

Grandpa's Letters



Erva Edwin Thaxton
World War II

Foreword

I don't know why I am writing a forward. This is not a book, and I am not the author. It is a collection of letters written by my father to my mother, entries from Dad's World War II diary, and various bits of information about Mom and Dad that I want to share with Kathy, Ken, Rob, our children, and our grandchildren. I have taken the liberty of editing Dad's run-on sentences and some grammatical errors, something that would be necessary for any of our hurriedly-written informal letters. The reading and compiling have been pure joy. As Jennifer said as she was typing, "I'm falling in love with my grandfather." The hours spent have been private hours of love that Dad and Mom have shared with me, and I now share with you. Thank you, Dad, for giving us a small insight into the love you and Mom shared and the loneliness you felt when the two of you were apart.

Diane

Note: Content written between brackets [] indicates editor's notes of clarification or fact. Content written in all-capital letters indicates entries taken from Erva's ship diary.

[The following letters were written by Erva Thaxton while he was in Las Animas working at J.C. Penney Company to Barbara Crays who was teaching elementary school in Parkdale, Colorado. They began to date during the summer between the two years of Mother's teaching in Parkdale. For the one school year their courtship was limited to letters and weekend trips by Barbara to Las Animas where both her parents and Erva's parents lived. Erv used Barbara's nickname, Bob, whenever he wrote to her.]



805 West 7th Street
Las Animas, Colorado
April 16, 1937

Barbara Crays
Parkdale, Colorado

Dear Bob,

Just got home from the show, and there was supposed to be \$95 given away. No winners were there, so it will be \$110 next week. Wouldn't it be swell to have that to start a vacation with? We could see lots of places on that, couldn't we? I sure hope nothing happens so we can't go this summer. If I should get transferred, it wouldn't look so good for our trip. If it isn't too far away, we can go anyway. We will keep planning on it anyway, until something comes up to stop us.

I sent my pictures away the other day, and they should be back tomorrow. I was sure disappointed that we didn't get more pictures, but no one seemed very enthused over the idea.

They have started working on Archie's [Thaxton] house. By a week from Sunday, you won't know the place. They have the front porch off, the ditches dug for the pipes,

and the foundation for the back porch laid all in two days. They are supposed to start putting the bathroom in tomorrow and laying the foundation for the garage.

Do you know the fellow that used to work at the bowling alley when Denny Ward owned it? It was his wife that went crazy. I guess she was really wild.

So you have decided not to put your application in at Rixey. Your hours won't be so good in the [City] Pharmacy, but it will be a lot less responsibility.

The last three days have really been swell. It has been so warm and nice out that it would make an ideal night for a picnic. It is even too nice to go to bed. I guess I will have to since I have no one to sit up with me and look at the moon and such.

I'll see you in about ten days.

Love, Erva

April 29, 1937

Dear Bob,

I guess you think you are pretty smart getting a three-day holiday next week. It must be nice to have a position like that. You tell your [school] board that I said it was alright for them to give you a day off, so you could come home to see your Mom! You might ask them if it would be alright for me to come up and see you, too. (I'd like to see them stop me.) If you come home the third it will only be three weeks from then until school is out. That won't be very long.

Yesterday I worked around home all morning hauling trash, etc. Then in the afternoon I helped Archie haul some. Then I washed and vacuumed my car. I sure got a nice sunburn doing it, too. My arms are really red. I just got my car looking pretty good, and today we got a nice dust storm and then a shower. I guess my work was all in vain.

Say, how about a date for the night of June the 18th. I have a little matter I would like to take up with you. Don't make up your mind in too big of a hurry because I don't think this matter will be too pleasant. You didn't think I could find out, did you? Well, that just goes to show you that you don't want to try keeping anything from me.

I saw Bernard [Hendin] tonight, and he showed me that picture of Yellowstone Falls that he had enlarged. Boy, it is really good. I am going to get the negative and have one made, too.

