickens now. Give my best love to Estelle, John and Johnny and Eddy. I have sent them all cards or letters but probably they never reached there.

I have made many new friends here and time doesn't drag as much as it might. Of course there are many hours when thoughts drift homeward and a real feeling of homesickness comes. I certainly miss Flossie. The thought that always helps is the mental pictures of my final return. I have learned to appreciate many many things about the U.S.A. and home that I used to take for granted before. We also went through so many hardships while en route that now it takes a real "down to earth" hardship to faze us at all. By the way I have learned to eat carrots and ham but still can't quite go beets. We have gazelle meat often and some, I swear, is camel.

5

You'll probably think my penmanship is certainly getting poorer and poorer but the writing conditions are not exactly ideal here. I must write ~~on~~ using my knees as a table and must have a fairly thick towel under my hand so that the everpresent sweat doesn't soak through the paper.

Yesterday we had one of our bi-weekly dust storms and the native houseboys are gradually getting the barracks cleaned up. The fine brown dust seeps through any small crack and drifts up like brown snow on the barracks floor. Working out in a dust storm is really a nightmare and they usually knock off when the visibility drops down to 15 feet or so.

Give my regards to Jack Caesar, Smitty, Dick, Pete, Joe Mennone and the rest of the boys I know on the job. If the chance presents itself send me some of the dope about the jobs, Dad.

I think of you constantly, Mother and Dad and all the rest of you at home. God bless you all and keep you well. Give my best love to my Flossie and write as often as you can find the time.

Love – Fred

FREDERICK M. ARNOLT

A.P.O. 816

August 9, 1942

New Camp

Dear Mother and Dad,

It has been a little while since I sent off my last letter to you but I have been very busy and find it difficult to unearthen time to write. I've managed to get one or two letters off to Flossie every week so you'll all be fairly well posted on what I'm doing now. I also sent Estelle a letter about two weeks ago. I certainly hope she receives it. I had a very nice letter from her with two pictures of cute little Johnny.

As I mentioned in my last letter I am now in a brand new camp just being started up here on a river in the wilderness. Jimmy has received a promotion as I mentioned and is now project manager here at this camp. He wangled my transfer ~~and~~ so Here I am and I sure am glad to be here in preference to the last camp out in the barrens where I spent a few weeks. We are still in a hot section here. Today the temperature is 124° in the shade but it does cool off a little at night and as the country is more rolling and has

2

Some green foliage, it is more pleasing than the desert. As I spoke of in my last letter, this is a hunters paradise. There are large fat sand grouse by the thousands also quail, chukar partridge (or a similar bird), black pheasant, doves, big wild pigeons, plover, wild ducks, gazelle (by the hundreds), wild boar and of course jackals, hyenas, fox, wildcat, huge vultures, and eagles and many other birds and small animals. The river is full of fish but as near as I can discover they are all some species of carp. We haven't bothered with them as they don't take on hook and line. Of course we have no shotgun. All I have is an old Enfield 303 and a few shells which is "ok" for gazelles and boar but not much good on all the various game birds. What I'd give for my 20 gauge now and a bunch of shells ---.

For an indefinite temporary period we are on a 10 hour day, 7 day week. Because of the midday heat we work a split shift – 6 A.M. to 12 and 3 P.M. to 7 P.M.. This doesn't seem to leave much time for anything but working, eating and sleeping but it's all right with me as the days pass very very quickly. I feel fine despite my ten hours every day out

3

In that extreme heat on a "cat". I believe I must be building up my stamina a little or the heat just agrees with me.

We are living here in Bombay tents (double roof) and have wood floors raised 3' off the ground. They are all screened in (Some of Jimmy's good ideas) and are very comfortable. Ordinarily there are four to a tent but I'm in with Jimmy and he has a safe, table, tool chest etc. in this tent so there are only our two beds. We have a native boy, of course, to take care of the tent and washing etc.

I have been skimming a "cat" with L.T. rope blade almost exclusively. Was on a new "8" and am now skimming a new "6" which we bought up here to clear the new camp site but which is now doing some

real heavy work of 08 caliber. I'm getting fairly adept in the use of the rope blade and now am confirmed to its general superiority over the hydraulics. Live and learn.

August 11, 1942

Seems difficult finding time to write now. Either I'm out working or I'm too tired to write, it seems. I'm taking it easy this afternoon and doing just 6 hours today as I felt a little overtired and thought it best to slow up a bit. I get paid for 8 hours anyhow.

4

Although I'm very anxious to get all the overtime I can to help pay for my own "home in Metuchen" that Flossie and I talked about so much I'll have to be a little careful since an hour here on a "cat" in this intense heat and dust is equivalent to about three summer time hours home on a "cat" job. Ten hours here is really a tough day even with a three hour rest in the middle of the day. I'm saving and scrimping all the money I'll collect here so I'll have that much more on my return. Of course I'll want to get a few souvineers – rugs, etc. They say about money – "easy come – easy go." Well this money is certainly "hard come" and it shall be treated accordingly.

Our life here is actually full of romance and potential adventure but we are so busy that not often does it occur to us to stop and reflect over the color in it all. Jimmy has created very friendly relations here with the Arab tribes (He has certainly admirable temperament and qualities for this job here – believe me.) And therefore the four most powerful Shieks (Shakes) in this area are "brothers" with him. Shiek Zemel, the most respected and powerful Shiek has sent his twelve sons to camp here to be Jimmy's sons. They are to protect him and the rest

5

Of the Americans with their lives. We also have twenty or more fierce Arab guards around the camp. Sardar, one of "Jimmy's sons" is head guard. His brother, Cooki, who was ordered here by his father, Shiek Zemel, is one of the most feared bandits in this section of the country. He is rather fierce looking but very friendly to us all. This is quite an experience.

Had a laugh a few minutes ago. One of the brothers of Shiek Ahmed bought his horse here with a lame leg and asked for the doctor. So in order to keep diplomatic relations running smoothly, Lucky our first aid man, smeared some salve on the horse's leg and bandaged it up and after much "salaaming" etc. the Arab took his bandaged horse down the road proudly. Poor Lucky! I have a sneaking hunch that this is just the beginning.

At night our guards sit around on the little hilltops surrounding the camp. They whistle to each other at frequent intervals and between their whistles and the noises from hyenas, jackals, wildcats and night birds there is much to occupy ones thoughts on a sleepless night – sleepless nights are few however. Well, best love to all of you. Write whenever possible.

Fred

(This was found on the reverse side of page 5)

Dear Adelaide,

Father wanted me to tell you how much we all enjoy Frederick's letter. His descriptions are wonderful. I'm thinks he writes so well. Father is fine and has completely recovered the use of his leg. Love to all,
Edith

FREDERICK M. ARNOLT

A.P.O. 816

August 11, 1942

New Camp

Dearest Sweetheart

This will just be a short little letter. I mailed a fairly lengthy one to you a day or so ago and just now finished one to my Mother and Dad. The long hours and hard hot work make me pretty tired at night and I seem to find little time to do much but work, eat and sleep. I'm not working this afternoon as I felt pretty overtired this morning. Just put in my six hour shift and rested this P.M. I want to get every cent of overtime pay I can but I guess I'll have to be a little careful as ten hours he on a "cat" in this intense heat and dust is a pretty rugged diet when it's mixed in with a seven day work week. As I mentioned before I'm scrimping and saving every cent I can and spending money just for my bare necessities. I want a real nest egg for a house etc. when I return home.

Jimmy received three letters from Aunt Grace yesterday. One was mailed less than a month ago. He gets more mail then anyone I ever saw. Aunt Grace must write every day and she must have a friend in the P.O. to get them through so quickly. She says Johnny Fisk married a girl in Denver, Colo. Things certainly change quickly in war time.

2

Your letter was mailed about the middle of May, Darling, but your telegram has eased my mind and I guess everything is "oke" with you all. I think the mailman has a grudge against me and must throw about half my letters out the plane window.

I'm losing my newly gained weight but I still feel fine. We are rapidly getting a pretty nice camp here. A lot nicer then any of the rest. Jimmy believes in comfort for the men and that means a lot in this country. I'm getting used to the queerly garbed (redacted) riding around the camp on horses and donkeys. We have many rather fierce looking (redacted) guarding our camp and as we have treated them very kindly and generously they would really protect us if we did have any kind of a raid – which is highly improbable.

I now see no reason why I can't stay here and work out my contract and at the same time stay healthy and make our financial future more secure. I'm getting plenty of experience in many ways and at times really enjoy it here – except that I miss you so much, Darling. Well I must take a nap. Bye for now – All my very best love.

Fred

August 21, 1942

New Camp

Dear Folks,

Well, your wayward son is finally getting around to writing to you. I have received quite a few very nice letters in the last few days – several from my Flossie and one from Mother (July 24, Eddy (July 28) and one from Stellie (July 22) Its a real thrill to hear from you all and wish I had time to write all of you more often but as I am now working a 70 hour week out on a “cat” in the hot dusty prairie it seems I do nothing but work, eat and sleep. At least the days are flying by for me and that’s a big help.

I’m well and very interested in my work. I sweated off my newly gained weight is short order and am now about down to my normal poundage. Jimmy, who is running things up here, is also well. He’s doing a fine job and we are now living very comfortably here I sht new camp.

I was interested to hear that John hopes to get a commission. Certainly wish him all the luck in the world. He has fine training and experience or the job he is trying to get. The little incidents about little Johnny mean much to me. I wondered if the cute little tyke still remembers me. I’ll hardly know him when I finally return home.

2

Give Chet, Thelma and Janet my very best wishes. I’ll try to write them but can’t promise how soon it will be. Nice that Eddy could take over my old “carrimor.” Hope he treats the old girl well. Her former master has about forsaken her for a (redacted).

Naturally I can’t get much information about my work past the censor. At present I am operating a (redacted) what I am told, is a vital piece of work. I’ve been working by myself and acting as my own foreman and engineer. To date about 15 mi. have gone by and I have been complimented on my “artistic” work and speed by the Field Engineer and Army Major in charge. I’m working as hard as I can and am hoping to get a promotion before the job is done and I return home again. Time will tell.

I’m glad to hear that you are finishing your job on scedhule, Dad. That is damn fine work in such a short time. I wonder if you have more work now or not.

Certainly was surprised to hear what Flossie was doing. War sure changes things. I think the work will be good for her as it will help to pass the weeks by quicker.

Give all the gang on the job my best regards. Tell them we’re really putting out over here now and I’m learning more every day. I’ll write a longer letter soon.

All my best love to you all – Fred

August 28, 1942

New Camp

Dearest Sweetheart,

Still working here, feeling pretty well and living in a new camp with Jimmy. Jimmy just received two letters today from Aunt Grace (very recent – Aug 7 and Aug 11) One which she says you all are fine at home. Says that you are slimming down to pre-wedding form and that you are missing your hubby. Your hubby sure misses you, Darling. I have enclosed two –not very good – snapshots of myself taken here in camp about a week ago. I'll enclose duplicates in another letter in case this one fails to reach you. You'll probably think I was lying about my 182 lbs but I really did tip the scales at that when I first arrived. The hard work and heat just cut me down to a slim figure of my former self but I expect to get fat again this winter.

I'm on the track of a shotgun which some of the (redacted) near here have. Its supposed to be new so they probably stole it somewhere. They only have a few shells but I'm hoping to get more shells from another source. Hoping. Today I worked near some rice fields and saw hundreds of ducks. Through my interpreter I learned that in about a month and a half thousands of ducks arrive from the north so if I can only get gun and shells I'll have the most wonderful

2

Duck shooting imaginable. The ducks (Pintail, widgeon & teal) are quite tame and can be approached in range fairly easily but of course with a little shooting will become some wilder.

Received a nice letter from John Huegg dated August 3. He said that the duck season home had been lengthened to seventy days Wow! However I'll have my real dream duck hunting here if things turn out right. The defense bond I mentioned in my last letter will have to wait for awhile. Any shotgun I can locate here will probably cost me about 3000 (redacted) or close to \$100.00 and shells about 30¢ a piece no doubt. Expensive, but damned if I don't get some fun out of this tough job, somehow.

I find my work very interesting. I'm working through interesting country compared to the rest of the job and are pretty well on my own. Have an interpreter with me all the time now to help me in my dealings with the natives and of course carry a rifle at all times on the job. Now have one other (redacted) ~~and~~ on #12 (redacted) and also an oiler with me.

Darling, I think of you often during my waking hours. If I only had the time and wakefulness I would try and write you every day but this long

3

Work week makes writing a real problem and you must forgive me if my letters seem hurried or short from now on.

Our camp is rapidly approaching real comfort. We now have electric lights and refrigeration. I'm either working, sleeping, eating or swimming so I don't get much time to use the recreation facilities. I have indulged in a few games of ping pong since we got our recreation room up and equipped.

I guess you're working mighty hard now yourself and find little time for recreation. We'll certainly take some time off for fun when I get back again.

You have to be a real diplomat when it becomes necessary to run the "(redacted)" etc through some native Shiek's rice fields or irrigated corn fields. There are times when I wonder whether they are debating how to dispose of me and the "cat" in the easiest manner. However, now I am no longer alone and most of the tribes are friendly so it generally turns out "oke" with all parties satisfied.

Well, Honey, this isn't much of a letter but I'm pretty short on time now since I have to go on a reconeseans [spelling wrong inserted over word] tour with Jimmy. Love to our folks, Dearest, and all my very best loe to you – always,

Dream of me and I'll dream of you.

Your own (?) - - F (?)

F.M. Arnolt

A.P.O. 816

(Care of Postmaster, Miami, Fla.)

Foley Bros. & Spencer, White &)

(Prentis.)

Dear Mother and Dad,

I received an August letter from each of you a few days back as well as two from Stellie. Enjoyed every word of them I am still well and happy. Our new camp is rapidly becoming completed and although the personnel here is still very small we have many conveniences and comforts such as running water, electric lights, ice cold water and soft drinks as well as beer, very comfortable sleeping quarters with soft beds and clean linen twice a week, and a cook that has no equal elsewhere on this project. The small group of fellows here are all congenial companions and we agree 100% that this is the best damn camp in the outfit. We also do more work per man than any other camp. Sounds pretty conceited but we don't lack competitive spirit and camp loyalty. Jimmy is doing a fine job here and our camp, as well as some of the individual workers in it, have received many compliments from our head man and the Army officers in charge of this project.

My life here is full of interesting incidents. Many would not bear retelling in a letter that must pass by the censor. Still are on a 10 hr. day, seven day week and time is flying by for me. Seems like I just get up and it's time to go to bed again. I have been seeing much of some of the local Shieks and Khans here in line of business and naturally have many interesting experiences. Have eaten with some of them in the real Arab and Lourie (Kurd) style. Also have been on several lengthy horseback rides with some of them looking over their property where our work crosses same. I like the Arabs better than I do the nomad Iranians (I meet few of the better class Iranians out here). The Arabs seem to be cleaner and have more racial pride than the Iranian nomads. All these nomad tribes here specialize in thieving and banditry but the (redacted) run more to the sneak thief style while the average Arab is more of a rough and ready gun and knife toting bandit. The only exception is the Lourie (an (redacted) nomad tribe). These are the famous Kurd bandits and I count a few of these my friends here, although there are not many in this section. Onem with whom I have had a few meals and visits, is (redacted). He has some of the finest horses I have ever seen (I imagine he stole many of them). Most of the tribes here are friendly with the Americans and we have little trouble with the local bandits. Some brigands come here from other sections and give us a few sleepless nights. Our Arab guards have always managed to drive them away but fifteen or twenty shots in the middle of the night doesn't make for good sleeping. I carry an Army 45 at all hours of the day and sleep with it under my pillow at night but up until now have been able to file no notches in the stock. Very disappointing! Life here is not exactly dull and I'm afraid, in some respects, I actually enjoy it.

Since I first came up to this new camp with Jimmy I have been very fortunate in the character of the work I was given to do. All the jobs I've had were very interesting and they took me over much of the country hereabouts. The work has been of such a type that a fellow could really make a showing if he

took a little pains. I have done my very best and have been congratulated by some of the officers in charge whose compliments really count for something. Although promotions and raises in pay are very slow and in coming over here, I have hopes that I may achieve a higher rating before my time is up. However, time will tell. I feel that the experience I have had here is worth more than the money. I really mean that. I have a good deal more confidence in myself now and although the I went through some darn tough times, especially on the trip over, I think that the move I made in coming over here was the very best thing I could have done and that would still hold true if my pay was one quarter the amount it is.

(2)

I have not been able to get my hands on a shotgun yet although I have a deal pending with one of the Sheiks that I feel sure will result in my having a 12 gauge double and sixty six shells. This is a shotgun hunter's paradise and I just have to get in a little duck and black pheasant shooting before the fall passes by. We have gazelle about twice a week and it's mighty delicious, believe me. Just go out at night and get them with a rifle. Jimmy saw two lions near here a little while back. Leopards are fairly common in the thickets but lions are almost extinct and so of course we would not shoot at them if we could. At night one hears the "walwis" (wal-wees) howling to the moon and a nocturnal ride in a jeep cross country will scare up wild boar, gazelle, jackals, hyenas, and occasionally large gray wolves. We haven't bothered much with the fish here in the river. They seem to all be a species of carp and we thought we would wait until the weather gets cooler before trying to trap or seine them. One of the lads here is a humorous tall lanky Arkansas hill billy and he is always rigging up crazy fish trap contraptions etc. (now he is starting to make a seine out of mason line) Another of my buddies is a cow puncher from Oregon and another a California ex cow puncher who is a real horseman and darn good gazelle hunter. We also have lads from New York City, New Jersey, (Palmyra), Connecticut, Washington (State), Oklahoma and Kansas. Old Arkansas Slim has promised to take me to the "best damn duck shooting spot in the world down on the old Mississippi in southern Arkansas" and I'm sure going to hold him to that promise when we all return.

My letters may not come as often now because I have so little time. Occasionally we kind of ease up a little for one day. You really have to with a seven day week. Then I am not quite as tired and I can sit down and write a halfway decent letter. I'm using a swell new Royal portable that has been issued to Jimmy and find it less tiring than handwriting. Jolliffe is still at another camp but he gets up here every Sunday night and the three of us have a good visit. Jolliffe looks extra well and can truthfully say that the country agrees with him. Of course I have slimmed down considerably with the long hours but I have only lost a day and a half because of illness and that was just heat exhaustion. Now that we have all the facilities here our living conditions are excellent (especially our food).

I am not so busy that I do not think of you all at home often and wonder what you are all doing. It was nice that you were able to get up to Essex for Grandma's 85th birthday, Mother. I'm glad to hear that he has been standing up well. Sarah must have been quite a surprise to you all. It is nice that she turned out to be such a nice girl. Estelle sent me three cute pictures of little Johnny in her last letter. I enjoyed having them and hope she will continue to send a few additional ones as the months roll by. When you find time, Dad, let me know what you are doing now that the big job is closing up. Is war time construction still booming or has a lull started in construction work? I guess you must have done a fine job there at Raritan from what I can piece out in yours and Eddy's letters. I would have liked to have

been on a job that size with you but perhaps when I return there will be other large jobs that I can be with you on.

Time for my nightly rounds and inspection of the camp guards so I will close. My best love to you all and to my Flossie. I miss you very much but know that it will not be so many months before we all together again.

Fred

FREDERICK M. ARNOLT

A.P.O. 816

September 22, 1942

Dearest Sweetheart,

I received your letter of August 20th as well as Lorraine's of about the same date, a week ago but this is the very first chance I have had to answer. Please forgive my tardiness, Darling. I've just been so darned busy. I'm still working out of the new camp but am no longer running a cat. For about two weeks now I have been acting as a road foreman and another man has taken over my machine. A requisition for my reclassification and the corresponding change in rate has been filed but those things move slowly and it may be another week or more before it comes through. I've made good so far, Honey, and it hasn't been through drag. The Major in charge recomnded me and it wasn't because he liked my looks. (How could he?) So I have been pretty busy at my new work and in addition, Jimmy has been away from camp for several days on business and I have been Acting Camp Manager – spare time is hard to find.

Our new camp is a honey. The best, by far, in the entire outfit. Although we do not have many luxuries we do have comfortable sleeping quarters and good food and some recreation facilities. The days still continue pretty hot but the temperatures are much lower then they were – about 100 to 110 now instead of 130 to 140. At night it becomes very much cooler and after midnight one actually has to use a blanket. We have a dandy Old Town outboard runabout in the river but don't have any motor yet so we can't take any cruises. The recreation hall has ping pong table, library, radio-phonograph, dart games, checkers and cards etc., and we have a badminton set and outside court but it is still too hot to use it much. Five of the fellows have bought horses and I have some here which the company has rented for the use of engineers and foreman etc. so there is plenty of chance to ride. I have to ride occasionalu on business but still prefer a jeep. With horses, a pet goat, puppy, pet baboon, chickens and other miscellaneous items we now have quite a menagerie here, but I forget, Sweetheart, - you don't care much for animals etc.

Believe it or not, I still hav'nt gotten a shotgun and now the possibility looks pretty vague. I just have to watch all those wild ducks and pheasants and suffer in silence. It is fortunate that I have so little spare time to worry about hunting. I do some gazelle hunting and find it good sport but not like ducking. Recently we have seen a few leopards and two lions but have not tried to bag any. The huge white storks, for which these lands are famous, are now coming down into this section and are numerous all along the prairie. Have also seen a few wild geese and flamingos.

Have had increased dealings with the Shieks and Khans in this section since Jommy has been away and have many interesting visits with them. Can almost enjoy one of their dinners now. Some of them have had interesting lives and they are a real source of information about war possibilities in this section (after they finally accept one as a confidant) Perhaps their friendship will mean much to me some of these days. Never can tell.

(2)

Jimmy, Jollife and I are still well. I have not been as tired nights since I stopped pushing a cat around. There are little things that keep a fellow from feeling his best here in this country but considering

everything, I really can't kick. However, Darling, have no fear that I'm not anxious to get home. The sooner I can get back to you the better I'll like it. You will be tickled to hear that, due to our unnecessarily overprolonged trip to the job site, they have removed from the time (nine months) that our contract calls for on the site work all the time over two months that it took us to get here. In other words, Sweetheart, my contract will expire about the fifteenth of February. Please don't get your hopes up, Darling, too much. Remember that the war will have a great effect on what I can, or will be able to do, in regard to coming home. You may rest assured that, no matter how well I do or don't do in my work over here, ~~that~~ I will not stay one day longer than I positively have to in order to satisfy Uncle Sam. I would certainly, far rather, be home working the I would here but since I am here and the government can use my service to good advantage to help win the war I can't quit completely at the end of my contract but must consider the conditions prevailing at that time. I hope that the war will have reached a stage, by the coming of spring, so that I can return home without having to quit. And as for signing another contract, Honey, - I won't sign one for any such period of time as this one covers. You can depend on that.

October 3, your birthday, and I have nothing suitable to send to you nor no way to get anything. In addition they advise us that parcel post to the States is most uncertain. All I can say is that you must get yourself something very nice and think of it as coming from me with all my heart. I hope, on my return, to bring some things for you that will be worth while but at present am unable to do much. I have plenty of money (too much to have in hand, actually – about \$550.) and intend to send either a money order or defense bond as soon as I get the opportunity. I'll probably need plenty of money to pay my ~~ine~~ income tax for this year and so had better send a money order – then again, I guess the defense bonds are tax exempt. You know, Darling, we are really in the wilderness here and have little chance to get where we can buy money orders, bonds, souvineers or anything else.

Sweetheart, I think of you constantly no matter how busy I am. You are dearer to me than anything else in the world and you can be positive that the thought is always in my mind to get home to you at the very first opportunity. I'm trying to make the best of it here and trying to see some pleasure and good out of all of this but don't ever think that this is a "hell of a lark for me" and that I am having so much fun that I don't think often about getting home cause, Honey, this is just all a bad dream and some day in the not too distant future you and I will awake in the morning and find ourselves in each other's arms.

All my very best love to you, forever, Darling.

Your own Hubby.

Freddie

FM Arnolt

A.P.O. 816

September 30, 1942

Camp

Dearest Sweetheart,

Practically October all ready. I wanted to send you a cable for your birthday but the military have clamped new restrictions on the sending of personal cables for the time being. I certainly wish I could be with you, Darling, but the miles are too many. Has been some time since I received any letters from Home. I had one dated August 28th from Estelle in the last two or three weeks and that's about all. Even Jimmy has'nt done so well, having received only about two in that period. I guess the mails are being held up from some sections although some of the lads have been getting quite a slew of letters every once in awhile.

Your far-from-home straying Hubby is still healthy and working hard and is missing you more every day. When my contract expires in February I may sign up for two or three months so as to get home in the spring or early summer but unless it means getting a real black mark as a slacker that will be all the time I will sign up for on work in this country. There are many other big defense jobs under way nearer to home where my services would be just as valuable and I would like to come home for at least a short period and then, if the war is still more or less in it's present stage, get on a job nearer to home. Of course I might get in the army too but at least I would be home with you for a short period. (heavily crossed out word) Getting in the army doesn't worry me much anyhow. I'm practically in the army now and, although there is considerable difference financially, it would probably be little different from this. Might even be in a decent country for a little while, (heavily crossed out word). Money doesn't mean as much to me as it once did although I naturally know it is darn important.

As I mentioned in a previous letter I am no longer operating a machine. Have not done so for almost a month now. My official reclassification as a road foreman (general) is supposed to have gone through but I have not as yet received official notification to that effect. The new rate will be forty cents more an hour and will probably be retroactive for a week or so as I have been acting as foreman for some time. It will ba a month or maybe two before you notice any difference in the checks due to the natural delay in getting records to the home office but of course, being retroactive, you should receive a large sum all at once when my reclassification record finally hits the home office. I'll notice it in my overtime pay at once. They say, "don't count those chickens ---" you know, but, since I was told by the big boss, himself, that everything was going through, I just had to tell you all about it at once, Sweetheart,

The fly and mosquito season has just started here and, believe me, they're thick. During the daytime there are millions of flies in the air. They particularly delight in crawling all over your face and buzzing in your ears and eyes. Pleasant - . It is cooler now and if it were'nt for the damn flies wouldn't be too bad. The first drops of rain (just a very tiny sprinkle) that I have seen in many months, in fact since leaving South Africa, fell day before yesterday. In fifteen or twenty days the real rains (and mud) are supposed to start. It will be cooler and the countryside greener and more pleasant but of course there will be plenty of mud and the damn flies and mosquitos are said to get much more numerous. What a country!

Bugs – Bugs * Bugs !

(2)

Well, Darling, your duck hunting fanatic Hubby is going to get even with some of these Ir..... ducks before this fall is over. A friend here happened to get to a certain big city in another country near here and came back with 150 new American 12 gauge shotgun shells and a new single barreled shotgun. I'll be able to borrow his gun and buy some of the shells and get in a little duck and pheasant shooting after all. (The shells cost \$6.00 per box --- at home - \$1.00) We have also discovered a source for rifle bullets (30¢ a piece) and now can do all the shooting we can afford. We have several horses around camp and I will soon be using them frequently for work and for hunting, I guess.

I hope you are all well there at home. I become more and more homesick every week despite an interesting job and am convincing myself surer and surer that the one thing I want the most is to get home to you as soon as I can. If this country were fit to live in I might feel a little different even though I miss you terribly, but this land is not a fit place for a New Jerseyite like me to try and live in. It takes a great deal of one's energy just trying to keep from getting sick and as near as I can figure out gives no benefit at all to a fellow, physicaly. I don't mean that I won't be worth a darn to you when I finally do reach home, cause, Baby, I'll sure try (or die, trying) but I'm afraid I can't promise you too much until I spend about a month resting up in the cool clean mountains in Maine or some similar place.

Jollife is soon to be up here with us and then we will have quite a representation from New Jersey. There will be eight in camp from out State. One of the lads, Hank Osborne, has a girl in the Pru – Jean Dobbins. I am still separated from my California buddy, Jim Ausmus, but am now pulling all the strings I can to get him up here with me. Jollife is apt to get a pretty nice job up here with Jim and I. but we'll know more about that at a later date.

Still getting along all right on your job, Honey? Is my Dad doing much work now? Hope all our loved ones are well and happy. You know, Sweetheart, if we ever get a slack period here I am surely going to feel the pangs of homesickness (and lovesickness too, for you, Darling). It is only the fact that I am now so darn busy that helps me to pass over those blue moments. Hope I stay just as busy until my contract expires and I can return home. Time is really moving along quickly. A ten hour day – seven day week tends to that.

Am still having many interesting experiences with the local Shieks and Khans. They write me notes occasionally, in Arabic and Persian, which I am saving to bring home. They all call me Mr. Fredi and address me that way with great formality. Forgive the punk typing – just tired.

Remember me to all the folks, Darling. I couldn't do or send you anything for your birthday. All I can do is tell you how much I love you and miss you, Sweetheart and believe me, that's sure a-plenty!

Your very own, always –

Freddie

F.M. Arnolt

A.P.O. 816

October 2, 1942

Camp

Dear Folks,

Dad's lengthy and very interesting letter of September 6th just arrived in camp today. The Metuchen letters are now coming through quite speedily. They are rarely more than twenty or thirty days old and that is pretty good in these times and under the conditions now prevailing. My Flossie's letters all seem to be held up in the Newark censor's office and usually arrive about one month later than do yours. Many of hers do not arrive at all and I think it would be much better if she mailed all her letters to you in a separate envelope and let you mail them there in town. Jimmy's mail also comes through in speedy order. I guess that is probably true of most of the small town mail.

I especially enjoyed your many interesting statements about the job and the equipment. (Nothing was censored out) That was a very unfortunate accident for McCabe. I hope he recovers as quickly as possible. It is mighty tough to be layed up in a hospital when you are used to being out on the job. One little statement in your letter, Dad, caused me much speculation: that remark Mr. Preen was still dickering to buy out Utility. I naturally knew nothing of this and as I realise that it might change your status, possibly to the better, it interested me much. Will be very interested to hear if anything came of it eventually. Give Rich St John, Johnny Onders, Dick and Pete, Joe Mennone, Hap Vandewater and all the other men that I worked with my very best wishes. They are doing just as much for the country as we are doing over here except that the scene of operations is further removed.

Your Son has received a nice promotion although he is still awaiting official notification of the reclassification and corresponding higher rate of pay. (Forty cents an hour increase). The notification will probably be retroactive to a certain extent as I have been acting in my new capacity for some time. I am general road foreman now and instead of operating the machines teach others to do so and direct the machines (several) in the work. We have much new machinery over here now, (I can not give any detail naturally) but they are all machines with which I have had considerable experience. The machinery is more or less standardized (heavy redaction). There are many (heavy redaction) A great percentage of the work here is the same type I have been doing for the last three or four years and therefore is right up my alley. There seem to be many men over here that lack experience in the common sense way to do work of this type. I suppose this sounds like Monday morning quarterbacking but if you and Dick and Pete and some of the other boys were over here they could make a large percentage of the gang over here look silly. I feel that I am gaining much in experience here day by day in many ways. I have to deal with Sheikhs, Kahns, bandits, thieves, spongers, dyed in the woll draft dodgers, no nothings and some real swell regular fellows. The conditions here are really making me appreciate the good old U.S.A. more and more every day. Our country is certainly worth fighting for despite guys like Frank Hague and the other racketeers.

I and Jimmy and Jolly are still well. I have lost considerable weight but that was to be expected in the extreme heat and under the long working hours. I feel better now that I am no longer banging around on a cat. And I'm positive that my "skinning" days are over for good. If I can't make good in what I am

doing now, I'll take up silk stocking salesmanship or some similar line. Will write again soon. Love to you all, always.

Fred.

F.M. ARNOLT

A.P.O. 680

October 18, 1942

7 P.M.

Dear Folks,

As I am starting to write this we are experiencing our first rain; a heavy thundershower – lightning and all. Everyone is quite excited. I haven't seen a drop of rain since leaving South Africa over four months ago. The damp air feels fine and smells very fresh after all these dusty weeks.

I'm well and still working hard on my new job as road foreman. We are still on a ten hour day – seven day week basis and it seems very likely that we will go on a twelve hour day shortly. There is no use in writing any detail about my work as the censor will just cut it out but I guess I can say that our job is coming along fine – is of much military importance and I think and feel that I am surely doing "my Bit" even though I am receiving excellent financial compensation. My new rate of pay is of course very nice and all this overtime builds up quickly, however, the few things I do purchase here aside from rugs sure are expensive.

Jimmy and Jollife are both well and doing fine work. Jolly has been re rated as a mechanic and of course Jimmy and I have been re-rated so the N.J. lads are n't doing so bad over here. Jimmy, Jolly and I all have the same tent and all have a few rugs around so we have a comfortable living place. The camp has, of course, increased greatly in size and is no longer

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The exclusive little layout it once was, however, most of the lads are nice fellows and things run along harmoniously. The peace and quiet is no longer as we are running two shifts a day and the camp is bustling most of the time.

The mail man has been treating me poorly in the last few weeks especially in regard to letters from my Flossie. I have had a few letters from you and Stellie but my latest letter from my Sweetheart was mailed by her on August 15th, two months ago. I hope she is well. I suppose many of her letters are laying in the Newark censor's office. Several large batches of mail have come in lately but Freddie has n't been the lucky one.

Have been too busy lately to do much visiting although Jimmy and I did have a regular feast at Shiek Khalef El. Haida's, one of our most influential and respected neighbors. Although the meal was cooked in Arab fashion it was really tasty and I can truthfully say that I enjoyed it. I have managed to get shotgun shells (Winchester – 12 ga.) but have no shotgun of my own yet. One of the Army officers has one I can borrow but I hope to get one of my own. Last one I looked at (an old 12 ga. German double) was 4000 Rials or about \$130.00 (not for me!)

Best love to you all and write whenever you can – Fred

October 22, 1942

Dearest Sweetheart,

Had a very pleasant surprise today. My trunk finally arrived and I was one of the lucky ones – the contents were intact. This is really a swell break. The weather is now beginning to get cooler and we now have occasional rains. They say it gets quite damp and chilly here later on and my heavy clothes will really be welcome. My trunk came quite a roundabout way and has touched several countries that I didn't see. I feel pretty elated.

Although we have some pretty hot middays still, it usually cools off considerably at night and we now sleep under blankets. We have had some real thunderstorms and several gales and rain squalls. We had a terrific windstorm the other night and I was almost as certain as my name is Fred that our tent was going to blow away, however, she stayed with us that time.

Jolly is unpacking his trunk and believe me if he runs out of soap it will surely be a miracle. He has about fifty bars stacked around the floor. Soap is a bit scarce here at times but I have a pretty fair supply stocked up. Wish I could pick up the clothes in the bottom of my trunk and see my 20 gauge with some shells lying there. I could just as well have brought

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It along as our luggage was never examined. Guess you're getting tired of hearing about that "damn shotgun", Sweetheart. I suppose it's getting to be an obsession with me now but I surely do miss it. As I mentioned in my letter yesterday, the only shotgun that I have actually has my hands on would have cost me about \$130.00 and I just felt I might be able to do better than that some how. Maybe I'll wish I had bought it but when I began to think what a swell shotgun I could buy back home for that much money, I didn't feel like going it. The gun was an old German 12 ga. Double in fair shape. Far from new but still not old enough to be a real fine gun.

Jimmy and Jolly are still well and working hard. The change in weather has pepped us all up considerably and if it hadn't given me such a bad case of the "old duck hunter's itch" I'd be in pretty fair shape. I need a haircut but aside from that I'm just your same skinny old Freddie. About the only improvement I can relate is the possible loss of some of my pessimism. That went by the wayside in the past few months. Of course it should have as everything has been for the best so far.

2-A

October 25 – 42

Sweetheart, I surely do miss you. Many many times I say to myself "the hell with this whole lay out. I'll start for home when my contract is up regardless of the conditions". Then I think of the thousands of other young fellows who are just as far from their loved ones and in a much less desirable situation than I am and I realise that I must stay here as long as they need me here. When they decide that my services are no longer of any value towards the ultimate defeat of that louse, Hitler, I'll be on my way to your arms as quickly as I can. There are frequent nights now when I lie in bed wishing you were alongside me, Darling. Believe me I could certainly go for a little of that huggin, "squeezing" and general "stuff". I was as certain as day and night that I love you more than anything else in the world so I can't say that I'm more certain now because, Sweetheart, that wouldn't be possible. I crave your lovin' etc. so much that,

if, by some miracle, you were suddenly in my arms I'd probably give a fair imitation of a male nymphomaniac on his wedding night. May be I'm talking over my head, Honey. I might be a fizzle but I'd sure try!

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I love you. It's so darn unsatisfactory to sit here and say I love you and miss you, Honey. If I could just get you in bed you'd see what I mean. I need your lovin' and kissing but I suppose I'll have to be satisfied with telling you about it for awhile. The weeks are not dragging along for me, Sweetheart, and I hope they are moving quickly for you. Before we know it I'll be able to demonstrate (at least a little) of what I tell you (?) now.

I have another "hot tip" on a s_____ (I won't say it.) May be in my next letter I'll tell you about a duck hunting trip and may be it will turn out to be another false alarm and I'll just go ahead and "blow my top" (a favorite expression over here).

I believe I'm going to gain some weight back now that cooler weather is on the way and now that I am not doing as heavy physical work. Our eats here are the envy of all the other camps in the outfit. We have the #1 cook. This makes for hearty eating so perhaps I can write you later on in the winter and tell you I'm back to 180 again. Hope so. Well, Sweetest Darling, give my love to our folks and keep a great big chunk for your own. Always your own Freddie.

P.S. If you want to send me something (my duck call and a good oen knife would be most welcome)

November 4, 1942

Dearest Sweetheart,

I just received your letter of October 9th, the first in quite some time. Sure was glad to hear from my Sweetheart, again. Evidently from the facts in your letter, you are still working. In your last letter you were not feeling too well and thought you might have to stop work. Hope you are feeling 100% again. Don't want my Darling to be sick. I'm still going along the same. We work every day – ten hours and I'm pretty weary when night comes but I haven't been sick. My reclassification as foreman went through officially on October 3. The weather is somewhat cooler now, especially in the morning and that pep's one up considerably. We have had a few rains but the real rainy season has not started yet.

Bear with me, Darling, for a few lines. As I told you in my last letter I bought a good 12 gauge double-barreled shotgun from a Shiek nearby. It cost me a king's ransom – 5,000 Rials or about \$150.- I have a few shells and have more coming. So far I have only shot about twenty ducks (Red Heads, Wedgeon and Teal) Naturally I have very little time to hunt right now and my limited supply of shells holds me down. This is a duck hunter's paradise. There are thousands of ducks and geese nearby and to make it more interesting there are about twenty different

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Species of ducks and two kinds of geese. Did you ever hear of the Black Flamingo (out in margin) not a game bird, Darling? There are hundreds here and they are a real beautiful sight as they fly gracefully over the rice fields in huge V formations. They're jet black in color and very graceful while in flight. Besides all the ducks and geese and upland game birds which I have described before in other letters, there are snipe, woodcock, yellowlegs, plover and many other shore birds of that type. I have seen about twelve different species of hawks. One is a beautiful robin's egg blue and has about a four foot wing spread (I think this bird is actually a falcon) There are huge vultures with wing spreads of about eight to ten feet and others smaller. Out on the desert there are now big "bustards". These are something like our wild turkeys. They look like a goose but have longer wings. They're extremely wary and I haven't bagged one yet nor any wild geese but I'm still trying.

Now, Sweetheart, lest you think I have forgotten – I would rather be home with you right now than in this hunter's paradise. I'll take my chance's on bagging a few "blacks" down at D.C. if I can come in at night and get a big hug and a kiss from you. I really miss you, Darling, and all the ducks in the world won't make me want to stay here any longer than I have to.

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Jimmy and Jolly are both well and doing fine and we are all together here. In future days to come we may have more spare time and will be able to get around the country and do things. Of course it's hard to say. We might have some other work to do right away – rain or no rain.

Wonder how the people at Newport are. I feel ashamed that I have n't written them but I've been so busy and so ready for sleep when night comes that I've written only to my Sweetheart and my family. Wish you would write them ^ the Luptons and tell them I hope they're all well and happy and explain to them why I haven't written them. I guess I owe a lot of letters, your Mother and Dad, the Hueggs, the Meserolls etc. but it just can't be helped.

Sorry I couldn't send you a birthday present, Darling, and I'm afraid that will go for Xmas too as we haven't been given any satisfactory assurance that parcel post will go through. You must do my Xmas shopping this year (nothing new) and get yourself something extra – special from you absent “extra special” boy friend. He really misses you and your “extra special” lovin and is counting the days until he'll be able to collect some of what is now due.

All my best love,

Freddie

F.M. ARNOLT

A.P.O. 680

November 10, 1942

Dear Folks,

Yesterday your far-straying son received a very nice letter from Mother (Oct 10) as well as one from Flossie. Enjoyed hearing from you very much but feel rather guilty that I have not written you more often. We are still working the long hours and full weeks but my work is now, of course, not as physically exhausting as it was when I was on a machine. In fact I would feel fairly fresh at night if it weren't for my extra-curricular activities – mainly – duck hunting. Well, I am now in a duck hunter's paradise, no kidding. I have my own private duck preserve containing about 100 acres of ducks and geese (about 10,000 ducks)> Also have a little duck boat there and to top it off, my work is there also. I usually slip out early in the morning after my gang has started in good shape and knock down four or five fat rice-fed mallards or pintail. These we barbeque for our lunch out on the job and they're mighty delicious. Sometimes I stay after work and gather a few for camp. Shot five mallard drakes, one mallard hen, and six widgeon tonight in about thirty minutes. Probably had 3 or 4 hundred ducks in range in that space of time but just picked out the ones I wanted.

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Dad, when the ducks and geese get up off my private swamp it looks like a dark cloud. When I say about 10,000 ducks, I really mean it. There are about twenty species. So far I have identified; mallards, pintail, black mallard (really), baldpate, widgeon, cinnamon teal, blue winged teal, bull necks, shoveler, broadbill, red heads and coot. There are a few strange species but they are all good ducks (rice and grain eaters) There are also two species of wild geese and wild swan. I have never seen any hunting like this even in these "Field and Stream" movies and this will be an experience I shall remember all the rest of my hunting days, believe me. As I mentioned before I was able to purchase, after weeks and weeks of searching, a good serviceable 12 gauge double (French make, hammerless with barrels modified and full). Have a few shells (#5 and #2) and more promised to me. I guess I better stop my raving but my mind is so full of duck hunting thoughts it's hard to keep it in. Some of my army officer friends kid me about being a game-foreman instead of a road foreman but as long as I get my work done they seem to be with me 100% on my duck hunting. I have various dates to take some of them out hunting and feel sure that I can show them

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Duck hunting far and above any they ever saw or heard about.

I'm still well as are Jimmy and Jolly. Jimmy has done and is doing an A #1 job of running this camp. Everyone likes him and he keeps things going smoothly and sees that the men are comfortable. Jolly is, of course, right in his own niche here now as mechanic and he is one of our best. I have a little project of my own and it is tangled up with rice fields and water so I'm in an element very satisfactory to me. Our head "men" (we have a few new bosses) are, generally speaking a pretty nice bunch and therefore all in all I am just about as happy as I could possibly be so far from home and my loved ones. Dick St. John always liked a water job and I guess I follow along in his footsteps in that respect – especially when

those ducks are around. Spend much of my day sloshing through mud and water like a Cumberland County marsh rat. Still ride back from the job in the dust. The real rainy season has n't started yet although we have heavy thunderstorms occasionally. Crocuses are popping up all over the hard baked prairie now – also little patches of fresh green grass. Another month and everything will be green and fresh.

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In looking back over my month here I see that everything has certainly turned for the best for me. I have much to be grateful for. This war has placed thousands of young fellows in very undesirable positions all over the world and I am very fortunate indeed to be in the spot I'm now in.

I'll certainly miss you all at Christmas. Wish I could send you all something extra nice from here for your presents but that can't be. Your Christmas package for me will be extra welcome no matter what it contains. It certainly was wise not to send anything expensive. Parcel post is not too sure now-a-days.

Flossie sent me a snapshot. She certainly looks fine, does n't she? Wish I could see her right now. So Stellie is semi-expectant. Hope things turn out right for her this time. Bet little Johnny is a cute tyke now. Suppose he talks like a house afire most of the time.

Time to retire. I'm up long before day light in the morning. Give my best wishes to all my working friends, Dad, and my friends in Metuchen and vicinity. Mother, Rich and Dick St John and you, Dad, would like it here now and we could certainly use men like you but I guess you are doing plenty of valuable work at home, now.

All my best love to you all – Fred

F.M. ARNOLT

A.P.O. 680

December 2, 1942

Dearest Sweetheart,

Received an extra nice spine-tingling letter from you today, also a nice letter from Grandad. I believe I have received almost everyone's Xmas cards now but as yet, none of the packages have arrived. They probably will however.

Haven't written as often as I should have in the last week or so. Since we started on the 12 hr. day there has been little time for anything but working, eating and sleeping. Have had no time for hunting in the last few days but in the past five weeks I bagged a total of 130 ducks, seven geese and some pheasant. Pretty fine hunting but very very expensive, I'm afraid. I've made a lot of overtime but have spent much (too much, I guess) shotgun and shells took considerable and I have purchased a few rugs. Guess I have about \$800 - saved up, some in American money orders and some in rials. Will send some home one of these days, but am not too anxious as I never know what will turn up and after my practically penniless 107 day trip to this place I want no repetition of that affair.

Still am not at all sure what the future has in store for me but believe in my own heart, that I will be on the way home to you, in the spring. Am not going to renew my contract. The men that leave here honorably will have many opportunities to go on other Army jobs when they reach home and, to tell the truth, Darling, I miss you so badly that I would rather have a month at home with you even if I had to go away again, then I would to stay on here for the duration. I feel now that I would just as soon go in the Army after reaching home as long as I could have a month or two with you and from all semi-official rumore, we would have that much grace time, at least. Your letters telling me of the reception awaiting me at the Penn. Etc. make me all the more eager to get home as soon as possible and there is no use kidding myself or my family or you, Sweetheart, I have been through a lot in the past months and am ready to get a vacation and especially am anxious, to be with you, so watch for me, Honey. 'cause I'll be on my way one of these months soon.

Certainly was glad to hear that you are feeling so fine, Sweetheart, and that you are not working such long hours. The money is unimportant. Just be in A-1 shape when

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I reach home and that will be my reward. I dream and think of you all the time, Honey. Even though I'm very busy and time goes quickly I have a tight craving feeling in my insides that only holding you in my arms can satisfy so it won't be too long now, Darling. Perhaps May or June. May be sooner. I sure hope so.

Letters seem so hard to write when there is so little I am allowed to say. From daylight until dark I am occupied with activities of which I can write nothing. At night I'm usually ready for bed. Some of the gang play poker etc. until the wee small hours but not your Freddie. He doesn't pass his overtime money over the table, he shoots it into the air in powder and smoke at "those damn ducks" (as you would say). Jimmy, Jolly and I are the original "early to bed early to rise" boys. Jollife is some exception though, as he works all kinds of hours. Jimmy and I call him "O.T." Jollife as his overtime hours are scandalous

(some times- 18 hrs. a day) He should have a pretty penny saved up in O.T. as he neither gambles or shoots his money into the air.

Sure will miss you on Xmas morning, Sweetheart. (Xmas Eve too – in fact especially!) Save that new nightgown for my home coming. Hope it's a "scandalous affair". If it isn't positively breath taking and spine – tingling, get one that is, if it costs \$50.00. I haven't been even semi-intimate with any women (white, black or tan) even in South Africa (where there were temptations by the score) since leaving you in the Penn Station many months ago. There's no use pretending, Darling. I want and need you ably but can wait a little longer. Just long enough to meet you in the Hotel Penn, Honey. Be prepared. I'll be.

I guess Jolly feels the same as I do (both young squirts yet) so he and I are counting the days although we aren't sure yet what day will be the last one.

This letter can hardly be called a narrative but there is little to narrate so I'll close up and get in my lonely bed and dream of you. All my love – always, Sweetheart

Freddie

F.M.ARNOLT

A.P.O. 680

December 8, 1942

Dearest Sweetheart,

Here I am again, safe and sound and loving and missing you more every day. We're all well here and still busy. Have gone off the long 12 hour day and are back on ten hours with some Sundays off. I had the past Sunday off but instead of sitting down and writing to about ten different people I went hunting. I should be ashamed, I guess, but I'm always grabbing every chance to hunt. Sunday I bagged 16 ducks, 2 pheasants and one desert cat (kind of a panther.) My total on ducks is now 187 and geese – 7.

The last two days have been rainy and chilly but this afternoon it cleared up. We are in a new tent now which is quite de luxe, having solid wood sides and sliding door and windows. We have our rugs hanging on the walls and covering the floor and with out little electric heater are prett it cleared up. We are in a new tent now which is quite de luxe, having solid wood sides and sliding door and windows. We have our rugs hanging on the walls and covering the floor and with out little electric heater are prett cozy. Your pretty picture adorns the door of my steel locker and Jolly (O.T. Jollife) has Dot's hanging on the wall so we are surrounded by luxurious carpets and exhibits of feminine pulchritude – just like a Shieks domicile only the "femmes" are not real flesh and blood. "Sheik" Fish is always getting "bakehish" fruits and nuts and once in awhile, native liquor so we do pretty well. If I could only hav you I would really be happy, Honey, I can't wait until we meet and are together. That first night – Zowie! I suppose I'll be useless, more or less. Just – "one second Freddie". That'll be me. But the way I feel now seems like I could love and love and love you. We'll see.

Now to get around to a little dry financial discussion. First of all, I have heard that we are still exempt from paying income tax on our wages earned overseas, which is something you won't have to worry about. Exemption covers wages earned overseas by persons who have been out of the U.S.A. six months or more and that's your Freddie. I don't have to pay any income tax on any of my salary earned on this project from the very first pay check. Now as to the amount due and payable in N.Y.C. to date (the amount paid to you) here's the dope.

From March 16/42 (first day on full pay) until October 3/42 there were 29 full pay weeks at #100.80 and for this period you should have received 29 checks @ \$90.80 (Of course I recd. The other \$10.00 here). From October 3/42 to Dec. 5/42 there were nine full pay weeks at new rate of \$120.00 and

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You should have received nine checks @ \$110.00, however, there may be quite a delay in this increase reaching the N.Y. office and therefore you will probably receive the regular checks for awhile and then some day, a check with all the back (increased) pay due. My new rate was officially retroactive to Oct. 5/42.

Mar. 15 – Oct 3 = 29 checks @ 90.80 = 2633.00

Oct 5 - Dec. 5 = 9 checks @ 110.00 = 990.00

Total due in N.Y. to Dec. 5 =\$3623.00

That's your end Darling. At this end your Hubby has made considerable overtime but has also spent a "hell of a lot" of money (in true Freddie fashion) some on necessities, some on rugs but plenty on shotgun and shotgun shells. At present I have about \$900.00 saved up and hope to come home with, at least \$1000 - in good old U.S. money orders.

Well, I guess that covers the financial picture fairly completely. Save all you can cause Hubby isn't doing too well. I know you are doing superbly, Sweetheart. We hear more and more rumors about our going home soon. Some men have left and others are leaving shortly. Of course my contract isn't up yet but they say a lot of fellows will be released before their contract expires. I know nothing, officially, about myself but have a very strong hunch that I'll be with you before our next wedding anniversary. I've done my bit here and am prepared to do more after I see my loved ones for a little while and in some other spot then this "corner of hell". It's pretty nice around here now with the cooler weather and the hunting etc. but I'll never forget that summer. Honey, it was a "bitch"! I don't want to go through another summer here. I made the past one all right but there were a lot of fellows that didn't do so well. I was lucky and I know it. A lot of men will never be the same after the heat here this past summer.

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Perhaps when I get home I'll get into something more unpleasant but I'll take that chance to get out of here before summer and to be with you, if only for a few weeks. Of course, you understand, this all depends on my being released honorable. I won't quit, flat. I think, however, that most of the men will be given an opportunity to get home. Please Don't get you heart set on this, Sweetheart. Everything is pretty uncertain, the only thing sure is that I love you and miss you so much it hurts.

Have received eleven Christmas cards but, to date, none of the packages. Would you make it a point to get in touch with the Meserolls, Huggs and any others that have been so kind as to write me. Tell them I have not forgotten them and I will write some day soon. Just seems hard to find time to sit down and write.

Give my love to your family and mine and think of me on Christmas Eve 'cause I'll be thinking of you every minute, Sweetheart.

All my love, forever, Honey,

Your own Freddie

Don't forget to get that \$50.00 (sheer) nightgown for "that occasion."

F.M. ARNOLT

A.P.O. 680

December 4, 1942

Dear Folks,

Have been a little negligent about writing the past few weeks due to our new 12 hr. day working hours. Pretty tired when night comes and about ready for bed. Received all of you Xmas cards as well as Meseroll's, Grandad's and Jane's. Yesterday a nice letter from Eddie arrived which I enjoyed exceedingly. As yet none of the packages have arrived on the scene but I await them expectantly. I'll certainly miss you all at Xmas. For so many years we were all together that it seems almost unreal that we will be thousands of miles apart on Christmas morning.

However I'll be happy in knowing that you will all be together, healthy and happy and you can be assured that I am 100% well and as happy as I could be so far from all my loved ones.

Hope Flossie has taken good care of my Christmas shopping (as usual). There was nothing I could do about it over here but you'll know that my heart will be with the gifts whether I am present or not. We'll probably work right on through Xmas Day but it will be just as well to not have an idle day with all our thoughts of home.

2

Naturally I can't talk about my work and as that now occupies about 80% of my waking hours little else is left to tell about. In the last week I have had no time for hunting but in the five weeks prior to that I was convenient to a fine ducking spot and was able to get in from fifteen minutes to an hour, during quiet moments out on the march after ducks and geese. Up until a week ago I had bagged 130 ducks and 7 geese which is mighty fine hunting for such short periods of time. My hunting has been very expensive but has been about my only recreation. I can truthfully say that I have had duck hunting that surpassed my wildest dreams and it will be an experience I'll never forget. Perhaps, later on, we'll get back on shorter hours and then I can do a little more hunting in this "shotgun hunter's paradise."

Our tent here is pretty cosy. Jimmy, Jolly and I have about twelve rugs on the floor, table and hanging on the walls. We now have a little electric heater and three blankets each so are very comfortable. It gets quite chilly now at night and early in the morning but the midday sun is still quite hot.

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Jimmy has bakshish gifts of native wines and liquers quite often and though most of them are reminiscent of a strong varnish remover there is occasionally a bottle of pretty fair stuff to warm your insides on a cold evening.

When I get back in a passenger car on a smooth highway I won't know what it is all about. For months now I have pounded my bottom on the seat of a jeep or hard-riding truck up and down a renovated camel trail sometimes wighty miles a day, most of the time at ten to fifteen miles an hour. I have driven hub-deep through dust and through mud and have forded streams with the water covering the floor boards. When "that damn road" gets too rough we just drive out through the prairie and think we are in paradise until we hit a half obscured irrigation ditch – then the air is blue! So if you were out driving with

me some day and I leave the highway and start out across a plowed field or through the corn-stubble just remind me that I am home and not in _____.

We hear rumors (good old rumors) that our outlook on the war is brightening up. Sure hope so.

(over)

I am anxious to get home now and am looking forward to spring as it may possibly see me on the way. It looks now as though I can come home honorably at the end of my contract. I might have to go out on another Army job again but would have a month or two at home anyhow. Time will tell just what will happen.

Well it's my bed time now (8 P.M.) so love to you all and have a swell Christmas. I'll be with you in thoughts anyhow.

Fred

December 15, 1942

Dearest Sweetheart,

Sure hope this little note reaches you all right because, in it, I have enclosed eight hundred dollars in good old U.S. money orders. Although they are made out to me you will be able to cash and deposit them since you hold my power of attorney, Darling. May our savings account rise with leaps and bounds. We have received official notice here from New York that the new income tax laws do not effect our 1942 income, earned on this job. Our wages earned in '42 on this job are entirely exempt from the Federal income tax. For 1943 we are exempted from the new 5% victory tax and if we are overseas twelve months in '43 are exempt from income tax for that year. Of course this last is extremely doubtful – we hope, Darling. Any how – no income tax this year, Sweetheart.

Just finished an extra delicious wild duck dinner. The whole camp enjoyed the same, as yor Freddie had about forty five big mallards and a few geese stowed away in the refrigerator. I'm now starting to collect game for our Christmas dinner. I supplied duck and pheasant on Thanksgiving Day. So far I have seven pheasant and one quail in the freezer and now must get busy and

2

Secure more pheasant and a bunch of ducks and geese. Hope also to get some wild swan. They are very numerous now and the natives say they are excellent eating. The ducks here are certainly delicious. They feed entirely on rice and other grains and have no gamey taste at all. When Bobby, our superlative cook, gets through with them you can cut the meat off their breasts with a fork. Jolly ate so much he can hardly talk tonight. Tell Dad they are really big mallards They weigh between 4 and 5 pounds apiece – actually. I guess the wild swan go about 20 to 25 lbs. The geese run from 8 to 14 lbs.

Darling, I have a lot of enjoyment from my hunting and other experiences here but I'd still give anything to be with you. Sweetheart, I miss you far more then I can tell and now, when I try to imagine our meeting in the future – I can't because the situation is too wonderful to be imagined. Talk about getting goose pimples and that quivery feeling, Honey – oh, just wait until I get hold of you then I can show you how it is.

Give my love to all our folks. Keep building up that savings account for that wonderful future we're going to have, Honey. All my love, always, - Freddie

F.M. ARNOLT

A.P.O. 680

December 16, 1942

Dearest Sweetheart, I suppose this sounds a bit unromantic but I'm nursing a tender bottom again tonight after a fifteen mile cross country jaunt on the back of an Arabian stud. So, Darling, I thugh I'd talk to you tonight and may-be get a little sympathy. Don't you weep for me and my poor bottom, Honey? Went through some interesting country – "wild and wooley." Saw much game and also my first native shotgun hunter. He was hunting pheasant to sell in town for 30¢ apiece and he had an ancient double barreled muzzle loading shotgun. His method was unique. He had a screen made of burlap about

four feet square which he held in front of him. This had a peep hole through which he watched for pheasant. When he located a pheasant on the ground in range "Boom" went the old muzzle loader and down went the pheasant – maybe. We had a little conversation on some of the finer points of shotgun shooting and then went about our respective affairs.

Jimmy was "bakshished" another rug today. He will be able to go in business pretty soon. We'll have to hire a ship all for ourselves. I only have four rugs, two of which are very small, but Jolly, Shiek Fish and I together have quite a passel of carpets. Jimmy is thinking of sending one home by parcel post just to see if it reaches there "oke". Shipping anything

2

Now is very uncertain.

Certainly hope my letter of yesterday reaches you all right since in it, I enclosed \$800.00 in postal money orders. Be sure to let me know (in several different letters) if it arrives safely. Don't forget, Honey – I don't have any income tax to pay on my wages earned this year on this project. We should be able to build up our savings account in good shape.

The country hereabouts is becoming more pleasant to live in day by day. The prairie is all turning from drab brown to fresh new green and the air is cool and usually clear as we now get enough rain to keep the dust down. Of course it doesn't compare with the good old U.S.A. but neither does any other country in this whole world in spite of the steamship companies' literature and travel pamphlets. Boy, when I get home I'll sure be satisfied to do my traveling in the States.

There is nothing new to narrate. We're all healthy and will stay that way. Remember me to our firnedes and love to our families. For you, Sweet, all my very best love, always. Still miss you more then ever, Darling, and still tingle in anticipation of our meeting – not too far away.

F

Sunday, December 20/42

Dearest Sweetheart,

Your letter of November 18th, which the Newark censor's office kindly released on Nov. 25th, arrived today. So your physical being is "a little bit of all right", Honey? Certainly wish I were there to appreciate it. I would appreciate it too, believe me. Did you break down and get that \$50.00 present for your Christmas from me? If you didn't you better hop right to it and get it for Easter "cause \$100.00 would be "ok" by your Hubby. Still healthy, working seven days a week and still getting in my hunting. Have bagged 221 ducks, 8 geese and about forty black pheasant up until today. Now I won't have to take a hunting vacation after my "lovin" vacation. Can just prolong the "lovin", since the hunting I'm now having in what little spare time I can muster up would be hard to equal back home.

We have just been informed officially that Uncle Sam will be our boss after the 1st of the year. Our contracts will be taken over and will remain in effect just the same. Don't forget, Sweetheart, - you don't have to worry about that income tax this year - that is; on my salary. We have received that official word also as I mentioned before in a previous letter.

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I mailed \$800.00 in postal money orders to you about a week ago. Be sure and let me know as soon as you receive it. The Christmas packages have not arrived yet but we're still hoping they'll get here before the 25th. Looks like we'll probably have Christmas Day off. Wish I could spirit my way homeward and be in your arms on Christmas Eve, Darling. I'll be there in my imagination but I'd give anything if I could be there in person. Of course this letter will reach you long after Christmas, Sweetheart, but right now my thoughts are full of Christmas, you and my family. Bless you all and may nothing mar your happiness for the whole new year. I'll miss Poppa Elmer's crazy presents and Mother Florence's laughter. I know you'll all have a hell of a good time. Have one for me too. I'll probably take second best and have a good time out on the marsh, hunting but in the evening and early morning I'll certainly be with you in thought, Darling. You know, Honey, it won't be so many months and we will actually be together. I'm on that quick coasting downgrade as far as my time goes now. The long months are behind. Love to you all and all of my very best to you, Honey.

F

F. M. ARNOLT

A.P.O. 680

December 21, 1942

Dearest Sweetheart,

This will just be a short note as I wrote you last night and the night before and there is little new to say. However I just became the owner of a (sidebar taken in October) snapshot which contains Freddie and his shotgun and knew you would probably like to have it. It is necessarily mutilated in order to pass the censor but your skinny Hubby is all in one piece.

Jimmy and Jolly are fine. They thought they had a little joke on me tonight but it has backfired. One of the Arab guards caught a live coot (mud hen) and bought it to the tent as a bakshish for "Mr. Freddie". Jimmy put it in a basket by my bed as a joke. The damn things are no good. While we were eating supper it escaped and we just discovered its hiding place now. Lo and behold, it discovered the farmer in the crowd and it sits peacefully under Jimmy's bed. They're darn pugnacious little devils. They fight and bite like hell and someone is going to have a lot of fun getting it out from under Jimmy's bed but that won't be me, Darling, because I bagged my share of game today.

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This morning, before sunrise while I was standing in a rice field here six huge grey "Koorkees" flew overhead just in range and I finally achieved a much desired goal when a shot from my shotgun brought one tumbling down. They are a species of wild swan, excellent eating and extremely wary. This one had a wing spread of six feet and weight of 20 lbs. They have a stirring trumpet like call and are fairly numerous hereabouts but because of their super-wariness I have been unable to get in range of one up until now.

That damn coot! Jimmy succeeded in chasing it out from under his bed and it took refuge under mine, not knowing, of course, that it was the sleeping place of the great Dan'l Boone. So I sent it scuttling over to Jolly and now the tent is in a turmoil and I might as well stop writing because I'm too busy keeping that "bugger" from getting in my bed. Love to our families, Honey, and all my extra special brand of love for you. Let me know if you get the snapshot "oke" and also if you received the \$800.00 in money orders "OKE."

Freddie

F.M. ARNOLT

A.P.O. 680

December 22, 1942

Dear Folks,

Been quite awhile since I wrote you. Forgive me – better late than later, I guess. A, still fine, working hard and having some fun with my shotgun also. It is almost Christmas here and all of our thoughts are of home and our loved ones. I believe we are to have a holiday on Christmas. Guess I'll spend that time out with my shotgun although I am finally getting very near the end of my shell supply. Today I received a nice letter from my Flossie (of Nov. 17th) and Christmas cards from Mr. and Mrs. St. John, Mr. and Mrs. Satterer, Thellie and Ruthie Satterer, Fred Searles and my Flossie. I've now received about 16 cards. Seems like everyone sent me Christmas greetings. Many thanks to them all. The packages have not arrived yet and with shipping the way it is, they might not reach here at all – but we're still hoping.

I suppose you know by now that after January 1st, I will be working directly for Uncle Sam. There will be no other change in my status as far as I know at present. My present contract with rate of pay, time of expiration etc. will remain the same. If we receive any time off our contract for our

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Over-prolonged trip en route, my contract would run out around the middle of February; otherwise it runs out about the first of April. I have, to date, signed no extension of my contract. Jimmy signed up for another nine month term but Jolly and I have done nothing yet. Please tell Flossie as she seems to have received the impression from one of Jim's letters that I extended my contract. I have done nothing in regard to this yet, and, if I do, I shall certainly let my Flossie know first thing myself and she won't hear about it second hand. I believe that in the not-to-far future I am going to have a very difficult decision to make. Everything is in more or less of a turmoil here right now with the change of administration etc. and we actually know little of what is going to happen in regard to ourselves. However, we are quite certain of a few facts. One is that none of us will be forced into the Army here. Also all those who desire will be able to return home honorably ~~when~~ when their contract has expired. My decision will be made more difficult by the fact that Uncle Sam will be my new boss. I am not at all averse to staying here and doing this same type of work

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but I certainly miss home and my Flossie. As I say, I don't know what I am going to do. When the time comes I hope that the right answer will come ~~from~~ to my mind. I would like to get a commission but the officers here seem to think (at present) that the technicians here of more value to the war effort in their present status than they would be in the regular army. So there's all the dope I can give you by letter. Pretty vague I guess. It's vague to me.

The weather is very pleasant now. Cool. Only occasional rains. The prairie is now turning a fresh new green. We have a little stove in our tent and it feels mighty good at night since the air cools down quickly at evening and the nights are almost cold. I haven't gained any weight back but neither have I been sick so I can be thankful.

I have been very fortunate in that my work is on the site of much good hunting. To date I have bagged 227 ducks (mostly huge fat rice-fed mallards), 8 geese, 1 wild turkey, 1 huge wild swan (20 lbs. with 6' wingspread), and about 40 black pheasant – also a few other odds and ends – quail etc. I won't have to take a hunting vacation when I reach home since I am having hunting here that would be hard to equal at home.

(continued on back of page 3)

My hunting has cost me a king's ransom (with shotgun shells at \$8.00 a box) but I can't say I regret it since it is the experience of a hunting lifetime. I have saved about \$1000.00 of overtime money, anyhow. I have few souvineers. Two rugs of much value and two very small and insignificant affairs that I use everyday on the floor of the tent. A few Arab knives and some old (ancient) coins and small relics picked up in the ruins of ----- . We have been living out in the wilds here and have had little opportunity to purchase any souvineers typical of the country and if I came home today I would have few articles of interest to bring with me.

Well I'll close now. Seyfula Khan, one of our Louric neighbors and friends, is visiting us here in the tent tonight and it is becoming increasingly difficult to concentrate on this letter with all the chatter in two languages. Love to you all. Remember me to my friends and may we all be together soon.

Fred

December 24, 1942

Christmas Eve

My Darling Sweetheart,

If my heart and thoughts were ever with you, Sweetheart, they are with you tonight. It doesn't seem like Christmas Eve here at all. We did not receive our packages yet and we have not a drop of the "spirit that cheers" – not even beer. All I can think of is the happy times you and I have had on all our past Christmas Eves. We have many wonderful ones in the future and I guess I must make up my mind to forget this one and look at those [blacked out word] ahead. But, Honey Sweet, I can't begin to express how I love you and need you tonight. If I could only rub Aladin's lamp and wish myself in your arms this minute, Darling.

Your letters of the 17th and 18th November arrived, also Christmas cards from your folks, Thellie and Ruthie, Fred Searles and you, Honey. My picture rugs you asked about are the kind you hang on the wall. They are quite valuable. I paid approximately 110.00 for the pair and now (about a month or so later) have been offered over \$300.00 for them. They have poems woven into the border (in the native language) and many pictures of ancient kings etc. as well as many other designs into the carpet. They are

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supposed to be fairly rare and probably would be worth much in the States. However, they're not for sale. They're for our dream home, Darling. I really have few other articles worth bringing home. Being out here in the wilds for so many months has not given much opportunity to buy worth-while souvineers typical of the country. I have a few knives etc. but most of the stuff is junk and is not worth bringing home.

Sweetheart, I'm sorry you received the impression from one of Jim's letters that I had extended my contract since I have done nothing of the sort. Jim extended his for nine months but Jolly and I have not done so and have no idea what we will do. Darling, you know I would tell you first, the very first, if I had signed an extension. Everything is in a turmoil here with the change of authority and we don't know a damn thing, officially, about how soon we'll be coming home. So just hope and pray, Darling, for my early homecoming. I'm sure hoping. But don't expect anything too strenuously because, right now," I don't know nothing."

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Boy, the day I have to lock my door to keep you away from me will really be some day. It's liable to be the other way around. Say, if we both feel that way we'll have to get an asbestos lined room. Anyhow, I'm not buying any locks. I'll take my chances.

Darling, there's nothing to read between the lines of my letters. I'm 100% well, but skinny. I'm crazy about you and want to get home to you tomorrow if possible. Also. I'm full of conflicting thoughts about what I should do, "if this occurs" and "if that happens" but these are my problems and are no secret. The only thing is, that, at present, I don't know enough of what is going to happen to make that decision, hard or easy, so all we can do is wait and hope and pray. I'll try to decide right when the time comes and I hope I'm strong enough to make the right decision regardless of my personal hopes and

desires. I haven't heard any war news, Sweetheart, but with so many good, God respecting people on one side it seems impossible for the little yellow men and the Nazis to keep the whole world in turmoil and sorrow for very long. I love you, Darling, forever and always – never forget.

Goodnight, My Sweetheart – Merry Xmas.

Fred

F.M. ARNOLT

A.P.O. 680

January 4, 1943

Dearest Sweetheart,

Still missing you, Darling. Christmas and New Years have come and gone and I'm glad of that. Hope they're the last I spend away from home and you. A few packages arrived here on Christmas Day. Jimmy received three and Jolly, one. I didn't do so well. Since then, however, I received a box of Mother's cookies and that's the total of my packages to date. Shipping is so very uncertain. The packages may arrive yet. We really enjoyed Mother's cookies. Jimmy received a box of them also and they gave us a real taste of home.

We've been going rug crazy the last few days. Jimmy has received several "bakshis" rugs and I purchased three more. What a sap! I haven't any idea how I'm going to get them home. I now have three medium size affairs (4 ½ ' X 6 ½') and four small ones. I also purchased three pieces of native needlework (one quite large) and nine pieces of native brasswork. I have about \$270.00 tied up in this stuff. If I were sure how I could get it home it would be "oke" but may be I'll wish I hadn't purchased the same.

I've eased off on my hunting now having about run out of shells. More are available in Basra but that price is prohibitive for me now. Eight bucks a box has about wore me down. I've had a lot of fun. The finest

2

Hunting of my life and now I guess I had better try and find a purchaser for my shotgun and see if I can't recover all or part of what I paid for it. When I return home I'll, no doubt, be popped right in Uncle Sam's army and I should really save all I can for that eventuality.

Be sure and let me know, Darling, as soon as you receive the \$800.00 in money orders that I mailed to you on December 15th. I also sent you a little snapshot of me in another recent letter.

The same old grind here except that the air is now full of rumors and speculations about where we may be or what we may be doing a month or so hence. We have heard no definite official news. The only thing I can be sure of at all is that my contract will terminate in a very few months and at the end of that time I'll probably come home to you – for a little time anyhow.

Letters have been coming through to us very slowly of late. Guess it is due to the very heavy Christmas mail. Hope you are well and happy, Darling, and are keeping that "Grable-like" contour for me. I sure miss you and you can bet your life I love you more than ever, Sweet. Jimmy and Jolly are both fine and are staying healthy.

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Pretty nice weather here now. Pleasant during the day and almost cold at night. We sleep under three blankets at night and it's usually a chilly awakening in the morning. Our food still is A#1 and, in that respect, we are very fortunate. Although we will have to do without some of our wild duck and pheasant dinners in the future we should still be eating in pretty high style. I guess things are quite

changed at home now in many respects. Home will seem strange after the last months I have spent. However it will sure seem good to be there and I'll have no desire to do anything or go anywhere except to spend my time at home catching up on my loving with my Sweetheart. Probably have to do a lot of lovin' in a little time as there's no telling where Uncle Sam will send me. As it turns out we couldn't go into the Army over here even if we wanted to, so home we must come. – How soon – no one knows. Have heard no war news at all in weeks and weeks and therefore have no idea at all how things are going. Hope we're holding our end up, at least.

Well, Darling Sweet, this letter sounds dead as hell but there is little I can say except I love you, love you, love you, love you more and more every hour --- Freddie

F.M. ARNOLT

A.P.O. 680

January 9, 1943

My Dearest Sweetheart,

Well I finally broke down and sold my shotgun. Must be getting some common sense in my old age. I had great sport with it. The hunting experience of a lifetime; but shells were so darn expensive. The gun was sort of a drug. As long as I had it I would probably keep paying \$8.00 a box for shells indefinitely and I figured I had better dispose of it when the first good opportunity arose. I received every cent of the amount I paid for it (150.00) and feel pretty happy about that. Of course it's a little tough seeing all the ducks and pheasant around and not be able to hunt but I sure "raised hell" with them for a couple of months (over 260 ducks, 8 geese 46 pheasant, 1 wild turkey, 1 wild swan and various other little numbers).

Now I can save the rest of my overtime money for our future home and also that swell fur coat you're going to get some time when this mess is over. By the way did you get that "super-smooth" nightgown I told you to get? My contract expires on March 30th, thereabouts, (only about eleven more weeks) and it seem prettsure at this time that I'll be coming home to you and "uncle's" army shortly after that date. The situation has changed here considerably and I don't think I'll have that "hard decision to make" after the termination of my contract. Probably will be able to come home honorably at that time.

2

Did you receive the \$800.00 in money orders I mailed you on December 15th? That should boost up our "home savings" considerably. After checking over my earnings to date I can begin to visualize our little house "all our own" that we will have after this mess is finished. Of course no one knows how long the war will last (we never hear any real war news here) and I may have to put in quite a spell in the army at little pay but we'll make out "oke", won't we, Darling?

As I mentioned in my last letter, I have acquired a little more "stuff" to bring home, brass work and a little needle work but I still would like to get another one or two really good rugs. The two picture rugs are my pride and joy being about priceless to me. I have one other medium size rug, 4' X 7', that is fair and three small ones that are more or less "run of the mill" in this country. Jimmy, of course, has the best bunch of rugs, having had all the opportunities. I think he has about fifteen now; many of course being small. The various Khan's and Shieks "bakshished" him with several and he picked up three beauties on his trip north. He'll have to charter a ship all his own to get the stuff home. I just had, what looked like, a splendid chance to pick up a beautiful 10' X 12' here darn cheap. The carpet was a very fine weave and quality

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And a pleasing pattern but when we gave it the "water test" we found that the dyes were not very good. Sure was disappointed, believe me. Rugs have become very expensive here in the last few months. Many of the large rug prices are absolutely prohibitive – (400.00 to 800.00 for a 9' X 12') and so I may not be able to pick up any more at a price I can gamble with; getting it back home being a little gamble. Real rug bargains may still be found here and there is one has more or less unlimited time and a means

of transportation but our 70 hr. work week doesn't leave much time for running around. You'll welcome me at the "Penn" with or without rugs, won't you, Darling?

Do you still maintain that sylph-like form for me? I haven't received any mail in a long time due, I guess, to the Christmas mail loads. Hope you're all "oke" at home. Received a company telegram from you a few days ago. It stated that an increase was expected in the Baldwin family soon. Let's hear more. The only package that ever arrived was the box of Mother's cookies. Jimmy, the lucky dog, has received four but Jolly, only one.

Sweet, I love you more than ever and am counting the hours until that wonderful day when we will finally meet. It isn't so very far off now, seems like. Love to our families and my extra special for you –
Fred

January 11, 1943

Dearest Sweetheart,

Received your letter of November 29th today, the first in quite some time now. Was a real thrill to come in from work in the evening and see your nice letter lying on the table. I mailed a letter to you about two days ago and as there is no new news at present this will only be a short note. Was happy to hear that you are all well and getting along all right. I'm 100% healthy although not fat by any means and I'm getting along "oke", especially now that I can think of the fact that it is not going to be so very long now and I will have you in my arms again and that's a pretty certain fact; it won't be so long now. Of course, Darling, you mustn't expect me to appear suddenly on your doorstep in a few weeks or anything like that but it does seem highly probable that I'll not be in this country when the N.J. trout season rolls around. Won't be able to go trout fishing but may be able to do some kind of fishing. Jolly and I will, no doubt, be sticking together as our contracts terminate on the same date. Jimmy may surprise you all, but don't breathe a word of this to Aunt Grace, Sweetheart.

In case my previous letter fails to reach you I'll repeat: I sold my shotgun. Am still hunting for a couple more really good rugs and am saving my O.Y. money. Let me know when you receive the \$800.00

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In postal money orders I mailed you on Dec. 15th. Boy, if you will have to pay over two hundred dollars income tax for the short time you have been working what would I have to pay if my 1942 income were not tax exempt? A young fortune, I guess. Well, I won't have to worry much about the income tax for the last half of 1943 either as Uncle Sam doesn't pay the boys any large wages and I'll certainly be one of the boys not long after I get home again. As long as they don't send me back here I'll be satisfied. From April until October this is no place for a human being. One summer here is about all I care for and that one is passed, thank goodness.

A sure wish I could feast my eyes on that heavenly apparition of 145 lbs. on the hoof. Although you're still 10 lbs from the goal, you have done wonders. Don't worry about that other ten but don't dare add any to that 145. Stay healthy but don't eat like your Mama – on a diet or I'll be a broken hearted Freddie on my return. I'll do my best to get in fine fettle for you, Honey, and if I leave here before the damn heat starts, I should be "oke".

Was there or was there not an increase in the Baldwin Family by adoption or otherwise? The little news I have received in the past few weeks has been slightly confusing. Love to you all, Sweetheart. We won't have to hold in our lovin' so very much longer, Darling, what an occasion its going to be. All my very best love, always. – Fred

F.M. ARNOLT

A.P.O. 680

January 11, 1943

Dear Folks,

Christmas and New Years have passed by uneventfully and I am glad they are behind. Had Christmas Day off but worked New Years Day. Most everyone wished we had worked on Christmas since there was little to do except sit around and think of home. I went hunting Christmas morning and shot nine fat mallards and in the afternoon I slept. Mother's cookies arrived a few days after Christmas and we enjoyed them very much. No other packages have arrived yet for me. Jimmy received four and Jolly one. I can not feel too disappointed about the packages as there is little chance of parcel post getting through in these times and we didn't have too much hopes in regard to receiving our Christmas presents. We can make them up some other year in the future. I certainly missed you all on Christmas morning with little Johnny all excited and thrilled and my Flossiprobably acting about like Johnny. Jimmy was away on a vacation trip north on Christmas and Jolly and I were together, hunting etc.

Have received very little mail lately but there have been certain developments here that would account for this and of course the heavy holiday mail loads have a decided effect on our receipts here.

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You will no doubt be greatly surprised to here that I have sold my beloved shotgun. The hunting is still as fine as ever and shells are still available but the price of the shells is almost prohibitive. I purchased many shells at that price of 30¢ a piece and if I kept the shotgun would probably keep right on buying them so I thought it best to dispose of the gun in order to save more of my O.T. money. I was fortunate enough to receive the same amount of money which I paid out for the shotgun (\$150.00). I had the finest shotgun hunting experience of a lifetime and up until the day I sold the gun I had bagged over 260 ducks, 8 geese, 46 pheasant, 1 wild turkey, 1 wild swan and some quail, wild pigeons etc. The game is still as thick as ever but now I just watch it instead of hunting.

There are many new developments here which I can not, unfortunately, disclose in a letter, however, they do affect Jolly, Jimmy and I directly. About the only thing I can say is that I am very apt to be on my way home before too many more weeks are passed. My contract terminates on or about the end of March and it now seems fairly certain that I will at least be on my way shortly after that time, if not before. Of course on my arrival home I'll, no doubt be drafted within a few weeks but at least I'll be home for a little while. The resolve I made not to quit and not to leave before I finished my

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Work will still be carried out whether I leave before March 30th or shortly after and that's all I can say except that my health is 100% "oke".

The weather here now is very pleasant and although it is the "wet" season it actually rains very little. The early mornings are quite cold ^v but the memories of the blazing white summer heat are not easily forgotten. This is no place for a human being in the summer time and I shall be glad not to have to spend another summer here.

Wish I had been able to get more really good carpets here. I only have two that are outstanding. Jimmy has many fine ones as he has had many opportunities to find same. The price of carpets here has now gone completely haywire and even if I had the time I would have to hunt a long while to find any good buys now. Naturally it will be a problem to carry much stuff on the way home especially if we have as gummed up a trip as we had coming over but I figure I could probably handle two more med. Size rugs (4' X 7') if I could find two that were really worthwhile and not too expensive. Hope to hear from you all soon and know that you all are well and happy.

My very best love to you all and I hope to be with you before too many more months pass By.

Fred

FRED M. ARNOLT, JR.

January 16, 1943

Somewhere in Asia

Dear Granddad,

This is your Grandson from the land of dust and camels. I'm sorry that I have not been able to write you more often but we work a;; the datlight hours here and all the days of the week and when night comes about all a fellow feels like is falling into bed. However, I understand that Mother forwards some of my letters up to you there in Essex so I suppose you all know a little of what I'm doing. I'd like to tell you about our work as it is interesting and we are pretty proud of it but the censor would'nt approve so I'll have to stick to other less important subjects.

I'm feeling fine. Since the weather has become cooler I have gained a little of my lost weight back and feel, in general, much spryer. The blazing heat of the summer is only an unpleasant memory here now. It is about like April at home here now except that it rains little and the sun is warmer at midday. The few rains we have had have caused fresh new green grass to crop up all over the prairie and the country looks much more attractive then it did when the hot sun kept the ground baked hard and dusty. This country is a great farming land but long years of neglect have created a dust bowl here. They have a complicated irrigation system which, with improvements and attention, would make this a regular Garden of Eden. My work has brought me in contact with many of the local native farmers and I have been much interested in the primitive methods they employ in the planting, cultivation and harvesting of their crops. Of course I'm no farmer, Granddad, and never expect that I will be but I find the contrasts here pretty interesting.

This is part of the "Bible Land" and all about there are ruins that give a faint inkling of the wealth and power that was here in the days of Darius and Solomon. Of course the people here are not Christians but Mohannadens. I find, however that there is much in common with the two religions and it does not seem strange to have the Mohammadens occupying a land that the Bible describes in chapter after chapter. The method of living in the hundreds of poor mud villages, throughout the countryside has apparently changed but little in hundreds of years. The people live in their mud villages with their sheep, goats, donkeys and cattle eating simple bread and cooking over dung fires. They have no conception of cleanliness and of course sickness is prevalent. There are many bands of Arab outlaws that steal their grain and livestock constantly and help to keep them in the same state of poverty. I have come to know many of

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the neighboring Sheikhs (Arab) and Khans (Lourie) quite well and have eaten with them in their homes on several different occasions.

As you may have heard I was fortunate enough to locate a good servicable shotgun and shells here and I have had the hunting of a lifetime. My work was right in among many rice fields where there were wild ducks by the hundreds. I have bagged up to date over 260 wild ducks (about 75% of these were big fat mallards, also some red heads, pintail, gadwall, widgeon, bluebill, shoveler, teal, and golden crowned

Siberian ducks) 8 geese, one wild turkey, one wild swan weighing twenty pounds, about 46 black pheasant and also a few quail, snipe, sandgrouse, wild pigeons, and actually Granddad, I have only scratched the surface as far as the shotgun hunting goes. With rifle (.303) I've killed gazelle, wild boar, desert panthers and a jackel or two. All the game is used for our mess here and we find that there are none of the grain fed game birds and wildfowl that are not superlative eating. The wild mallards are huge, weighing four to five pounds and I have to admit that they are better eating than any of the wild ducks I have had at home. The big wild swan was as tender and tasty as nicely roasted teal.

I received your Christmas card and thank you kindly for thinking of me. I also received a nice note from Dette and Ruth which was mailed in Utica, N>Y> and also a pleasant Christmas note from Uncle Fred and Aunt Hattie. Please give them all my sincerest thanks. Christmas wasn't particularly merry here as all the fellows were thinking of home but we can make it up next year when, God willing, we will all be home with our loved ones.

I do not know just how much longer I'll be over here but there are persistent rumors that most of us will be on our way before May. I would like to get in the army now although we are practically in it. (blacked out) We cannot get into the regular army over here but must come home to be inducted. Knocking ducks down from the sky is good sport but it would be a lot more fun knocking down Heinies. I'd like to be in anti-aircraft or aerial gunnery but they'll probably put me to work on roads or bridges. We hear no war news to speak of but it's rumored that we aren't doing so bad now. Perhaps this mess will be cleaned up in a few more months and we can all come home and settle down to pay for it.

Take care of yourself, all of you, and my best love to you, Aunt Edith, Hattie and Fred, Hayden and Susie and Sarah, Dette and Ruth, Ned and Blanche and all of my other good friends from the little town that has given me hundreds of very happy memories.