We were in the Pharmacy, and they showed us some of those photograph albums that you were talking about. They would last a long time, wouldn't they?

Well, it's about time to retire, so I'll be seeing you in about four days.

Love, Erva

April 22, 1937

Dear Bob,

Well here it is 10:30 p.m., and I have just finished supper. The boss (J. Fenimore Cooper, manager of the J.C. Penney Company store in Las Animas) was out of town this afternoon and tonight, so Ralph [Ralph Adkins] and I had to put in windows by ourselves. It was almost 10 o'clock when we finished sweeping - and you think you have a tough life. Say, you don't know what a tough life is.

Have you noticed the moon tonight? It is really swell. I wish you were here to enjoy it with me. We couldn't have done much good tonight, but there will be lots more nights. Bernard and I were talking last night about how swell it would be to have a picnic one of these nights.

How would you like to go to Holbrook (a lake north of Swink, Colorado) to a dance Saturday night, if I get off work in time? That would be pretty nice, don't you think? I was just thinking that a week from Sunday we could go on an all-day hunting trip. We might have a moonlight picnic too, if we aren't too tired. Huh!

We got our bathing suits in today, and some of them are pretty nice. If you come in Saturday, maybe we can find one for you. They aren't very expensive ones, but maybe they will be alright. I imagine it is a little cool swimming in these lakes around here yet. Earl Piper said he went swimming in the dam [John Martin Reservoir just south of Hasty, Colorado] the other day, and it wasn't so very cold.

Well, it's long past my bedtime, and I am tired besides. I will save the rest until Friday night.

Love, Erva

April 28, 1937

Dear Bob,

I was sure glad to hear that you got home okay. That is a pretty long road for a little girl to drive alone.

This week has gone by pretty fast so far. You know it is only three days until you will be down again, and that is only about four too many.

Boy, the wind has really blown here today. It has quieted down a little now, but it is still blowing pretty good. You can even see the moon now.

It will be swell driving by moonlight next Saturday night, huh! I hope the wind doesn't blow.

Leona [Erva's sister] left this morning for Boulder. They [Leona and Claude Settle] were to be married in Denver tonight at 8:30 p.m. The girls had a shower for her last night, and she sure got a lot of nice things. She said she was sure nervous when she started opening the packages.

Ralph told me today that Earl Piper asked him his advice on whether he should go to work for the Penney Company or not. Earl told him that the boss said there would be an opening for him pretty soon. Ralph said the boss was sore at him all day Saturday. He thinks he is going to get the transfer, but I'll bet he is wrong. I hope so anyway. I told him I didn't know a thing about it. He said he would go out of here whistling if he had the chance. Earl told Ralph that he was supposed to decide before convention, and that is only a little over two weeks away. The boss will probably do something about it then.

A cousin of mine and another fellow stopped here today from Kansas. They are going up to Washington, Oregon, Canada, California and clear down the coast. They said if they could find a job, they would stay and work; and if they didn't, they would have a swell trip anyway. It would sure be swell to take one like that, wouldn't it? They don't have any certain time to be home so they don't have much to worry about.

I'll see you Friday night. If you promise to be here before one o'clock, I will come down to see you.

Love, Erva

May 6, 1937

Dear Bob,

I suppose you have recovered from our trip by now. I felt pretty good Monday, but Tuesday I was pretty dead. I guess that was just a little too big of a trip for one day.

I saw Bernard tonight, and he had his pictures that we took up in the hills last time. They weren't extra good, but I have seen worse. I sent those two pictures of mine to the Denver Post. If I have any luck, they may be in the paper Sunday. Wouldn't that be something.

Ralph and I just got through decorating windows. We got through a little after nine tonight, so that wasn't so bad. I asked Ralph about his vacation. He said he had already told those folks that he couldn't get off in August, but he would find out what he could do about it. The boss said today that he wanted them [all the employee vacations] over by the middle of August, so that will make it better. If Ralph takes his the first two weeks in August, I will take mine the last two in July - that is if we get two. I will still have to see it before I believe it.