Fred

F.M. ARNOLT

A.P.O. 680

January 29, 1942

Dear Folks,

Received a regular bonanza in the mail line today – six letters and one package. Dad's and Estelle's letters of December 30th arrived and four from my Flossie (Jan 3rd, 7th, 9th and 10th). A few days ago I received three packages. The presents from you all arrived as did Flossie's also a box of cookies from you and one from Flossie and one from Mr & Mrs. Satterer – five packages. You would probably be surprised to know that your little presents were worth their weight in gold. The things you sent were articles I needed badly and can not obtain here. I certainly thank you all. I had a real thrill when I received your packages and an extra kick when I saw how wisely you had picked out the gifts. You had a big gang at the house on Christmas Day. Must have had a swell time. Well, next year I'll be there with you. Was sorry to hear about your illness. I guess it's been a mighty tough winter there at home – extra cold and with insufficient fuel. Hope you're all well now.

I'm disgustingly healthy although not too fat. The cool weather has pepped every one up but all ready the midday sun is pretty warm and it won't be long before we'll start sweating again. However, before the blazing summer heat is here I'll be on my way home so let it get hot.

F.M. ARNOLT

A.P.O. 680

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You'll be surprised to hear that I'm now operating one of the #12 blades here on the finish work. Not a demotion, however. Many men have gone home and although there are plenty of other men here, in uniform, there is a scarcity of capable patrol operators to shape up our finished product so I had to get back on a machine again. Of course there are no civilian foremen here now anyhow. All the bosses here now have silver bars or other gadgets on their collars. My rate of pay remains the same and I'm still classified as road foreman.

Possible, before this letter reaches you, Jimmy will be home and you will know – all or almost all, about what's what with your son. In the event that Aunt Grace does not know that Jimmy is on his way home please do not tell her as she'll worry herself sick. I could not stay here after my present contract terminates if I wanted to, even though I have an excellent record so it won't be so long and I'll see you all again – surely before summer. The Army will let me have a little vacation and then I'll be in the Army or on my way to another war construction project.

Thanks to you all for your presents. Send me snapshots whenever you can. I get a big kick out of them. Johnny seems to get cuter all the time. Stay well and happy and love to you all.

Fred

FRED M. ARNOLT, JR

A.P.O. 680

February 8, 1943

Dearest Sweetheart,

Still working as always in the same camp here. Much has changed but the work is still to be done and there are still a few of the civilian personnel here. Just how long we'll be here is still unknown. We must be hard to replace as "they" have taken over most of the operations. Jolly is still here with me and we hope to be able to stay together. Jimmy is well on the way now and may possibly arrive home before this letter, in which case you'll know all – or almost all. As far as I know at present I'll probably be coming home shortly after my contract terminates – about seven weeks hence. It looks rather improbable that I'll be leaving before the end of March although I thought for a time that such might be the case. However, Darling, we're both doing our bit and staying healthy so a few weeks more or less doesn't mean so

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FRED M. ARNOLT, JR

much now while the war is still going on full blast. I'm afraid I would have been much interested in staying on for the duration had there been an opportunity to get a commission, however, none of this civilian personnel has been able to get a commission here – college degree or not. So it will be home and a "rookie" for me. Most of all I want to be with you, Darling, but I'm afraid it will only be for a short time. The thought that plagues my mind now is that I'll take that rotten trip home and after a few months or even weeks we'll probably have to take another similar trip to some other foreign shore. There is some danger, of course, but it's the monotony and poor food and poor living conditions that makes me dread those "wonderful" war time ocean voyages.

It's raining tonight but our de luxe boarded wall tent with the electric heater is pretty cozy. There is little to do at night but now that I'm running the #12 I'm ready to sleep shortly after

(over)

Supper.

One of the natives caught a monster fish in the river in front of camp this afternoon. The river is pretty small and the three foot specimens I have seen come out of there heretofore seemed mighty large for that creek, however, this giant was 5 ft 8 inches long and weighed about 100 pounds. Remember back this summer when I told you about bumping into lots of fish while churning around in the old swimming hole – never in my wildest dreams did I visualize that there were such gigantic finny denizens in this little creek. Imagine punching a one hundred pound fish in the face with the heel of your foot and not getting into an argument with "fishy."

Have become acquainted with a Captain in the Medical Corps (can not give his name) who has spent many visits and weekends in the Metuchen house. He's from N. Carolina and is Dr. Morris' best friend. Also have a soldier friend here in camp from New Brunswick. He was on a mile-route for a dairy there and sold me chocolate milk at the Personal Products' job.

Well, Sweet, time to close. Love to all and my extra special brand for you.

Fred

FRED M. ARNOLT, JR.

A.P.O. 680

February 21, 1943

Darling Sweetheart,

A cold nasty rainy Sunday and no work. Your Freddie is sure homesick and lovesick. What would we be doing today were I home? Could lie in bed late as we wanted (what a luxury) – then down for that good American Sunday breakfast – then those papers (especially the funnies) – then I could spend the rest of the day telling you how much I love you (and I sure do, Honey) After supper we could walk up to the Forum for the early show and then home again for bed when you could make me prove (or try to prove) that I could do all those “quivery” things I told you I’d like to do all day long. Around here there’s nothing to do but sit around in the tent and read. One can write letters too but there’s not a darn thing to write about.

Your lovesick Hubby is still well except for a little cold and sore throat (my first in almost eight months) Jolly is fine also and I hope Jimmy is too. Wouldn’t be surprised but what he is home right now while you read this letter, May be he’s told you all my secrets all ready. He doesn’t know, however, that I lie awake for an hour or so every night these last few weeks thinking about how

FRED M. ARNOLT, JR.

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Much I want you (and need you, believe me) upi’re in my mind constantly, Darling, day and night and I sure dream of you – if my dreams were only real – the foundations of this tent would shake – at least.

They sent me an application to renew my contract for three or six months or state my desire to return home after the termination of my contract on March 29th. Believe me I thought it over mighty carefully from all angles. If I were to go north during the summer and if the army stated they really needed me here I might possibly have stayed a few months longer as the war appears to be very unsettled right now. However, we can get no information. The job is about completed here and the blazing – health – deteriorating summer is only a few months away so I put a little check in the “want to go home” column and hope to get early transportation after March 29th. Jolly has received no application yet so nothing new there. Get ready, Sweetest One, I can’t tell you how much I love and need you – just wait!

Your own F.

FRED M. ARNOLT, JR.

A.P.O. 680

February 22, 1943

Dear Folks,

It [redacted] all night the night before last and some yesterday and some more last night so things are a wee bit [redacted] around here this morning. Today is clear and when that sun gets high it should [redacted] up swiftly around here. Yesterday was Sunday and due to the rain we had our first day off in many weeks. Suited me fine as I have had a slight cold and sore throat for the past few days and yesterday I stayed in camp and took care of it. Feel better this morning and if the sun dries out things enough will be out working after lunch. As you probably know by now I am one of a very small group of civilians remaining here in this camp with the soldiers to finish up the job in this area. For the last four weeks I have been operating a #12 on the fine finishing work. My rating and rate of pay as road foreman is unchanged but they were so short of experienced "blade" men I had to get up in a "blade" myself. We are working very hard to get finished up as soon as possible and time is still passing quickly for me which is a help. I certainly miss you all there at home and am looking forward to seeing you

FRED M. ARNOLD, JR.

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before summer.

Jolly is well and working hard. Jimmy is probably home there now at the time you are reading this letter or will be soon. I guess you'll know the answers to a lot of questions concerning us when you see Jimmy. As far as I know at present I'll be on my way home shortly after March 29th at which time my present contract terminates. About the only thing that would change this would be an urgent request from the Army to stay a little longer – that they really needed me here, or a chance to go north to work in a decent summer climate. These things look rather remote right now. I am anxious to get in the service anyhow and must come home to do that. If there was any chance of a commission I would stay but there isn't. I can come home and get in the ranks and possibly get a good non-com's rating and be in the U.S.A. for a month or so anyhow.

Hope you are all staying well now. Must have been a tough winter – cold and with inadequate fuel. In some ways we have been very lucky. There is practically no where to go here but I guess there is practically no way to go there √ at home so we (continued on back of page) aren't too badly situated.

Are you finding enough work now to keep busy, Dad? Sure hope so, though I guess construction activity will taper off from now on except for overseas work. From what little war news we get it sounds like the war may last a long while yet. Of course there's always a chance that Germany may blow apart suddenly but darned if it looks very probably.

Naturally I have done no hunting since I sold my beloved shotgun but I've been too busy anyhow and the ducks have mostly all gone further south. We see a few of the big mallards along the road waddling around in the newly planted fields but the thousands that were here through October, November and December have left. Have seen no geese or wild swans in a month. When you ~~teff~~ see Jimmy tell him

that the natives caught a fish out of our swimming hole in the river that was 5 ft. 8 in. long and weighed over 100 lbs. I hardly believed it when I saw the darn thing. The river is no more then a good size trout stream. It was'nt a carp. Looked like a wall eyed pike in some ways but had no teeth. Well, I'm getting near the end of the paper so must close. Love to you all. Expect me soon (Ihope) Fred

Up the right side

P.S. Wrote to Joe Benes and received a reply from him.

FRED M. ARNOLT, JR.

A.P.O. 680

March 4, 1943

Dear Folks,

Dad's letter of the 26th January arrived today. Glad to hear you're all well. Your far straying son will soon be on the way home, probably before this month is up according to the latest information. Plane transportation is like the general's gold stars, only for the elite, so I'll be coming via water however I'll dodge all the torpedoes. Jimmy is probably home now as you're reading this letter so you, no doubt, know much about our doings. Jolly is signing up for another three month period. He just received a nice raise and I don't blame him for wanting to stay for a few months longer on his new rate. He is in the garage a good deal of the time and out of much of the sun and dust. The job has agreed with Jolly 100% and he has worked hard and earned his raises. I had an opportunity to stay on for three to six months but as my work is about finished now I'd just as soon come home and start out new. The money just doesn't equal another summer's blazing heat here.

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FRED M. ARNOLT, JR.

Sorry to hear your job bidding has not been particularly successful in the last few months, Dad. Suppose new construction in the States is now dropping off and everyone is getting hungry again.

I just about had my mind made up that I wanted to get in the army when I reach home but the boys stationed here in this camp are sure doing a job of talking me out of it. If they keep on telling me their experiences when they were first drafted they'll have me signing up for another war job when I get home instead of waiting for the draft. Your remark about the papers stating that married men without children would be called up within the next two months just shows the "hokum" the government is handing out. Hell, Dad, fifty percent of the men stationed here are married and have children and they were drafted six months or more ago. There are men here 44 years old, married with children that were drafted. Of course they're "non combatant" at present but they're soldiers just the same.

The soldiers here certainly are a nice bunch

(over)

There are only about ten civilians here and around sixty soldiers. We get along handsomely and couldn't ask for more congenial companions.

There is nothing new. Before too long I'll be home to see you and tell you all. Stay well and good luck to you on some work, Dad. Love to you all.

Fred

FRED M. ARNOLT, JR.

A.P.O. 680

March 19, 1943

In Iran

My Darling,

Your homesick Hubby sure finds the hours dragging by now. Wish my ship was sailing tomorrow but I have heard nothing definite except that my name is listed for the next ship which may possibly leave before the end of the month, now less than two weeks away. In this country of bare dirt much rain makes a real mess and it has rained intermittently for the past week. For miles around the desert is a sea of deep gooey mud and water. Our work the past few days has been limited mainly to hauling convoy trucks through the mud and we have had many idle hours which pass slowly.

However, my Sweetheart, I keep from feeling too depressed by the wonderful dreams and fancies of our soon-to-come meeting. I too have realized more and more during this year we have been apart how much you

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FRED M. ARNOLT, JR.

mean to me and how much I love you and need you. Probably the majority of my letters seemed unlike real love letters and possibly my lines of love sounded more like pure physical passion but, believe me Sweetheart, I could not find words to express my true feelings in these letters, usually written after a tedious day's labor when my mind was pretty tired and dull. I, too, feel, like you, that I have grown up. All the little petty trifling annoyances that used to build up to large proportions in my mind before now seem silly. I can think of a hundred occasions, seems like, when I just made an ass of myself over some little thing and when those times come to mind I remember how patient and considerate you always were – times when you should have been kicking me in the pants instead of humoring me. Darling, if I took you for granted before I sure never will again. The luckiest and happiest thing that ever happened

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FRED M. ARNOLT, JR.

to me was when you came down the aisle on Elmer's arm, looking like an angel and became the swellest wife a fellow ever had. Sweetheart, don't take this letter for one written on a whim at the spur of a moment. It's not that I just feel homesick and lovesick and sentimental tonight but I realize that many of my other letters may not have shown you how I really feel about you and tonight my mind is clear and fresh and full of thoughts of my Darling.

We certainly have a wonderful future ahead of us – our own little home, some little ones and you and I together always. There could never have been any doubt that I would be 100% true to you spiritually during the past year of separation and when I feel proud of myself because I was physically true to you under trying conditions it is really a false vanity because, had I been otherwise than true, I would have most surely been a fool.

Don't worry, Sweet, I will be (continued on back)

home safely and soon. It just isn't destined to be otherwise.

Try to get that vacation and see if you can't plan a little honeymoon trip for us as I mentioned yesterday. This year has done us both a world of good I believe, in many ways and soon we can reap a little of the harvest. I love you much more than life itself, Darling. Dream of me – perhaps our dreams will join.

Your own – Fred

FRED M. ARNOLT, JR.

A.P.O. 680

In Iran

March 21, 1943

Dear Folks,

The country hereabouts has certainly changed it's appearance in a few weeks. Only a month or so past they had dust storms in this section and today the entire desert is inundated and looks like part of the sea. As you know, I have been in this desolate desert camp for the past couple weeks. During this time it has rained about ten days and we have been wallowing in glue like mud and water most of the time. A large, usually placed, river about twenty five miles from here has overflowed it's banks and now the entire prairie is part of that river even to the hundreds of seagulls flying around and possibly to the fish. If anyone had told me before that this ordinarily dusty dry section would turn into a lake inside of a week I would hardly have believed them. Naturally our work has been hindered greatly and much of our time is devoted to getting convoy trucks out of the mud and on their way again. The camp itself is ankle deep in mud and altogether a messy

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FRED M. ARNOLT, JR.

proposition. However I don't have long to go now. My contract runs out is eight more days and there is plenty of transportation available at the present time so I should be on my way shortly. The experiences of the past two weeks have just clinched in my mind the fact that Iran (we are allowed to mention that now) is one of the most unpleasant, uncomfortable and unattractive countries in the world and that is I never see it again it will suit me fine. Even the wonderful duck hunting I had doesn't change that viewpoint.

Sure will be glad to get home for awhile no matter what the conditions are. Am certainly anxious to see you all again and am looking forward to it earnestly. Just what my status will be and awaits me re the draft board etc. naturally causes me some speculation but not worry. Felt pretty patriotic and all that for a long time in regard to getting in the service as soon as possible but I'm afraid the insight I have received during the last month or so has pretty well disillusioned me. Guess its' just as well because

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FRED M. ARNOLT, JR.

It would'nt be pleasant to join up or be inducted with that false impression in my mind that I have been cultivating for some time. Jimmy (he should be home by now) knows about how I felt before about getting into the service as soon as possible. He had an inkling of the set up here just before he left. Well, he was right 100% and I'm afraid my attitude has changed considerably. Perhaps I'll see it in a different light when I reach home. The country and conditions here don't lead to much clear thinking.

The wind just picked up (we have many gales here) and the tent acts like it's going to leave for neighboring Iraq but it never had before so I'll relax.

Don't know the date of my departure but feel you can expect me before or in the early part of June at least. My love to you all. I'll see you soon a soft bed and plenty to read will be a treat. And to be with all my loved ones will be best of all.

Fred

F.M. ARNOLT

A.P.O. 680

March 25, 1943

Dear Folks,

Only four more days and my nine months in Iran are up. Have heard nothing definite about departure date yet. The flood in these parts has hindered transportation to a great extent and no doubt has caused some delay in (redacted). We have been unable to work for several days and I've been passing the time walking (eight miles a day), reading and sleeping. There's little to read but old copies of Reader's Digest, the most popular literature in these parts. Some of the articles about "state of mind" and government bureaucracy, particularly in the capitol make me wonder if we'll ever win this war. These articles were written in late '42 and give me the impression that the New Deal bunch are still playing political games with the war effort and, that, while our soldiers are dying in North Africa and Guadalcanal. It doesn't seem possible that the people are going to sit back and watch Roosevelt and "his boys" mess up the war effort like the WPA. That is, and let him get away with it. Personally, I think he's too darn Navy-minded to be the big boss of the fighting effort. To my mind we should concentrate a large percentage of effort on planes – bigger, faster, more heavily armed and longer ranged

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Because control of the air is certainly winning or losing this war on sea as well as on land and the biggest damn battleship is just a rowboat with a few air rifles for protection without superiority in the air over it. One battleship in the building sure takes time, effort and money that could well be better spent on thousands of long range bombers. Oh well, may be I'm all wet and should keep my mind on the road building business.

The last few days have been clear and sunny and most of the ankle deep mud had dried up in the immediate vicinity of the camp which is a distinct (redacted). Have heard nothing re Jimmy's return voyage. Probably he's home safe and sound by now. Jolly is in a camp considerably north of here but unfortunately not in the "north" but perhaps he may get a break and be sent up there before the real hot weather starts. I feel pretty certain that I would have stayed on longer had we been assured of going north and if our food was a little better. We're now on B rations and our only meat is Spam, frankfurters and canned willie. I can still go the canned willie but the Spam and weiners – brrrr! We have no fresh vegetables of course and a very small variety (continued on reverse side)

of canned. Since army B ration started about a month and a half ago my old "consti" trouble returned to some extent. I had been untroubled by that for eight long months. However, I still feel healthy and have had no real illness all the time I've been here so have a great deal to be thankful for.

Hope you are getting more work, Dad. Guess it's going to be tight going for awhile on construction work within the U.S. There must still be plenty of overseas work yet, particularly in South America.

No more news at present. Rumor has us leaving here about (redacted on previous pages) but that's my unverified rumor probably worth nothing.

Love to you all and I'll be with you soon.

Fred

U.S. NAVAL CONSTRUCTION TRAINING CENTER

CAMP PEARY

WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA

NOVEMBER 12, 1943

Dear Folks,

Received your letter of Wednesday and Eddie's latest this morning. Glad to hear you rushed my "tonic". I sure can use it and it should arrive shortly.

Much of the gang, including me, are stiff and sore from the obstacle course which we went over yesterday morning. In addition we had our typhoid and tetanus shots yesterday afternoon.

So Eddie and Sue are to be married around Christmas. That's swell. I do not think I'll be there but wish I could. What I meant about the length of my training period was 3 plus 4 weeks of training. Three weeks of "boot" and about four weeks of "advanced". There is a very remote possibility that I might be home around Christmas time but it is highly improbable. They are so crowded with new SeeBees that some of the recent leaves or libertys have been (continued on back of page 1)

longer than usual. The regular leave period after breaking "boot" is 12 hours and after completion of "advanced" – ten days. Some of the recent graduates have gotten 62 hours to ten days after breaking boot and ten to fifteen days after breaking advanced but don't figure on it because its improbable.

There are upwards of 60,000 C.B.s here now and they are coming in (or were last week) at the rate of 500 to 1,000 a day. (this information is not for the general public) So it's a crowded camp.

Our training and lectures are all on military subjects not – nothing pertaining to construction work. By the way, Dad, this camp covers about 34 sq mi. How does that compare with Kilmer? I think the weather is miserable down here. A raw penetrating cold. We are up and standing in formation from 5:15 A.M. on and its might chilly, especially before sun-up. We are not supposed to wear too much clothes as we are in a "hardening up" process. They say we'll get used to it and I guess we will. I feel sorry for some of the fellows from the deep South (Louisiana etc.) We have several in our

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U.S. NAVAL CONSTRUCTION TRAINING CENTER

CAMP PEARY

WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA

platoon and they really suffer from the cold. There are a couple of things I could use but there's no hurry. Send them along anytime you have time = 2 med. Size bath towels, all white (for spares), one washcloth, 4 pr. Regular G.I. all wool grey socks (Could be gotten at Army and Navy store or Cheap Johns sometime when you are handy to them, Dad) size 12., that R.O.T.C. Army Engineers book I bought some time ago (this will be very valuable to me during my present training). That's about all for the present, thanks.

I have sent postcards to almost everyone though I don't have time to write them all (Grandad, Goepels, Meserolls, Eddie, etc.) Of course I'll write Eddie a letter very shortly. Dad, I wonder if I could have the New Brunswick paper sent to me. I would like it if possible. (continued on back of page 2)

Well the C.P.O. is calling us out for some detail so I must close. Love to you all – every one.

Fred

U.S. NAVAL CONSTRUCTION TRAINING CENTER

CAMP PEARY

WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA

Sunday,

November 14, 1943

Dear Folks,

Well we have just received an announcement that causes mixed feelings. Our "boot" training has been lengthened and we will not break boot until the 16th of December. The advance camps are evidently so crowded that they must hold us longer. They are sending many of the new inductees right back home for 30 days after they go through the reception center here. Of course the first feeling is one of disappointment. Being a lowly boot isn't much fun and we are all looking forward to "breaking" and getting into "advance". On the other hand, we need the extra training badly and it will no doubt be to our great advantage after we get on Island X. (Out of ink) This puts a better light on (continued on back of page 1)

my getting home around Christmas time but its all pure conjecture at present. Generally there is only a short liberty after "breaking boot" but due to the lengthened period of isolation and detention they might just possibly give us a better break on that leave. Remains to be seen. This order affects all boots in Peary (2 weeks extension for each Area)

I hope the Aggie will arrive soon because I really need it. I am starting to have a little pile trouble because of the darn "consti". Other wise I feel swell. Once I am able to get "started regularly" I don't anticipate any big difficulty because of the rigouous exercise. Its just that "getting started" business.

Went to church this morning with some of my platoon buddies and about 3,000 other "boots" from our Area and adjoining Areas 06, 7 + 8. There are services for Protestant, Catholic, Hebrew and Christian Science at different locations and different hours. Church is not compulsory. In our particular barracks about 30 out of 60 attended one/ or the other of the services. Enclosed is program. Well, must close. Love to you all, each and everyone.

Fred

U.S. NAVAL CONSTRUCTION TRAINING CENTER

CAMP PEARY

WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA

NOVEMBER 14, 1943

Dear Folks,

Just a short note. Mail is delivered here on Sundays but I didn't get my letters from my Flossie although your package arrived. Now, I'm pretty worried because I haven't heard a word from Flossie since I got here and I've written her every day. Your letter came yesterday, Dad. Thanks. If my Flossie was all right I would certainly have received a few letters from her by now. I don't know just what to do. We are not allowed out of the Area or I would telephone her. If I don't hear from her in the next two days I'll go the the Chaplain and see if he can help me to get contact with her. I'm really worried now. If anything is wrong (continued on back of page 1)

please let me know. This silence from her is far more worrisome then knowing would be.

All my love,

Fred

U.S. NAVAL CONSTRUCTION TRAINING CENTER

CAMP PEARY

WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA

NOVEMBER 20, 1943

0700

Dear Folks,

Well my cold feels better this morning. I was pretty uncomfortable yesterday and when we went over the obstacle course I felt like an old man. But I feel much more chipper today and I guess old man cold is on the down-grade.

Received your letter, Dad, and the clipping from the N. Eve. News about opening day. Looks as though I didn't miss much. Thanks for getting all that gear for me. It should arrive by Monday. In regard to the other items; the Navy issues us a good pocketknife and, if we need a compass, I have no doubt it will be issued to us. A good hunting knife with a long blade (about 7") is much desired (continued on back of page 1)

by all Marines & Seebecs going overseas. Among other things it is used as a personal defense weapon. The big rub is to find a good knife. They are scarce as hen's teeth. I know because I did some looking around before I came into the service. They have these long bladed knives in many A. & N. stores but they are cheap in quality although not cheap in price. I don't need one right now but might want one in the future so, in your travels, keep your eyes open. It would make a good Christmas present if you could find one. I could use a little pocket honing stone. These are about ½" X 1" X 3" in size and should be fairly easy to locate. Could also use some plain white envelopes (they're scarce around here) stationary size (6" or 8" long). Those licorice pastilles (sugar coated) that you sent, Mother, really hit the spot and you can send more any time you want. Some nice eating apples would be mighty nice, too. Seems like I

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CAMP PEARY

WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA

keep asking for stuff every letter. I'll get caught up pretty soon with the "gimmee" line.

Well, Monday morning will see two full weeks of "boot" by the board. (Our actual "boot" schedule started on Monday, Nov. 8 and is now scheduled to end on Dec 16th, a total of 5 ½ weeks) Glad two weeks are by and wish it were four. Naturally we're all anxious to get into "advance" where the training is more in our line of occupation and more interesting. But of course this basic is necessary. Also, in regard to "advance", I understand you can send your clothes to a laundry there and that's some relief. The actual clothes washing isn't bad but there are 240 men to each washroom which has a capacity of about 15 men and there are (continued on back of page 2)

about 8 buckets. When you hang your whites on the line the soot from the galley stove is apt to dapple them with black spots and you must then do them over again. So you see how it is.

1200

Well, we had bayonet and machete training this morning. I don't know what's in store this P.M. The bayonet and machete training we get here is just enough to make us realize that we actually would' nt have a chance against an experienced bayonet or machete operator and the best thing to do is stay supplied with ammunition. According to our C.O. about 1 out of 10 Seebes actually see combat action but of course a far larger percentage will be subjected to aerial bombardment at some time during their See Bee career. The See Bees have their own Commando battalions, chosen, of course, from young athletic lads. These are demolition experts. About ¼ of them are assigned to and trained with the Marines. No other See Bees actually don Marine uniforms. Well, time to seat. Love to you all – Fred

November 20, 1943

2030

Dear Folks,

Mother's letter of Friday A.M. received tonite. You certainly are busy writing, Mom. Guess Eddie and I keep you pretty busy. Let me tell you your letters mean a great deal to me and I know they do to Eddie. Mail call at noon and before supper are the high spots of the day and it's a real thrill to hear your name called and get that envelope with the familiar writing from home on it. Flossie's letters are coming now so everything is fine. My cold is lessening in severity and the "Aggie" has straightened out the other situation so I'm feeling peppier. The last couple of days the weather has been warm and pleasant. It could stay this way all winter and all the SeeBees in Camp Peary would be happy. Bet you got a kick out of the neat way my "civvies" were packed in that carton mailed from here. We were all standing naked holding our clothes and the boxes were thrown at us and a P.O. bellowed "Stow that damn civilian gear and zoot suits in those boxes and do it "on the double" ". We just pushed our clothes in the cartons, paid the postage and were herded into the medical department.

I would certainly like to get home (continued on back of page 1)

for Eddie's and Sue's big event and I'll just have to hope hard that it turns out that way. What's Jim Fish doing now? Have they offered him a Colonelcy yet? Well, its time for "taps" so I'll say goodnite.

Sunday

0930

Our whole barracks (2 Platoons) are on mess detail today. We have a few minutes between shifts right now. We start at 4:30 A.M. or 4:30 and are finished at 1930 but usually have an hour or so between shifts. I'm on my regular job of washing department (Otherwise known as Captain of the Scullery) Some title! I much prefer wood chopping, ditch digging etc. The only good thing about K.P. on Sunday is that we don't have to stand on the drill field for 2 or 3 hrs. this afternoon for inspection by the C.O. That's generally a tedious proposition.

If we are six weeks in "boot" we're very apt to get a 62 hr. liberty after "breaking". This wouldn't put me home for Xmas but it would be mighty nice to get home then, even for a short time. Of course anything can happen so we'll just have to hope.

So long for today. Love to you all.

I'll write soon again. Fred

November 23, 1943

2000

Dear Folks,

Received a nice Thanksgiving card and note from Aunt Marion, a letter from Eddie and the New Brunswick paper today. Thanks a lot, Dad, for sending my Field & Stream and the N.B. paper. The F. and S. this month was certainly a duck hunter's issue and it is giving me much enjoyment. Eddie's letter was short and contained mostly his leave plans inasmuch as he has been able to plan so far. Unfortunately there was no way I could give him any positive assurance that I would be able to be his best man, which I certainly desire. It would be a great disappointment to me not to be able to be at his wedding. I answered him as best as I could. Just have to hope for the best. Of course he can be assured of using y car on his "wedding" leave. The way things are shaping up around here I wouldn't be one bit surprised if we break boot on the 2nd instead of the 16th. I know nothing definite but our Chief (C.P.O.) seems to think it a possibility that we break on the 2nd and be shipped to Rhode Island. This is not official; just a rumored possibility. Once in advance training in R.I. I might have a chance of getting a special 62 hr. leave but of course I'm not sure of anything.

My cold is about gone now and I'm (continued on back of page 1)

feeling pretty good. Between the candy etc. that you sent and a large box of goodies from Flossie I am in pretty fair shape for sweets. Hardly have room to stow it all now so don't send anything more except, may be, some of those sugar coated licorice pastilles some time in the future.

We are brushing up on our drilling, bayonet and machete fighting and skirmishing in the woods. Tomorrow we are going to have drill setting up shelter halves (pup tents). We also get some more shots tomorrow. Washing clothes here is sure a headache. As I said before, it isn't the actual washing that's difficult, its sharing that 15 man washroom with 240 other guys between the hours of 7 P.M. and 9:30 P.M. Sounds impossible doesn't it. It damn neas is! I was up at 3:30 A.M. this morning to do my [xed out word] washing and that is actually against regulations. However you get "gigged" for dirty clothes so it's the lesser of two evils.

Sure hope I am sent to R.I. The train connections from here are punk. I understand they are good from Camp Endicott to N.Y. Well, Folks, its time for sleep. Love to you all.

Fred

U.S. NAVAL CONSTRUCTION TRAINING CENTER

CAMP PEARY

Williamsburg, Virginia

1 December 1943

My dear Mrs. Arnolt:

It was our privilege and pleasure to guide your son Frederick ,

To a profession of his faith in Jesus Christ while he was in "boot" training in Camp Peary. Christian baptism was administered on a previous date.

Your son has expressed a desire to unite with the Dutch Reform Church Church of Amboy Ave. Metuchen, N.J. and we have written the pastor of that church sending him the necessary information. The pastor will, I am sure, see that the name of your son is entered on the membership roll of the church.

We are very happy that your son has made this important decision and we pray God's richest blessing on him and his loved ones.

Sincerely yours,

J.T. Burns (stamped signature)

Chaplain, USNR

December 1, 1943

Dear Folks,

Received Mother's letter of Monday yesterday. We were pretty busy the last day or so getting all our clothes washed and rolled for the big inspection and I didn't have much spare time for writing. Now the Inspection is over and we can relax until the next one.

We have received official notice that we will break boot on Dec. 16th or 17th and possibly on Dec. 23rd. The basic training has been extended at all See Bee Camps and areas. I guess they are getting plenty of men out in the field now and can afford to give the new men more training. Of course this is to our ultimate benefit but we all are anxious to break boot and become full fledged See Bees. We are breaking "detention" Friday. This means we will not be confined to this Area any more and will be able to go any place in the Camp. It really doesn't mean too much. We have a few more recreation facilities available and (continued on back of page)

That's about all.

I am very much afraid that I am not going to be able to make Eddie's wedding. Chances are we will be shipped out to R.I. or some other place a day or two after breaking boot. Then they might only give us a 24 hour liberty. From what I can find out there is very little chance of us receiving an extended leave after boot as some of the recent "graduates" have been fortunate enough to receive. The big rush is over and they are only taking in about 1/3 the amount of men per day as they did a few weeks ago and therefore conditions are not going to be so crowded that they will give us 5 or 10 day leaves. Christmas is, of course, a gamble. We must just hope and pray we can get together then. My chances will be better, I imagine, if I am shipped to R.I.

If you find time you could mail me some more of those sugar coated licorice pastilles like you sent before and I also need some plain envelopes.

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We are lucky and we can get plenty of chocolate candy here at the Ship's Store but those licorice pastilles really hit the spot and they are compact and easily packed away.

We had tent pitching drill and lectures on long marches etc. this A.M. I guess we have bayonet drill etc. this afternoon. Tomorrow we go on a fifteen mile hike with packs and rifles.

It snowed yesterday and was mighty cold and raw. Today is cold but clear. We are still running around in summer underwear, a jersey and a suit of coveralls but we aren't getting "used" to sunny Virginia yet because everyone still has colds.

Its not hard to understand why service men hate John L. Lewis and what he stands for. One reason hits right close to home. Due to the coal shortage caused, in part, by the striking miners we have to burn wood in our barracks (continued on back of page 2)

Stoves and as we are unable to get enough wood we can only use one of the two stoves in a barracks. Consequently one end of the barracks is seasonally warm and the other end is like an icebox. However, I am still feeling ok except for a cold and I don't regret "signing up" one bit.

Well its time to fall out so good afternoon.

Love to you all. I certainly miss you all.

Fred

December 9, 1943

1200

Dear Estelle,

Received your letter and envelopes with V-mail from Joe Benes in England. Your's amd Johnny's card also came this morning. Mother wrote me and told about my entering the Church. I am certainly pround and happy about it. I was a little surprised as I didn't expect it to take place so soon.

We have'nt heard anything new about "breaking boot." The date still is tossed around from Dec. 16th to Dec. 23rd. We have also heard nothing about any prospective leave or liberty and no doubt will know nothing until the very last minute. I'm certainly hoping I'll get home for either Eddie's wedding or Christmas but I can't figure on it at present.

We have been taking several 10 to 15 mile hikes recently and this afternoon we go over the obstacle course again. This makes about 10 times for that. We had lectures all morning. We don't seem to be getting any drill or instruction of a new nature now and seem to be reviewing what we have already learned. (continued on back of page)

December 10, 1943

1800

Well, I'm back again. We have been pretty busy. Had our second "bag inspection" today. It was a strict one and we had much preparation. "Bag Inspections" is an inspection by the Area C.O. of all your clothing and equipment. It must all be clean and tightly and neatly rolled, then arranged in certain order on your bunk. Each man wears clean clothes from head to toe and when the inspecting party enters the barracks you snap to attention and remain that way until each man's gear has been inspected (30 minutes to 1 hr.). If your eyes move at all from a position straight ahead, they knock off points. They're fussy!

Received a nice letter and a New Testament from H. Ver Strate yesterday and today Mother's licorice and envelopes arrived. Thanks very much. Please pass the word around. Don't send me any Xmas presents or, in fact, any more boxes for awhile. We have a sneaky suspicion they might move us shortly (probably to another Area in this camp) and storage space is small Love to you

All. Fred (continued up right side of letter)

P.S. Received a nice box of fudge from Thelma today.

11 December 43

1900

Dear Mother and Dad,

Received Dad's letter of the 10th tonight and received the licorice and envelopes day before yesterday for which I thank you very much.

I have sounded out my C.O., against the advice of my platoon Chief, 're a special leave to attend Eddie's wedding. The answer was definitely no and, although I didn't exactly receive a reprimand, the C.O. inferred that I was wasting his valuable time. I'm in the Navy now and next time I'll know better. Emergency leaves in cases of serious illness or death in one's immediate family are granted after negotiation and investigation by the American Red Cross. These are the only leaves granted in "boot". I'm certainly disappointed. It means a very great deal to me to be present at my kid brother's wedding but there seems to be no help for it and it must just be a sacrifice made for the service. (continued on back of page)

I purchased some little See Bee lockets and have mailed them to Flossie, Mother. She will pass one on to you. It was easier to send them in one package to one place. They aren't anything special but are the only thing in the See Bee pin line I have been able to locate so far. Perhaps I'll run across something a little better one of these days. I think a pin would be more suitable.

My health is good. Of course I have the Camp Peary "Croup" but a cold is one of the standard features of this place and after a few weeks one gets used to having it. About three days ago it was quite warm and we were going around in a sweat all day. Yesterday it suddenly turned cold and windy and last night and this morning very cold and very windy. Its about 20° out with a high northwest wind. I find the barracks quite comfortable and in general seem to feel the cold less then about 75% of the gang here – which seems strange. Personally I feel as though I am harder and in much better shape physically then I have been in many years. I don't have bulging muscles

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U.S. NAVAL CONSTRUCTION TRAINING CENTER

CAMP PEARY

WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA

or an inverted pyramid physique but I can take a 15 mile hike over rough terrain with full field pack in good shape and yesterday I had a ditch digging detail (It was our platoon's "duty day") and I worked hard and continuously with pick and shovel for eight hours without becoming unduly tired. So I feel that regardless of what may come I am doing myself a lot of good here. I have 'nt weighed myself since my induction into the camp when I weighed in at 192# but I believe that I weigh about 175# now and I feel fit.

They are still kicking our "breaking" date around from the 17th to the 23rd. Personally I now hope it is the 23rd. There is no chance of my making Eddie's and Sue's wedding in either event and if we do break on the 23rd, they might be (continued on back of page 2)

Kind and give us a 62 hr. leave which would put me at Lake + Spring on Christmas Day. Here's hoping!

Now, about Christmas presents etc. I have thought is all over and have reached this conclusion. It looks to me now as though we will have seven weeks of "boot training". In the past they have given boot trainees who had "broken" after 6 weeks training a 62 hr. leave. (After 4 weeks boot – a 12 hr. leave) of course this does 'nt mean that we'll get it but it looks possible. I feel that somewhere in the vicinity of Christmas I'll have a short leave. It might be before Dec. 25th or after. I would rather that no one send me any Christmas packages. I'll take my chances and have my Christmas on my first leave, whether its Dec. 25, Jan. 25 or Feb. 25. I have no place to keep any presents here and if we had to move suddenly, anything extra would be a real problem. So lets have it that way. Send me nice letters whenever you can but no presents. I hope we'll be together soon. All my love –

Fred

(Up right side of letter)

P.S. Dear Dad, I still think that was a C.B. bulldozer operator!

U.S. NAVAL CONSTRUCTION TRAINING CENTER

CAMP PEARY

WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA

December 16, 1943

1230

Dear Folks,

If my writing appears ahaky, please overlook. I don't have St. Vitus dance but its about 34^o in the barracks. Due to the fuel shortage we are only allowed to heat (?) the barracks from 1730 to 0730 and it was + 8^o early this morning with a strong wind blowing. The last four days have been absolutely miserable - very cold and windy with an overcast sky and snow flurries.

Now, we have received some official news and its all bad. I am going to let you know all the details and then I am going to try and forget about it and settle down optpmistically to a long monotonous stay right here in Camp Peary. None of us will receive any leave (continued on back of page)

for Christmas. None of us will receive any leave after breaking boot, possibly the 23rd, possibly the 29th. There is a slight possibility that we might get a 62 hour liberty after breaking boot but it is mighty uncertain. We are not leaving Camp Peary and we will receive our "advanced training" right here in sunny (?) Virginia. We are all to be placed in a "replacement" or reserve group and may have to wait some time before we even get into "advance" training. During this period, and it could be months, we will be on Ship's Detail and do plenty of K.P., guard duty and wood chopping etc. with a little drilling mixed in. Our C.O. has informed us that it is highly probable that none of us will ever get overseas and it is possible that the majority of us may never get into "advance training". He says that all the embarkation stations are loaded with trained CBvbattalions waiting

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WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA

for shipment overseas and that the advance camps are overloaded. We are surplus and will be part of the CB reserves probably held in this country. Isn't that disgusting! The ironical fact is that, if I had been in two days earlier I would have had four weeks boot, had ny advance training about completed and would be getting my 10 day embarkation leave on the 22nd. What a break! Well, its all water over the dam now and I'll have to reconcile myself to a rather monotonous and lengthy period here at Camp Peary. You would think that, as we are surplus, we would be apt to get leave a little easier but the true condition is just the reverse. From what the C.O. told us and from (continued on back of page 2)

the facts I have gleaned from many conversations with CB's who have been here in Camp Peary for many months, leaves are few and far between. The CBs receive less leaves then either the Army or the regular Navy. Generally, after being here three or four months, you are supposed to get a 62 hr. liberty and then, after that, a 62 every two months. You also get "12" hrs (evenings off) about twice a week.

Your leave adds up one day a month and after 12 mos. Here you are entitled to a 10 day leave. Of course, after "advance" you get that 10 day embarkation leave whether you are actually going to embark or not but there's no saying, now, when we will even start "advance" training. Folks, this is all the unpleasant news. Lets all forget about leaves or liberty entirely and if I should happen to get a 62 hr. after breaking boot, we'll just accept it as a present, unexpected. On the black side of the ledger – my health is good and I

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CAMP PEARY

WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA

expect it to remain that way. The training and routine here, although not as pleasant as a normal civilian life, is bound to do me a lot of good and the food and living conditions are far better then life on a transport or in Iran. So I'll just make the best of it.

The ban on packages is off again. The highlight of our life here is "mail call" I would appreciate if you will have my American Rifleman and Field + Stream mailed direct to me from the publishers. → (up side of letter) Or, if it isn't too much trouble Dad, you could forward them on to me as you did that one Field + Stream. If you send me any "goodies" don't send too big a package at a time. A small package a little oftener is better then a large package at long intervals. We just might move someday and surplus material is difficult. I still think it (continued on back of page 3) beter that you hold my Christmas presents. I don't know what they are, of course, and don't know where I could stow them right now. So hold them for awhile. Write whenever you can find the time.

I am certainly sorry I couldn't make Eddie's wedding. Give my love and congratulations to them. I could 'nt send a telegram from here. The phone situation is nice here, too. There are 6 (six) pay phones available in camp for the entire enlisted personnel of 60,000 men or more. The phone line is a mile long and long-distance calls are a real chore.

I'm not too downhearted despite the disgusting news. Just send me cheerful letters wehever you find the time and I'll get along oke. Alongside ~~of~~ life at home, this is rough. Alongside life overseas (in Iran for instance) this is paradise so I'm not kicking.

Love to you all,

Fred

U.S. NAVAL CONSTRUCTION TRAINING CENTER

CAMP PEARY

WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA

DECEMBER 19, 1943

0900

Dear Folks,

The bitter cold has kept pretty steady for the entire week. It warmed up a little yesterday afternoon but is cold again this morning. We have K.P. again this Sunday so instead of a day off, have a long hour day.

Well, brother Eddie is a married man now and I'll bet he is happy. Hope he had a nice little honeymoon and I hope my Ford behaves all right. Sure sorry I missed the wedding.

The sudden change in weather and extreme cold has brought on an increase in "cat fever" and colds. At present I have a severe head cold and feel pretty uncomfortable. The latest bulletin put up on the board 're the status of Area D-5 was quite discouraging and has most of the boys pretty much (continued on back of page)

Down in the dumps. Our boot has been extended to Dec. 30 and the bulletin says we should expect no leave until our embarkation leave and, as this is after completing advance training, it will likely be after the end of January. Of course the bulletin was also interlaced with comments about us now being in the Navy and the nation being at war etc. and on and on. The bitter truth is that our Area (1200 men) has just hit hard luck on this whole deal. Men coming in just one or two days before us have all ready finished boot and advance and are now home on their 10 day leave. Men coming in just after us, because of the overcrowded conditions, were given 10 and 15 day leaves. We just seem to be unfortunate enough to be caught in between. The irony of it is that our Area ranks pretty high in marks. The top drill platoon of the entire camp comes from our Area. We are not being "held back". Its just the breaks, I guess. We really can't be sure of anything. Our Area C.O. told one of our men

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WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA

this morning that, as our "breaking date" has been changed three times already, it could be changed again in either direction. He also told our Chief that he thinks we have a good chance of getting a leave any time from Jan. 1st on but that he could 'nt put that in an official bulletin yet. We'll just have to keep hoping and praying.

The mail situation is terrible right now. I've received one letter and one Xmas card in the last 6 days. I guess the mail is all jammed up at the Williamsburg P.O.

I would rather you held my Christmas presents here at home. I still feel I'll be home for a leave before spring. You may send any goodies you wish, however, but don't send too big a package at one time.

(continued back of page 2)

Our real "boot" training is actually over; that is we don't have any new subjects. We have had some lectures three times over again. They just seem to be trying to find things to keep us busy. We take long hikes every other day or so and do a lot of camp maintenance work. If I can get rid of this nasty cold, I'll get along fine. January isn't so far away now.

My hair was really sheered off that first day at the Camp induction center and it is just now getting barely long enough to comb a little.

Unpleasant as the cold spell was here, I couldn't help thinking of the swell duck hunting they must have had down (or up) at Dividing Creek. Sure be glad when I can get back in a blind down there on a cold windy December morning.

Love to you all – Fred

U.S. NAVAL CONSTRUCTION TRAINING CENTER

CAMP PEARY

WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA

December 21, 1943

1900

Dear Folks,

Well, I have some good news but must caution you to keep in mind the possibility that it can be changed at any time and may be. Although the official notice has not been posted on the bulletin board yet, I think I am going to be with you on New Years Day. According to the latest dope we are due to "break" on Dec. 29th and on the 30th, are due to get a 10 day leave starting early in the morning. We are then due back on Jan. 9th and are supposed to move from here on Jan. 15th; where we don't know. If this does pan out, and I now feel pretty certain in my own mind that it is straight dope, I'll have a swsll Christmas present after all and can have my Christmas (continued on back of page)

On New Years Day with you all. As soon as we receive final official confirmation of this I'll telegraph Flossie. If I can get a chance I'll telephone you. I'm looking forward to seeing you all again, enjoying Mother's fine cooking and just relaxing in front of the fire at home.

I am sending Johnny a cloth See Bee insignia that Estelle can sew (if she wants) on his sailor suit or coat. It is not an official U.S. Navy insignia and he can wear it. I also have pins for Estelle and you, Mother, that I will ring home; on the 30th, I hope.

Love to you all.

Fred

U.S. NAVAL CONSTRUCTION TRAINING CENTER

CAMP PEARY

WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA

December 22, 1943

1800

My Darling,

Your nice letter of the 20th arrived tonight and it was just what I needed to cheer me up and make me feel warm all over. Our New Years 10 day leave is still a matter of speculation and is amounting to a minor war of nerves "around here". The leave is actually on the books for us and the written order is up in our area headquarters right now but according to our platoon Chief the Area C.O. does not want to announce it to the men yet because of a possible cancellation. Anything can happen yet. Just keep on hoping, Honey. The chances are very good but don't feel certain until you get a telephone call or telegram from me saying I'm on the way or until you actually see me. (continued on back of page)

Well, I was certainly sorry that I missed Eddie's wedding but am sure glad I did 'nt miss my own because you and I seem to see matters in the same light. It was certainly the most wonderful day of my life when I walked back up the aisle with you on my arm. It has been a wonderful union up till now and we have many many wonderful years ahead of us, Darling.

It's swell that you have trimmed your figure down and are now pouring it into a size 16, Honey. I can't wait to see you, hug you and, best of all, be with you night and day. I still haven't weighed myself but I think 175 is about it. My waist is certainly a good deal slimmer anyhow and my clothes all fit me looser than they did when I first arrived here. I know you look swell and hope you'll be satisfied with your hubby.

We are no longer called "boots". We are now "boot salts" and are addressed as "sailor". A

2

"boot" by the way is "an unsuccessful draft dodger with no hair". A "boot salt" or sailor is "an unsuccessful draft dodger with some hair." I have 'nt any too much yet.

I'm glad the kids enjoyed our wedding present. Our budget, as you say, may be shot to hell but we are still in love and happy and have a lot of fun. I'm sure looking forward to having you on the sofa with me in the living room before the fire sipping rum cokes and "anticipating" – the evening ahead. I'll be glad to do a little going out too, as long as I have the "anticipation."

About the "insignia" you want to sew on your scarf. The only cloth See Bee insignia I have for you is not too small (about (continued on back of page 2) 2 ½" in diameter) It may be too large to sew on a scarf but you can have a look at the one I sent to little Johnny. I'll bring yours to you in person (soon, I hope) I also have three See Bee pins of one type, two See Bee pins of another type and another locket necklace affair similar to the ones I sent you but nicer. I hope you did 'nt mail my watch before receiving my second letter but if you did its oke. I'll get it eventually whether I get that leave or not.

We are all on “tenterhooks” around here what with Christmas coming and that 10 day leave hanging fire but we ‘re keeping cheerful. My cold is better.

We are decorating our barracks (the whole camp is) with holly, pine, waxberries etc., of which there is an abundance around here in the woods. We even have a little table Christmas tree.

God bless you, Darling, and keep you safe from worry and harm. Merry Christmas. I love you, my Dearest, with all my heart – Fred

U.S. NAVAL CONSTRUCTION TRAINING CENTER

Camp Peary

WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA

December 23, 1943

Dear Folks,

Dad's nice letter arrived this morning. Dad, I didn't know it was in you. You described Eddie 's and Sue 's lovely wedding ceremony so well that tears came to my eyes. It must have been touching. The kids do look so young. I certainly regret not being able to be Eddie 's best man.

This punk Virginia weather! The last three days have been warm and pleasant and plenty of sweating was done. Last night it turned very cold and today is 100% miserable – bitter cold, windy and overcast sky with snow flurries. Today is our duty day and I am on a carpenter detail making various repairs around camp. Spend most of the time trying to keep warm.

The whole area is agog over the (continued on back of page) rumored 10 day leave to start on December 30th. There is more than rumor involved. The actual order has come through from the main headquarters but our C.O. has held up announcement of it because of a possible cancellation. One of the potential reasons is the impending R.R. strike. I have a sneaking feeling that, in the event it has not been cancelled, we will be notified on Christmas Day. Sure hope it comes through all right. Its certainly much more than any of us expected after the last news we received from headquarters. Would be wonderful to be home with you on New Years Day.

We have decorated all the barracks, messhall, rec. hall etc. with pine, wax berries and holly which grows around camp in profusion. We are going to have Christmas Day off as well as Sunday. I don't know what we 'll do with all that spare time. Wash and roll clothes and think about home, I guess.

2

I did want to call you up on Christmas Day but there is a line about 2 miles long at the 6 telephone booths all the time. They'll probably start lining up at 1:30 A.M. Christmas morning. Everyone is pretty "high" around here now anticipating that leave. If it falls through, morale will be at a low ebb around here for awhile. My cold hangs on but it has improved in the last 3 days. I don't know what this miserable weather today will do to it. We have such a lot of constant changing from hot to cold and vice – versa.

All I can think of now is that darn leave and that is 'nt even a certainty yet. I can just visualize being home with Flossie and you all in the living room before the fire on New Years Eve. I hope it turns out to be that way but I am cushioning (continued on back of page 2) myself so that is the event it fall through, I won 't feel too sick.

I'll try to let you know by phone or telegraph when and if I am arriving home.

Love to you all – Fred.

U.S. NAVAL CONSTRUCTION TRAINING CENTER

Camp Peary

WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA

DEC. 30, 1943

[In a box]

S.D. 3012

Co. C, Platoon 4

Camp Peary, Va.

Dear Folks,

As you can see by the new address, we have made a change. We have moved into an advance area and are actually starting our advance training tomorrow. By the way leave the "Williamsburg" out of the address and just put Camp Peary, VA. Our mail will reach us a little sooner that way. So they say. The "S.D" means "Special Draft" and that is just a unit exactly like a battalion. We are now formed into a semi-permanent unit and all our training from now on will be on a battalion basis. We'll be shipped out the same way no doubt. They are forming no battalions here now, that is, the units are all called "Special Drafts". (continued on back of page)

Our New Years leave has been definitely fallen through and our first leave will be our embarkation leave which will fall about the end of January. There will be no scuttlebutt about this. We will know the exact dates of our leave in a day or so (officially). Naturally I'm disappointed as hell about not getting home for New Years but there's nothing I can do about it but grin and bear it.

Our old platoon was all broken up and I am with an entire new gang now. They seem to be segregated more nearly as to trades. Our platoon consists of mostly bulldozer operators, mechanics, etc. There are only 4 1st class men in our platoon of 34 m3n. I'm the only foreman. The other 3 are operators. I have been appointed MAA of the barracks (Master at Arms). I am in charge of the barracks except during training periods. There are a lot of commissioned officers in the unit and we

2

Have plenty of saluting to do. This area is a little nicer then the old one. We are nearer to "topside" with its stores, soda fountains and movies.

We are starting on the rifle range tomorrow. Our advance training is all given to us by U.S. Marines and they are supposed to be plenty tough. The disappointment of losing that New Years leave is alleviated somewhat by the fact that I was lucky enough to get in a regular unit starting advance right away. Now if I can get rid of the darn colds and fevers I'll be "oke". Perhaps there won't be such an epidemic of that stuff in this area. I certainly hope not. Well, as M.A.A. I won't have any K.P. or general duty, anyhow.

I'll close this note so I can get it in tonights' mail. Sure (continued on back of page 2) miss you all and look forward to the end of January when I will surely see you. Keep my Christmas presents till then.

Love to you all,

Fred

January 2, 1944

Dear Folks,

Spent a very quiet New Years here in my new barracks. Can't say I did much celebrating over the holidays as I spent Christmas plus three more days in the sick bay with a light case of flu or "cat fever." I feel better now but I still have a cold.

We had a 12 hour liberty but it fell while I was in sick bay and therefore I didn't go anywhere. We have one coming up on Monday night but I doubt if I'll go anywhere. You are off from 5 P.M. to 7 A.M. the next morning and about all a fellow can do is go to Richmond and walk the streets with thousands of other servicemen, and then come back to camp in the wee hours of the morning all tired out and a days work ahead.

Not being able to get home over New Years was a great disappointment but I 'm getting hardened now and more used to taking things as they come. The definite date for the start of our 10 day embarkation [[and]] leave is January 24th and you can figure on seeing me then.

We were actually lucky to get placed in a regular battalion and start our advance training right away. We might have been placed in a replacement pool or a stevedore battalion where one waits around indefinitely doing plenty of K.P. and guard duty. Of course we'll now get overseas sooner but that may be quite some time yet.

We have had one day on the .30 cal carbine, learning how to shoot it and take it apart etc. Monday we go to the range for three day shooting with the carbine. Next Monday the technical schools start, diesel repairs, equipment repairs, diving, earth moving, carpentry, pile driving, subgrade constructions etc. Also have schools on the B.A.R., Thompson submachine gun, 30 and 50 cal machine gun, anti aircraft, 61 mm mortar etc. The technical schools last about two weeks or a little longer then we have about a week of battle training and then our emabarkation leave.

We are all being interviewed one by one re our trades and experience by our Company Commander. I will talk to him tomorrow. I don't know what school I'll "pull". Would like to get "subgrade construction" and B.A.R. "and anti aircraft" but I won't know which I'll get. We got a fine platform chief (C.P.O.) He is a civil engineer and worked 10 years for the Nebraska Dept. of roads and highways. He has considerable "soil stabilization" experience and is one of the few Chiefs I have met that really knows his stuff. He is a swell fellow with a very pleasant personality. Our platoon is a pretty complete dirt moving outfit. We have dozer and carryall and blade men, shovel operators and truck drivers. Only one foreman though- Freddie. Of course the whole outfit may be all broken p again but there is a good chance of most of the company, at least, staying in one group.

Well time for taps now so I'll close. Love to you all. Write whenever you can. Fred

7 January 1944

Dear Folks,

We are now well started on a new year which will bring, I hope, a much closer end to the conflict. I'm still feeling fine and as healthy as I have ever been and as happy as I could be so far from home.

Flossie's last letter was written from Metuchen and it made me feel good to know that she is getting around again just as she always did. I'll bet Lee and Johnny keep the house in a happy turmoil most of the time. It's pleasant to have the young'uns around, especially at Christmas time.

I have been doing some studying the last few weeks; trig., surveying, etc. and now I have my stabilization manuals to pour over. Helps to pass the time away. Many of the gang working with me are interested in the possibility of small earthmoving and roadbuilding businesses after the war, hence my numerous requests for approximate pieces and costs, Dad. Planning and dreaming for the post-war future helps to keep morale up in times like these.

Sent Flossie a couple of snapshots which she will share with you. No telling when I'll be able to get any more. There are a few cameras around but film is very scarce.

Received Dad's letter of the 29th yesterday. Certainly glad to hear you have been able to finally get a little return out of the old McMyler and that you have a substantial amount of work on hand for the winter months of the new year. The new Ready-Mix plant must be quite an outfit. Has the company lost many more men to the service?

Have you heard any news about Jollife? I often think of him and wonder if he is still a lucky civilian. Sorry to hear that Sheikh Fish is not enjoying very good health. Give them my regards and best wishes when you talk to Aunt Grace again.

Dad, that hand level is sure worth its' weight in gold. One of the boys I have checking grade accidentally dropped it the other day but it is so sturdily constructed that no damage was done. We all held our breath for a minute or two though. I notice that Kuker Rankin make also a special 10" hand level (extended), this one is 7". That should also be a dandy .Have you ever seen one? Bye for now-Love to you all, Fred

January 10, 1944

Dear Folks,

Well, I'm still spending my CB career here in the hospital. It's a comfortable place and a fellow gets plenty of rest but its not my [[way]] idea of the way to help win this war. I really am feeling fine now and am permitted to get up occasionally. My pneumonia couldn't have been a very severe case. At the same time it appears I am going to be here quite awhile yet. When I mentioned getting out to the doctor, he just smiled and said I wasn't even started on the way out yet.

The hardest thing to combat in here, of course, is the monotony. We have some magazines and a portable library visits the ward twice a week and all this helps. Mail is coming through a little slowly as it always does when one has a change of address here.

The sun is shining today and the snow is starting to melt away. By tomorrow all will be mud unless it suddenly turns cold. That's one advantage of being in here-we aren't exposed to the vagaries of this Virginia weather.

I was pretty well pleased with my advance training scedhule before I was popped in here. After four days on the rifle range I was to go to diesel repair school for 16-18 days and then on Jan. 27, come home for a 10 day leave. In addition I had been appointed Master of Arms of the barracks, a job entailing considerable authority and responsibility. You ca see why I'm disgusted now.

Dad's letter of Jan. 6th was just handed to me. I enjoyed it very much, especially the part about all the crows on the snow covered cornfield. Makes me feel homesick. I have received the letters mailed from you all to D-5 Area oke. as well as the Mercury and Science Digest. Magazines are extra nice right now.

Well, goodbye for now. I'm really feeling fine physically but so disgusted. Love to you all- Fred

Jan. 14, 1944

Dear Folks,

Mother's letter of Tuesday P.M. arrived yesterday afternoon. I guess my mail reaches you a little quicker than yours reaches me but most of the difference in time is right here in camp, I believe, as sorting and distributing is always a problem in a camp like this. I hope you are up and around again all right, Mother. Between Eddie and I in service hospitals, Flossie and her grippe, Johnny and his mumps and your little trouble we're quite an outfit.

Received the "Coronet" you mailed to me. That certainly is a swell little magazine. Also received the Reader's Digest that the Church is sending me. I'm pretty hungry for sporting magazines: Field & Stream, Outdoor Life etc. so try and send those as they come out. I received the last Field & Stream all right as well as the 2 "American Rifleman". The American Rifleman you just forwarded should reach me shortly.

So Helen Prescott now has a little boy over a year old and her little girl is in kindergarten. Time sure does fly. Sounds just like Maizie- "I'm somewhere doing something with airplanes." And I sure get a kick out of Sue's "expectations". I hope they turn out that way. Having all 3 babies at the same time sounds all right to me, too, but I'll have to do a little better than I'm doing right now.

Although I feel that I am recovering rapidly there is much doubt that I will be able to get out of here in time to go with S.D. 3012. They keep the boys in here for a long long time after they are up and dressed and around. Some of the fellows here were only in bed for 10 days but they have been convalescing for three weeks or more. Well if I can't make S.D. 3912 and that Jan 27th leave may be I can stay in here until spring and some decent weather.

By the way, leave the (3012-4c) off the address. It's just Med. 2, Station Hospital. That was my mistake. I just received slips signifying there are 2 packages in the hospital P.O. A corpsman will pick them up for me this afternoon. I don't know what they are. Possibly one is my Xmas watch which I asked Flossie to send on to me as my watch is sort of haywire.

They're having a "field day" in here today-moving all the beds and mopping and scrubbing etc. Some confusion! Tomorrow the "old boy" inspects.

Well, I'll close for now. Love to you all and stay healthy. Fred

Jan.14, 1944

Dear Folks,

This will only be a short note. I have a bunch of letters to answer. Don't know if I can make them all or not. Yesterday day I received a very nice long letter from Aunt Grace. Also received the puzzle and little Johnny's present. Thanks very much for everything. This morning I received very nice letters from Uncle Hayden and from Dick St. John.

I have some nice news. The X Ray that they took on the 13th came through absolutely clear and the doctor told me this morning that I could get dressed and stay up all I wanted. Also I have been assigned little duties on the hospital work details as are all convelescents. These are good signs and I hope I am able to get released at least by the end of next (coming) week. In addition an orderly brought around my "embarkation leave chit" to fill out with my destination, leave address, method of travels etc. This denotes that I am still "in the running" for that Jan. 27th leave if I can get out of here in time. I'm feeling fine and if old man "relapse" stays away from my door perhaps I'll see you before too many weeks go by. Here's hoping! All my love, Fred

January 16, 1944

Dear Folks,

Well, I'm up and dressed this morning. Have been working on the cleaning details and will be working in the galley for a few days, probably until I am released. I certainly get tired easily. I feel like an old man' I'll have to be careful for a few days so I don't gather in a relapse. But I'm on the way to recovery and should be out of here by the end of the coming week.

We have a CB in here that just got back from 2 years in the Soveast Pacific. He has some kind of a recurring tropical fever but it's not malaria. He was in three invasions including the invasion of the Gilberts and has the D.S. Medal as well as numerous campaign bars. He says he doesn't know why they have the CBs in sailor uniforms because they eat, sleep, fight and work with the Marines and wear the regular camouflaged Marine battle dress while on land. It's pretty rugged out there from what he says. By the way, Dad, he says a good hunting knife is worth its weight in gold and many of the boys that did not go over with one made them out of scrap iron from demolished tanks etc. So the one you got me for Christmas will come in handy, no doubt. I can pick it up on my embarkation leave, whenever that turns out to be, so don't send it to me now. He says the biggest trouble out there is lack of sleep. The CBs, according to him, work 48 hrs out of the 24 and so find sleeping time scarce. At that, he seems anxious to get back into active service but wants to return to the European theater not the Pacific.

It rained hard all day yesterday and, last night, turned into snow so the ground is with a couple of inches of white mush this morning. Some weather around here! Perhaps it's not any better up Metuchen way now but I'd sure rather be there.

There's not a darn thing to write about, seems like. I'll certainly be glad to see you all and sure hope I get home the end of this month. Love to you all, Fred

January 19, 1944

Dear Folks,

As Flossie may have informed you, I had a little relapse and am flat on my back again. Today, I feel much better, have no fever and hope they'll let me up soon. Of course the biggest thought in my mind now is missing that 10 day leave. It will really take a miracle to get me out of here in time now-a miracle that I certainly can't expect. They say that if you want a thing bad enough and hope and pray for it to come true that it will usually turn out that way. I haven't given up the "hoping and praying." I find that it cheers me up to feel that there is still a chance, even though remote. I actually only have 5 days left in which to get out of bed, convalesce and be discharged by our very fussy but excellent doctor, Lt. Commander MacNamara.

Although the 10 day leave actually starts on Jan. 27th, they are releasing the men on Jan. 26th at 2:30 after storing their sea bags and gear in the morning. Don't figure on me making it but say a prayer or two. I certainly want to come home to you all in the worst way. If I don't make it (extremely probable) I'll just have to grit my teeth and wait for the next chance. I'll write tomorrow. All my love- Fred

January 27/44

Dear Mother + Dad,

Well the girls certainly gave me a big surprise yesterday and they boosted my morale about 100%. It was a complete surprise because, although I knew Flossie wouldn't pay attention to my telegram if she had made up her mind to come, I never in the world expected them so soon. They seem to have surmounted all the little difficulties I anticipated easily; mainly due to their coming in the car. I never thought of that though I know Flossie is like me and never thinks of any other way to travel. With an automobile, lodging and eating and, of course, transportation doesn't seem to be any real problem here.

I feel much better today and, if I keep on this way, my sinusitis will soon be a thing of the past. The girls' visit has helped me no end. Frankly, I was beginning to feel pretty low.

They had a beautiful day yesterday, warm and sunny-unusual for here. I hope the weather holds out for them during their stay here. Both of them were actually sunburned from the drive down. Now they'll never believe my story of the nasty Virginia weather. They both looked fine and, needless to say, looked like a million dollars in solid gold to me. My only regret is that the hospital visiting hours are only 2 hrs. a day. It seems to fly by.

My Company Commander was in again yesterday morning to see if there was any chance of my still making the leave. Of course there wasn't but it was mighty nice of him to come in the last minute that way. I'm now out of #3012 and at the mercy of "Personnel." They may put me in another special draft when I get out of here, in which case I would get my leave before too long anyhow. The chances of being stuck in a replacement pool are diminishing all the time as they are shipping "drafts" out to other camps as fast as they can. Rumor or "scuttlebutt" says that by May most of the CBs will be out of Camp Peary, that they are going to close it down and make a prison camp out of it. This is only "scuttlebutt" but they are starting to fence the camp area in- a tremendous job. Seems to me the camp is spread out too much to be a good prison camp but you never can tell. I'd like to go to R.I. first, California next. One is close to my home, the other has the climate. Probably end up in Biloxi, Miss. They seem to have a great surplus of SeeBees in the continental U.S.A. waiting for action-and fussing. Of course, a large reserve is necessary in all services. Trouble is most of the CBs are fresh out of civilian construction work, have left good war and defense jobs behind them, have only had a few weeks of military training and now must be idle except for K.P. and guard duty (which never ends). Coupled with the Navy Department's reluctance to grant the CBs any regular leave schedule morale is naturally mighty low. Well, it will work out eventually.

Construction work seems pretty slow now, at least, compared to the past couple of years. Of course Jan. and February are "dead" months during normal times anyhow. I hardly remember a Jan. and Feb. when I did much else but hunt crows and gripe about the weather. Usually when we had to work during these two months, we (operators) griped and if there wasn't work we griped. Just part of contracting in N.J.

I know when you get through planning out Utility's new R.M. outfit it will be just about the most efficient layout possible, Dad. Well, I must close now. Love to you all. I'll try to write every day while the girls are here. - Fred

January 29, 1944

Dear Folks,

Well this is the last day I'll have my visitors from home to visit me in the afternoon. Their visits have certainly meant a great deal to me and I'll certainly miss them after today. Coming just when they did, on the day my "lost" 10 day leave started, helped a great deal.

I'm feeling a little better every day although it does seem to be a very slow process. I feel so very weak and, although I don't have any real pain anymore, my sinus passage still seems to be draining a little. The doctor was going to irrigate my anterum again yesterday but he was too busy with tonsilectomys. Guess he'll get around to it this morning.

The weather has been beautiful the last few days. The girls will never believe all my stories of the miserable Virginia weather. It has been a fine break for them. I hope it keeps up until they reach home. By the way, Dad, wish you would send me a short telegram as soon as the girls reach Metuchen—forget it, I must be in a fog! They'll be home before the letter is. Guess I'll just give them the letter to take home.

I think they may allow me to get dressed and be up shortly but I doubt if they'll let me go outside for awhile yet. Today being Saturday and, so, inspection day there is much deck swabbing, dusting etc. going on. Takes about 4 hours or more to get ready for inspection and about 5 minutes for the Captain to go through the ward.

Certainly am anxious to get home for a few days. Must devote my energy to getting well and getting out of here so I can start that upward trek towards another 10 day leave.

Can't think of anything new so I'll close. Love to you all. Fred

February 2, 1944

Dear Folks,

Received Dad's letter and clippings yesterday. I didn't know the "Pierce" mentioned in that clipping about "~~Foley~~"Foley's Foolish Follies". I assume from the information that he must have worked on a section of the road well north of our camp. He wasn't one of the head road men there. Probably worked on the Andremishk-Zab Zab section. You must have had a pleasant time in New York, Dad, meeting an old college mate and visiting one of your old haunts. It was very interesting. E. Smith seems to have quite a sales line. I guess he needs it with the Cat. Sales he made last year.

The girls seem to have made the trip "in a breeze". I certainly enjoyed their visit.

I believe that they are going to discharge me from the hospital tomorrow. There is no trace of that sinu trouble although I still seem to have a very slight cold in the head. I think I'll be ok now if I get any breaks after I get out of here. They should be a little lenient after a month in the hospital. I'll certainly speak up for myself because a stint of guard duty etc. would pop me right back in here, I'm afraid. It has become much colder in the last day or so. That beautiful spring weather we had when the girls were here was much too nice to last. Anyhow I am going to take it mighty easy for a few days if they do let me out.

I'll let Flossie know if they discharge me from here and also my new address just as soon as I find out.

Love to you all- Fred

7 February '44

Dear Folks,

Your schoolboy son is getting along fine. Still feeling ok, although very tired at night, of course. Find my "specialist course" very interesting. Today we reviewed the types and characteristics of various soils and made several tests in the laboratory (Sieve analysis test on sand and clay, liquid limit, percent of moisture in sand from stockpile here in camp, plastic limit and shrinkage tests) Wish the darn course was two months long. It will be of great value to me after the war. They really have a complete soil mechanics lab here.

Don't have much spare time now. We start marching to school at 7 A.M. and have to march back and forth noon time as we eat lunch here in this area. In the evening we have some homework and many times have 4 hour guard duty at night so if you don't hear from me quite as often in the next two weeks you'll know why.

I guess you better send me another bottle of Aggie. I was pretty well jammed up while in the hospital and am still having considerable trouble. Good old consti! The bottle I have is getting a little low and I might need the stuff to keep healthy the next two weeks.

My mail hasn't caught up with me yet but I should start picking it up tomorrow. This writing is terrible but I'm hold ing the pad on knee and sitting on the edge of the bunk. There are tables near each stove but I can't stand the heat they out at close range.

This is a gummed up special draft. They transfer men in and out of it at a rate to make one dizzy. No one knows if they'll sleep in their regular bunk at night, be transferred into Ship's Company or be on the way to California. However, I doubt if they'll transfer me out after just putting me in here. I'm not figuring on it anyhow. I'm figuring on sleeping in a real bed and enjoying Mom's swell home cooking from the 21st on for 10 days. Love to all, Fred

10 February '44

Dear Folks,

Received letter from Dad with clippings and letter from Mother containing Eddie's. Was sorry to hear about Eddie's trouble but it sounds as though he'll come out ok. I wrote Eddie a nice long letter about for days before I left the hospital but I sent it to his "outfit" so that's probably why he didn't receive it yet. I didn't have his hospital address. I'll write him in a day or so, soon as I get some free minutes. Between homework, laundry, gear inspection on Saturday etc. this is a busy few days right now.

The clippings on soil cement were very interesting, Dad, and I'm tickled that you have all ready sent for TM 5-255. We spent the entire day on soil cement stabilization today. Among other things we saw a 2 ½ hr. series of Army Engineer motion pictures on constructing and maintaining military highways and runways of all types. We also had 2 films on soil cement stabilization which were extremely interesting.

Tomorrow we are going to mix up some soil cement samples at various cement and moisture percentages and put them through various field and laboratory tests. Of course the testing will go on for several days due to the "curing" period. We do a lot of lab testing that would ordinarily be done by civilian labs or Stae Highway Commissions in peace time and my notebook is filling up with various test charts, formulae etc. It's all good experience though along with the "practical" end.

I'm still feeling ok and am slowly getting stronger so may be I'm through with my little winter troubles for awhile. Sure hope so. This note is scribbled hurriedly. Love to you all- Fred

12 February '44

Dear Folks,

Received "stabilization" booklets ok, Dad. Thanks very much. They will be helpful in my studies. It rained hard all day yesterday and became very cold late last night. I know, because the "extra details" finally caught up with me and I walked guard post from 10 P.M. to 2 A.M. last m=night. I really have been lucky up to now in not catching more of that "service overtime". Today is clear and very cold and windy. We have just finished putting our clothes away after our bag inspection and in a few minutes will muster for our classes (10 A.M.). Takes about 4 evenings to prepare for a bag or gear inspection and the inspecting officer walks through the barracks in about 2 minutes.

All the conversation around the area now pertains to leave, leave, leave. I know I'm certainly looking forward to it. About 40 of us are going to charter a bus to take us directly from this area to Washington, D.C. In this way we'll save a couple of hours. Trains run from Washington to Newark and N.Y. every hour. With luck I should arrive at Satterer's at 2:30-3 A.M. on Monday morning, the 21st. The bus meets us in Washington at a specified hour at the end of our leave and brings us back to the camp. The bus chartering is a regular authorized affair and there will be many groups of 40 CBs doing the same thing. Train connections and scedhules

Just got back from my P.M. classes. Found letter from Flossie, the Technical manuals (TM 5-255), thanks Dad, and a lovely long letter from Aunt Marion which I must certainly answer. [[side note-also received "American Rifleman".]] It's bitter cold out with a high wind sweeping across the area tonight. Made test on soil cement mixtures all day. Love to you all- Fred

14 Feb. '44

Dear Folks,

Another rainy Virginia night. I received your package today. Thanks a million. Everything was in good condition. The Brownies certainly are delicious. Yesterday I wrote Eddie and Aunt Marion. Am still feeling ok and anticipate no complications before the start of my coming leave.

We have been working with and testing various soil-cement mixture as well as studying up on the different types of steel runway mats. Tomorrow the class has a practical problem out in the field. We have to load, transport by truck (1/2 mile) unload and place 2500 sq. ft. of the famous steel "pierced plank" runway.

It's not a rush job, just an opportunity to familiarize ourselves with the organization and methods for placing same. Due to my rating and experience I guess, I have been appointed the N.C.O. in charge of the operation. I'll only have 20 men but it will be good experience for me. We have a general rest coming up Friday. The time for the course is woefully inadequate and I hope I can get some additional instructions later on. There are many subjects we didn't have time to cover. May be I can take kind of a P.G. course. It's mighty interesting. Funny but I was appointed the N.C.O. in charge tomorrow over the heads of 3 C.P.O.s in the class. Goodnight. Love to you all- Fred

15 Feb. '44 noon

Dear Folks

Well, I've had a busy morning. My gang of 20 men including some C.P.O.s laid down 4,000 sq. ft of "pierced plank" runway in about 2 ½ hrs. We had to work in muddy conditions and we had only one truck hauling the pierced plank and so we lost considerable time waiting. The stuff is easy to handle and lay and with a little training we could really go to town. We have half of it picked up and back in the stockpile now. We have some more movies for 2 hrs. this P.M. and then we'll pick up the rest of our runway.

They hooked me for Corporal of the Guard again tonite but I have an easy shift (6 P.M. to 10 P.M.) Of course the Corporal's job isn't hard work anyhow. I have 23 men under me whom I must post and then check every hour.

It cleared up last night and although it was cold and windy this A.M. it has warmed up considerably now.

16 Feb. '44 (Noon)

I never had time to finish this yesterday so I'll try again. Received Mother's letter with Eddie's this noon. I can just see Eddie laughing over the teeth episode. I can't blame him. Glad he only has minor repairs. He probably thinks we act like mother hens watching over a lone chick but we love him so much we can't help it.

Well, we had our final exam this morning (a three hour affair) and I'm proud to say that I was the top of the class. My mark on the final exam was 100, believe it or not, and my course mark will be about 98.8 or 99. The course has two more days to run and we are taking up different phases of asphalt stabilization.

Only a few more days and I will be with you all. Sure am enjoying those Brownies, Mom.

Love to you all, Fred

P.S. Saw some very interesting training films yesterday. One on LeTourneau and Cat. Equipment, showing types to use on various kinds of work etc. Very interesting but nothing new. (Put out by Le Tourneau) Another one showed methods of testing materials for, and constructing military roads of natural stabilized material. Another showed grubbing and rock clearing (U.S.Army Engrs.)

Love-Fred

17 February 1944

Dear Folks,

This is about my last letter until you see me sometime Monday morning or afternoon. They gave us a few hours off this afternoon. Some of the boys are up at the Camp Peary R.R. Station buying tickets. I'm straightening out my gear so as to have it all ready. The next three days are apt to be hectic and it's best to have everything ready. Some of the West Coast boys have R.R. tickets about 4 feet long. Had hoped to do a little more washing. Yes, Mother, you guessed it. I'll bring a little home and do it in the washing machine. Of course it won't be very much as I'm fairly well up to date but I might as well start with a clean bunch of gear when I return.

Tomorrow is our last day of school and we are going to continue making and testing bituminous stabilization samples. It looked as though they might hook me in as an instructor in "sub-grade construction" but it is quite uncertain as they are closing down some of the schools due to the fact that no new See Bees are coming in now. I wouldn't mind the assignment as it would give me a splendid opportunity to learn much more about this subject but I am not too keen on being stuck in Ship's Company here at Camp Peary. However, if the assignment should materialize and be offered to me I would not turn it down.

Very shortly I'll be home with you all and it's going to be a mighty nice feeling, believe me. The time will fly by but I'll be very very thankful for every minute.

Until I see you Monday. Best love to you all. Fred

7 March 1944 P.M.

Dear Folks,

We moved into S.D. 3014 in a new area this morning. Everything is as confused here as elsewhere. No one knows anything official about anything. A few facts seem to be evident. The See Bees have more men than they need and the Manpower Commission has been raising a little fuss about the number of skilled men killing time here at Peary. The powers that are trying to bluff, cajole and persuade the rated men here to sign up for General Service but they won't tell us a darn thing about General Service. It would be like signing a blank check to sign up for G.S. under the present conditions. We don't know if it means shore duty or ship duty or what trades they really need or whether or not we will hold our present rates.

It's a mess! It seems quite certain that they are sending out no more construction battalions from Camp Peary and those rated men that didn't sign up for G.S. are liable to stagnate here in Peary for months going the endless rounds of guard duty, K.P., guard duty etc.- all of which is pretty rough. As a See Bee I cannot be placed on construction work as inspector etc. or at a Naval Base within the continental U.S.A. Under General Service I could be so placed but the question is, would they do so? Or would they decide to make a gunner's mate or a coxswain out of me, in which case I could hardly hold my first class rating. The opinion here in Peary is that they cannot reduce your See Bee rating except by a court martial but I'm not a bit sure of that, having never seen it in writing. You take a big chance by signing anything in this outfit. Like anything else, much depends on who you know. If I knew a fairly high ranking officer (Lt. and up) on some Naval Base or construction work in the U.S.A. I could, through him, be transferred to his command. Especially during the present CB shakeup. But, of course, I don't know any such man so I am just another confused CB. Another of the disadvantages of G.S. is that, if assigned to sea duty etc., you become a social outcast as the regular Navy boys don't like the See Bees and a rated CB would live a lonely life on board ship. Have this dope from CBs that have been through it all.

All in all folks, it's a mess! The constant round of K.P., guard duty and little W.P.A. work details plus the Peary living conditions and atmosphere is pushing morale down and down as well as spoiling a fellow's physical condition. There's no work or exercises now to harden a fellow up and after a few more months of this, I won't be able to do any work at all.

Don't mean to sound too pessimistic. My health is now ok but you must admit it's darn confusing and plumb depressing. There's nothing to do at present but wait and see if the "brass" won't make things a little more clear.

That's about all the data now. Love to you all. Your confused CB, Fred

[Included: Copy of "Bee Lines"-Camp Peary newspaper-4 pages -Vol IX Issue IX March 6 1944]

6 April 1944

Dear Folks,

Received Dad's letter yesterday. I certainly have been a poor correspondent lately but as you know, I am still killing time and there is little to write about.

We are moving to another area today. We just moved here to A-1 on Sunday (~~and~~) from area A-6 and now we're moving back to A-7. It's so pointless- this moving, but typical of the service. I think we'll be in S.D. 3019 now but I won't mail this until I know, definitely, my new address. I will have been in S>D> 3012, 3017, 3014, 3013 and 3019 and in Areas D-5, A-3, A-5, C-3, A-6, A-1, A-7 and the "scuttlebutt" says we'll soon be moved to one of the B areas in a general service pool. All this moving and still killing time. All the moves do is disrupt our liberty schedules and we don't like that. We had this coming weekend (Easter Sunday) but this latest move may kill that. I guess they don't have anything much to do up "topside" so they move us around like chess players. Sure wish they would make up their minds.

Just found out my new "temporary" address. It's almost the same as my present one. It's Co A, Platoon 2, S.D. 3019. I suppose I'll have a new one in a few days.

We still have days when the ice will "make" a little in the shade so the Virginia spring is not too balmy. From the sound of your letter, road work is still almost non-existent in N.J., Dad. I imagine you'll have enough little odds and ends to keep busy this coming year but I don't suppose there'll be any money in them to speak of.

I think it's a darn shame about John. They have all these men here just killing time and many are young unmarried lads. Seems unfair. But that's the way this manpower business seems to operate. It's definitely snafu!

Glad to hear Eddie is getting a leave. Hope his leg is coming along "oke" now. Although he seems to be on a sort of glorified G.I. vacation, I know it isn't what he wants.

We had a rugged little party yesterday. Although we have done nothing but loaf around and kill time day to day, once in awhile a bunch will get turned over to the Marines for an unpleasant day of drilling, obstacle course and calisthenics. I say unpleasant because we don't have it often enough to harden us up. Once every week or so is a killer. We put on our helmets and coveralls and leggings and were marched down to the docks. We had our toy rifles also. There at the dock we climbed down a 40' cargo net into some invasion barges. It was about 30 degrees and very windy and cloudy. We moved out into the river and headed down crouched in the bottom of the Higgins. The river was choppy and the waves soon began to break over the boat and soak us. Cold is no word for it!

After an unpleasant 30 minute ride we shot in towards a beach and went aground about 100' from dry land. Down went the low door and out we rushed into ice cold waist deep water. Great fun! After wading ashore and shivering through a few beach head tactics we were returned to the dock and marched back to our barracks in the biting wind. I didn't enjoy the experience at all. This is after months of idleness. A silly business. Love to you all- Fred

1 May '44

Dear Folks,

Arrived safe and weary at 2 A.M. Had uneventful trip. Stopped at Aberdeen, Md. For a nice striped-bass supper. I didn't feel dangerously sleepy while driving back but I sure "hit the sack" thankfully when I reached camp.

In checking over my time-tables I find the best connections possible for my weekend trip will get me in N.B. at 10:15 A.M. Sat morn. This entails one change at Phila. What number bus do I take from New Brunswick? Seems like in the confusion over the "key" I neglected to or forgot the size finally decided on for John's shorts. What was the decision? The shirt was 38, I believe. I have Dad's and Mr. Mescrolls size all right.

Well we were all surprised and mildly disgusted to find a new station order posted to the effect that as of today, May 1, the liberty and leave uniform will be whites. We won't be permitted to get out the gate in dress blues. Now I'm really glad I'm in the laundry. I'll have to get an extra suit or 2 to leave at home. I can have them done at the Chinks between weekends. The suit I wear up on the train will be a mess, no doubt. It's hot as the dickens down here today but actually it's pretty early for whites and the fellows traveling north will look pretty silly in whites and a pea coat. Bye for now. Love to you all- Fred

Thursday A.M. October 5, 1944

My Darling,

We are on the Santa Fe now and are stopped for a few minutes in Pueblo, Col. We will stop at Denver, I believe. Yesterday we crossed Indiana, Illinois and Missouri and Kansas. We made short stops at Indianapolis, Ind., St. Louis, Mo. (at night), Kansas City, Mo., Emporia, Mo., Rocky Ford, Col., and Pueblo, Colorado as well as several small towns. We couldn't leave the vicinity of the train at most of these places. We have to cross Col., Utah, Nevada and California yet and I hear we are going to stop at Cheyenne, Wyoming. It was pretty balmy riding through Kansas but last night we came into Colorado and I woke up at 5 A.M. about half froze. I put on all my clothes and got back under the covers. Boy, oh boy! I sure needed you my Darling. I'm in a lower and the icy wind whistled in through the cracks of the window frame. Now that the sun is up its' warming up fast, though.

Kansas is certainly a farm state. As far as you could see were rolling fields of corn and grain. Now that we're in Colorado the scenery has changed. Lots of sage brush and cattle with mountains in the distance. Some parts of it remind me of Iran.

We are stopped for water in Colorado Springs. The air here is nice and clean and cool, however, we are now secured to the train and can't get off. This goes for Denver too, I guess. The drunks succeeded in spoiling it for everyone.

This seems to be a nice town. There are some whopping big mountains in the background. Wish we could get off.

We're on the way again. We were only here about five minutes. I guess I'd better finish this note so I can have it mailed in Denver. I'm thinking of you my Darling, and love you more than ever. Love to your folks and mine. All my special best brand of love for you Sweetheart. You own-Fred

8 October 1944

TTV-1, Camp Parks Cal.

Dear Folks,

I'm still in the "telephone center" waiting to get a call through to Flossie. I only had about an hour wait to get Metuchen but I've all ready waited two hours for Newark and was just notified that there will still be a 2 or 3 hour delay. However it is very comfortable here with upholstered chairs and lounges and writing tables all around. They have a busy place here with a central switch-board and 12 pretty girls running same. They have 25 phone booths however you place the call at the main desk and then sit down and relax. When your call goes through the girls announce it over a loud-speaker and tell you what booth to go to.