Dorothy [Thaxton] has been about all in (tired) the last few days. She is feeling a little better the last day or so, but she doesn't look so good. They are doing pretty well on the house now. They have the bathroom all fixed and part of the siding on. Most of the porch is fixed inside. It is going to look pretty good, I think.

It is bedtime so I guess I will have to quit for this time. You might try writing a little oftener if you want to. It won't make me very mad.

Love, Erva

May 8, 1937

Dear Bob,

A week ago tomorrow night we started our trip. It doesn't seem that long for some reason. This week has sure gone by in a hurry. If the next two go by as fast, it won't be long until school is out.

Thanks for writing me and telling me where you will be, but I am afraid I can't get up there this weekend. I don't know for sure what I will do yet. Swede [Nelson] wants me to go fishing with him Sunday. If he decides to go for sure, I suppose I will go with him. If not, I am going to help Archie start putting the siding on the garage. They are almost through putting the siding on the house. They will probably finish tomorrow. It is sure going to be nice when they get it all finished.

Say, you sure are doing a lot of running around for an old school teacher - weekend parties, suppers, etc. I'll bet you are just practicing staying up late at night so you will be in good shape when school is out. How about it?

I was intending on working tonight but didn't feel like it, so I went to the show.

I am sure anxious to see the paper Sunday and see if my pictures are in it. That would be something, having my name in the Denver Post, now wouldn't it?

Ralph told me the other day that the boss told him about Warner [Manager of the J.C. Penney store in Monta Vista] having a place for me. I'll bet you couldn't guess where it was - Monta Vista, Colorado. That is almost straight west of Trinidad. It is in between two ranges of mountains. It isn't much larger than Las Animas, but that store is sure going to town. They had a 50 percent increase in business last month over a year ago. That would be a good place to make a showing. The manager must know his stuff to make an increase like that. They probably will have that place filled by the time the boss makes up his mind to let me go. I have never been there, but sounds like it would be a pretty nice place. It is quite a way from here. Remember, mum is the word because I am not supposed to know that either. Ralph thought at first that it was he who was going to be transferred. I think he has sort of given it up since the boss told him that.

It's bedtime, so I guess I had better sign off for the present.

Love, Erva

P. S. If I should happen to get it, you could come over. We could spend the weekends in some different mountains for a change, huh!

May 12, 1937

Dear Bob,

Here it is bedtime, and I am just getting off work. We got about fifty cases of shoes in today for our June shoe-selling contest, and we have a lot more that will

probably be in this week. I guess you will know where I will put in most of my time this week. Our basement looks like a warehouse instead of a store room.

I suppose you had a nice vacation over the weekend. I had a lot of fun too. Swede, a fellow from La Junta, and I went fishing. We went out to the dam first, and then we went over to Rule Creek and caught nine. It was real cold all day. The wind was blowing pretty hard, or we probably would have caught more. I talked to two other people today that went out, and they said that neither bunch of them caught a fish. I guess we're not such bad fishermen after all.

Archie and I got out this evening and threw the ball around a little to limber up. It sure seems good to get 'hold of one again. We were supposed to practice yesterday, but there were only three there. I don't imagine we will have much of a team again this year. (The team was probably the First Baptist Church men's softball team.) Ah, well, maybe I won't even be here to play.

Ralph asked Earl the other day what he had decided to do about the job, and Earl said he hadn't decided yet. The convention is next week, so he will have to decide by next Saturday. Ralph said he discouraged him all he could because he said he would sure hate for either of us to have to work for J. Fenimore. I really don't think Earl will take it.

It really has been warm here today. Tonight would be an ideal night for a picnic, but there doesn't seem to be anyone here to go with me. Besides, I would have to work anyway, so I guess we will have to go some other time, huh?