It was nice to talk to you. Sounded like a local call. I hope my connection with Flossie is as good. Well, I was glad to finally arrive here. I enjoyed seeing the different states although my view was brief. However the trip, all in all, was pretty rugged and mighty dirty. Camp Parks is a semi-permanent base, very modern and of top notch construction. The atmosphere here is entirely different from Peary. They treat you like a man and a human being. There is no guard duty for us and K.P. is made very desirable by granting very generous liberty and having easy working hours. K.P. is one of the best details here from I can find out. You are on duty 24 hrs. (actually work-8 hrs.) and then off 24 hrs. On the 24 hrs. off you have 20 hrs. liberty. Most of the boys have jobs in town in the canneries or shipyards and get \$8-\$14 a day for that off duty day. Some deal! Each weekend you get a 36 hr. liberty. Of course it doesn't always fall on Sat. & Sunday. I'm not on K.P. yet but may be for a week or so. The situation at present looks like this: I am at present in a "receiving deport." Tomorrow we will have a physical exam and be placed in TTU-1, TTU-2 or TTU-3. The first, and that's where I'll be, is a big replacement group physically fit and available for immediate over-sea duty. TTU-2 is a group needing some physical correction (glasses, dental work etc) before being fit for overseas duty. TTU-3 is ships company and consists of about 80% overseas veterans. After I am in TTU-1, I will be available for transfer into a bunch of things: NCB- Naval Construction Battalion (1200 men); CBMU- Const. Batt. Maintenance Unit (200-500 men); SB- Special Battalion (Stevedore); Special drafts- attached as construction unit to Army or Marine Divisions (100-1000 men); Casual drafts- To fill up CBs and CBMUs now overseas and short of personnel.

I might go to a CB school while in TTU-1 or any of the other units I listed. While waiting in TTU-1, I'll do K.P. and other general work details or as I said before might possibly go to school (unlikely). The work details here are not like at Peary. They are actual jobs of work not WPA projects that a fellow is ashamed of. The situation here in regard to shipping out is all a big gamble. I could be here one week or 6 months. I may be given my embarkation leave while in TTU-1 (It could be this coming week) or after I was put in a CB or CBMU etc.

My impression, at present, of Camp Parks is good. The food is superb, far better than Camp Peary, recreation facilities within the camp are more than adequate. There are plenty of interesting places to visit outside camp although transportation is a little rugged. The main thing is the atmosphere. It's a real CB camp and the fellows seem to be proud of the CBs. There are hundreds of veteran CBs here from overseas duty.

The embarkation leave situation caused me much worry especially with Flossie in her condition now. I'll get 15 days but the transportation problem here now is fierce. I talked with several of the boys who made the trip recently. It is impossible to get reservations on the fast trains and Pullmans. If one could, the fare would be about \$150- On the slower day coaches which are jammed to the gills the trip takes from 5 to 6 days, one way, costs=\$80.00 plus food. Plane tickets are sometimes available. We get a C-4 priority on plane seats. If you can get a seat, it only takes about 30 hours. The rub is that you can't be sure that you can hold the seat because a man with a higher priority can replace you at any stop. Coming back is exceptionally bad because loss of your seat might mean coming into camp "over-leave" which is bad. Plane fare, round trip is about \$275.00. If a fellow has contacts and "pull" he can get a free ride on an army or navy bomber if one happens to be going your way but it's a last minute- never know business and with the present jam of leaves going out of here it's almost impossible to land a ride if that sort. And then you have that "getting back on time" worry. I have been home so much that under the circumstances I feel I would do better not to make the attempt now but I don't know how my Flossie will feel about it. I don't know just what I would do with my leave but there are all sorts of job possibilities and I may have a chance to do a little hunting here in the Sacramento Valley. I have a friend here that lives in Sacramento. I would certainly like to spend the leave at home but- I don't just know what to do yet. This is getting to be a regular book.

You are allowed to hunt here on Sunday and I feel certain I can borrow a shotgun. Shells however are naturally a problem and I thought if I had my 12 ga' shells available I could place myself in a position to go hunting if I get a chance. Ray Baruth, my friend that lives in Sacramento, has a brother in Berkeley nearby and I wanted the shells to go there so they would be readily accessible. If I'm shipped out before I can use them it's no big loss as I'll be well paid for them here. There are plenty of 16 ga. shells for you in case you can go this year, Dad.

Did you get the Parker yet, Dad? Be sure to grease it well inside and out with that Rig that's in the gun closet. I have had my T.C. Smith 20 gauge restocked by a stock maker in Vineland, New Jersey. He has had it about 3 months now and it will soon be finished and shipped there to Metuchen. When it arrives, Dad, I would like you to grease it thoroughly for me and pack it back carefully in the box for me. Thanks.

The climate is very nice out here now; mild during the day and cool and crisp at night.

How are Estelle and John and Johnny and Patty? And has Thelma "done it" yet? I think of you all always and look hopefully toward the day when we'll all be together again. Give me the news from Eddie as he sends it. Love to you all. Fred

P.S. Just talked to Flossie and found out that Thelma and Chet have another little girl. Some girl-8 lbs! Give them all my best wishes, F.

Thursday, 11 Oct. '44

Dear Folks,

I started on K.P. this morning. Strange to say, I hope we get a week of it at least. The liberty is so good that K.P. is highly desirable, as I believe I mentioned before. We worked about 2 hrs. this noon, will work about 2 hrs. at supper and the same for breakfast tomorrow. At 1 P.M. tomorrow we go on liberty and are due back at 9 A.M. Saturday morning. That's the schedule; one day-duty, and one-day liberty. On the off day I'll be able to work and make a few extra dollars- that is, if we stay on the detail. Transfers to regular CB units come through regularly and a fellow can't figure ahead very far ahead.

Ray Baruth, my Cal. Friend, got special liberty last night and went home to Sacramento (109 miles). He drove his car back this morning and now we have a means of transportation. That's very essential in this camp. We don't figure on trying to get an off-duty job until the beginning of the week. On tomorrow's liberty, we are going to Sacramento and probably on Sunday also. Ray wants me to see his home town and family and, of course, I am anxious to see some of the country hereabouts.

Parks is 100% better than Peary in every respect. The atmosphere is entirely different and natural the camp is far superior to Peary. They have every conceivable type of recreational facility here. A fellow could spend all of his free time inside camp if he cared to and keep well occupied.

I received my first V-mail from Eddie today, also Dad's airmail letter. It was nice to hear from you. Eddie's letter sounded very pleasant. At the time that he wrote it he evidently was enjoying himself in a nice part of France. I'll write you all regularly and keep you posted on my doings and will call you occasionally. Love to you all- Fred

15 October 1944 9A.M.

Dear Folks,

Your letters are coming through now and it's certainly nice to hear from home. I received my first letter (V-mail) from Eddie day before yesterday. He evidently is in a very pleasant part of France and seems to be getting along fine. Hope he stays in that section a long time. I'm still on K.P. and find it a very good detail here. I'm off now until 10:30 tomorrow morning and can go on liberty at 1 P.M. My friend Ray is now on a little different liberty scedhule which is too bad as the use of his car to get around was mighty pleasant. I'm going to hitch hike to Sacramento and ride back with him tomorrow morning. He is up there now as he got the weekend and is off from last nite at 5 until tomorrow morning at 7. I drove up with him Friday afternoon (came back Sat. A.M.) and enjoyed myself a great deal. I'm crazy about the country around Sacramento. It has everything including a perfect climate. We picked and ate from trees and bushes in his backyard fresh figs, plums, English walnuts, black walnuts, pecans, blackberries etc. They had an orange tree but the oranges weren't ripe yet. The city itself is very attractive and modern as are the surrounding'

Within a hundred mile radius of Sacramento you can find every kind of climate and outdoor sports to be found in the U.S. The people are very friendly and what healthy looking kids-red cheeks and tan. I certainly am impressed by California. They had plenty of work and prosperity before the war and they seem to expect a real boom and plenty of jobs after the war. Every municipality has plenty of long range plans for post war as has the State. The State of Cal. Has passed more legislation granting real benefits to their veterans for post war then any state in the Union. I should join the State Chamber of Commerce. Goodby for now. Love to you all- Fred.

18 Oct. '44 Tues. nite (Pay no attention to address on envelope)- this is circled

Dear Folks,

This has certainly been a hectic day. There were about a million things to do but I'm about all set now and ready to ship out. We go to Treasure Island, San Francisco and, as they have all ready loaded our gear on the ship, I think we'll sail in a day or so- destination, Hawaii. I'm in the telephone center now waiting to get a call through to Flossie. I have a couple of hours off. The 42nd NCB is a veteran outfit, (have been commissioned for 28 mos.) Most of that time was spent in the Aleutians. They have a fine record. The battalion has about 60% veterans and the remainder- new boys like me. They have been training and have been on maneuvers for about 4 months here in Camp Parks. I don't know much about the men yet, of course, but they seem like a good bunch. Many are bone-fide construction men and there seem to be several in my Company from N.J. They have that real "unit" spirit from what I can see.

We had an exacting "physical" this morning, then were issued our Marine clothing, helmet, First Aid kit, canteen, cartridge belt, gas mask, .30 cal. Carbine and machete (Philippines here we come!) We had a gas mask drill for about an hour this morning. Of course I had a lot of gear to get in shape and packed also and then a lot of running around on personal errands. I converted some cash into Traveler's checks etc. This afternoon I went to my old post office and there was your package containing Agarol etc. That was a good break, believe me. You can send your glasses, Dad; an extra pair will be handy and send a bottle of Agarol occasionally. I'll send you one of "those" letters so you can get yourself another pair of glasses. Enclosed is money order for \$55-. The bill for my L.C.Smith work is 44-. The balance is for the glasses. I am enclosing ~~my~~ original letter on the L.C. Smith stock work and the latest letter from Bright, Dad. He all ready has instructions to ship the gun to you but I haven't written him yet about sending the bill to you. Would you drop him a line, Dad, telling him to send the bill directly to you. You might add that you would like the gun for the opening of the upland season, Nov. 11, That might hurry things up a little. Thanks. Don't forget the grease!

I'm pretty glad that I made this outfit. I don't see any profit in hanging around the States doing K.P. and laundry work. I can't come home and live a normal life until the Japs are finally licked so I might as well get where I can do some real good. If I was close enough to home to do my Flossie some good in the vents soon to come, it would be different but out here I'm almost as far as Hawaii as far as my chances of getting home are concerned, I feel happy that Flossie is surrounded by her loved ones both in Newark and Metuchen and I don't have to worry about her receiving the best of loving care from you all. That's a mighty big mind-easer, believe me. Well, I'll write soon but I guess my letters will be censored from now on. Love to you all, Fred.

29 October, 1944

Hawaii

My Darling,

Your letter of the 25th arrived today. Also had an interesting letter from Eddie that he mailed on 15 Oct. I've been catching up on my washing today and now have just about everything done up. We had liberty today but I didn't bother going out. I had enough to keep me busy right here. Many of the fellows came in from liberty early as there was little else to do but just walk around and look. Tomorrow (Monday) we'll probably be assigned to some kind of work.

So the Meseroll kid looks like Chet. Quite a handicap! I wonder what the Arnold kid will look like. He/or-she could be placed under an awful handicap also. Suppose it looked like its homely Sea Bee Papa? It hardly seems real to me. We are actually going to have our little baby. I'll bet it seems darn real to you about now, huh? I wish I could be with you in the days immediately ahead but I don't suppose there is actually much good I could do but be a "frantic father-to-be". "Main Aunt" will have to take over for me. She can don a pair of my G.I. shoes so that she will make the proper impression while pacing the hospital corridor.

The radio programs here are pretty nice. They have music on almost all day long. We have our own barbers here on our floor. They having been doing a "land office" business today. Many of the boys are getting their heads shaved but that's not for me. A "G>I>" is as far as I will go.

Darling, an old letter of yours just reached me and in it you tell of your Grandpa. I was certainly sorry to hear about his passing on. He was a fine old gent. Although it certainly must be hard on your mother, I think he's probably happier up There with your Grandma and his old friends. I know I'll want to be with you all the time and when the time finally rolls around I'll want to be with you in Heaven as well as I was here. All my love, Sweetheart- Fred

28 October, 1944
42nd Naval Const. Batt.
B-6, FPO, San Francisco

Dear Folks,

We are now established in "pineapple land" enjoying its' perfect climate. Our barracks are very comfortable. They are double decker type and I am on the second floor. We have ample facilities for washing and cleaning up. A hot shower was certainly refreshing after almost a week in the warm odorous hold of that transport. There is an excellent Ship's Service Store here with a very complete stock-no soda fountain however, that proves were roughing it! I understand we be able to get laundry service here in a short while, as soon as things are organized. The liberty here is poor of course and there is little to do off the base but that's to be expected here. We have theaters and rec halls and a Beer Tavern.

I received a letter from Dad that was forwarded from Cap Parks. I enjoyed the clipping about Eddie's bath. Also got a kick out of your successful bids at Industrial Tape etc. It's nice to have work for the winter season. Wish I was on the job.

√ By the way, Dad, if you can get me a pair of good Ray Ban or A.O. Co. sunglasses I could sure use then here. And, Mom, although books weigh heavily perhaps you could send me a "middleweight" one occasionally- humorous novels and short stories and historical novels (Early American) of the Van Wyk Mason type would be my choice. We can get plenty of candy here but your cookies and brownies would always be welcome. I had a nice letter from Eddie and he mentions receiving some brownies. He said they sure hit the spot.

I have a bunch of washing to catch up on. I was a little behind when they transferred me with such short notice at Parks and now I must pay the penalty with wash-women's hands. √ (Sunglasses to replace yours)

I don't know what I'm going to do here or for how long but I think I'll be here for awhile. It seems like a pleasant place to spend some time as long as I can't be home. I'll say goodbye for now. Will write again soon. Love to you all. Fred

2 Nov. 1944
Hawaii

Dear Folks,

Your letters are coming through splendidly now. I received Dad's of the 27th and Mother's of the 28th as well as three from my Flossie. It's a great boost to come into the barracks after a hard day's work and find those morale-boosting letters from home. I hope you are receiving my letters regularly without too much delay. In regard to my needs I would appreciate: Brownies Humorous Books Agarol "Just Fishing"- Ray B. Candy Hand level v Old copies of "Excavating". I know you save Const. Methods & Eng. News Rec. but am not sure about "Excavating" or "Exca. Engr." Whatever it is. If you don't save that, I'd like the past issues when you are finished with them, Dad.

Now I have thought of a very welcome Christmas present if there are no postal regulations against sending a "weekly" overseas and that is a subscription to "Construction Methods" sent right to me at my F.P.O. address. I would get a great deal of enjoyment from this and it would be very educational. We find it difficult to get magazines here and if there is any way to send your used issues of Life, American, Cosmopolitan etc. they would be much appreciated as would Sports Afield, Outdoor Life, and Field and Stream. The hand level would be a great aid to me. Just an ordinary model in leather case with belt loop. Our food is good and our quarters comfortable and the work is in my own line.

Of course I can't tell you what I'm doing here but they keep us busy and we sleep well at night. Remember when I was working for Ensign Delano Smith? Well, I felt then that I wasn't aiding in the war effort much. Laundry work definitely doesn't appeal to me. Here I am doing a man's job just as, and like, Uncle St John is doing and I feel as though I am really helping towards the final day of victory over that sap, mr. jap.

I like having a little responsibility more or less like I have had at times while working under Mr. Foley and Lt. Chas. Sells. You remember me mentioning him, Dad. Give my regards to Dick, Pete, Joe Mennone and the rest of the gang. Also E. Smith, when you see him, Dad. He would be interested in my day here but I'm afraid it would be only from a competitor's point of view, Old Parkhurst certainly had one junky orange outfit all right there at Livingston. I should know. They come bigger and newer though but still don't compare with Smith's. I agree with you there, Dad. Enjoyed the joke sheet very much, Dad. Gave the gang plenty of laughs.

I miss you all very much and you are all in my thoughts constantly. Things are popping in the Pacific now and a fellow can't help but feel a little more optimistic. Don't do any worrying on my behalf. I'm "living the life of Riley" here- well, almost. Love to you all- Fred

P.S. I'll send a note to put with the flowers for Flossie, Mom, in a day or so.

8 November '44

Dear Folks,

Everything is running along on regular routine now. We work 8 hrs. for six days and are off the seventh. I'm still acting as foreman in my own line and enjoy the job very much. I can certainly use a good hand level (in leather case). There's a shortage around here at present although I have managed to borrow one old one which eases my work considerably. That's an idea for a Christmas present, too, that hand level. Seems like I've been "gimmeeeing" considerably in my last couple of letters. I hope that my last letter to you wasn't too confusing. It was probably more obtuse than subtle but I imagine you caught the general drift. Some work is "personal products" and this is similar but more. Mail has been slow the last couple of days but will no doubt start coming through in a day or so.

The election came out about as I guessed it would (not hoped). More people voted for him than against so it must be the will of the people. Hope it turns out all right in 1946 and '47. I'm anxious to hear about the N.J. constitutional referendum. Hope it was approved.

I've been feeling fine although I am ready for bed each night. I must admit I'm not as tired this week although I still am doing the same work and hiking and climbing around in soft earth as usual. My face and arms are turning into the color of leather now under the Hawaiian sun. It feels great to be doing some real honest work and the time passes quickly.

I met new boys from N.J. all the time but none yet from Metuchen. Met a lad from So. River the other day.

Our platoon (those who desire) are going on a beach picnic Sunday with beer and hot dogs etc. no "femmes" though; strictly a stag affair. I'm going along. It should be fun. I haven't even felt interested in going into Honolulu yet but probably will at some future date. Love to you all- Fred

11 November '44

Dear Folks,

Just a short note tonight as I am pretty sleepy. Mother's nice newsy letter of Nov. 6 came today. I'm glad to hear that everyone is oke at Spring and Lake. I hear from Flossie regularly also and keep pretty well posted from that end also. Received the sunglasses in fine shape, Dad. Thanks. I'm pretty well set on glasses now. Am enclosing a little note, Mom, to put in Flossie's flowers. You could cut my printed name from the bottom for me.

I'm still working and like the job very much. The time passes very quickly. Have a fine bunch of fellows to work with.

I'm not really worrying about Flossie, Mom, though, of course, she is in my thoughts constantly. I somehow feel that everything will be all right and that your new grandchild and its' mother will be tip-top. A telegram would be sent to the same address here. Flossie asked and I forgot to put it in her letter. Let her know, will you. Thanks. Will write again soon. Love to you all- Fred

13 Nov., 1944

Dear Folks,

Just a short note. Am enclosing an American Express Traveler's Check for twenty dollars. This is to pay for flowers for Flossie and for incidentals during her convalescent period. If you should spend more, which is very likely, as there may be some things she will want, please keep an account and let me know. Am also enclosing an old letter from that gunsmith, Dad, which just caught up with me here. You understand about that.

It is a quiet Sunday morning here and we are going on a little picnic later on. I am feeling about as healthy as I ever felt in my life, here. I like my work so much and the fellows I work with are such good boys that time passes very quickly. One of my buddies in my platoon egged me on to betting him a case of beer that our new little one will be a boy. He says they're always girls. I'll be mighty happy with either but just have a hunch that it will be a Jr. Sure can make good use of that hand level, Dad. Love to all,
Fred

15 Nov. 1944

Dear folks,

Received Dad's newsy letter today. The mail seems to come through very well here and that makes things pleasant indeed. Will be mighty glad to receive the reading material and especially, the level. I have a little outfit that was issued recently but it is pretty inefficient as it is about a \$2.50 model and very hard to read through to the rod. I borrowed a old one from a Chief here for a few days. It was a K. & E. and was clear as a bell and very well made, however, I had to return it as he needs it.

I'm still feeling in the pink physically and am interested in my work. Of course there are ups and downs naturally, due to that red tape you mentioned and that darn Parkhurst stuff, big and new as it is. However, on the whole I think I am doing a good job. Naturally I am only a very small frog in a mighty big puddle but I feel I am accomplishing something worthwhile now and hope to continue doing so until it is my time to come home for good.

We've had a very good stroke of luck in one respect, since my last letter, and now have about 20 reasons for E. Smith to be happy. I don't know how it was worked but sure is slick. Of course, Dad, the job here is of the biggest interest to you and I but that is naturally not to be discussed until after the war so you get a break on that, Mom. You'll have a few supper-table discussions coming up though, I'm afraid, in the post war future. Enjoyed hearing about the jobs, Dad, and think you are very wise not to tackle any 16-18 hr. day project at this time. Let the hungry wolves go after that! If you read Dick part of that letter he must surely think I'm nuts. He would go nuts here with the red tape and labor situation, Give he and Mrs. St. John my very best wishes.

I miss you all and enjoy your letters more than I can say. Send a snapshot or two occasionally if you get any good ones. Love to you all. Will write soon again. Fred

(Enclosure from Arnolt, F.M. 13 Nov, 1944)

Edmund F Bright
Custom Gunsmithing
Magnolia Road
Vineland, New Jersey

October 17 1944

Mr. F.M. Arnolt

Dear Sir:

Will have your gun this week. Have finished stock and am working on forearm now.

The service will be \$25.00 for stock and \$19 for forearm, \$44 total.

I was fortunate enough to get a very nice piece of cincinnian (sp?) walnut so I used this instead of American. I think you will be well satisfied with this job, however if there is anything that does not please you when you get the gun, let me know.

Very truly yours

Edmund F. Bright

13 Nov, 1944

Dear Dad,

I wrote Bright and told him to correspond with you. He may have written this before getting my letter, however. Please take care of it for me. You may all ready have the gun, of course. When you do get it, look over the job very carefully and let me know what you think of it- quality of wood, finish and checkering etc. Don't forget the "Rig". This little gun is one of my pride and joys. I sound like papa talking to son instead of vice versa but you understand my little eccentricities. Love, Fred

19 Nov. 1944

Dear Folks,

We went on a little beach outing today as it was Sunday. Loaded some beer, ice and sandwiches on a truck and 20 of the boys from my platoon and headed for the beach. We went swimming and climbed coconut palms for nuts and had a good time in general.

Your letters are coming through fine. Received four yesterday including one from you, Mom, and Stells' with the snapshots. They are certainly good and definitely welcome. The colored ones are especially nice. Now send one of you and Dad, Mom- and later on, of course, one of my new little one and its' Mommie that I miss so much. By the way, while I'm here in Hawaii, don't send me any homemade goodies. Whenever you have enough butter to spare to make a batch send them to Eddie. They'll probably be worth their weight in gold to him and I'm living so luxuriously here that I would really feel guilty taking things like that when you all are so short of butter at home and when Eddie no doubts needs all the little "extras" he can get. I really mean that, Mom! We can get so much extra stuff here to eat at the Ship's Service Store that I really don't need a darn thing in that line.

However, I'm really starved for reading matter and am anxiously awaiting the arrival of some of the literature you have all ready sent to me. Still find my job interesting and road foreman is certainly right in my line of experience.

Was very disappointed to hear that N.J. went "no" on the constitutional referendum. Looks like the racketeer, Hague, is still riding high. I thought sure they would lick him on that issue. Disgusting, that's what!

Heard any news about the duck season in N.J. this year, Dad? My time will come again one of these days and you and Eddie and I can make a swell post war hunting trip. That will be a date! Love to you all. I miss you and am thinking of you constantly. Fred

18 Nov. 1944

My Darling,

Your letters come through regularly and I can't tell you how much it means to me to find a nice letter from my Sweetheart lying on my bunk after I come in from a hard dirty day on the job. Just makes everything all right, that daily letter does. Yes, that clipping from the paper did make me itch to be out there in the field hunting once again. Well, my turn will come again one of these days. There's no hurry about the slippers, Darling. They would be nice to have but there's no emergency and I can very well do without them if you are unable to locate any my size. Seems strange to hear about the baby's furniture being painted and all ready and the drawers filled with nice things for him/or her. When I finally get home the baby will be asking who that strange man is that keeps pulling Mommie into the bedroom all the time. Probably be old enough to climb up on a chair and telephone the cops that "Mommie's being waped" again and again!

Fine way for an old married man of 30 to be talking. To tell the truth I'm feeling younger every day, Honey. The regular routine of work, good food and enough sleep in this superb climate is making me feel very, very!

I'm sure happy that, except for your one fall, you have had a reasonably decent time carrying the little one. I pray every night that the birth will be quick and easy, my Sweetheart. I love you so much and wish so uch that I could be with you during this period especially. It will be wonderful to have two Flossies, one big and one little, to love and care for. If it's really oke with you, I'd sure like a few more little ones too. Of course we'll have to wait awhile now because, "by proxy" isn't very satisfactory and I wouldn't care for the test tube type.

Keep dreaming, Darling. I'll be with you. All my love, Fred

26 November '44

Dear Folks,

Your letters are coming through in fine time (4 to 5 days). Packages, however are very slow. I received my first two yesterday. One was the box of goodies that Flossie mailed to me while I was still at Parks and the other, a nice box of cookies from you, Mom. The cookies were in pretty good shape considering the long journey. Thanks a lot. They are delicious. The hand level has not arrived yet though it is overdue. Well, all packages are delayed and that's all there is to it.

Am still very interested in my job and have plenty of work of that kind ahead, I imagine. Of course there are many different things that keep me aware that it is not a civilian project. One thing I have learned is patience. Continually changing plans, some inexperienced operators and the "red tape" have resigned me to "taking things as they come and keep my blood pressure down". At present I am doing work that calls for a CPO rating but as I am a replacement in the 42nd Batt. I cannot look for an advance in rating for many months. Even in the CBs the old Navy "calender" system is still evident regarding rerates. That year I spent in Peary was definitely wasted as it counts for nothing here in this battalion. However, I feel not in the least discouraged but, on the other hand, feel that I'm darn lucky to fall into a line of work that I am familiar with. The days pass by quickly because of my interest and I am definitely acquiring valuable experience for post-war work. Naturally there are some methods I will do better to forget as there is no economy in the true sense of the word, here in service construction but much of my experience will be beneficial. Luckily for me, there happen to be few CPOs in the outfit that have experience similar to mine in that line of work, though naturally there are very capable men in their own line of work here.

The climate here is superb and I feel healthy as can be all the time. In Flossie's last letter she mentions Dad having to drive to Sea Girt in a snowstorm and that the temp was 28°. Strange to say, that gave me a pang of homesickness, despite the fact that the climate here can really be considered perfect. When I look back at the "miserable" N.J. winters I think now-were they so miserable? Those snowstorms and inclement days were the days I went crow hunting or down to Dividing Creek for ducks. It was nasty driving but the ice storms were certainly beautiful and it was cozy and warm inside the house. When you are away from home you certainly appreciate it's fine qualities.

Sure can use the good hand level, Dad. I've expended plenty of "blue air" over this crummy little 50¢ model I'm using though I have wangled the occasional use of a good K.&E. transit-level. I think I'll be able to get one issued to me shortly. They're beautiful big jobs and cost, I imagine, a young fortune. A high quality hand level, however, would be as indispensable as my watch.

What news of my L.C Smith 20 gauge and my Parker, Dad? I write Eddie regularly and hear from him occasionally. I imagine he's a mighty busy boy. He certainly is thrilled about Sue.

Something else to send me- I'm not sure just where they are but they were last in the closet in Eddie and Sue's room or in the blue ditty bag in the back room downstairs. They're rolled up in a roll and tied with cord- my Barber Greene Handbook, the Seamen book on soil stabilization and my Aviation Engineers Handbook. If you can locate them would you please send them along. Would also appreciate a

copy of the N.J. State Hwy. Comm. "Blue Book" or whatever its' called if you could dig one up for me anywhere, Dad (An old one would be ok.)

Remember me to the men on the job that I know and to the Missy's. Love to you all. How's "Fat Fanny". Her pictures are cute as a minute. Fred

1 December, 1944

Dear Folks,

Received a nice bundle of magazines from you yesterday so I am now spending a little time whipping the trout streams and sitting in my favorite blind at Dividing Creek while a bunch of "blacks" raise my blood pressure a few points by their wary circling of the decoy set.

Flossie's last letter mentioned a visit of yours. She said you brought some more nice gifts for the little one which is certainly fine of you. It keeps my morale right up there when I realize how kindly and considerately my Flossie is being treated by you all. I really have no cause to worry or fret about her comfort and well being, that's sure.

The job is going very well. I am tremendously interested in it (especially after that wasted boring year at Peary). Although I have little authority by rate or rank here, I have the say on this little job because of "know how" experience gleaned in Iran as road foreman and at home in my several years at practical const. work. I just happened to hit an outfit with a dearth of men with my particular experience. As in Iran, I find my years spent on the various types of equipment invaluable here, especially as the fine cooperative bunch of fellows working for me would not, in general, be classified as highly skilled operators. I guess the real sign of a job efficiently done is the "satisfied" attitude of the officer in charge of that part of the job. With 20 years experience behind him he lets me do it my way, doesn't bother me and walks around the work with a smile and a pleasant word occasionally. I'm afraid my letter is going to sound as though I'm "blowing my own horn" but I feel honestly that the situation is that way.

Of course, you mustn't picture me wearing gold braid or even a CPO's anchor in a few weeks. After all this is the Navy and seniority and the "calendar system" determine promotion more than "know how". It isn't bothering me though. I just like the work and think I'm mighty lucky in that respect.

The big #1 mystery right now is- "where is the hand level?" Being sent by first class mail, it should have arrived here a week ago. Oh well, perhaps it will show up in a day or so. I can certainly use a good one. This Sears Roebuck model I'm using now is very unsatisfactory. I haven't been able to get a good Dumpy Level issued yet as they are scarce.

Christmas will soon be here and I'll be thinking of you all constantly. Perhaps next year we can all celebrate it together. Love to you all, Fred

P.S.- Dad, any news of my L.C. Smith or Parker?

3 December, 1944

Dear Folks,

I worked this morning, Sunday, but am taking it easy this P.M. Received Dad's nice newsy letter of Nov. 27th. Glad to hear everyone is still fine there at home. Your eldest son is still feeling "in the pink".

Was pleased to hear that my 20 ga. arrived all right from E. Bright. The missing hand level is still conspicuous for its absence. Cannot understand why it hasn't arrived as the glasses that you sent via 1st class mail arrived in fairly good time. Would appreciate another bottle or two of "Aggie". I'm not using much at present but should build up a little stockpile here just in case we are shipped out somewhere suddenly. Probably won't be near any drug stores at my next stop.

There are a few "died in the wool" const. boys here. Mostly younger than I and operators. We talked "shop" night and day and, of course, speculate on going into business after the war. Equipment and methods are hashed over. I still feel Eddie and I might make a go of a small outfit after the war if he is still interested then.

Can you see a future in soil-stabilization sub-contracting? The equipment layout would be a little specialized but not too heavy an original an original layout. Do you remember the price of a Cat #12 Auto Patrol, approximately? The gang here including myself would like to get a Caterpillar, Le Tourneau and La Plante Choate catalog. Do you suppose you could get one of each from E. Smith for me? The outcome of the daily bull sessions on equipment put Caterpillar way out ahead in the tractor and maintainer line with International a distant second. Le Tourneau is the only scraper (cable) that they'll consider though the La Plante Choate hydr. Bulldozer is given a good word in the D6 and D7 sizes. Northwest and Lorain are still fighting out a tie in the crane-shovel line.

Love to you all- Fred

7 December 1944

Dear Folks,

The grading and heavy equipment gangs had a half day off today due, I think, to the fact that we have to drill a half day Sunday in preparation for some big revue to be held a week from today. It's raining and the job is more or less a sea of mud so it really is a good afternoon to be off.

The handlevel arrived yesterday. It was postmarked Nov. 9 so it took almost a month to get here. I guess they ignored the first class status and sent it along with the regular parcel post. The main thing is- it's here and it certainly is a fine instrument. It's a better level by far than any that have been issued here and is a hundred percent better than the little cheap lightweight model I have had to use in the past month on the roadwork. I'll have to watch it carefully because there are numerous envious eyes appraising it. Of course I might have known that you would send me the best, Dad. Thanks- its going to be a big aid to me. Our "fine grade" here is close enough if it is within a tenth and the handlevel and self reading rod is used for all the grade checking and stake grade transfers etc. I use it every few minutes when the box is near completion and so a good, heavy easy reading level is a real boon and saves me much time rechecking etc.

Received a very nice letter from Eddie dated 20 Nov. the other day, my second from him in November. A 1st Lt. now- we can certainly be proud of the "kid". He is evidently making good as we knew he would. His letters seem quite cheerful and he is, of course all enthused about the "coming event". We both certainly have much to look forward to in the post war years- may they soon arrive. However, not meaning to appear discouraging, those post-war dreams seem to be in the distant future right at present.

I don't know how the newspapers at home are presenting the situation in the Pacific but the Honolulu papers take an extremely realistic and common sense view. I am finding my opinions being swung more and more conservatively as regards any kind of early ending of the war with Japan. The job ahead is of tremendous magnitude. Really the war in the Pacific is just beginning. Perhaps some miracle may occur that will shorten the affair but that can hardly be figured on. The B29s and the new "supers", the B36s and B42s will help a great deal but the supply problem must be terrific.

A speech like Churchill made to England in 1940 would fit in well now and perhaps give a few of the complacent V-day spielers an awakening there at home. V-day in the Pacific is a long way off, I think. However, "prayer" is a powerful force so who can tell how soon all that evil will be snowed under. Sounds like I'm in a serious mood today- well, it's Pearl Harbor Day, Dec. 7, a good occasion for serious thinking.

Thanks so much, Mom, for ordering those nice flowers. Perhaps by the time this letter reaches you, the flowers will be delivered. A great day!

I sure think that our little Adams is a junk, Dad, but I must admit that the biggest and newest jobs are pretty good although not as good as a #12, of course. Although I am a foreman I steal an hour or so on the blades whenever I can just to keep my hand in and I feel pretty confident that I can hold my own in

almost any company. Of course I had some valuable experience on a #12 in Iran. I think I am more proficient on that than carryall or dozer now. Love to you all- Fred

10 December, '44

Dear Folks,

Your very nice package of candy from Lofts arrived day before yesterday and was certainly mighty welcome. I am saving up quite a stock of goodies in my locker for Christmas and also for the day I may have to load up on an LST. Some supplementary grub is mighty nice to have on those ocean trips. No trip appears to be in the offing right at present but of course one can never tell when the occasion might crop up. You all have certainly sent me some mighty nice packages and I certainly appreciate it and thank you all a hundred times over.

We had to spend the morning out in the warm sun on the drill field practicing for a bid parade and revue coming up this week. We are lucky in that we don't have to wear our steel helmets and our M-1 carbines only weigh about 5 ½ lbs. instead of the 9 lbs. that the Garands and Springfields weigh in at. Drilling is, of course, an unpopular chore but a necessary evil, I guess.

Well, the time gets closer and there is a good chance that I may be a Papa by the time this letter reaches you. The suspense sure is something.

The job goes along well as usual. That hand level is sure a peach, Dad, and is getting plenty of use. I am anxious to get my first copy of Const. Methods. I imagine it will be a little slow getting here though as magazines don't have a high priority in the mail.

There is little news. I'm still feeling "fit as a fiddle" and hope to stay that way. I think of you all constantly and look ahead to the wonderful days we have ahead after the Japs and Nazis are licked and Eddie and I are home again. Love- Fred

11 December, 1944

Dear Folks,

Dad's letter of the 6th arrived today and I was certainly surprised to hear that on that date it had been two weeks since you had last heard from me. A letter or two must surely have gone astray as I have written you at least once a week, usually on Sunday, and very often twice a week. You'll probably get two or three at once, one of these days. I have received almost all the packaged I think and two bundles of magazines. The last package was the one from Lofts. I think that the last one from you was mailed Nov. 9. Of course, as I mentioned before, the hand level arrived and I have been putting it to very good use, believe me. It's a dandy.

Your mention of the work at Ind. Tape and the weather conditions now certainly set me to reminiscing, Dad. I would gladly trade this beautiful weather here for a nor-easter in N.J. especially if I could go to Dividing Creek for a day's ducking. So long for now. Love to you all, Fred

17 December 1944

Dear Folks,

Received Mom's nice letter of the 12th yesterday also a Christmas letter from Harry Ver Strate and card from the Goepels. My daily letter from my Flossie was included in the days' mail also. I hear from her almost every day which is mighty pleasant, believe me. Was surprised to hear that some of my letters are coming through to you so slowly. Must be the Xmas mail load, although letters from you all and Flossie arrive here almost regularly in about 5 or 6 days. Received the good scoutknife yesterday, Dad, for which, many thanks. That made much better time than the level.

Well the new baby was due four days ago, by the calendar, so I've sort of been expecting a cable the last few days. Looks as though Flossie won't be able to enjoy Christmas at home which is too darn bad. The suspense here at this end is considerable but I guess those things can't be rushed.

Sunday is pretty dead around here. There is not much to do and I would just as soon work a half a day. The time would pass by quicker.

The job still is of great interest to me. There is a CPO over me, a man about 48 years old. He is an old Chief of Party and has had considerable engineering experience though little actual experience running road building and grading gangs. We get along fine. He sets most of the grades, radii etc, and I run the gang. Besides two grade men and some helpers the "gang" at present consists of [redacted] all with [redacted] blades [redacted] big ones) one pulling [redacted] one on a L.T. rooter and one with a push blade, 1- [redacted] roller, [redacted] (the largest), [redacted] and dump truck and 1- [redacted] with dipper stick. You can realize that I have plenty to watch with the fine grade on the road to take care of. I am just like a kid with a bunch of new toys and am anxious to get on the job each morning. I just hope the job lasts or we get another like it.

I was very fortunate to fall into a job like this right off the bat. The officer in charge of the grading and roads is an old super with 20 yrs. experience on that type of work and we get along very well. He lets' me use my own methods and keeps "out of our hair" when things are going oke. as all good bosses should do. On the progress chart for the job the roads are way ahead so, of course, I feel a little chesty from time to time. The road section is pretty simple-[redacted] of crusher run [redacted] wide with [redacted] dirt shoulders. There is to be [redacted] of A.C. but a contractor puts that on.

The drainage is taken care of by [redacted] ditches and by box culverts (concrete). We have plenty of intersections and curves to work in. I understand that snapshots of the men on the equipment are permitted so I'll try to get a few pictures one of these days. I have no camera (wish I had). They are permitted here but a few of my buddies have.

Love to you all and a mighty happy Christmas. You are all in my thoughts always. Fred

19 December, 1944

Dear Mother& Dad,

The Chaplain gave me the sad message last night and there is no sense in telling you how I felt- you know. It was a great boost to be able to talk to Flossie herself on the telephone this morning though I was so filled up when I heard her voice that I could say but little and could have kicked myself afterwards for not saying all the things I wanted to.

The main thing is that Flossie is going to be all right. That thought has eased the thoughts a little that run through my mind today.

I still feel that the Lord is watching out for us all and that He will give Flossie and I another chance. I'll be hungry for news of her. My love to you all- Fred

24 December '44

Dear Mother and Dad,

Kind letters from you both arrived day before yesterday and were a great comfort to me. I was glad to hear that Flossie was not put through too much suffering and knowing now all the circumstances helps me to feel that the little one's death was perhaps the best and most merciful thing for us all. I first heard the news, from the chaplain, on Monday evening, 18th Dec. Naturally I was hit pretty hard. My main concern was Flossie. I knew she would feel mighty bad about it. After I talked to her briefly by radio-telephone I felt better and hoped that the call had helped her too. Since then I have made up my mind that it is God's will, that He knows best and that Flossie and I will have another chance at raising a family. My concern now is that Flossie will recover quickly.

I hope she will, after regaining her health completely, become occupied with a new job or something that will help the time to pass more quickly for her. I have been so far away from all the planning and anticipation that the disappointment is dulled a little. It has hit Flossie and her family and you mighty hard I know. All of us must plan and pray for the future and forget the past sorrowful occasion as soon as possible. I am mighty fortunate to be blessed with such a wonderful wife and such kind considerate loving parents and I'm mighty grateful for these and always will be no matter what come up. Don't worry about me, Mother and Dad.

My interesting job here has been a boon, in the past week especially. Things go well on the job and I am busy enough to make the time fly by. I have been doing a lot of road work similar in many respects to the roads at J. and J. and little special earth moving jobs crop up from time to time. I was interested to hear that you sold the miserable little Adams grader, Dad. I have 2 new Adams in my outfit, the largest size, and they are fairly satisfactory but inferior to Cat. We have tried to beg wangle or steal some #12s but you can bet that the outfits that have them aren't parting with them without bloodshed. We were lucky to draw some good D8s and D7s and Tairuapuie (sp?) as the army usually gets all the good stuff like that. The big A.C.s stink! Regardless of what their ads may say they are way below Cat. In the esteem of the CBs. Sorry to say that the La Plante Choate Carrimor is not well liked. When real carryalls are considered it's always L. Tourneau. (I think the Carrimors oke though)

Our Eddie is definitely a first Lt. now. He wrote me in detail. He's now wearing a silver bar. A letter to you must have gone astray. I would be glad to have a 5" slide rule, Dad. You know, when I finally get home again I am going to be much better equipped for a job in road construction and grading. My experience gains every day and I'm going to keep learning all I can, believe me. Dad, would you try and get from Smith the approximate cost of the following (broken down into units):

- 1- D-6, La Plante C hydraulic angledozer, Le Tourneau power unit, LeTourn. Or La Plante cable scraper (4-6 yd.).
- 2- D-7, Le Tourneau angledozer, Le Tourn. 8 yd scraper.
- 3- #112- Auto Potrol.

Those first two outfits are real all-around rigs for any small or medium size contractor, I think. The cable blade is very satisfactory on the D7 and will do plenty of hard digging if operated correctly. The hydraulic

outfit is a bit more satisfactory on a machine the size of the D6 because of the lighter blade weight. An angledozer is a mighty versatile unit and well worth the extra cost.

A skillful operator on an angledozer can do some work ordinarily requiring a grader. By the way, the rope L.T. blade on the D8 is much more satisfactory than the hydr. And that includes operation in a lot of rock and hard pan. We have used both types extensively on the same type of work. Dad, see if you can get for me a rough estimate of the terms a fellow like me might get on an outfit similar to that mentioned a page or two back (D6 or D7 with blade and carryall.)

I realize it would be speculative but see if you can't get some dope on it for me so I and my buddies here can go ahead and enlarge on our post-war dreams and ideas. It helps to plan. Makes us feel like we're more than just service nos. and will some day be individuals again.

I'll miss you tomorrow (Xmas) but then, I miss you every day. I'm looking ahead to that wonderful Xmas we'll all be together again. Love- Fred

24 December 1944

My Dearest Sweetheart,

Well, 'tis the day before Christmas and I'm dreaming of home and you. I hope Christmas is not too bad for you this year, Honey. May be it will be our last one apart. Sure hope so, never can tell. There's a pretty good radio program on right now (Jack Benny, Fred Allen, Kay Kyser etc. all together) It's 1 P.M. here so it's evening there in New Jersey. In a little while I am going out in one of the trucks and go on a little sight-seeing tour with about a dozen of the boys. Just ride around and look at the sights if any. After supper tonight I'm going to the Christmas Eve service here in the area and tomorrow I'm going into Honolulu to one of the big churches for the Christmas service. A party leaves here by bus or truck at 9:30 A.M. We have a turkey dinner tomorrow and a big show at the theater tomorrow night including "Casanova Brown" which I fortunately have not yet seen.

Dearest, we have never discussed religion in any detail and I wish we had. You come from a fine Christian family and I am similarly blessed. Our families are not churchgoers but that doesn't bar them from being good Christians. They are kind, considerate and believe in and follow the Golden Rule. Many great churchgoers are not real Christians, as you know. Hypocrisy is not Christian-like and some people think that money can buy themselves a real Christian reputation. No, I'm not much of a churchgoer although I realize that the Church is an indispensable institution in Christianity and has beneficially influenced the lives of millions. I am of the opinion that the Church is necessary to a successful Christian life but as yet I have taken it in small doses.

My Darling, I am probably more religious than you ever dreamed but my feelings are so intimate and I dislike demonstrative religious actions so much that I do not show it very much. I joined the Reform Church in Metuchen because I felt that I was ready in my mind and I feel that it is a benefit to myself, my children, if any, and the community in general. I don't mean that I personally am any benefit to the community but the Church is and memberships keep a church going. I hope you will some day feel ready to join the Church but do not join because it is "the thing to do."

Read and study the New Testament, Darling, and perhaps you will feel as I do. As the Bible and New Testament are a little hard reading I want to hopefully suggest a book to you. One that is true, easy to read and a wonderful story. It is "Hurlbut's Life of Christ for Young and Old." It is an interesting, easily understood biography of the greatest person the world has ever known. It would make me very happy to hear from you, a few words, of your thoughts on this important subject. Please think it over seriously-
All my love- Fred

Christmas Day, 1944

My Dearest Sweetheart,

You are surely in my thoughts and prayers this day. I often wonder, Darling, how it came about that I am blessed with such a wonderful wife. For you are the finest partner a fellow could ever have and the knowledge of your love and our life together helps me over the hard spots and through the blue days. Although I am far away from home and you, I can relive in memory all the happy Christmasses we have spent together. Christmas Eve at the Satterers with all the hilarity, jokes and good times- Elmer's fascinating gifts and Ma Satterer's good eats and splendid hospitality- Walter's jokes and crazy actions and Viola's impersonations and the kid's excitement and happiness- and then we bundle up warmly and drive to Metuchen to spend the balance of the night before Christmas with my family.

Christmas morning- the tree and gifts and little Johnny's excitement-our happiness together- then a fine Christmas dinner and time for company to come. Oh, Darling, we had great times and ahead of us lie many more wonderful Christmas Days. That is what I think and dream of today and it helps to make me happy because I know that is all going to come true again.

I am enclosing a little program of our doings today. It isn't much but every little bit helps to pass the time today. The battalion gave every man a Xmas gift today which, although the value is small, is never-the-less a nice thought. It is a chit good for \$1.00 at the Ship's Service Store.

The Christmas Eve service last night was very nice and was well attended. My Dearest, I hope you will give my letter of yesterday much thought. I find my knowledge of Jesus' teachings of great value to me. I'm sure you would, too. All my love, Dearest, Your own- Fred

Enclosure:

Program of Christmas Eve show, church service and dinner menu from 42nd Naval Construction Battalion Island "X"

Christmas Day, 1944

Dear Mother and Dad,

This day my thoughts and prayers are with you all there at home; with brother Eddie in France and with my own darling wife. Christmas has many meanings to me and not the least of these is the memory of many happy Christmas Days at home with my loved ones. I have truly been blessed with a wonderful family. You have been the finest parents any fellow could possibly have. Your kindness and consideration, your generosity and most loving care has made my life a real happiness. Looking back at the years gone by, I see your kind deeds and loving attention shining out like stars in a midnight sky. If I, with my feeble attempts, can be half the man that you are, Dad, I'll indeed be fortunate and, Mother, your love and generous attention reach a goal that I and Estelle and Eddie will have difficulty attaining in our future years of parenthood. May God bless you both and grant you long lives here on earth with us and everlasting life in the Lord's own house.

I can remember all the exciting Christmas mornings now passed by when we, Estelle and I and, later, little Eddie awoke so early that it was still dark- the giggling and whispering as we delved into our well-stuffed stockings- little Eddie crawling in bed with you with some of his latest trinkets- then breakfast, eaten with hurried furtive glances into the "room" where the tree and all our nice presents lay- and our little game of each passing out a present to the next- the wonderful gifts that you always so generously provided even when the money to buy them with was none too plentiful.

Yes, Mother and Dad, you gave us many wonderful Christmas Days and their memory helps now to carry us on the necessary job here present. It is for lives like that we fight and work and the day is not too far distant when we can celebrate a real old-fashioned Christmas together once again. Love to you all and God keep you, your Son- Fred

31 December 1944

Dear Folks,

The mailman has been very kind this week. Along with letters, I have received: bundle of sporting magazines and construction magazines, package containing soil-stabilization manuals and "Coronet" etc., package containing historical novel, "aggi", candy etc., package of candy etc. from Flossie, magazine "Motorboating," to which I subscribe, and two issues of "Reader's Digest", sent to me by the Church. Also received Estelle's nice letter and a kind letter from Harry Ver Strate and several from Flossie etc. So you see I have had a pretty good Christmas week. I want to thank you again for all the nice things you have sent to me. I have received a fine bunch of Xmas presents in spite of being so far from home and despite the difficulty of trying to think of things to get me. You know what the books mean to me. I enjoy every word of them. That fine Kuker-Rankin handlevel is worth its' weight in gold, Dad. Of 15 or so levels kicking around the job, this handlevel is miles ahead of any other. I have all kinds of swap and trade deals offered me but I'd just as soon part with my wristwatch. I use the level just about as much as I do my watch. Next time you send a package would you send my little book entitled "Mathematics for Mechanics," Audels, which is in the old blue ditty bag in the back room. Could use that good 5" slide rule too, Dad. Thanks in advance. I am certainly glad to receive "Excavating," Roads & Streets" etc and I'm not the only one. They go the rounds of the grading and heavy equipment gangs until they're worn out. I am waiting anxiously for my first copy of "Const. Methods" which is my favorite.

You are the finest parents a fellow could have and Eddie and I are mighty lucky. You always thought of our happiness first and though in times past I have taken it for granted too many times I really appreciate it, believe me, Mother and Dad.

Flossie's letters have been cheerful and I am mighty glad that she has such an easy going nature. She is all ready planning for our next "little one" although that, of course, will be quite a piece ahead in the future. She mentions in a recent letter that she would like to adopt a little one and that thought leaves me very confused and filled with conflicting emotions. If Flossie could not eventually have a child of her own I would be 100% in favor of an adoption move right now. Estelle and John have been so wonderfully blessed with Johnny and Lee that I have no qualms about adoption. However, I wonder if it would make any difference later on when we had a child of our own blood. Frankly, I don't know and I need some carefully considered and mature advice. If Flossie mentions it tell me your opinion. Love to you all- Fred

2 January, 1945

Dad,

Just for the record, to help me and some of my buddies speculate on post-war possibilities of small contracting businesses could you dig up the following data (approximate of course):

Thanks. Fred

Cost new

- Seaman Pulvi-Mixer- MHD-----
- Seaman Pulvi-Mixer- THD-----
- Dual drum sheepsfoot roller-----
- 5 to 8 ton Tandem Roller-----
- 30 h.p. rubber tired tractor-----
- Heavy duty 4 bottom gang plow-----
- Heavy duty 9' offset disc harrow-

Rental rates (per hour)

- D8 and 12 yd. (level meas.) carryall---
- D7 and 8 yd. " " " --
- D6 and 5 yd. " " " --
- D7 Angledozer-----
- D6 " -----
- #12 Auto Patrol -----
- #112 " " -----
- 10-12 ton 3 wh. Roller-----
- 8-10 ton tandem roller-----
- Seaman Pulvi-Mixer -MHD-----
- ¾ yard shovel-----
- 1 ½ yard " -----
- 2 ½ ton dump truck-----

6" Pavement

Cost-in place

(Approximate)

- Concrete (Highway spec.) -----per sq. yd.
- Bituminous conc. (2" top-(stone base))-----" " "
- Soil cement-----" " "
- Penetration macadam-----" " "
- Bituminous road mix (mix in place)-----" " "
- Road gravel (Oil seal with chips)-----" " "

8 January, 1945

Dear Folks,

The mailman really treated me well tonight= two nice newsy letters from you, Mother, and one from you, Dad, three from Flossie, 1 letter from Dick St. John (some surprise, but mighty nice), three Xmas cards (Aunt Marion, Harold Miller and a pal from Camp Peary), a large package of Collier's and Posts, Civil Engr. Handbook from McGraw Hill (Thanks, Dad), a beautiful calendar from Smith Tractor entitled "Enchantress" and Caterpillar and Le Tourneau catalogs. Plenty of reading material now. I certainly enjoyed hearing all the news from home, believe me. I could visualize you all on Christmas Day and New Years Eve by reading between the lines of your letters. You were and are in my thoughts constantly.

That pre-fabricated paper house looks like the ticket for Dividing Creek. You certainly are running parallel in your thoughts re' a ducking shack with my own ideas on that subject, Dad. I have often thought of a Quonset Hut but they are rather expensive, of course. Our own little sleeping and eating quarters down there would really make the enjoyment greater. Flossie could be our chief cook and bottlewasher. I wonder what she would think of that!

When the censor cut up my letter (by the way, he's a pleasant chap from Newark) he cut out some prices I wanted you to try and dig up for me. At least I think he did as you did not mention them in your last letter. In reference to my post war dreams I would like to get the approximate prices of the following equipment: (Perhaps E. Smith would furnish them, if you don't all ready have them available).

Cat. D6—price with no attachments.

Cat. D6 with hydraulic angledozer.

Cat. D6 with Le Tourn. M5 (6 yd.) Carryall.

Cat #112 Auto Patrol

Cat D6 with Le. Tourn. M5 Carryall and Le Tourneau Angledozer.

Cat D7---price with no attachments

Cat D7---Le Tourneau LS (8 yd.) Carryall and Le Tourn. Angledozer.

I think that the D6 with Carryall and a ½ Auto Patrol would enable a fellow to do a lot of small jobs and make money. That M5 Le Tourneau Carryall looks like a honey in the catalog as it is just exactly the same design as the large models with positive ejection etc.

Dad, make me an optimistic approximate guess on the cash down payment needed for a #112 and D6 with hydr. angledozer and Le Tourn. M5 (6 yd.) Carryall. What percentage of the total cost would I have to put up, do you think? How much working capital (minimum amount naturally) would I need to operate these 2 pieces of equipment? Any other pertinent data on the financial setup of the above proposition would be appreciated.

Hold that other scout knife for awhile. I'm pretty well fixed at present but may need one later. Sure appreciate your trouble in hunting up a camera for me. Try to snag a film or two if you can as they are kind of scarce out here, too. Send "aggie" occasionally. You could send "Life" instead of "Colliers" as my bunk mate (in the lower) has a subscription to Colliers and his are available to me. Mother and Dad, I

certainly appreciate all the nice things you send me. They mean more to me then you can imagine. Love
to all, Fred

Card postmarked Jan 12, 1945

Happy Birthday Mother

(Card text)

To the finest Mother a fellow could possibly have. With deepest love, Fred

Published by Tongg Honolulu, Hawaii

14 January '45

Dear Folks,

Another quiet Sunday in the Islands. I have the sniffles which is unusual here in the sunshine. I think it's the aftermath of some "shots" I had the other day (Cholera, Typhus, etc.) We all had sore arms, too, but its only the beginning, as I understand we will get four or five more needles in a few days.

The war in the Pacific is certainly moving along now and the news is very encouraging. Mac Arthur's so-far successful invasion of the Phillipines has really brightened the outlook. Looks lie there'll be plenty of work for CBs. I noticed by an article in one of the mainland papers that they are enlisting a few certain trade classifications in the CBs now. Is Jollife still s civilian?

Tommorrow I start Malaria Control School for a few days. A very appropriate course for me, don't you think? Perhaps I can keep from getting Malaria again this time out. Certainly hope so.

I have thought over the "adoption" question very thoroughly and now feel that it is a good and wise move and have written Flossie to that effect. Will be mighty interested and anxious to keep posted on the developments. If you should stop hearing from me for a period of time don't be worried. Keep writing me regularly as your letters mean more to me then I can say. I would appreciate if you would send Agarol occasionally now. In case some packages don't get through I'll always have some on hand or some on the way.

There's nothing else now except the camera and films, if you can locate some and my "Math. For Mech." Book and slide rule that I mentioned in the last letter. Keep the magazines coming. They may be very old issues when I finally receive them but they'll be new to me.

I am happy as possible away from home and you all and find things of interest ahead of me all the time. Remember my old love of "Spam". Well, I guess I'll be seeing more of that darn stuff. Never have any when I get home. It's a disgrace to Hormel as I have said before. I was interested in the travels of the gentleman Mr. Lawrence who used to share your office on Clinton St., Dad. Love to you all-Fred

[Enclosure

Newspaper page from "Yank" (Pacific Addition)

Title of column- "Dudley Wintergreen in the Pacific"

Two stories (anecdotes) checked regarding the Seabees.]

21 January, 1945

Dear Folks,

I have not been able to write as much as usual this week. Have been mighty busy. At what, I cannot say but have been going to Malaria Control School in between time. Tomorrow is the last day of the course. It has been very interesting but, of course, not like construction work in the time-passing quality. We spent an interesting day in Honolulu. Each one of us was assigned to an Army dengue inspector and went on his regular patrol around sections of the city looking for likely breeding spots. The *Aedes* mosquito (carries dengue) breeds in flour vases, tin cans, in fact, any receptacle holding water for a week or more. My inspector was assigned to the slums and dives along the waterfront and we spent an interesting day.

Have not had time to read the nice novel you sent me for Christmas, in fact, have decided to save it for the [redacted]. I have plenty of study material now and should be able to keep my mind occupied on the long days.

War news is certainly booming these days. Hope the Allies can keep the pressure up on all fronts until the Nazis crack and then the Nips! We get two shots tomorrow, our final typhus and cholera shots. We are also getting a shot for bubonic plague and so should be well immunized. Too bad there is no anti toxin for malaria and dengue. They can be prevented though. It just takes constant and conscientious vigilance. Have been reading up on the history and customs of the Moros. They are really a bunch of tough boys and have been that way for centuries.

Sure am anxious to hear news now of the projected plans for adopting a little son or daughter. I'm just as sure as I can be now that I made the right decision and wonder why I ever had any idea that I would later regret such a move. I must have been still upset and surely confused. Now that I reflect back it seems foolish of me to entertain that particular worry.

Well there's no more news that I could get by the censor so I'll say so long for now. Love to you all, Fred
P.S. Be sure to send Agarol regularly, now!

25 January, 1945

Dear Folks,

Dad's letter of the 17th arrived today, also 2 packages of Life, Colliers and sporting magazines and Post. I can't get over the winter you are having there at home. Flossie's letters are full of news about snow, snow and more snow and your letters tell of it too. I don't remember N.J. having that much snow for years, especially Metuchen. Flossie tells me she is going to visit Sue in R.I. I think that's a fine idea. I'm sure she will be a comfort to Sue and the change will be pleasant for Flossie, too.

I have a new job at present, the grading and roads here being all finished as far as we're concerned. I'm equipment foreman under a swell CPO and the best Lt. in the outfit. He is also our Co. C.O., by the way. Of course the work is right in my line. I don't have much to do with major repairs but take care of adjustments and minor repairs as well as supervision of the operators and dispatching of equipment (Cats-etc., not trucks)

So Jollife is overseas again. If he got Jack Sharp's job he is really coining the dough. Jack was a crackerjack master mechanic and shop foreman and drew big pay. Jolly will be able to retire for life when the wars are over. Well, he's a hard worker and earns what he gets. More power to him! When this thing is over, the glory and the glamor of a uniform will be quickly forgotten and the boy with real money in the bank will be sitting pretty while the "vets" are picketing Washington again and populating the new post-war FDR-WPAs.

Will be glad to get the info. On equipment rates, rentals, etc. for my little post-war dream book. I'm not joining Frankies post-war W.P.A. I'll promise you that!

A most happy birthday today, Mother Dear. May you enjoy many many more and may they be happier every year. Love to you all, Fred

27 January, 1945

Dear Folks,

Received Mother's nice newsy letter of the 17th and Dad's very complete letter containing equipment data etc. (21st Jan.) I enjoy hearing from you so much and you'll never know how much your letters mean to me out here so far from home.

I guess the kids are really having a time for themselves in the snow. Bad driving and working conditions though. I hope Flossie is able to get the baby now after she has her heart set on it. Two disappointments in a row would be mighty tough. I'm mighty anxious for us to get the little one, too, believe me.

All my classes and "book-larnin" are secured now and I'll have to continue my studies at some later date. Right at present I'm far too busy to take in an extra study etc. My job at present is all-heavy equipment. I was a little surprised to see how easy it is to repaint equipment. Believe me, if I ever have any of my own after the war I'll paint it every year. Using high pressure water hose and then a very thorough cleaning with a steam and Oakite hipressure jet and painting with pressure spray gun, two men can clean and paint (1 coat) an "8" in about 4 hours. Hosing off takes two to three hours and painting (2 guns) takes about an hour. Of course we use an assembly line set up because of the number of pieces involved but two men could handle the entire job easily figuring about 2 Cats a day. We have experienced painters of course and they turn out the paint job in 45 min. to 1 hr.

Dad, your letter of the 21st was great. You gave me such complete data. The rental rate chart was very neat. The gang will really have figures to speculate on now. I am mighty interested in getting a piece or two after the war and doing a little contracting. The D6 with Le Tourn. MS- (yd.) scraper and angle dozer blade looks like a fine all around outfit. This would run around \$9400- complete. Of course ten thousand dollars is not hay. All I can do now is dream for no one can say how things will be when I finally get home. I may find, if there is an opening, that a job with Utility may be the best bet for the first couple of years. But it's nice to speculate, on paper. Doesn't cost anything. It's G. Lawrence all right, Dad and imminent.

Send "Aggie" at regular intervals, please as packages may be a long time reaching me and some may get lost by the wayside.

Strange to say, Dad, that friend of Mr. Hill's who was a foreman for Franklin Const. came over on the same bottom that I did but of course I didn't know of him then. Now I have no idea where he might be. Somewhere in the Pacific, I guess.

I am still amazed at the amount of ice and snow you are having there at home. Some winter. Well give my love to all my loved ones, big and small, there at home. I think of you always. Love- Fred

4 February, 1945

Dear Folks,

Letters from both of you arrived today and were mighty welcome. I received a V-mail from Eddie yesterday dated Jan 5th, not very recent. He seems to be taking things in stride and is the same cheerful boy. The Brownie arrived in good shape and will fit my needs nicely. Don't bother trying to find anything better, Dad. The Brownie will take satisfactory snapshots and will stand much abuse. Of course film and developing will always be a problem but we'll get around them. I'll include a request for film in every letter. You probably will not be able to get many rolls but can send a roll along anytime you are able to locate one.

Dad, I really had a thrill when you casually mentioned E.R Squibbs proposed 10 year expansion plan along Route 23. It is swell to know of these possibilities for good work after the war. I know you are more or less on the "ground floor" with J & J and Barber and the connection you are working on with Squibbs looks great. Of course I realize that the work will not likely be handed right out to Utility without competitive bidding but the potentialities are encouraging. I have not, of course, made up my mind yet just what I want to do when I get home again but it is pretty well narrowed down to the construction field. If Utility has an opening for me as an operator-foreman or something similar I imagine that will be my choice though I am interested in a position entailing more responsibility, personal initiative and technical skill than the type of jobs I held before the war. I have certainly gained considerable experience in the construction line since Pearl Harbor and am due to gain considerable increasing experience as the months ahead pass by. I jumped right smack into the line of work I was interested in here and there's little doubt but that I'll stay in that line from here on out. I've certainly gained in confidence in myself and my ability, perhaps too much so. I have thought much about going into business for myself but that depends entirely on conditions after the war and is a move that I wouldn't make immediately after my homecoming despite loan possibilities etc. I have in mind a two or three year working and acclimatizing period first. This would give me time to build up the necessary capital and analyze the post-war possibilities in the small construction-outfit field. Anyhow, who knows-perhaps my best opportunity will be some established firm like Utility. Time will tell.

You are probably a little confused as to just what I am doing now- with my talk of malaria control etc. Of course I can't say just exactly what I am doing, especially at this time. The malaria control school was just some extra training. 1st class C.P.O.s in the various lines of work were picked out to attend the eight day course. In lieu of a CPO with drainage experience I happened to be picked as "man in charge" during the schooling. After school was completed we reverted back to our regular status. My particular case is a bit confused, however. As they are caught up with grading here, for us, I have nothing to do in that line now and am attached to heavy equipment as a sort of equipment foreman. The work is very closely allied and either job suits me fine. At some later date in some other setup, I'll probably be needed in "grading" as they have few or no men with road building experience. Heavy equipment says they are going to keep me and I don't know who will win out. Possibly they'll combine the two depts. I am a bit inclined towards hvy. equip. as I would have charge of a considerable fleet of cats, graders etc. and operators and would be in on the actual work as much as I would as grade foreman. The two jobs conflict anyhow so may be they'll combine them. We have a grand bunch of new equipment but I can't give you amounts and/or descriptions. We are lucky, however, in that we were able to swap around and

finagle so that we have almost 100% Cat. In the tractor line. An achievement for the CBs, believe me. A.C.s are as numerous as leaves on trees and disliked heartily by all concerned. I will have some real stories (true) to tell you about equipment makes when I get home again. A.C.s advertisement give us a big laugh. Stick to Cat. For tractors and graders, Le Tourneau for cable operated equipment and La PlanteChoate for hydraulic stuff and you'll never go wrong. They're so fat ahead of the other makes that I can't see any sense putting good money in any other brand unless the price is sacrificial. International is second and is not a bad little outfit but beware of the attachments. Heil cable outfits are like Buckeye- the poorest bunch of junk manufactured. A.C.s have a good motor (G.M.) but otherwise stink!

Where is Sqibbs' property located on Rt. 25, Dad? By the way, Hawaii has mosquitos but no Anopheles (the malaria carrier). They have had some serious dengue epidemics in the past though (dengue carried by Aedes mosq.) You are certainly having an old fashioned winter there at home! By the way, Mom, I haven't joined "the men in the white coats"! I think of you all a great deal of the time and am looking forward to the good times we are all going to have after this mess is cleaned up and we are all home again. Love to you all, Fred

(P.S. Had a nice V-mail from Paul Smith. He sure thinks a lot of you, Dad!)

11 February 1945

Dear Folks,

Sunday seemed to come around quickly this week. Guess that's because I was too busy to think about the time. No work this Sunday. Sometime next week we are scheduled for another formal revue, our final, I imagine. Preparation for that will entail some drilling and the entire affair is heartily disliked by all. Flossie is now in R.I. and enjoying (?) the severe New England blizzard we read about here in the Honolulu Advertiser. I read an interesting article in one of the Redbook magazines you sent me. It concerned cycles and stated that we have just completed a warm dry climatic cyclic period and are now due for many cold wet years (this is an 85 year cycle). If true, the study of cycles might be an interesting and profitable subject. According to the article, '46 and '47 are due to be prosperous years with a business depression likely in '51 and '52. May be so- who knows! Anyhow' the climatic cycles would tend to explain the so-called "old fashioned winters" of years back.

Occasionally (especially when news from the war fronts is optimistic) I get spurts of post-war dreaming and thinking. This week I have been imagining myself and Dad and Eddie in the duck blind at Dividing Creek. I read my "Outdoor Life" etc from cover to cover and then re-read them. Don't forget to keep an eagle eye on our guns, Dad. I didn't pack them away as well as I did when I went overseas before but they'll be oke as long as they are checked periodically. Be especially careful of "fingermarks" on the metal parts. There were a couple of little gunsmithing jobs I wanted to get done and have been thinking that it wouldn't be a bad idea to have the work done now while I'm away from home and can't use the guns. I discussed both jobs with Treptow and we decided to wait until he had a slack period. That period should be now. If you have a chance drop in and see him and if he can do the jobs, let him have the guns. I don't want the guns laying around in the shop for months though.

Here's the dope. My Browning "Sweet 16" automatic is in the full length canvas (sheepskin lined) case. This gun is my special pride and joy. The push safety on this gun is very stiff and I need a very easy working safety especially when ducking with cold numb fingers! Treptow will work this mechanism over so it works easily and smoothly. He shoots a Browning Sweet 16 himself and so know just what to do. The other gun is in a canvas takedown case and is a new L.C. Smith 12 gauge double. I want to have him make a beavertail forearm for this gun. You can get the cost data from Treptow and I'll send you a money order. Thanks.

I have been doing considerable paper work and can't figure out how a fellow could buy heavy equipment and make it pay unless he had 6 to 10 thousand actual cash of his own. Borrowing heavily to start doesn't look so good to me despite government aid. A steady job at decent pay with an established outfit still looks a little better to me right now. What do you think?

Flossie certainly has high hopes of adopting a little one and may have her heart set a little too strongly on it. I am 100% in favor of it but it looks to me, from the information she has sent me, that the competition is pretty keen. I hope she isn't disappointed too badly if she doesn't make connections right away. We may be the lucky ones though. Sure hope so.

Don't forget to send snapshots of you all whenever you can and at some future date I wish you could snag some Kodachrome film and get a few inside snaps of my Flossie all dressed up fit to kill. A real pin-up photo, perhaps in her nightie. I'd rather have my own pin-up gal than some movie star.

Well, I'll close now with love to all of you. Write when you can. I really miss you all. Fred

17 February '45

Dear Folks,

Received Dad's letter of the 11th today as well as a 1st class package containing two rolls of film. Also am in receipt of two bundle of magazines (Life, Look and the Post) and another roll of film. Thanks a lot. I can't get any film developed right at present so I won't expose any of the new film until I get located and the developing facilities are set up. You'll have some snapshots coming to you then. The old Brownie will work out fine here. An expensive camera would be a liability I think through all the "roughing it" we may have ahead of us.

From the tone of Flossie's letters, I gather she has really enjoyed herself at Sue's. It was mighty nice she could have the chance to visit the Woonsocket folks and I'm sure she did herself and Sue considerable good.

[Redacted] More- I cannot say! So there is little news I can write you at the present time. I'm disgustingly healthy although not as light in weight as I would like to be. However, although I have lost no weight yet, I am not as soft and flabby as I was when holding sway as a laundry queen and feel very fit. I have an idea that the hot climate and hard work in the forward areas will skim my weight down some.

The war fronts are certainly bustling with activity and most of the news now coming through is good for the morale. Hope it stays favorable from now on for every day we make those advances and kill Japs and Nazis is a day nearer home for us.

We have some of those heavy graders that you mentioned, Dad, although I'm not permitted to state details or numbers. They are an excellent rig, surely second only to Cat. in efficiency and about like a 112 in production or a little better. The Army, as you may know, uses many Galions (the heaviest model) and seem to think very highly of them. I have had the opportunity here to study many more makes and models of heavy equipment and I think the experience may prove valuable in post-war work.

Your little news item, Dad, concerning Caterpillar's interest in purchasing the rights for the Galion Diesel Engine is a little confusing to me. First, I can't imagine Cat. wanting to purchase patent rights to another diesel engine when they produce one of the finest and most efficient heavy duty engines now on the market. Secondly, I never saw or heard of a Galion Diesel engine although they may be a recently developed model. All the Galion Graders I ever saw or heard of and there are plenty around here, are equiped with International Diesel Engines. If you remember, the small model we had was powered with International. Perhaps Cat. is interested in Galion's Hydraulic system which is very efficient or as I realize, perhaps they have developed a brand new engine. I'd sure like to hear more about it, Dad!

Regarding La Plante Choate vs. Le Tourneau rope scrapers, what you say may be true about the new Carrimors as I haven't seen any of the newest models. I feel that the Le Tourn. Is superior in several respects to the model Carrimor we have but of the newest models I know little. E. Smith sent me a fine Le Tourneau catalog but nothing on the new La Plant Choates. If you get any literature on them I'd would appreciate a copy. Has Cat. improved their power control unit? Potentially it was a fine outfit even though the ones we had contained several "bugs". Le Tourneau's P.C.U. is indisputably superior to

any other I've seen and I have been around and operated five other makes, most of which, like Buckeye, are "stinkers"!

Certainly glad to hear that Mr. Stelle is getting along well after his close shave. Seems to me you mentioned Mr. Stelle's close affinity for auto crackups before. Yes, I have often considered just how Utilities' possible liquidation would affect us all. That it would have a profound effect, there is no doubt. Although it is, at present, a remote possibility, it is certainly something to think about and make a few quiet plans for. Naturally there isn't a hell of a lot we could do ourselves toward carrying on even a small part of the business as the almighty dollar is vital. Although I often speculate on going into business for myself I realize that my available capital will be mighty low. I am attempting to save all I can from my meager service pay but if I even succeed in carrying out my budget plan I'll still be in no position to buy even a small portion of any business. I understand that N.J. has passed a very generous "aid-to-veterans' business-loan law though I know the details but three thousand dollars (as a loan) isn't much even though I might have an equal amount in cash to back it up. Oh, well it's too far away to worry about now—naturally can't help speculating though.

My first copy of Const. Methods has not reached me yet but it will eventually. Wonder how the ducks are making out through the severe winter you're having. They're probably all in Louisiana by now. Love to all of you, Fred.

18 February 1945 Sunday

Dear Folks,

Mail has arrived in a peculiar sequence this weekend. Received Dad's letter of the 13th two days ago, which was quick service. Also received one of the 14th from Flossie. Then yesterday I received letters from you both dated the 2nd and the 4th and one from Flossie dated the 4th. Well, they are mighty welcome letters, late or not. Dad's letter had the newspaper accounts and pictures of the severe snow conditions prevailing in N.J. and they were certainly interesting. I guess if I were home now I'd be grumbling about the severe and seemingly endless winter but from here the pictures and stories look very very inviting.

Flossie's latest letter tells of Stellie's latest misfortune. I'm certainly sorry Sis has had such a tough break again and sure hope she'll be up and around in a jiffy. We Arnolt Jrs. sure have to work like hell to have offspring but we'll win out in the end.

Regarding Aggie, one bottle a month would certainly be plenty if it reached me all right. I have received to date, two from you and one from Flossie. Perhaps it would be just as well to send me two a month for a little while until I get a reserve stock. I may be a long time receiving packages-----.

You both write such nice newsy and lengthy letters. They're a real treat to receive and read, believe me.

Regarding that snapshot you liked so well- Due to rationing here of print paper I was only able to get the one copy. The negative is not mine but I could get it I'm sure as it belongs to one of my buddies. He however has gone ahead and I couldn't get it until a later date. Here's the real fly in the ointment- undeveloped films or negatives cannot be mailed out. The censor's office won't pass them. However, at some later date and other location I will probably be able to have another print made of the negative and send it on to you. Meanwhile, if you really think it worth enlarging, you might be able to have a negative and enlargement made at one of the big photographic shops in Newark. Just an idea, of course. As you know, I have received in good order the Brownie and three rolls of film and you will eventually be in receipt of more snapshots. However, that is in the distant future right now so don't expect any snaps for a month or two, possibly longer. In fact don't be surprised if you should stop receiving mail from me shortly. You'll understand, I know and eventually you will start hearing from me again.

I certainly hope Flossie doesn't get too disappointed if she should have to wait some time for the adoption of the little one. I do hope everything turns out all right and we can become proud parents. I feel that the new little one should get absolutely the best of everything including the name we both have planned for our first born. I think Flossie will feel the same way.

Am certainly interested in the property purchases etc. made by all those big firms near New Brunswick and vicinity. There will have to be an awful mess of jobs available after the war to avoid considerable unemployment and the plant expansion work around Middlesex County should certainly help men in our line of work. Of course, as you say, competition will be very tough. No question about that. But we'll get along oke, I'm sure!

Those three years that Mr. Lawrence spent on the Phillipines during the Moro insurrection must have been darn tough. The Moros are rugged characters from what I hear. They are mostly on Mindanao as you say. There are few, if any, on Samar. I believe the Moro tribes are more or less friendly with the Americans now as are the Visayen tribes found in the Central Phillipines.

Well, enough geography. Love to all of you. Fred

2 March 1945

Dear Folks,

Dad's letter of the 25th arrived today and was most welcome. Was glad to get the dope about my guns. I know you are taking good care of them for me, Dad.

Yes the events occurring in Iwo Jima and in Europe would certainly tend to make things appear a bit more optimistic as to the ultimate end of the conflict. I feel that we must invade Japan at the earliest possible moment as they are no doubt engaged in furious efforts to move their vital industries to Manchuria quickly as they can. I feel that the Japanese Islands are now highly vulnerable but not so in the case of China and Manchuria where they can fight long delaying-type actions with large forces of men. Of course the Nips don't seem to be such great mechanized warriors and our superiority in planes, tanks and artillery (after we get them there) would be very telling in large scale land engagements such as could take place on the Asiatic mainland.

Your package of magazines are real morale boosters, believe me. You know what a reader I am.

From Flossie's last letter I gather that her adoption plans have been more or less squelched and I'm certainly sorry that she had to suffer another disappointment. She speaks of taking a job in the Pru and naturally, that is 100% ok with me for I feel that a decent job in a pleasant atmosphere will help to take her mind of the recent disappointments and conditions in general. It will also help her to stay physically fit and mentally alert.

There's little more news I can tell you today. Soon, perhaps, I may have something of more interest to write about.

Love to you all- Fred

2 April 1945 Pacific Ocean

Letter #1

My Own Darling,

Well this is probably the letter you have long been awaiting. I am now nearing the end of a lengthy ocean trip. We expect to reach our destination in a few days and then I can get my first mail off to you. I've had a mighty pleasant trip, strange to say. Usually a voyage like this is miserable-jammed in the hold of a crowded transport. My good break was due to the kindness of my bosses and I can truthfully say that this trip has been a pleasure. There are only six of us on here as passengers, two officers, two CPOs and another 1st class man and myself. We have large roomy and cool quarters and eat luxuriously. No place on the ship is out of bounds for us and we stick our noses into all the matters pertaining to the sailing of a large vessel (navigation, engine room etc.) The entire crew from the captain down have been mighty nice to us and I'll always remember this trip as one of the highlights of my service career. It has been a mighty pleasant and a most comfortable voyage.

Of course I am now anxious and ready to get to work once again and am more than a little interested to see what kind of a place we are going to live and work in for the next few months.

And, Sweetheart, I'll certainly be glad to receive your letters once again. I should have quite a batch of them awaiting me at my new home. I have missed those daily words from you more than I can say.

This trip has been very eventful but of course the censor will not permit me to tell all the details that I would like to. One event I will never forget although my own part in it was infinitesimal. This was a thrilling rescue at sea enacted by the skillful Captain and crew of this ship during the blackness of the night on a rough sea. The details of this episode are firmly imprinted on my mind but I'll have to wait until my final homecoming to tell you all about it, Honey. Believe me, it was unforgettable.

You Hubby is the picture of health though, I must admit, a wee bit on the "chubby" side due to the wonderful food and too much rest acquired on this trip. However, a few seven-day work weeks in the hot tropical climate will soon whittle down the excess and "some". I am in a 100% better physical condition than I would have been had I been forced to travel by transport and this will help me no end in staying healthy out here in this type of country. I have acquired a nut-brown color due to the days spent out on the deck in my bathing trunks but I'll lose that out on the job, I imagine, as we'll probably have to wear protective clothing.

My traveling companions have been mighty congenial. The two officers are both old construction men as is "Okey" the CPO who is my immediate boss. We have built hundreds [redacted]

However, trading tales of construction experiences has helped mightily to pass the long hours and a fellow can always learn something. I have become much better acquainted with "Okey" on this trip. He is the heavy equipment department head and will probably be my boss right along. Twenty years or more of earthmoving and heavy construction experience give him plenty on the ball and my association with him should certainly be beneficial to me in knowledge gained. He is quiet and extremely likeable-home state = W.Va. I have been studying a little Civil Engineering and one of the officers, an N.Y.U.

graduate (1925) - civil engineering (this should interest Dad) has helped me out on some of the problems. The other officer, who is one of my company officers, is a fine fellow and it is due to his and Okey's efforts that I have been able to travel to my new station in such style and comfort. Believe me, I am grateful for this! I know too much about troop transports.

I'll close this letter now and start a new one. I love you and miss you so much, Darling. Fred

3 April 1945 Pacific Ocean

Dear Folks,

In a few days we'll be coming into a port where I'll be able to mail this, my first letter to you since leaving the Hawaii Islands. If you and Flossie should compare notes, you will find considerable duplication in these first letters. The information will be of interest to all of you and so, much of the contents will be identical.

I have had, and am having, a very pleasant and most comfortable trip- strange to say. Usually a trip like this, in the service, would be darn miserable- jammed in the hold of a crowded troop transport. My good break was due to the kindness and thoughtfulness of the CPO I work for and my company officers. I can truthfully say that this trip has been a pleasure. There are only six of us aboard as passengers on this, a cargo ship; two officers, two CPOs, another 1st class P.O. and myself. We have roomy, cool and comfortable quarters and eat luxuriously. No spot on the ship is out of bounds to any of us and we stick our noses into all the matters pertaining to the sailing of a large vessel (navigation, engine room etc.) Well, of course the radio room is out of bounds but no one can enter that but "Sparks" and the Captain. The officers and crew of the ship from the Skipper on down to our mess boy have been mighty nice to us and I'll remember this trip as one of the highlights of my service life.

Of course I am, by now, anxious to get to work again and am more than a little interested to learn what kind of place this is we are going to spend many months working in. Well, we should begin to get a little idea about that in a few more days.

The trip has also been very eventful but naturally the censor will not permit me to send details. However, one event I will never forget and that is the courageous rescue at sea, in the blackest part of the night with a heavy sea, [redacted]. Our most skillful Captain and crew deserve real commendation for this job. My part in it was little more than that of a most interested and sympathetic bystander but I feel I was privileged to witness this real but storybook-like act of heroism. I'll save those forbidden details until my homecoming.

I am disgustingly healthy and, I'm afraid, a bit fat in places. However I am 100% healthier than I would have been had I had to travel via troop transport. I'm a lot better equipped to battle the diseases out here and that "chubbiness" will melt away in the first couple 12 hr. day, seven day work weeks under that hot tropic sun. I'm afraid my nice deep tan acquired on the boat-deck while en route will also melt away as we'll no doubt have to wear protective clothing as in Iran.

My travelling companions are most congenial. The two officers are both experienced construction men as is, of course, my boss "Okey", head of our heavy equipment department. We have moved thousands of yards of earth and constructed hundreds of miles of roads while en route this trip.

However, swapping our construction experiences has certainly helped to pass away the long hours. I have become much better acquainted with boss, Okey, on this trip. He is head of the heavy equipment department and is apt to be over me right along. Over twenty years experience in earthmoving and heavy construction give him plenty "on the ball" and my association with him should certainly be beneficial to me in knowledge gained. From W. Va., he is quiet and extremely likeable.

I have been continuing my studies of sections of civil engineering that pertain directly to my work and have received aid from one of the officers travelling with us. He is a graduate C.E. and, by the way, Dad,- N.Y.U. class of '25.

The little war news we have been able to get tis past month has all been most favorable and makes us all hope for a reasonably soon end to this mess.

Well, I'll close now. I am missing you all and think of you always. I know that letters await me at our next port from you and I'm certainly anxious to hear your words. Love to you all- Fred

7 April 1945 Pacific Area

Dear Folks,

We [redacted] at our new destination. I have not been ashore yet. The two officers and Okey and Newt, the CPOs, have gone ashore. They went ashore yesterday and came back this morning for a short time bringing some of my accumulated mail. I had 16 letters from Flossie, two from Dad and the damn fine #5 slide rule, one letter from Mom, one from Estelle, one from Eddie, some cards, a very nice letter from Aunt Hattie and the cablegram regarding the arrival of the "General". That was great news and I'm certainly happy to have another fine nephew. I wrote Eddie today. The latest letter was Mar 12 (almost a month old). Mail won't be so quick and regular way out here.

I'll bet you think I'm suffering from a paralyzed arm or something but I haven't been able to mail any letters for the month I've been en-route. I'll try to catch up a bit while I have the time. The refrigerator technician and I are the only CBs left on board now. As he is responsible for refrigerators in operation here and I am in charge of heavy equipment cargo, we may be aboard for some time yet. Okey says that the situation doesn't look too bad here. The camp is in a very attractive spot (a coconut grove) and although it is hot on the job in the daytime, it turns quite cool at night. This seems rather surprising as we are so close to the equator.

I know that there is usually a nice breeze blowing across the harbor here. I hope we are able to discharge our cargo soon. I'm anxious to get at the business at hand. I'll have a good "spot" in it, I know. They have had very little sickness here. I guess "control" has been on the ball. Although, naturally the Nips are nearby, we are well protected. I'm not a bad shot anyhow. We were able to do a little practicing on the way over which all helped.

I think Flossie's plans 're "foster-mothering" are fine and I approve 100%. It should help oher a great deal and certainly it is a worthy effort. I want her to be happy and stay happy and healthy and anything that helps her towards this, I'm for! I certainly an happy about Peter J. Arnolt and know that he and Sue will stay healthy. Eddie must be so happy!

Ed, by the way, is evidently going right ahead. Each little promotional although it may only mean more work and no extra rank, is definitely a step up. I'm proud of the kid brother in the fighting infantry, believe me. [redacted]

Say, that snapshot Stell sent me of little Lee holding the floppy doll is just about the sweetest baby picture I ever saw. That dress is as cute as a minute. That's the dress Ed sent her from Paris? He's a good picker. Lee looks older of course and the sweet smile is far more attractive then the pout she wears in the other snaps I have. Now, how about a nice snap of Mom and Dad? Mother can wear her nice new grey suit I'm hearing about. You know it may be quite awhile before I see you "in the flesh" and I have no picture of you. We took afew shots on deck while en-route and when I am able to get them developed, I'll send you some. The snapshots that are sent to me are worth their weight in gold and I'll try to send you all I possibly can.

Dad, be sure to let me know the cost of the developing materials you may send. I mean that!

Aunt Hattie send me a very nice letter and I will certainly try to answer it soon.

Well, I'll close for now. I'm thinking of you all always. Love-Fred

21 April 1945 Philippines

Dear Folks,

I'm pretty tardy with this, my first letter to you since landing here on the scene of our future operations. Okey and I have been working some mighty long hours trying to get things ironed out in our department and we have had mighty little spare time on our hands.

Things are not too bad here. We live fairly crudely in tents on the ground and have few extra comforts. However, the climate isn't too bad. It is hot during midday but there almost always is a breeze and it's comfortable enough in the shade. The nights are reasonably cool. We, so far, have been plagued with little dengue and typhus and practically no malaria at all.

I'm as healthy as can be and am fast losing my extra poundage gained during the trip.

Our mail is balled up badly. I received my first recent mail yesterday- two letters from Flossie of Apr. 10 and 11. However, all the mail from any of you from Mar. 13 to April 10 has never arrived and so I am missing practically an entire month of news from home.