The boss will leave next Sunday and won't be back until a week from Sunday. Say, we will all have a vacation for a week.

Here it is almost twelve o'clock, and I am up writing a letter. I should have been in bed hours ago.

Did you notice I didn't get my pictures in the Denver Post last week. I haven't got them back yet, so maybe they will be in later.

Well, bye bye. I will see you in a couple weeks.

Love, Erva

May 13, 1937

Dear Bob,

I guess you are still counting the days until school is out. Just think--it is only a little over a week. It doesn't seem possible that another year has rolled around. I am getting to be an old man. Just think, I have been out of school four years - my, my.

You ought to come down Friday night and watch the big baseball game. We are supposed to play La Junta up there. I don't imagine we will even have enough for a team. You will probably get all the softball that you want when you do come home.

So Evelyn [Crays] is counting the days until they can come down here, too. There must be something about this old place that everyone wants to come back for.

It seemed funny for me to go up there [Sterling, Colorado, where Malcolm Crays also worked for the J.C. Penney Company]. I have seen Evelyn in the store and waited on

her, but I had never really met her. She is sure nice and friendly. She acted as if we had known each other for years. It was sure easy to make myself feel at home up there.

I'm afraid you would have a pretty hard trip if you left home Saturday night to go up to Monta Vista and be back by noon Sunday. I figured up on the map, and it is about 230 miles from here. That would be further than the Sterling trip. Now if you were at Parkdale, it wouldn't be any trip at all then. But I guess you won't, so that's out. Ah, well, if I get one [a transfer to another store], it may be hundreds of miles from there - who knows? The suspense is sure about to get me down.

If I keep writing every day, I'm afraid my letters will have to be a little short. I don't seem to be able to think of much to write. I'll see you in a week and three days, huh.

Love, Erva

May 15, 1937

Dear Bob,

Well, just one week from tonight I'll be seeing you, huh? The time is going by fairly well, even if it is a long wait yet. A week isn't very long, but it is still seven days. I suppose you are about through with everything but the tests.

The carpenters finished up at Archie's today. Boy, it really is looking swell. He hasn't sided up the garage yet, but I think he and I will work on that Sunday. They haven't decided what color to trim the house in yet. They still have that to do also. You probably won't even recognize the place.

I was talking to Ralph yesterday, and he was telling me what the boss told him about the transfer. He said that Warner wanted to transfer me to Monta Vista, but the boss told him that he wanted to keep me for a while yet. He said that he could give me some more training yet. That is what he told me when Frank [Frank Duncan, who transferred to the Greeley store] left, but I haven't seen any of it yet. Ralph said the way he understood it was that it was supposed to be a first man's job. Boy, would that be something, but I suppose it is all filled up now. Monte Vista made a 50 percent gain month before last over a year ago, and 33 percent last month over a year ago. They had third to the largest percent of gain of any store in the district. That is really going to town, isn't it? Ralph said that if Earl took this job, he was sure I would get the transfer. If Earl didn't get it, then he didn't know whether I would get one or not. If they had to transfer someone in here, they would have to pay him probably \$75 or \$80 a month. You know that sure hurts the boss.

I have heard so many things about this, I don't know what to believe. I guess I will just have to forget the whole thing and just wait to see what happens. It sure does keep you in suspense though.

We will all have a nice week's vacation while the boss is away. It is really a pleasure to work when he's not around.

I got my pictures back from the Denver Post. They sent me a list of rules for the contest and said not to send the negative. I guess you were wrong after all. I will have to have them developed and send them in again.

I was talking to Bernard the other night, and he still hasn't given up the idea of going with us on our trip. We still haven't decided where to go either. I really don't care much where we go. I think we will have a swell time wherever it is.

I was talking to your mom today, and she said she was getting ready to move. I guess you won't get to have your flowers and croquet grounds, but that should be a nice apartment anyway. After all, it is warm enough now that we won't have to stay up there anyway. Bernard said that he and Roberta were talking, and Roberta said she would be glad when you came home so we could go on some moonlight picnics. Bernard said just the two of them went on one the other night, and that it was really swell.