From Flossie's letters of Apr. 10 and 11 I gather that she is caring for a little one now, possibly two. It's interesting to speculate but of course I know none of the details. The main thing is she seems to be very happy with her new responsibilities and that, of course, makes me happy, in turn. She sent me two snapshots from all of you. I'll send you some as soon as I can get some developed.

I miss you all and am thinking of you always and pray for the day when we can all be together once again.
Love to you all. Fred

22 April 1945 Philippines

Dear Folks,

I am beginning to receive a little recent mail now although no late ones from you all as yet. Had a nice letter from Aunt Marion and a short one from Eddie dated Apr. 2nd. The "lost" mail from Mar. 13- Apr. 10 has not arrived yet and so I'm missing almost a month of news from home including details about Flossie's "babies" which she mentions in every letter now.

In Flossie's latest she mentions that Dr. Morris is soon coming home and that you will have to locate another house. This, of course, is quite a surprise although it was to be eventually expected. It's hard to imagine coming home to another place. We've been connected with Spring and Lake so long now. I do hope you are able to locate a suitable house, one in which you will be comfortable and one convenient to everything. It's hard for you to keep shifting around. Maybe you can find something of a permanent nature. Will be mighty interested to hear all the details.

We are not too uncomfortable here. Could be much much worse. Our food isn't much but the climate could be worse. I'm mighty busy but, of course, for security reasons I will be able to tell you little of my work. War news, which we receive daily, is certainly good and it looks as though Germany is on her last legs now. We had a USO show last night and it was pretty good even with such a small cast.

Gene and I are going to take a few pictures this afternoon and as soon as I can get them developed I'll send some along to you.

Send me all you can from home in the way of snapshots and eats. They'll certainly be welcome. Received my first "Const. Methods"- (January), Dad. Love to you all- Fred

26 April 1945 Philippines

Dear Folks,

Received a nice bunch of letters today (5). All late dates from Flossie and you. Sure is a morale lifter to receive recent mail from home. The pictures of Johnny and Lee are certainly cute. Also received some of Flossie's "glamor" snaps. They're certainly good! I now have two rolls of film exposed but we are out of hypo and paper. Hope the supplies you sent, Dad, will arrive soon. Also need my watch as I think the dampness has about done-in the one I have.

Parcel post and all second class mail will arrive very slowly here as it comes by ship and it's a long trip. By the way, your first guess was correct. Was surprised to hear about Dr. Morris. Hope his return won't cause you too much inconvenience.

Dad, I won't be able to tell you much about my work. I have a responsible job and work for the best Chief and the best officer in the outfit. It's right in my own line of work having to do with supervision of heavy equipment.

Working conditions here are bad, first, because of the heat and second, because of the terrain. That's about all I would be permitted to tell you now.

I had a little pang of homesickness when Mother mentioned my prowling about in the wee hours of the morning on April 15th and when I read the clipping regarding the opening day on Flatbrook. Well, my day will come again.

This is a most verminous place- rats, and snakes and huge poisonous centipedes, scorpions and spiders. I don't mind the rats and snakes so much (although I would'nt relish coming face to face with a King Cobra) but the damn crawlers, like centipedes, give me the "willies". Guess I'm getting to be a sissy. The country is also full of monkeys and they have plenty of simian pets in camp. Of course they're kept well sprayed with DDT. There's one little character that loves to eat toothpaste and shaving cream etc. and he is going to find this camp "off limits" darn soon if he doesn't change his habits. The terrain is covered with coconut trees and the water in a green coconut is truly like the elixir of the Gods to a hot sweaty CB.

You are doing just right with the guns Dad and naturally I leave it up to your own judgement about when to have the little work done on them. We don't have to worry about the Nips here now, just the vermin. My hat's really off to those Marine and Infantry jungle fighters who must ignore the crawlers and creepers and watch out for the dirty Jap snipers. They're really heroes!

I do hope Truman turns out all right but his past and present contacts are not too savory.

As I mentioned in my last letter I received my first Const. Methods (January) the other day. No packages have come here. I will wait in anticipation for the snapshots of you. As you know I have none of you at all.

Dad, I was interested in your recent order of a Galion Grader. If you have purchased the largest Galion, you will have a good machine. Of course it can't stand up to a Cat. 112 or 12 but I consider it second best. The motor is the well known Int. UD-14, which is a fine motor. The key point of maintenance in this model

is the hydraulic system. The oil used should be SAE .10 for winter and 20 for summer and should be clean. The screen should be cleaned every 8 hrs. (This screen is in the hyd. oil tank) Operators should be cautioned against screwing down the relief valve to get excess pressure. Pressure just high enough to barely start raising the front wheels from the ground with the blade at right angles to the machine on the ground, is sufficient. It's a good machine but won't stand abuse.

You letters, both of you, are always so newsy and interesting. They are a real morale lifter.

I'm certainly tickled about Flossie having two cute little ones to care for. She seems so happy and busy and that makes me happy. The experience she will gain is of additional value.

Give Thelma and Chet and Janet my best wishes. I think of our neighbors often and hope little Po-Po is past the crying stage and is happy and healthy.

We get the latest war news daily via radio and certainly are going good. Eddie and the boys over there are really putting out as are our fighting marines and doughboys on Okinawa and points north. May the day of peace come soon and we will have a real celebration when we are all home together again.

Love to all of you, Fred

2 May 1945 Philippines

Dear Folks,

Am getting a little mail from home every day or so now and that helps a great deal. Received Mother's very nice birthday letter today and the snapshots of you both which were most welcome indeed. These are my only pictures of you and I will cherish them. I also was in receipt of a nice letter from Dad a few days ago and two packages of magazines mailed in February as well as a package containing peanut brittle and licorice & aggie.

This is my first candy foe some time and really tasted delicious. I am now well stocked with Agarol. I haven't been having much trouble lately and so have been using little. The magazines, needless to say, are being heartily enjoyed. I hope the packages containing the M-Q developer and paper arrives soon as we are out of materials and I have two rolls of film exposed and ready. I am anxious to send you some snaps.

As you may have heard from Flossie, we made a little move to a new location and I am now in a 14' x 14' tent with three other fellows. We fixed the tent all up like a summer bungalow with a wood floor raised three feet off the ground, screening and a nice table, chairs and lockers built by your son who is getting to be a fair hand at furniture building.

It's hotter than Hade here during the day but it does cool down at night. During the latter oart of the afternoon I feel like a sad sack but revive a little after a cold shower and supper. Usually I have a little work to do in the evening on records and sometimes must go out again to check on equipment. Of course, some days are hellers when everything goes wrong and we put in many extra hours.

Had a little excitement today. One of the boys needed some adjusting on a tournapull. After making the necessary alterations I hopped on to make a couple of trial hauls. One of the rear tires was bad and just as I got in high gear on a down grade the tire blew out. I was doing about 20 and had a load of about sixteen yards and when that tire went I sure went for a ride dodging coconut trees. Finally I came to a stop safely by dropping the pan, but sure was a thrill. Nothing like a little excitement. Transportation is, as always, snafu and it's a long walk to the mess hall so I use one of the spare motor graders for a taxi. No trouble getting a load of passengers.

The natives here are intelligent, reasonably clean, honest and, of course, friendly. Not like the Arabs. Will get a few pictures of the "local color" as soon as we have a way to develop them and I'll send them to you. The women dress quite modern but they carry their bundles balanced on their heads. They carry a 5 gallon can of water in that way with ease.

I can't get used to the nonchalant way they treat nudity though. Our showers at present are right out in the open and the gals walk around and haggle about laundry etc. while the boys are showering. The women generally appear unconcerned although sometimes they do a little discreet giggling. Frankly I'm not used to it myself.

Well, I'll close now and hit the sack. Love to you all. Keep the candy coming whenever you can and of course your wonderful letters. Your son- Fred

10 May 1945 Philippines

Dear folks,

Dad's letter of April 30th arrived today. I also was in receipt of a package yesterday containing Aggie and licorice pastilles. The candy really hits the spot. We don't get any here. I am extremely well stocked on Agarol so never mind sending any for awhile. Parcel post is very slow here. This last package was mailed Feb. 12.

Well, we heard the good news 're V-E day by radio and by an "extra" of our own little daily paper, a copy of which is enclosed. President Truman's and Churchill's speeches were relayed here via short wave and we heard them at 10 P.M. Tuesday night. We get the latest news regularly by radio. The boys naturally were happy about the great victory but took it in a pretty well "matter of fact" manner. Of course our road here still stretches far ahead and it's a little difficult to get the feeling that V-E day brings out V-day much closer although it will certainly speed up the war against the damn Japs. The main thing is- it's over over-there and millions of fine boys, including our Eddie, will be spared suffering and death and may soon come home to their loved ones. It's a wonderful occasion and we should all certainly give thanks to God.

Keep on telling me about the work you're doing and the potentialities lying ahead, Dad. Hearing about the future job possibilities with J & J, Barber and Squibbs is great tonic for my morale.

You say such nice things about Flossie. It makes me mighty happy to know that she is happy, busy and in the best of health. I can hardly wait to be with her and you all once again. Who can tell, perhaps this Christmas will see us all together once again. Love to you all- Fred

Enclosed- camp newsletter "The Beach Head Bulletin" Tuesday, May 8 1945 vol. II No.8

Headline- **THIS IS IT! GERMANY SURRENDERS**

Back page describes details of German surrender and European speeches and celebrations.

14 May 1945 Philippines

Dear Folks,

I received your two most recent letters today (May 7 and 8) and they were certainly welcome. I certainly hope Eddie gets a nice long furlough in the states before being sent out to this miserable theatre of operations. I'm certainly proud of brother Eddie and naturally had to show the portion of Mother's letter relating to his citation to my boss and buddies. He's quite a boy, believe me!

Well, things go on as usual but we are gradually making our home here more comfortable. We now have a fine new messhall and our Ship's Service Store opens tomorrow. As I mentioned in my last letter to Flossie, I have a desk job now. I'm temporarily in charge of the heavy equipment office and take care of records, equipment assignments and personnel, parts and repair data etc. It's a pretty good job but I'd just as soon be out on the grade and think I will be, before too long as my road building experience is wasted here in the office.

Dad I feel impelled to discuss the Galion Grader Mod. 101 that you have purchased. Of course there were sound reasons for your purchase but just from a debatable point of view and off the record, of course, economically, Utility would have been ahead by presenting Gilbert with a \$1000.00 gift and then purchased a Cat.#12 because actually there is no comparison between the big Galion and the #12, regardless of the theoretical factors glibly presented by the Galion salesman.

I know what I'm talking about from present experiences. The gross weight of the two machines is almost the same, the blade sizes are identical and the tires are the same size- but there the resemblance ends! In these parts anyone would gladly trade a brand new 101 Galion for an old "beat-up" Cat #12 any time. The Galion has a good motor but it doesn't compare with the motor in the #12 which is the same as the D6 motor, regardless of pretty torque-rating theories. The Galion frame and moldboard and arms will not stand the abuse that a #12 will. The hydraulic system which works good when new, gets miserable with age and wear. Hydraulic steering is nice but it makes a very slow handling rig. You can only perform one operation at once and that's darn slow working.

With Caterpillar's positive mechanical controls you can steer, swing the blade, lean the wheels, raise and lower the blade all at once, if you can move your hands fast enough and a capable operator can run rings around a Galion 101 for that reason alone. I've run 'em both a great deal! And they shouldn't be mentioned in the same category. There are more features but this is enough for one letter. Anyhow it's just from an argumentative point of view as the machine is purchased.

I was afraid you and Dad would forget your guesses, Mom. Not my middle initial, so—try again. That picture of me was the same as Flossie's. I managed to secure another copy. I have some dandys as yet undeveloped. Will sure be glad to get that paper, Dad. Try to get some more printing paper at the first chance.

Mom, you can send condensed milk, canned peanut brittle, canned nut crunch, sugar coated licorice pastilles and those little round chocolate drops coated with sugar (Tropical type). It will be all mighty welcome! Dad, my boss wants to know if you could get a first class slide rule and send it. He admires my dandy 5" but needs a 10", mainly because of his eyes. If possible it should have a magnifying slide as well as the regular slide and should be in a good case. He's willing to pay \$15.00 for one and will, of course, send you a money order when we hear from you. And by the way, I'm using one considerably

now and would like a 10", too. I'll gladly pay 15.00 for a first class rule. Could you pick up a couple and send them via 1st class mail? Let me know the cost. We only need the ABCD scales and wouldn't want too many extra scales on the rule, if possible.

Well, I've rambled on and on so now I must close. Love to all of you. I miss you all so much. Pray we may be together this Christmas. Fred

17 May 1945 Philippines

Dear Folks,

Well I am finally able to send you some recent snapshots. Hope you like them. Printing paper is the holdup now. Dad, try and get some for me at the first opportunity. There is no shortage of hypo and M-Q but paper is mighty scarce in these parts. We would like to have a gross of 116, a gross of 120, one gross of 620 if possible. Do the best you can anyhow. Could always use more 116 film for the Brownie too.

I am enclosing a rather lengthy list of items I need. Many of them are small and of lightweight. If you could make up a couple of small packages and send them via 1st class mail it would help as parcel post is very slow here. In addition, would you ask E. Smith if he has any calendars left that have equipment pictures on them. I'd sure like one, also a catalog of the complete LaPlante Choate line and specification sheets for the Cat. D8, D7, D6, D4, D2, DW-10, #12, #112 #212 and pull grader with power controls.

If you get a chance I'd like the specifications, cost and pictures of the Lorain 40 6x6 Moto-Crane and attachments. Who is the local dealer for this item of equipment and what approximate terms do you think I could get on one?

I am busy here in the heavy equipment office and I am certainly increasing my knowledge of h. equipment, parts and maintenance by leaps and bounds. I think, all in all, I am acquiring a lot of valuable experience and knowledge for post war work.

I think of you always and pray that May 7, 1946 will find us all together again. Love to you all. Fred

P.S. Seriously now, be sure to send me the cost of all this junk I have asked for so I can send you a money order for same. (You will receive copies of all the snapshots that I sent to Flossie, within a week or so.)

21 May 1945 Philippines

Dear Folks,

Received Dad's letter of the 14th today and enjoyed it very much. His guess was right but I don't think it will be for long. I'm pretty busy right now as we are organizing our department on a little more efficient basis and I have several large file index arrangements to work up and also a spare parts inventory. And then, at the end of the month, our logistics report, which is a honey! In addition I have to do some studying for a stiff exam that I'm taking at the end of the week. More about that at a later date. Of course my regular daily work must go on as usual so I have little spare time right at present. However, it's all very interesting and I'm picking up a lot of knowledge about heavy equipment repair, maintenance and parts as well as repair shop organization.

Am always interested in the dope about the jobs. That Woodbine job would suit me fine, especially if it was about 50,000 sq yd instead of 5,000.

Do the soil cement potentialities look promising there in New Jersey for post-war or is it a little too early to tell much about it? The "Pulls" will really bale dirt but you must have A #1 operators. Of course, conditions must be good or your maintenance costs jump, and so will the insurance.

Personally, I wouldn't think much of going into earth moving sub-contracting with Pulls, especially in N.J. where climatic conditions are so severe. An economical set up would require three "Pulls" and a D8 pushcat, at least, and that means your new equipment investment would run around \$60,000.00. A hydraulic D6 dozer with a 6 yard Le Tourneau pan would suit me although I feel that a big Link Belt Speeder truck crane or a Lorain 40 truck crane might be a money maker there in Middlesex County.

I am still feeling fit as a fiddle and missing you all very much. Am sure proud of Eddie. Love to you all-Fred.

Saturday Eve.
26 May 1945
Philippines

Dear Folks,

Well, the lovely month of June will soon be here; lovely back in New Jersey is, of course, what I mean. Many pleasant memories of fragrant cool mornings and soft evenings at home- And of course June is the month in which the most important thing in my life occurred- My marriage to my darling Flossie, who I miss so much these long evenings. June is also reminiscent of long drives in the country and trout fishing. I have dreamed of trout fishing often in the last few months. Perhaps Dad and I and Eddie can take that dream trip to Nova Scotia after we are all at home again. I certainly am anxious to feel a fighting trout on my slender fly rod and to see them splash and swirl at the fly. Well it can't be too many months away.

From the latest news I gather that all men over 29 are now permanently deferred. So John will be safe, for which I'm mighty glad. They don't need him and he has enough cares at present. Am, of course, quite interested in your house hunting I certainly hope you can find a suitable and not too expensive a home in which to settle permanently. At any rate, I hope you don't have to make a move until you have definitely found what you want in Metuchen.

Am still on the same job and will be, I imagine, for some time. It certainly is a splendid opportunity to gather reams of information on performance and maintenance costs of various makes and types of heavy equipment. You would probably be surprised at the amount of equipment we have. That, of course, is restricted information so I must save the details till my homecoming. Love to you all- Fred

31 May 1945 Philippines

Dear Folks,

Received Mother's nice letter of the 23rd today. Glad you liked the snapshots. I am having copies made tonight of all the snaps that Flossie received and will send them to you in a day or so. A little of our old mail is starting to come through. I received several from Flossie written in March and one from you, Mother, a March date, too. Received two bundles of magazines mailed in February. Parcel post is certainly slow here. My watch has not shown up yet. Certainly hope it comes soon. My other watch is finished and I am certainly handicapped without one. Have received no packages mailed after February 28, as yet but I'm hoping. Enjoy both of your letters so much. They are always so newsy.

We're busy as the dickens, of course. I have more work and responsibilities tacked on every day. I'm certainly learning plenty about equipment. By the way, I received a belated V-mail, mailed in March, from Paul Smith. It was thoughtful of Paul but then he always was a nice guy. He said that Caterpillar intends to bring out their own line of scrapers. This is fascinating news and the gang and myself are certainly speculating about it. Do you know any details, Dad?

Well, I have it all figured out (on paper) and if things look good when I get home I'd like to get a couple of pieces of equipment and start out. Maybe I can get a break like Paul Smith and Delano did with Utility. Of course, I'll wait for the break before trying to swing it. I have my plans made for a D7 with an 8 yd (level) LeTourneau Pan and a D6 with hyd. angledozer and LeTourneau 6 yd. Pan. I figure operating one myself (May be Eddie will be interested, too). I'll need around 5M cash and, of course, some good connections. If I can make a deal with E. Smith to get the equipment for about 1500-2000 down and two years to pay, I think I can swing it- (With work ahead on the books, of course) I pretty well have the 5M figured out with my present assets and possible govt. aid. Anyhow, it doesn't hurt to plan a little- and dream.

Flossie says a big racetrack is planned for Stelton. Boy, that's bad news! Don't buy in Metuchen if that looks as bad from there as it does from here. I can see myself moving further into the country all ready. Time will tell. Personally I'd like to live a little further out in the country but, of course, Flossie will have her ideas about that, too, I imagine. Somerset Co. or possibly southern Middlesex if I could find the right spot. Anyhow that's all for the future. If it wasn't for that race track, Metuchen would suit me fine for awhile (until I have enough money to buy a country home). Some ideas!

Well, the Nips are beginning to squirm and they should really be "sad sacks" by Autum. If not Christmas at home, then may be Easter, I hope. Love to all of you, always, Fred

P.S. Well, I have to write a postscript for,-

On my return to the Company area tonight I found a slew of that old mail that has been lost. It was all from March and the first week in April. There were two from Mother one from Dad and twenty four from my Flossie. On top of all that my watch arrived in A #1 shape so tonight is a gala night. Seems funny to read those old letters relating Flossie's "soon-to arrive" kiddies, all your speculations on my whereabouts and the thoughts of the good progress of the war in Europe. I was mighty mighty glad to receive them, believe me.

Well, I think I'll read them over once again. Love, Fred

16 June '45 Philippines

Dear Folks,

Received Dad's letters of the 1st and 7th this week also two packages containing Aggie, licorice and the developing materials, another package containing the printing paper and two packages of magazines. Folks, you have no idea how much those magazines mean to me. We read them over and over here, especially the sporting and construction magazines and the "Post". It's mighty nice of you to send them so regularly. The licorice etc. is also more than welcome. I have enough Aggie stocked up now for some time to come. I read with interest all the details of the equipment you are sending me. I can use it to mighty good advantage. I think, however, that you are overdoing that "birthday" business but it's mighty kind of you and I'm mighty grateful. When next payday rolls around we'll send the money order for the one slide rule. It's for one of my co-workers, the Chief in charge of diesel repairs. He appreciates your trouble, Dad. By the way, the 100' tape should be in inches. Although all our survey lines are worked out in tenths, naturally, the inch scale is more practical for all around work here.

My pal Okey is leaving for the States in a few days for his indoctrination as Warrant Officer. It's a swell break for him but will be a little tough on us. He is one of the finest men I ever met and the best all around heavy equipment man I ever saw. I'm going to ask him to call up you and Flossie when he gets East on his leave. Certainly wish you could meet him personally. You'd agree with me on his personality and an hours "shop" talk with him would show you what I mean about his ability, Dad.

I have broken another man in now on the office work and I am out in the field again. With Okey gone my work and responsibilities will be increased considerably. I took an examination for Chief Machinist Mate and passed with the highest mark in the battalion. Of course that doesn't automatically make me a CPO but my rating has been changed from CM1/c to MM1/c and they tell me I'll be up for Chief on the first of the month. However, we won't count the chickens before they're hatched!

Was mighty interested to hear of Eddie's new job and happy, especially as he may now never get out here in the Pacific Area at all. He's a fine officer, I'm sure and certainly is a swell kid.

Little Peter sounds cute, I hope Ed gets to see him while He's still young (that is real young).

Well, Mom, here we come to the usual "shop" discussion- bear with us. I was mighty interested in your comments on the Motor Crane, Dad. It sounds mighty good to me. I am especially glad to know that you are acquainted with the Lorain dealer for there is no truck crane like the Lorain in my opinion. My experiences here and in Iran have sold me on Lorain especially the Lorain Motor Crane and this opinion is shared by men out here with years of crane and shovel experience. I would, of course, rather deal with E. Smith but the N.W. just doesn't stack up against the Lorain. We have them both and the records don't lie. Lorain's independent swing is one of many features that make it the No 1 crane. There are plenty of other advantages also. Just another little dig regarding your Galion Grader (forgive me)! We have all makes and I have had much experience with them all, We have found that the Cat #112 even though smaller and with less horsepower, will out perform and out produce the Galion 101 or the big Adams or the Austen-Western 99- in the long run over a period of months. The #12 is so far ahead of the rest it isn't even funny and from an economical standpoint a contractor should pay at least 2,000- less for a Galion 101 against a # 12. Month in and month out the Cat.12 will do more work and be in the shop far less hours. You would be surprised to find out quickly that extra 2000- would be made up by the #12.

Of course, I don't know the price of a Galion 101 but it certainly must be considerably cheaper or they couldn't sell them.

To a man our operators dislike the hyd. system on the Galion especially the steering and we have some experienced men here. The Galion is known as the old women's machine because of its pottering slowness on the controls and of course the Adams is famous for the "window shade" blade which runs up and down and sideways with just a little wear. The Aust. West 99 is a perinnial repair shop fixture. There's only one motor grader- the Caterpillar. Love to you all, Fred

(This in right side margin) P.S. Could use some fish line for the line levels. Have had no time to look into fishing situation.

21 June 1945 Philippines

Dear Folks,

Received in good condition today (and in exceptionally good time) the following articles:

2 slide rules	2 slide rule manuals
2 " rule magnifiers	1 bottle Higgins black
Gem Blades	1 ruling pen
Pocket Ben	Eversharp leads
6" scale	2 line levels
1 116 film	

Certainly appreciate all these items and can use them to very good advantage. The quality, as is true of everything you send me, was high. I'll have to guard that little architect's scale, the line levels and the Pocket Ben with great zeal as they were the object of many envious glances. The slide rules were fine and on the first of the month (pay day) the Chief will make out a money order for that one. He was tickled pink with it. The boys got a kick out of all those separate little packages and accused me of having a Cat. #12 sent out to me by first class mail, piece by piece. I'm an awful Caterpillar addict and the gang knows it. They say Cat. should pay me for advertising.

Dad's letter of the 12th arrived yesterday. Hearing about all the jobs you have on the books makes me yearn to be home once again and working n them. Save a place for a road foreman or a "heavy equipment "spread boss" (or a patrol operator [only Caterpillar]). Unlike many returning boys I'm anxious for work and look forward to a good 40-48 hr. work week. Of course the pay check will look good, too.

By the way, everytime you send any kind of a package, slip a bottle of India black ink into it. We use it for stenciling out clothes as well as drafting and it can't be purchased out here.

That race track business certainly irks me! I don't want to stay in Metuchen if that goes over. When I get out of the service I'm going to have privacy and quiet, peaceful surroundings in my home life even if I have to pitch a tent in the Watchung Mts. I'm fed up with crowds, lines and no privacy. That's definite!!!

Maybe if the race track does come I'll be able to sell 4 Ely Ct. at a decent price and look for a place out in the country. Seems silly to talk that way after just buying the little house but the race track is an unforeseen development and on top of that my life in the service has made me more "country-minded" than I ever thought possible before. I'm getting almost as biased on that as I am on Cat. products.

One of my buddies has been after me for months to sell my hand level. Of course that is out of the question. I'd just as soon sell mu wristwatch. But I finally told him I'd see if I could locate one. If it wouldn't be too much trouble, Dad could you keep your eye open for another good one?

I wish I could have seen little Pete. Imagine he's mighty cute. Eddie and Sue are certainly lucky.

Love to you all, Fred

23 June 1945 Philippines

Dear Folks,

Received Mother's newsy letter of the 16th and also the following via first class mail: 1 package (12" st.-edge), 1 envelope (2 triangles, 1 protractor, 1 frenchcurve, 2 envelopes (Equipment data). Everything was in good condition and it certainly arrived in good time considering past performances. I am informed that practically all 1st class mail now comes by air. I've received everything now but the compass and that will no doubt arrive in a day or so. Dad, that protractor was a beauty- the best I've seen anywhere. Of course, as usual all the stuff was A #1 quality. I got a big kick out of receiving and opening all those packages. It was a nice birthday present, believe me. I imagine the parcel post will arrive some day. I don't believe one package you sent me has been lost. They all seem to arrive eventually and in good condition, thanks to efficient Arnolt packing.

Well, I have my postwar cabin all drawn up although I've decided on a new location. I believe I'll find a nice spot in Cape May County or in the vicinity of Egg Harbor. Someplace near the beach and yet near good ducking and fishing spots. It will be close enough to use as a headquarters for ducking in the Dividing Creek section and, of course, will be surrounded by other good ducking spots in that vicinity as Egg Harbor and the Delaware Bay shore of Cape May Co. are excellent ducking spots. It will afford much better salt water fishing than right at D.C. and will be a great deal nicer for Flossie because of the proximity to ocean beaches. There seems to be a very nice summer crowd going to that section. I know a few people in Wildwood itself. As far down as it is, I can get away from that motley crowd of people from No. Jersey and New York. The whole family could have fun at a spot like that (a great deal more than would be possible at D.C.) and in addition we would be ideally located for the hunting in the fall (Ducks, quail & woodcock and railbirds.)

Now, this is no idle postwar dream. I intend it to be a reality soon after I am home and settled for good. I would appreciate it, Dad, if you could send me a N.J. State Hwy. map and, if possible, county maps of Cape May and Atlantic County (I think Atlantic is the next county above Cumberland and Cape May.) Is Egg Harbor in Cumberland or Atlantic?

My cabin is of generous proportions although of inexpensive construction. It has a main room 10' x 24', a kitchen area (not exactly a separate room) 8' x 10'; 2 bedrooms 10' x 12' and storage space and washroom etc. It has a 8' x 24' screened porch in front. The bedrooms could sleep 4 and there would be room in the "main room" for 2 to 4 more, or even 6.

It would be a real hideaway affording recreation- spring, summer and fall for everyone in the family from kiddies to duck hunters. What do you think of it? Naturally, I'm enthused! Now the main thing is to get this war over soon so we can all be together once again and start having those good times.

I am still holding forth in the same job and hope they'll condescend to make me a CPO some day as I have been doing Chief's work ever since entering this battalion. Things look favorable now but I'm well conditioned for disappointments. I've had enough of them now so that they're easy to take in stride. I have been feeling pretty optimistic for some time. You wouldn't know your old pessimist!

Okinawa is now ours, although at a terrible cost, and the Japs will surely be beaten to their knees by our tremendous air power and then by our fighting men. It won't end tomorrow but I feel certain they can't hold out another ten months. Time will tell! Love to you all, I miss you, Fred

25 June 1945 Philippines

Dear Folks,

I certainly was a surprised and delighted fellow today. A swell new Parker 51 pen arrived in the mail, also Dad's letter of the 17th. I can't imagine how you managed to snag one so quickly. I've wanted one for some time but never asked before as I thought it would be in the class of a new Kodak or similar scarce article. It came in wonderful time, seven days. I am mighty grateful for this fine present and, believe me, can put it to good use. Thanks, again! Are you certain you don't want me to send you a money order for this? After all, you have overdone the "birthday present" business and I am more than willing to pay for this fine pen. Be sure and let me know!

I was very interested to hear about your future prospects for a little work in Millville. That's certainly close to my old stomping grounds. Just exactly where is Woodbine?

I can find nothing about Joe Roberts' brother in connection with the 42nd NCB. Are you sure you got the right outfit number. Anyhow the CB officers live in a different world. More so than a civilian would imagine. It's a cast system like nothing the Army ever imagined. Nuff said!

Your new work prospects certainly look interesting. I hope things are moving along well when I finally get home. I'll be ready for a good job and I'll be ready for hard work.

The Jaeger Loader looks interesting. I have never seen them. Have had extensive experience with the Trackscavator on Cats. and the Bucyrus Erie hydraulic front loader on International and they are a mighty handy rig. The Jaeger would have two big advantages in that it has an independent swing and is a on rubber tires and could be used on pavement. Of course it would be inefficient in mud or hard digging. It should shine around a building job like Johnson & Johnson. I have seen front loaders used on rubber tired farm tractors (no independent swing, though) and they were a handy and inexpensive rig. The particular operation I noticed was cleaning up excess material, (rocks etc.) along shoulder of new highway. The stuff was windrowed up by a blade and picked up by the loader and placed in trucks. I imagine there would be good rental possibilities in snow removal work in a city like New Brunswick and in the industrial plant yards for a rig like the Jaeger loader. Seems to me that for Utilities varied work you couldn't lose on a rig like that. With a D4 or D2 dozer and the Jaeger loader you could excavate in tight places. Working together they would move quite a bit of yardage. They're awfully handy for moving rocks, debris, cement bags, heavy parts and construction material and save a lot of "bullwork". One of them will handle the sand and gravel for two to four 14S concrete mixers to beat hell. We use the Trackscavator etc. for that a great deal and it saves a lot of wheeling. You could use them for concrete but would have to have your mixer elevated. Well, I'll close now. Thanks, again for the swell Parker. Love to you all, Fred

[on right side bar (am enclosing Jap. Invasion money.)]

Attached- ONE PESO- "THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT " [looks like a US dollar bill]

29 June 1945 Philippines

Dear Folks,

My new "51" is working fine and I certainly am pleased with it. Strange to say, we have Parker 51 ink in our little Ship's Service Store most of the time so I have no problem there. I received Mother's letter of the 19th telling me how I happened to get the pen so quickly and it certainly was a lucky break. I'm mighty grateful for it.

Dad, I have some interesting little news to tell you. You remember Green of "The Green Ball" down near Johnson & Johnson. If you remember when I came home from Iran he had just got back from the Aleutians in the CBs as a CPO and was getting a medical discharge. I always figured he was a real phony and I know you did, too. Well, I just happened to find out that he was in the outfit and all the gang knew him well, too well! Listen to this- If you remember, his picture in dress uniform was in the N.B. paper and there was a lengthy article extolling his wonderful service record. His picture showed a row of ribbons on his chest and the article stated that he was the recipient of the Navy Cross for meritorious service in opening up and maintaining a heavy truck repair shop and keeping the trucks running under extremely difficult conditions. It also stated that the long hours of arduous work he put in had undermined his health and so he had to be given a medical survey. What a joke! The boys here got hold of that clipping somehow and cherished it. Now here's the real dope- He came into the CBs as an MM1/c largely due to that line of "bull" he spreads around so well. He told everyone that he owned and operated a fleet of 45 big cross-country cargo trucks- imagine that!

While in training, he palled around with the M.A.A. and became chummy with some of the officers, who were naturally all green, too. He talked so long and loud that he was made a CMM before even leaving the States and before he had done any work at all.

On arrival in the Aleutians he was put in charge of the truck repair shop. The outfit had no equipment to speak of then and the repair shop was a little 16x16 lean to. He fortunately had two excellent mechanics working for him. One is now a CMoMM and in charge of the truck repair here which is huge (about four times the size of Utility & Tar Asphalt). The other lad bunks with me and is a MoMM1/c, soon to be a CPO, a crackerjack mechanic! Well, Green didn't know anything about anything and on top of that he was lazy. He laid in the sack all day and these two lads with some helpers kept the small bunch of second-hand trucks going to the best of their ability. Green was the most disliked man in the company. Yes, he was even in B Co, this company. What little time he spent was "promoting". Trading gov't. equipment off for furs etc. on the side. Finally after only two months out he wangled a medical survey. Although he wasn't doing anything and had stolen enough stuff to live like a king he still couldn't take it. His health may not have been too good but it wasn't from overwork. The boys said he was a great faker.

He come home in two months, was entitled to no ribbons at all. He hadn't even been out long enough to merit an "area" ribbon and of course the "award" was pure fiction! Now if that's not something! That's an example of something you have heard me mention before in regard to CB ratings in some instances. Of course there are windy characters like him that get ahead temporarily in all walks of life but when the chips are down, the game is up. The gang here said that if Green ever found out I was in his old company and knew I was so well acquainted with the mechanics, he'd run when he saw me coming. But I don't know. You can't embarrass a guy like that.

Well I'm still fine, still miss you all and hope to be home for next Easter.

Love to you all, Fred

6 July 1945 Philippines

Dear Folks,

Received Mother's nice letter of the 27th and Dad's of the 25th today. Little Pete's pictures are wonderful. He certainly is a cute little tyke and, to me, he is the image of brother Eddie. And, by the way, Flossie tells me that Eddie's on his way home. That's great news! Perhaps he may be home by the time this letter reaches you. Sure hope he can stay there.

Am enclosing that money order for the slide rule for my friend. He say's "thanks, again for your trouble," and that goes for me, too. I certainly appreciate the trouble you have gone to in getting all that stuff for me,

Hope my little buddy is over the chicken pox by now and sure hope little Lee didn't come down with it. With only one real vacation a year, it would be a shame for illness to spoil it for Stell, John and the kiddies. Ocean City is a beautiful spot. May be Flossie and I will be able to spend a few days there ourselves next June or July.

Sure got a kick out of Aunt Grace and her "French itch". Of course this is not the so called "French itch" or any other similar business. It's a tropical heat rash. Excess seating causes it to get very severe in some cases. The rash pimples turn into hundreds of little boil-like sores full of puss. They're really nasty although severe cases like that are not too common. There is also considerable ringworm and fungus infection, which will sometimes hospitalize a fellow. Now don't worry. I seem to be one of the luckier fellows and to date have only had the itchy, stinging stage of the heat rash. It goes away during the night and doesn't come back until the hot part of the afternoon. The less one exerts and sweats, the less trouble one has. Sometimes that's a difficult condition to avoid, though. Needless to say I take good care of my feet, keeping them dry, changing socks daily and using Quinsan foot powder profusely. Fungus foot infection in these parts is a terror. There are lovely springs and bubbling clear brooks in these parts but we steer clear of them and don't think of swimming. Schistosomias (not spelled right), a fatal tropical disease, is picked up from contact with these pretty fresh-water streams. Nice place- these tropics! Swimming in either fresh or salt water here is dangerous because of fungus infections, generally located in the ears. Of course salt water bathing is slightly dangerous because of venomous sea snakes, poisonous coral and shell-life. I'll wait until I can go in at Ocean City.

They passed me by again on my CPO rating and I have discovered that I really have little chance of making it due to my replacement status, regardless of my qualifications and ability. Of course, I feel very strongly about this situation but, naturally, in the vulnerable position of an enlisted man can do or say nothing nor dare I even let you know my thoughts. I have been disillusioned so much since joining the CBOs that I now can be disillusioned no more. I merely get more disgusted and have an intense, though now dormant, feeling against the methods and officer "caste" of this W.P.A. organization. Anyhow, I have plenty of company. There are many old time construction men in the ranks and they all feel the same and are treated about the same. Bill Greene, who I mentioned in a recent letter was a living example of CB methods of awarding for merit. I can say no more for, of course, my mail is not private, however I am really full of thoughts, many cynical and bitter, I'm afraid. Don't worry though, I'll get over it after a few years as a civilian.

Of course, Eddie may be home by now and you'll know all about his malaria, Mom. It is, however, very possible for him to have carried for months the malaria germ. It can be more or less dormant in the blood for years and then strike suddenly. That condition is not common, however, thank goodness.

Must close now, love to you all- Fred

13 July, 1945 Philippines

Dear Folks,

Received Dad's two letters of the 2nd and 3rd and was certainly interested in all the news. I have felt right along that you were going along pretty far on that birthday business. I fully expected to pay for all the drawing supplies, tape and, of course, the "51". I offered a buddy £5⁰⁰ for his "51" shortly before asking you to get me one so you see I really wanted it. I'm mighty grateful for all the trouble you have gone through in digging up all that stuff for me and thanks again for the nice presents you have all ready sent me. I was, as you thought, a little worried about asking you to get anything more for me because of the fact you wouldn't let me pay my own way. I'll send a money order for the "51" and the tape after our next pay day. I have the money in my pay account as I'm saving quite a bit now and would rather pay as I go along and have no debts on my arrival home. Thank Mr. Wernik, too. I imagine he has many asking about Parker "51"s these days.

You mentioned a DW-10 on the Wood bine job. Who did you get that from and what do you think of it? Does it have a La Plante Choate or Le Tourneau Scraper behind it?

Now for my comments on the big news. Naturally, I was surprised to hear that Utility had sold out although I knew that Stelle wanted to get out from under. I naturally have many mixed up thought concerning the deal. Although I would like to see you owner of Utility, I feel that it is quite a burden considering the amount you would have to borrow. I, too, feel confident that we could swing a small business of our own successfully and not have such a huge debt. The new Utility deal could be for the best. Of course that remains to be seen. I can't help but feel a little apprehensive about the nationality of the purchasers but if they are big enough and strong financially it may turn out fine. Of course, you will have an idea of their plans and methods when you negotiate with them regarding your own salary and share of the profits. You should certainly get a better deal from them than you did from Utility. You gradually took over the running of Utility and made more money for them every year. I feel also that they could have done much more for you than they did.

At least you are now in a strong position to deal with these people, for obvious reasons. Being in a decent financial condition yourself, of course, helps like hell and your value to the future of the company in that section of the State is too much to be estimated. You more or less streamlined and modernized Utility along with building up their business and profits and I know that you were often hampered by Mr. Stelle's ultra-conservativeness and tightness. Utility is in an ideal position now to really go to town in a big way after the war, thanks to your efforts and ability, and if the new owners go along with you, as they surely should, the whole outlook will look mighty bright for all of us. Of course, it's all speculative now and we must just hope for the best. I was mighty tickled to hear about that steam crane deal. That was a break! Personally, I breathed a sigh of relief and said "Thank, the Lord we're rid of that." Of course it has been blessed at times as well as damned, I'll admit. Please keep me posted on all the details of the new setup. I'm more interested than I can say.

Well, I am out on the "grade" again and happier there. Although I gained valuable experience in the heavy equipment office I really prefer the outside work. I was changed over at my own request after breaking in another man on my job. I'm putting in the fine grade on a big hwy. project. The advance gang moves most of the dirt and makes the big fills and my gang finishes the grade and "tops" the road. I have a sizable fleet of Galion 101s and Cat 12s as well as some excavating and compacting equipment

(The censor won't permit any more details on equipment) The blades are, of course, practically new and the 101s can almost hold their own with the 12s. Of course, after both makes had considerable wear it would be a different story. My operators all angle like hell to get on a 12 but we only have a few. The 101s do all right, though. The job is quite a project but, again, I bump up against Mr. Censor.

May be Eddie is home now. I sure hope so. It's too bad he'll lose that job he had. I suppose it's too much to hope for but it would be great if he were released now for good. Scuttlebutt is rife in these parts about us all getting home by Christmas but it's just "skuttle" so far.

Love to you all---Be sure and keep me posted, Dad. Fred.

16 July 1945 Philippines

Dear Folks,

Received Dad's letter of the 9th today. Was very much interested in your comments on the new Galion 101. You state that my estimate of the 101 was "to say the least rather conservative." Well, Dad, I didn't go "all out" for several reasons. First of all, when I heard about the 101 it had all ready been ordered and my comments were too late to make any difference, second; the whole deal, as it was, was more or less beyond your control (I know you preferred the #12) and little could be gained by stating just how lousy the "101" is; third, I realize that I am a rabid Caterpillar fan and for that alone am more or less prejudiced at the outset against another make of similar equipment. However, in the past three years I have had extensive experience with the largest size motor graders and particularly Galion 101s and Cat #12s and you are 100% correct in stating that the 101 is lousy. I can realize how Joe feels about it. That slow inefficient hydraulic control system is an abomination to a former Cat. Operator. The Cat is so much quicker and decisive on the controls. Now, you have trouble now. "You ain't seen nothing"! Wait till the Galion gets a little wear. How does Joe like the way the machine shifts (transmission). Those shifting levers are a heller and require two hands to shift same generally. Of course Joe is husky and may be he hasn't noticed that.

Another thing- the brakes are poor and when you're working on a steep grade you have to use both foot brake and hand brake to hold the damn machine while shifting or changing the blade position. The tie rods (steering) are weak. Ours are all bent up most of the time. Working side by side on a real production job the #12 will do from 25% to 100% more work depending on the number of blade shifts necessary. On a short haul where blade shifts are frequent the 101 is just lost. You seem to be having extra trouble with the hydraulic system on your 101. The controls should work instantly (one at a time) and there should be no 30 second pause. Is the belt that drives the hydraulic pump tight? This belt which is a damn poor design feature, has a tendency to work loose and that would cause trouble like you mention. We use SAE 20 in our hydraulic system. The pressure relief valve must be adjusted so that the front wheels will leave the ground when applying down pressure to the moldboard. There's nothing in the world that can be done about the miserably slow acting adjustments. The hydraulic system is inadequate and only one control can be worked at a time with any degree of efficiency. This makes it very nice when you are working close to a soft edge and have to steer, lean the wheels and raise the moldboard at the same time to avoid sliding over the edge and messing up the job if m=not doing something worse. Well, enough of that!

What's the dope on the guns. Is the Parker back yet? If you haven't all-ready sent the L.C. Smith 12 to Treptow for a beavertail forearm, forget about it. I would like to have the safety on my pet Browning 16 auto worked over and eased up a bit, though. There is a new gun protective coating now on the market called "Sheath". It is supposed to be the tops. You might ask Treptow about it if you get a chance.

Am mighty interested in the new Utility setup and it's potentialities. What are they going to do for you? You certainly deserve a better deal. I read the clipping with interest. Yes, Cannon was right. The halos were missing. Anyhow I hope the "new order" will bring you increased prestige, interest and profit along with your increased responsibilities. You richly deserve that, Dad.

Certainly was a darn shame about Stelle's vacation getting all messed up at the last minute. Well, maybe she can sneak in a little vacation before fall. Now if we only had our cabin at the shore—

Love to you all, I think of you always, Fred

22 July 1945 Philippines

Dear Folks,

Received Mother's letter of July 10th and also one from Flossie of the same date. This is the first mail in seven long days. Mail has been very slow lately for some reason or other. Well, this is another one of those Sundays off. I dislike them intensely as there is nothing to do or no place to go and boredom is paramount. We just sit around and think of home and wait for the mail to come in at 11 A.M. After that, things get a little brighter (if we receive mail) and then things get bad again after lunch. Oh well, it can't last forever!

Just developed and printed three rolls of film and they came out lousy. My first bad luck with pictures. I think my films were affected by the heat and were aged because other films in the same developer etc. came out fine. I am sending Flossie a couple of me, they're very poor! and will send copies to you when I get them printed. They're really not worth sending. I'm out of film now so if you can locate any more 116 film, I'd certainly appreciate a roll or two. Dad, the enclosed snapshot is of a very handy home-made boom on a D4. The D4 was equipped with a La Plante Choate angle dozer (hydraulic) and a LeTourneau PCU. We made the boom up of 3" heavy duty pipe and miscellaneous 1/2" flat stock. The boom line is hooked to the left hand drum on the PCU and the hoist line to the right drum. The boom is 15' long and you can boom down and pick up light loads about 8' to 10' from the drawbar. Boomed up, she'll pick about 3,000#. Of course the angle blade helps act as counterweight. The boom can be removed speedily by removing the cables and the two boom hinge pins, however, the boom does not interfere with dozer operation at all (in fact it helps to steady the little machine) and we leave it on except when overhead clearance is necessary. Pulling the boom up tight against the PCU eliminates it slapping around while operating as a dozer.

By the way the little D4 is one of the most versatile grading and excavation units imaginable. It is enough larger than the little D2 to have good stability for fine grading and you would be surprised at the amount of yardage this little rascal will turn out on jobs suited to it's size. It will work in very tight places and of course the "angling" feature of the blade is useful for a score of varied applications. Combined with one of those little 3 yard La Plante hydraulic scrapers (4 wheel, bottomdump) it would be a mighty handy rig for all types of little tricky jobs.

Another good gadget for the rear end of a D4 or a D6 is a Hyster winch. On either "4" or "6" the Hyster will pull a D8 out of the mud with ease; the line pull is tremendous, and our big hysters on D8s will snap a 1 and 1/4" cable on a straight pull. Believe me when you hook onto a big load with one of those (a 2 and 1/2 yd. shovel for instances), something moves. Well, enough "shoptalk".

Brother Eddie should be home by now. Hope he stays home for good. I imagine Joe Benes will either be home soon or is home now. He's been over there a long time.

Dad will look very attractive in that barrel 'ne a new suit of the right dimensions. Painted Caterpillar yellow it would be quite a eye filler. Will be very very interested in all the details in the new Utility set, Dad, so keep me posted whenever you can. By the way, do your foremen still receive less money than the operators on the job? This is, of course, of great interest to me for I never could quite understand that setup and feel even stronger about it now after working for Foley Bros. and talking to construction workers (foreman and operators) from all over the country. Under the old setup an engineer (operating)

would only have to work 8 or 9 months a year to make the same annual wage as Dick, for instance. That makes it a little difficult for an operator to get that "promotion" for although responsibility, authority, and increased prestige are nice, they don't feather the nest. For instance in my last pre-1942 work year, I grossed between 3500- and 4000-.

Under the Utility foreman's scale that would hardly be possible without putting in some awful hours-or am I wrong about this? Anyhow I'm sure of one thing and that is I'll never go on a straight time basis for over a 40 hr. week. I think that time and a half for over 40 hours is as fair for the foreman as it is for the operators and another thing I feel that a foreman (over heavy equipment) should receive as a annual wage, based on a 40 hr. week, at least 10/12s of the annual wages of his highest paid operator. On an hourly basis, I feel he should receive at least the same scale as his highest paid operator. What are your views on this, Dad?

Guess I've said enough today. Love to you all. I sure hope I'm with you before next year, this date, rolls around. Fred

25 July 1945 Philippines

Dear Folks,

Received Dad's letter of the 16th today as well as a nice letter from Joan McKinney. She certainly writes an interesting and intelligent letter. Says she is working in Gen. Elec. This summer and is going to Indiana U. in the fall. Would like to see the McKinneys. Joan must be quite a gal.

Am enclosing two old snaps that one of the mechanics tinted for me. I think they're pretty good for an amateur job, especially considering the scarcity of proper materials and the conditions out here. He does a little side line business; gets 50¢ a print which I think is mighty reasonable. Hope you'll be able to locate some more film for me. I'm plumb out and it's impossible to get any out here now.

My chances at the CPO rating are not definitely gone as they didn't fill the vacancy. The thing that irks a little is the fact that they let it hang month after month when I am doing work in the rate all the time. I know that the biggest hold up is seniority. Of course they may hold it until I get more time in but that could go on a long time. Well my Co. Commander is for me as are two other officers on the "board". That's three votes for me out of six. As far as I know the other three officers have nothing particularly against me except my lack of seniority. I guess I can't really gripe too hard yet as they haven't actually given the CMM rating to some one else. Just have to wait and hope for the best.

So Brewster has the race track. Of course a job like that is deep in politics anyhow. The biggest gripe I have is that they'll scare my pet crow flocks clean out of the county now. That section right across from the Pines was "crow heaven". Have met no Metuchen See Bees yet but if I could tell you the tremendous number of CB battalions in the Philippines you would realize my small chances of meeting them. As for See Bees working for you- well- there are CBs and CBs---

Love to you all. Fred

Enclosed: Two photos. One photo of Fred in front of an excavator (May, 1945). One photo of Fred and his friend Okey on the ship en route to the Philippines (April '45).

29 July 1945 Philippines

Dear Folks,

Received three additional 1st class packages from you today containing thumbtacks and scotch tape, Parker 51 ink, needles thread and pins and also a package of Sat Ever. Post. Everything was mighty welcome and thanks. The magazines lately seem to have a happy faculty of arriving on or, just before, Sunday. As Sundays are now idle days and long and monotonous, new magazines are really a mighty welcome article. The Post is particularly good because of the many interesting stories and articles. Receiving a bunch of them in sequence makes serial reading enjoyable as one can read right through as in a novel.

The boys could see the "homecoming" close-by when the rumor of Japan's purported plea for peace came through but now the over-optimism has been quelled a bit with Japan's ignoring of the Allied ultimatum. I've been reasonably optimistic but not to the extent that I felt an "ultimatum" would hasten the Jap's surrender one iota. It will just have to be a case of bomb, bombe and finally invade and I'm afraid we'll have to drive them out of their holes in the ground one by one just as we had to on practically every island we have so far taken. Not a pleasant thought, but as long as the militarists control Japan (and I don't see how they can be overthrown as they have the weapons etc.) I think the Nips will fight to the bitter end.

Well, under the new Navy "point system" I'll be out in 1950. Won't that be swell! I'll have a couple of those pretty red hashmarks to wear on my uniform. May be I'll even make "Chief" by then as I should have some seniority at the end of 7 or 8 years of service. If my seniority won't be enough my age will certainly clinch it as that is a very important qualification in this outfit.

Seriously, though, anything could happen and I'm still hoping for a Christmas at home. Love to you all.
Fred

4 August '45 Philippines

Dear Folks, Since my last letter to you I have received Dad's letter of the 22nd, a package of sports magazines, Cosmopolitan etc., 3 separate packages of printing paper, a roll of 116 film (that was certainly welcome) also sewing materials, and literature on the Lorain Moto Crane etc.- for all of which- thanks very much. Those regular shipments of magazines mean a great deal, believe me.

Was sorry to here about Delano and Smith's difficulties, for Pauls' sake. Although I never thought too much of Delano, I like Paul a great deal. They had such a nice little set up there and splendid opportunities to get ahead. Hope I can get a chance as good as they had some day.

If Villa's DW-10 must be pushed to unload as well as load it is definitely inferior to the Tournapull as you can unload the "pull" in any gear you chose under reasonable traveling conditions. With a fleet of Pulls it does pay to keep a good haul road maintained but, of course, that would be true of truck hauling too. Good operators can keep their own haul road in pretty good shape without losing to much time generally. I think pretty highly of the "Pull". They will move dirt pretty cheaply even on fairly short (scraper) hauls (600 feet) and, of course, are tops for hauls from 800' to 3 miles. We load ours with a D8 using a snatchbar instead of pusher loading. The "bar" is very superior to pushing and does not interfere with casual use of the pushcat as a dozer. The biggest item in "pull" operation is experienced operators. We have the super Cs, 15 yard capacity (heaped) with the 150 h.p. Cummins Diesel Engine (a very efficient power unit, by the way). I think they cost 13,000 - complete. They weigh only 16 tons net. I had a lot of fun stevedoring them. They're tricky because of their length and the awkward free hinge at the drawbar. Of course, it would take a lot of dirt to pay for a "Pull" setup. Three of them at 13M and a D8 would be 50M bucks.

Am enclosing a money order for the \$43 - I owe you for the Parker 51 and the 100' tape. Thanks again for all your trouble, Dad, in digging this stuff up for me.

Was mighty sorry and a little worried about my Flossie's nervous trouble and certainly hate to see her give up her little ones. Of course, it's the only thing to do if the Doc says so but it surely is a shame. Is her trouble serious?

Flossie tells me that Bob Lang is home and discharged. Glad to hear it. Does he seem to be interested in a job with you, Dad? Wish Eddie could get out, too.

Well, I'll close now with love to you all. I miss you all more then I can say and am certainly praying for an early homecoming. Love to you all - Fred

13 August, 1945

Philippines

Dear Folks,

Received two packages today containing fish line and fish hooks. Also received this week that 100' tape. It sure is a honey, Dad, and I'll certainly take good care of it. It should last me several years. By the way could you dig up some kind of a receipt for that so I could have it handy to prove ownership. The CBs have tapes something like that although not as good and they might suspect I procured same as "midnight issue". Thanks again for your trouble in locating this stuff for me. Make up some kind of a receipt (most anything would do) and send it as soon as you can.

I enclose some snapshots. Florrie has copies of these or is receiving some. Those two snapshots of the Tournapull upside down in a ravine show what happens when an operator gets a little careless going down grade with a Pull. Luckily the boy was thrown clear unhurt. Ernie and I got the machine out with two motor cranes. It was practically (Arnolt, F.M.) undamaged which speaks

2

Well for Le Tourneau's rugged construction.

Well, we're all sweating out Japan's final answer now to ~~her~~ our conditional acceptance of her surrender offer. Up to the 11:30 A.M. news report, there has been nothing new and we may hear nothing until 10 P.M. tonight (Philippine time); that's 9 A.M. in Wash. D.C. Most of us feel it's "in the bag"! Hope we're not wrong. That would be some let down. We had a tremendous celebration here on Friday night when the first reports of Japan's offer came through. I narrated this in some detail in a letter to Flossie and will ask ~~here~~ her to report the details to you as it would make a lengthy repetition. Now, if and when the official peace-surrender terms are signed, we'll start sweating out our homecoming. Naturally it may take several months. Sure hope I can get home by Xmas, though. I can't visualize the CBs being part of the Army of Occupation here in the Pacific but you can never tell what the Navy will do. "Bye for now.

(Arnolt, F.M.) Love to you all – Fred

7 pictures enclosed

- 1) Fred & Gene on beach – Philippines July – 454 (Arnolt, F.M.)
- 2) Fred – Philippines July – '45 (Arnolt, F.M.)
- 3) Fred trying hand on motor grader Philippines – July, 1945 (Arnolt, F.M.)
- 4) Fred on beach by native Filipino dugout sailing canoe Philippines, July, 1945 (Arnolt, F.M.)
- 5) Fred + Ernie, July, 1945 Philippines (Arnolt, F.M.)
- 6) Fred + Ernie July 1945 Philippines (Arnolt, F.M.)
- 7) Fred trying out new homemade boom. Philippines, July, 1945 (Arnold, F.M.)

17 August 1945
Philippines

Dear Folks,

Am enclosing four recent snapshots. Received package of "Life" this week. The magazine bundles arrive quite regularly and are mighty welcome.

Well, now that the war is over, the main thought in our minds is, of course, getting home. Our work now takes a faded significance and it will be difficult keeping up an interest in it, I'm afraid. The Navy announced it's point system which, at the present time, does me no good at all.

According to that system I have sixteen more months to go! Of course no one knows whether the CBs will be demobilized by that point system or not. Personally I doubt it. The CBs usefulness has certainly now passed toe goal with the end of the war and I can't visualize them using us for occupation forces. I really feel that they will start demobilizing the CBs soon. I hope so but I could be wrong. We are, however, a long long way from home and transportation will be a problem. (Arnolt, F.M.)

2

All we can do is hope for the best. I would surely like to be home for Xmas this year.

Eddie must surely be home-~~for~~ by now. Hope he can stay there for good.

Glad to hear there appears to be so much work ahead, Dad. I wonder what Eddie has planned to do? Is Bob Lang working for you now?

I guess the end of the war will put "fini" to my chances of making CPO. I feel pretty disgusted about that, believe me but then I'm afraid my CB career has been a long series of disappointments and disillusionments and I am sure of one thing – I'll be a mighty happy boy when I get that discharge certificate and can ~~Choug~~ throw that "monkey suit" to the rag man. I'm afraid I'm a dyed in the wool civilian at heart. Seems funny after my childhood desires and ideas regarding the military but the service has turned out a good deal different then I imagined. Love to you all – Fred (Arnolt, F.M.)

4 pictures enclosed

- 1) Fred – Philippines – August, 1945 (Arnolt, F.M.)
- 2) Philippines – Aug. '45 Fred + Jack (Arnolt, F.M.)
- 3) Fred – Philippines – August, 1945 (Arnolt, F.M.)
- 4) Fred + Gene Philippines, Aug 1945 (Arnolt, F.M.)

22 August '45

Philippines

Dear Folks,

This is a little difficult to write. I feel mighty ashamed, Dad, That I completely forgot your birthday. At this time there is little I can say. You have been so good to me – the best Dad a fellow could ever have and I've been a real heel not to even remember your birthday; you certainly remembered mine! I'm darn sorry, Dad, and belatedly offer my best wishes and most sincere affection on your birthday just passed. God grant you will enjoy many many more together with us, your loved ones.

Florence sent me the big news that Eddie is stateside and has been home. I will anxiously await news of his status. Hope he will be a civilian soon. Can imagine his joy at seeing Sue and his little Pete.

Well, many of my friends will soon be on the way home from here with the coveted 44 points.

Arnolt, F.M.

2

needed for a Navy discharge. I only have 36 points and so, have some more time to put in. I don't think it will be too long though – six months at the outside. I have written Flossie an affirmative letter on having 4 Ely Court fixed up before my homecoming. She'll need good sound advice and I know you'll help her. Financially I believe we are oke. Although I had figured on a G.I. loan to remodel with, I guess we could swing it without as we have about 1,000 in bonds and about 900 – cash counting what I have saved in my Navy account. Living space will be at a premium for the Arnolts and we'll need 4 Ely badly.

I am enclosing a snapshot. Will send a few more as soon as I have copies printed. I received two packages of magazines (Arnold, F.M.) this week – thanks.

3

Well, they finally came through with the CPO rating and I'm now a Chief Machinist Mate. No more "monkey suit", thank goodness! I'm naturally pleased but feel it's "about time".

Everything is in a turmoil here with men packing to go home etc. and, as usual, things are slightly snafu. I sure hope my turn comes before too many more months roll by. I can't figure on Christmas in Metuchen but I'm hoping and praying!

With this thought, I'll close with love to you all,

Fred

Arnolt, F.M.

1 picture enclosed

Fred Philippines – Aug. '45 Arnolt, F.M. CMM

26 August '45

Philippines

Dear Folks,

Received Dad's letter of the 13th and Mother's of the 18th yesterday. I certainly appreciate your advice about remodeling my house at this time. I had no idea conditions were as bad as you state, Dad and I agree with you one hundred percent that it would be better to wait before taking any big expensive steps. I'm sure Flossie will feel the same way when she hears the details. I have suggested that she give the tenants notice to Nov. 1st. Then she can have Koster make all necessary maintenance repairs including refinishing and painting interior. The plumbing and heating systems should be gone over thoroughly. This arrangement should give us occupancy in December and

(Arnolt, F.M.)

2

If I am fortunate enough to get home then, we will have our own little place to move right into. In the event I do not get home until spring, we will only be out a few months rent which I can afford. I would rather be out a couple hundred dollars and have our own ~~our~~ home ready to move right into on my arrival. Don't you think this arrangement is best?

As to the approximate month of my homecoming I can make no accurate guess. The Navy calls for a score of 44 points for discharge at this time. I only have 36 and they add up slow at ½ point per month. However, I feel that the required point score will be lowered considerably at an early date. The big problem now is transportation and I

(Arnolt, F.M.)

3

Think that even our "44 pointers" will be held up until the "invasion" and occupation of Japan is safely secured. After that happens, men may be released quickly, especially from the CBs. I feel optimistic about it, anyhow. The point is – I can plan now within three or four months anyhow. I would certainly like to get home for Christmas but of that event I can not feel certain right now.

Its great to hear that Eddie is home safe and sound with Sue and Pete. Give him my love and best wishes. I hope I'll see him very soon. Just what is Ed's status now? Is he stationed some place near home? Does he think he'll get out soon?

Hearing the facts concerning all the work you now have on

(Arnolt, F.M.)

4

The books and the bright future potentialities makes me very happy. I am mighty pleased that the new Utility setup seems to be working out favorably, Dad, although there is no doubt in my mind that you will carry the business on as well, and probably with more success then under the old management.

I feel myself that I would like to go to work very soon after my arrival home. I want to get into the swing of things right away and have no desire for a prolonged vacation. Of course, when the right seasons roll around I intend taking up my hunting and fishing with zest and may take little vacations at those periods. I know you can understand my feelings in that respect. Do you know Eddies plans?

I'll close now with love to you all. Fred

(Arnolt, F.M.)

31 August '45

Philippines

Dear Folks,

Received Dad's letter of the 19th today. Was mighty interested to hear all about Eddie and his interesting broadcast over the radio. Would liked to have heard it. It was a great break to be assigned to Halloran so near home. Hope he gets his discharge soon, He's certainly done his share.

Well, naturally scuttlebutt is rife in these parts. I am unable to disclose much of it as we still have censorship. The boys with the coveted 44 points are still around awaiting transportation. I think that problem will ease considerably when the occupational forces have Japan secured and the POWs are shipped safely home. I, of course, have only 36 points and cannot look forward to immediate discharge. However, if, as Sec. Forrestal says, the Navy

(Arnolt, F.M.)

2

Plans to discharge over 21/2 million men in 12 months, I have a good chance of getting home in the spring. Naturally I deeply desire to be home for Christmas but I'm afraid that's only a remote chance unless they lower the point score drastically and speed up transportation. I believe the Sea Bees are not yet through and that the Navy intends using them for a few more months (You can probably guess where). However, CBs, as a whole have fairly high point scores due to age, dependency and length of service and many thousands will, no doubt, be released soon. Personally I think I'll yet see another land and another project before I am eligible for release though I'm surely anxious to get home right now. All our

(Arnolt, F.M.)

3

work now seems like an unnecessary anti-climax and time will surely drag from here on. I expect to be placed in another battalion shortly which will have no effect on my status in any way whatsoever. My point score of 36 is just high enough so that anything could happen. Naturally I'm hoping and praying for some miracle to occur and get me home for Christmas. Can't figure on it though.

My advancement to Chief Machinist Mate will make the coming months of waiting much easier for many reasons, especially if I am transferred into another outfit. I can be thankful for small favors anyhow. A rerate to Civilian 1/c is what I'm working for now and that will be a tough one to sweat out.

(Arnolt, F.M.)

4

By now you have my two contradictory letters concerning my decisions on the 4 Ely Court remodeling. I feel more certain all the time that you are 100% right, Dad, and that we should wait awhile before making any such expensive steps. Truthfully, I am not even certain now that I'll want to remain in 4 Ely Court for many years to come and the expensive remodeling we have in mind would necessitate that for I feel we could never get our money back on a sale. The remodeling would bring the cost of the place to

about \$9000 – and I feel that would then be too much house for that little lot. If Flossie has the interior completely repainted and maintenance repairs made to heating and plumbing etc., we will have a nice little place to move into

(Arnolt, F.M.)

5

On my homecoming and will be able to plan together in the following months just what we want to do on a semi-permanent basis.

Although we have a little money saved up, there is much we'll need it for when we start our normal life again. I'm certainly glad I was able to save some all the time. That will make things a lot easier. Of course, a good job for me will be of primary importance and I am mighty interested in your optimistic prophesies, Dad, on the vast scale of proposed construction work lying ahead.

No More news now from hear (that the censor will pass), so I'll close with love to you all.

Fred

(Arnolt, F.M.)

9 September '45

Philippines

Dear Folks,

No more censorship and now I can start sealing my letters.

As you guessed I have been on the island of Samar. If you have a sizable map of the Philippines, glance down at the extreme southern tip. There you will find a little scraggling peninsula jutting south. On this peninsula and lying on the shores of Leyte Gulf you can spot the town of Guinan. The 42nd camp area was about 6 miles north of this little native town. The 75th NCB camp area is on a small island named Calicoan which lies just off the southern tip of the peninsula. This is where I am now. Our camp is on the beach on the Pacific shore of the island. There are thousands of CBs in this area; actually somewhere

2

Between 25,000 and 30,000. This is all a portion of the big proposed post-war Naval Base in Leyte Gulf. The little native towns are few and far between and are, of course, "out of bounds".

The 42nd Battalion was disbanded and broken up. One company went to China. The equivalent of another company has gone or is waiting to go home – on points. About 300 men (a little more then a company) were transferred here into the 75th. The balance of the 42nd Batt. Were transferred into other outfits. Here in the 75th we are all jumbled up and have no idea just what we're going to do. Of course, scuttlebutt is rife – "We're going to Manila, to Japan, to China, we're going to remain here and be a base maintenance outfit. Take your

Choice!

3

The only thing certain is that they don't need us and have'nt needed us for months. We have been working on permanent post-war Naval establishments and are mighty fed up with it all! We're hoping that the civilian contractors and labor unions back home (and the congressmen) will get wise and demand the return of the CBs. There are ten men for every job and the jobs have and have had, no connection with the war effort (that is this war). Our biggest job was a Naval Ammo. Depot like Pickatinny or Raritan. Absolutely 100% post-war. Our battalion would have been plenty for the job. They used four because there was nothing else to do with us. But would they send us home – no! This work, done in the typical

4

Bungling Navy – CB manner is costing the taxpayers about 500% of what it should. If this had either been a combat zone or was really a project for this war it would'nt be so bad. Now, why has'nt the Navy demobilized about ½ the CBs already? Well, the high ranking officers (Commanders, Captains etc.) know that when the bulk of the CB personnel is cut down they'll be out of the plushiest, best graft-producing job they ever dreamed of. Now we're getting around to the enlisted CBs' No 1 "bitch", "his pet peeve" and the cause of bitterness so strong and so universal that it would stagger the civilian imagination. Just ask any enlisted CBs what they thought of their officers. Remember, I realize that there are exceptions but, in general,

5

a bigger bunch of phonies never trod the face of the earth than the commissioned officers of the CBs. (I do not refer to warrant or Chief Warrant) Behind that one main requirement, that holy and revered college degree, this men had little or nothing to qualify them. I believe, from my own experience and my contact with hundreds of other CB serfs in this vicinity that, at the most, 15% of the CB officers were practical experienced construction ~~when~~ men. In the 42nd we had none. Not one! From our drunken, sadistic, thieving, grafting, moronic CO, a full commander, down to the lowliest pink cheeked child ensign we had not one construction man. Of course they all held C.E. degrees. My, yes!

5

We had ex – WPA supervisors and New Deal Beauocrats, shoe salesmen, schoolteachers, politicians and politicians, gentlemen farmers, clerks and of course happy little squirts fresh out of their fraternities but no construction men, not one! No wonder these “leaders of men”, these “braid-happy schoolboys”, these bastards! Want to see the CBs held until the bitter juicy end. They couldn’t get a job as water boys on a real construction job.

Now, Dad, you wonder – “Well, how did the CBs get the work done if their officers were so inefficient?” “How about the newspaper and radio hallabellaw”. This is the hard part to explain to the civilian.

6

I’ll try though. Imagine some insane millionaire with unlimited funds starting in contracting business. He hires some lingerie salesmen and shoe clerks for Superintendents and project managers. He makes it known to them that money is no object. He wants to lose money and they’ll never get fored for inefficiency. They’ll automatically get a raise every 12 months! This hypothetical contractor gets a road contract – say about two miles of rough road grade involving around 400,000 yards of earth excavation. They put the equipment on the job. How much? – well, we’ll say thirty D8s and 15 yard carryalls, 20 D8 dozers, 10 D6 dozers, 15 motor graders, rollers galore, 4 – 11/2 yard shovels 6 – ¾ yard shovels, 120 4 to 5 yard dump trucks. They’ll work

7

three eight hour shifts and have enough electric generators to light a big city. They have six to 8 engineering squads of 15 men each on each shift. They have a supply yard full of new cats and shovels and ~~when~~ one breaks down on the job they run a new one out in it’s place. Obviously they can’t hire clerks and Fuller-brush men to run this equipment so they hire about 50% experienced construction men and 50% eager hard-working American kids who are dying to learn how to operate equipment and who don’t mind doing things over and over again the wrong way because they don’t know any better and of course the Supt. Doesn’t know or care. To make it more realistic we’ll make all these Supts. Have college degrees.

8

And, by some strange quirk, of legislative fate, we’ll have the congress pass a law to impress all these men into the service of this contractor to do his will and obey his orders under penalty of imprisonment or death. Now do you doubt that the job can be done under such conditions, Dad! It won’t be done once, of course. For the first two or three times will be the wrong way and the road will fail but

eventually it will be done, of course, they have no specifications and no state inspectors so the banks may be all shapes and angles. There may be little or no drainage and the curves may have reverse super elevations but they'll call it a road! There'll be so much equipment on

9

The job that they need police to direct traffic but with unlimited personnel, they have no problem there. This is the CBs – not all the CBs but a large percentage. Wait till I get home and tell you some of the publicity stunts that are pulled.

This is enough for today but I've only just begun. These won't be very nice letters home but may be if I get it off my chest now I can act like a human being when I get home. I can say this with feeling - "Thank God our combat units aren't run and officered like the CBs"! A CB officer would be shot in the back the first time he ever got in combat.

I'll say so long. I love you all and miss you and you know how I want to get home.

Fred

9 September '45

Philippines

Dear Folks,

This is my second uncensored letter. I hope you didn't find the first one too long or disillusioning. I'm going to relate a few little incidents. These are not hearsay and are actual happenings that I myself either heard or saw. Of course the CBs are full of such little tales about the hated "gold-braid" but these I personally know are true. I was there.

One of our full Lts. (a college man, of course) and an ex-WPA supervisor from the South, found himself, at the end of a pour, with about three yards of extra concrete. In all seriousness he ordered the Chief in charge to have the men dump it in a nearby hole and then cover it with water – saving it for use on the following day!

2

I had a 500' I-R compressor one day that didn't want to start. It was mounted on four rubber tired wheels. A Lt. J.G. (a college man, of course) was becoming a bit impatient. He told me to tell the mechanics to stop fooling around and throw the damn thing in gear and tow it to start it. What could I say and not risk punishment?

One sunny day we had to load an 80 D Northwest Shovel (21/2 yards) on a barge to move it to another nearby island. Chief Johnson was in charge. I was helping him and we had an operator of 15 years experience. When we got to the dock and saw the barge, we almost laughed. It was just too small. There were three full Commanders, a Lt. Commander

3

And several Lts. There on the dock site. All seemed to have a finger in the pie. Okey (Ch. Johnson) told the head Commander that the barge was inadequate. Of course, he was told that the barge was ample and he was ordered to load the barge without further ado. We tried and when the rig was almost on the barge she tipped up and the rig slid off into 8' of water. Fortunately the operator was unhurt. Well Okey and the operator were insulted by this bunch of addled nincom poops for about a half hour. We were told it was a case of pure incompetence on our part and to get the rig out and load it if we stayed there forever.

4

So we went about getting that 60 ton rig out of 8' of water. We got it out in thirty hours and went to get some sleep while the mechanics drained it out and checked it all over. The next morning it started all over again. Okey pleaded, argued and tried to convince them but they said "load it"! We tried a second time and in she went again. Stupidity – no just CB officers at work! This time they said leave it there and we did! It's still there as far as I know – a new 80 D Northwest.

I had some hard times on a road job we had. We had to go through a tidal swamp and then through some foothills with a tremendous surface water

5

Runoff. It called for careful drainage but my boss, a full Lt., said not to worry about it. I begged him to let me drop in some culverts, especially in the tidal swamp section (We had thousands of feet of Armco available) But he said no, it would take too long and to just go ahead and make the fill. Well, we fought mud and cussed and sweated for weeks just because some stupid stubborn Naval officer, true to custom, automatically disagreed with any suggestion made by an inferior. Finally after weeks of wasted effort we had to put in some culverts. He said we wouldn't have needed them if we had put the fill in right! Up in the foothills I wanted to cut my backslopes decently and make

6

An intercepting drain on the high side with cross culverts every so often. God knows we had equipment enough. But no, that was wasted effort to him so for weeks we fought washouts and seepage. We almost wore the dirt out rehandling it and I'll bet we rebuilt that road six times. That's the kind of construction men that received commissions in the CBs. Now there are exceptions, Dad, I know but unfortunately I have met few. Of the one hundred or so commissioned officers I have had contact with in the CBs only three were practical experienced men and they were Lt. or lower and so disgusted and disillusioned that their efficiency suffered.

7

Now these are just small incidents and don't begin to show why the enlisted CB is so bitter about his officers.

These officers have no interest at all in the men personally. All they care about is themselves and they really demonstrate it. You may have heard or read jokes about the B O Q (Bachelor Officer Quarters) and the Officer's Club being the highest priority of construction. This is doubtless not altogether true in combat areas but here the men lived in pup tents, washed in salt water and stood in mile long chow lines because of inadequate messing facilities while the BOQ and Luxurious Officers Club were built. I mean luxurious, too, with screened porches, bar, beautiful dining room etc. The men had spam and beans. The

8

Damn gold braid had steak and eggs. Intoxicants (except beer) are forbidden to enlisted men. Officers ration is 4 quarts of whiskey a month plus beer. And they don't hold their liquor a damn bit better as far as I can see. Of course, you know how their promotions come about. They are automatically jumped in rank, ensign to J.G. in 10 months, Lt. J.G. to Lt. in 12 months. An enlisted man has to work like hell bear insults cheerfully and be somewhat of a "yes" man to gain a miserly jump in rate in 8 mos. To a year for the lower rates and 18 mos. From 1st class to CPO. Fair as hell, isn't it! Well, I've spouted enough for this time.

Love to you all – Fred

7 September '45

Philippines

Dear Folks,

We are in a new area now and my address is the 75th Naval Construction Batt. I have not been assigned to a company yet so just use the battalion address for the time being. I had hoped to be able to give you all the details today. Censorship has been lifted in practically every outfit but this one so I'll have to wait a day or so until the order comes through here to tell you just exactly where I am and what gives. This area is quite inferior to my old camp area. There is a scarcity of fresh water and so we have salt-water showers and must save rain water for shaving etc. Quite a letdown! Well, we do have a laundry here anyhow and the food is pretty fair.

(Arnolt, F.M)

2

This move will mess the mail all up and I'll probably lose (for awhile anyhow) all the mail you may have sent me from about Sept. 1st until you received notice of my new address so if you sent me any especially interesting news or items, please repeat them in letters you mail to me at the 75th NCB address. I have not as yet been assigned a job in this outfit but expect notice momentarily. I imagine it will be in the heavy equip. line all right. I don't know much about the future here but certainly hope this is only a "waiting" job (waiting for transportation). I really think my chances of arriving home by Christmas are very slim indeed. There are a great many high point men here still awaiting

(Arnolt, F.M.)

3

Transportation and until they are on the way, we low point men can feel little hope for our speedy discharges.

Received Ed's letter of Aug. 20 and Dad's of the 26th. Was very interested to hear of Ed's status and plans. Sure glad to hear he's getting out so soon.

I have little more I can say now but trust I'll be able to "open up" in my next letter. Ask any questions you want as I'll be able to tell you all.

My thoughts are all concerned with getting home and getting discharged and it will be mighty hard to take any interest in the work around here now. I miss you all and home more than I can say.

Love to all of you,

Fred

(Arnolt, F.M.)

September, 1945

Calicoan Islands

Philippines

Dear Folks,

Received Dad's letter of the third today, also a package of Life, 2 rolls of film and the nose drops for my sinus. I have had no trouble lately but the medicine will be nice to have in reserve in case the sinuses act up again. I am pleasantly surprised that my mail is coming through so well after the transfer. This is unusual, believe me.

By now you have my letter regarding my plans for 4 Ely, revised after receiving your very welcome advice. The main thing now is to get the tenants out and have the place repaired and painted and our furniture moved in etc. Flossie seems excited about the prospect of moving back into our little home and truthfully, I'm pretty excited about it, too. It will be mighty nice to come home and move right into our own place together again. I suggested to Flossie that she investigate the possibility of having our kitchen and bathroom

(other side of page 1)

Modernized at this time. That wouldn't involve too much expense and, if those materials were available, it would be nice to have these items taken care of along with the painting etc. I told Flossie to be sure and have Koster check the heating system (including the hot water) over carefully and repair and replace where necessary.

You will be mighty busy now yourselves and activity there at home should be furious for the next couple of months. I will be anxious to get all the progress reports as things go along in the home organizing line. The Navy says they will have $\frac{1}{2}$ the personnel home in six months. That's 1,500,000 men and I certainly hope they are able to fill that plan for I have enough points to be in the first $\frac{1}{2}$ to get out of the Navy. The new $\frac{1}{4}$ point additional for overseas months gives me 39 points today and I'll have 40 points at the end of October. I think the Navy will lower the

2

Critical point score to 40 before the first of the year. That's just a guess but, based on the Navy's own estimated discharge figures, they'll have to lower the score after Dec. 31 st to make more men available as the present system will just about fill their quota for this year (750,000 men). I think I can figure on March anyhow and shall make my tentative homecoming date – March 15 th and just hope it happens sooner.

My present job doesn't amount to much but I think I'll land something a little more interesting before too long. This outfit is to be "Public Works and Maintenance" here at the Naval Base and there is considerable unfinished roadwork etc. I seem to be about the only CPO with less than 44 points that has

had any road experience. I was interviewed regarding my black top and asphalt experience and seem to be the diamond in the sandpile around here regarding

(back of page 2)

Civilian roadbuilding experience. Of course all it means to me now is a chance to work at something I like and that will help me to sweat out the long weeks of waiting ahead. Of course, the fly in the ointment is present, too, and that is the officer in charge of the road maintenance. He is an ex CCC and WPA engineer and before being commissioned was on some "new deal" project delving into entomology in the South (So. Carolina). He is one of those "superior" southerners and has had ~~no~~ no real road experience. Typical of the CBs to have a ex "bug" committee member as road maintenance officer! Oh, well, only six more months! I think I can make him toe the line if we really have any black top work to do "Burdocks" specifications for he knows nothing about it at all and will have to rely on what I know.

Love to you all. Bye for now,

Fred

23 September

Calicoan Is., P.I.

Dear Folks,

Mail has been coming through very spottily the last few weeks. Hope it's getting through a little better at your end. We are, of course, mainly waiting to acquire enough points to get home. The transportation situation is not too bright yet but it will probably improve. One hundred and fifty men left a few days ago. They were mostly "rehabilitation" boys getting home on the 18 month rotation plan. They've only been "out" 28 months! Most of the 44 point men are still here waiting (we have some 55-60 points). There are rumors that a bunch of them are to leave this coming week. I certainly hope they do for, until all the 44 point men leave, we fellows with lower point scores have no chance at all. Everyone seems to think they'll lower the point score in October to 40. I'll have 40 points on or about October 15th but it won't mean much if the high point men

2

Are still here waiting for transportation. My conservative guess as to the date of my arrival home, to wit – March 15th, seems a bit pessimistic I guess. At least the consensus of opinion here among the fellows with about 40 points is considerably more optimistic than my own opinion. They all feel that we might still be home by Christmas and will at least, be on the way home by then. Well, I hope they're right! The Army is certainly going to town with their demobilization program and are surely leaving the Navy at the post. All we hear over the radio are the glorious plans, promises and action of the Army in their rapid demobilization while, from the Navy department, we hear nothing except plans for the big Navy Day celebration to be held back in the States and other unimportant crap like that!

3

I'm still running the coral pit. Although all other outfits are on 40 hr. weeks, this outfit is still working two 9 hr. shifts, six days a week. This C.O. is working for that extra stripe before he goes home – at the men's expense! Our old 42nd finally tripped up and he is under arrest for misuse of our Welfare and Recreation Fund and several other charges of the same character. It was great news to us and we're all hoping he gets the "business"! However, I'll bet he gets out from under it all. After all, he is a Naval Officer and just below Jesus Christ in prestige. I thought the 42nd had an exceptional bunch of phonies for officers but I find the same thing in this outfit and the men in here from three different outfits all say the same about the officers in their old battalions.

4

I am on the night shift again this coming week. We change every week. I don't care for the night shift much but I must admit it is cooler.

In the coral pit, I have one Northwest 80 (21/2 yd), one N.W. 78 (2 yd.) and one #25 Northwest (3/4 yd.). Also have two O8s with Le Tourneau cable blades stripping the overburden and have an International ~~TD~~ 16-TD-18 with a Bucyrus Erie hyd. Angledozer cleaning up around the shovels. A #112 motor patrol keeps the pit road in shape in his spare time. We have about 45-50, 4 cu. Yd. trucks (International and Diamond T) hauling on a 2 to 3 mile (one way) haul. The trucks are, of course, small for a 21/2 or 2 yard rig but they're the standard military general duty dump truck and we have plenty of them and very few big dump trucks here on the island. The 21/2 yard rig puts

5

Out about 250 yards an hour and the 2 yard rig: about 200. I try to keep the rigs working on about a 15 foot face and as our pit is really a hill about 600 feet high we really have some series of benches cut! The overburden is black topsoil, coconut trees and big masses of hard coral rock. It's tough stripping! A powder gang (another CPO is in charge of them) is going steadily. They mudcap the big rocks and have six wagon drills working on the hard sections of the pit. For the 2 and 21/2 yard rigs we find it best to shoot this hard coral with holes 6' on center and 12' to 20' deep. They spring the holes with three sticks and use about three cases of ~~70~~ 60% in each hole. The shots are made during off shift hours and usually entail use of about 500 lbs to 1,000 lbs of dynamite.

6

This is all very interesting to you, Mom, no doubt!

The house situation is pretty exciting. I'm looking forward to seeing your new home and know it must be mighty nice. Flossie tells me you are planning to move in on October 15th. That's swell! I am darned pleased about the whole deal there at home and am surely in a state of anticipation about coming home to my own little house and finding my darling wife waiting there for me. I imagine she's busy as a bee right now. I know you are. It's a great feeling to know that it will only be a few more months and I'll really be home for good.

As always – my love to you all,

Fred

Friday night

Dear Florence,

I took a chance this week hoping that you would realize that Monday night was not a coincidence. I hoped you would want to see me as much as I wanted to see you, but you didn't appear to – so I stayed away this week to give you a little time to think it over. Evidently you did think it over

2

And decided other company was more pleasing than mine. It is well, Florence, that we found out these things now since, as I remarked before, marriage is permanent.

So here's to the end of a wonderful year – to me, and I think also a wonderful year to you. Am I not right?

3

I don't intend to make this note melodramatic. That would be stupid.

The end came darn sudden, kid, but that's the way these things happen. If there is anyone else I hope he loves you as much as I do. If there isn't anyone else I hope you meet someone that will give you all I wanted to.

Last page

It seems impossible to say goodbye so let's make it just – so long honey. Best of luck and all my love.

Fred

Now I guess I'll have to hunt up another girl friend tonight for solace but I assure you she's second choice.

Page 3 of a letter to Florence

Worked out in your own mind and that's oke. The radio, as are all the house furnishings, is your province, Honey. We fortunately seem to have very similar tastes. Say, that will be a neat trick if you can do it! I mean putting the twin beds in the little room. What are you going to do – stand them on end or make a double-decker out of them?

Anyhow your plans for the house sound great and it makes me feel good all over just to hear it all.

As to what color you should wear for my homecoming – well, I'll be so darn glad to see you that I may not notice what color you wear. I like you best in colorful skirts and white blouses. I suppose that's summer clothes but I can't help it. I like pretty blue and white combinations or red and white. Your figure suits me to a T and although I like the sheer-sheers for boudoir attire, I really am fascinated by you in a white blouse. Silly, I guess but, Honey, you know I love your pretty breasts and somehow, a white blouse seems to do them justice. I love all of you so darn much that it really is hard to pick out one feature but you know me! Just a wolf, at heart.

When I hear some of the other boys

4

Talk about their "home" troubles I really realize how fortunate I am to have such a sweet virtuous and faithful little wife waiting there at home for me. One of the CPOs here just received a "Dear John" letter today and he's pretty well busted up about it. Of course, that's no unusual event. The figures still amaze me. Over 1/3 or 331/2 of the servicemen receive "Dear Johns". In one CBMU (a CB maintenance) unit here, out of a personnel of 250 men, exactly 102 of these men received "Dear Johns". And of the 250 men there were sixty that weren't married so it was really 102 out of 190. They claim they hold the island record. I guess they do. Two of the men that work for me have gotten the works quite recently. One of them received a letter from his mother telling him that his wife is living with another man on his allowance etc. and that she (the wife) is now six months pregnant (Bill's been overseas for 18 mos.) Tim, the other guy received a letter from his wife stating that she was eight months pregnant but would Tim forgive her as the other man was so darn attractive and got her so excited that she couldn't control herself. Some fun!