I went to the show tonight and saw one of those wild west shows. Do you remember that show that you, Roberta, Bernard and I saw in La Junta, "When You're In Love", with Grace Moore and Cary Grant? That is going to be here Sunday. I may have to see it again.

I sort of slipped last night on my letter writing. I was tired and went right to bed after the show. Anyway, to miss just one night a week isn't bad, now is it? You aren't doing too bad yourself. Write lots, and I'll see you in about a week, huh?

Love, Erv



Barbara Thaxton 1943

[Barbara and Erva were married in Raton, New Mexico, on May 29, 1938. In 1939 they built their first home at 526 Vine Avenue, Las Animas, Colorado. Their first child, Shari Diane, was born on December 27, 1939. Sometime between 1940 and 1943, Erva was made assistant manager for the J.C. Penney Company and was transferred to the Lamar, Colorado, store. The next letter was written from Erva to Barbara and Diane while Barbara was in Las Animas to have her upper teeth pulled. Barbara had gum disease that caused her to lose all her upper teeth and be replaced with dentures. Her dentist was Dr. Mark Lamme. During this procedure, Barbara and Diane stayed with Barbara's parents, Lou and Nelle Crays, on their small farm just south of Las Animas on Highway 101.]

401 South 3rd
Lamar, Colorado
December 10, 1943

Dear Bob and Diane,

How is the tooth pulling coming along? I don't imagine it is any fun. It is too bad you have to lose your upper front teeth. I think, though, as long as they are bad, you had better have them out. That probably will cure your rheumatism and make you feel a lot better.

We got a package from Aunt Belle the other day. It had a Negro doll for Diane and a soldier for Johnny. We also got a Xmas card from Al and June Schroeder and one from Junior Smith in Honolulu. Also one from Aunt Zella (Node Elkin's wife, an aunt to Dad and a sister-in-law of Grandmother Thaxton's who lived in California)--Beware!!

I also got one from Uncle Sam, but it didn't say "Greetings". It was just to notify me that I would be notified for my first physical from this board in Lamar instead of the Bent County board. It sounds like my "greetings" might come later, huh?

After a week of batching, I will be used to that good Army food. I just finished a delicious supper of fried eggs, hot muffins (the neighbors donated), coffee (fresh--the other had begun to get a little stale in the pot since last Monday), peanut butter and cheese and also nice crispbread. I dropped the loaf on the floor and knocked a big hunk out of the cement. I also left the butter out of the refrigerator since last Monday. It got so strong, it wouldn't lie down on the bread.

I also keep the bed in good shape too. When I decide to go to bed, I don't even have to turn the covers down. I just jump in, pull them up over me, and go to sleep.

Something else I forgot to ask you was what I am supposed to do when I run out of clean dishes. The sink is running over, and the cupboard is running out.

Enough nonsense--I really am getting along okay. Tonight is the first meal I have eaten at home except breakfast. Mrs. Halvorson [Mr. Halvorson was the manager of Penney's in Lamar] had me up Wednesday evening for supper.

Last night they told us we could bring our army uniforms home with us from now on. They also gave us our emblems to sew on our shirts and also a gold badge to wear on our caps. Some class, eh?

If you don't get through with your teeth before Saturday, just stay over and I will come and get you. Don't look for me until you see me though. If I can get through, I will probably go down to the river and see if I can find a duck Sunday morning. We had about three or four inches of snow here again today, and I don't know whether it will be off of the side roads by Sunday or not.

Tell Diane she will be so big from not sucking her thumb that I probably won't know her. See you Sunday.

Love from Pappy

[The following is the first diary entry that Erv made in his "military diary".]

LEFT HOME MARCH 19,1944, FOR INDUCTION IN THE NAVY, WAS SWORN IN MARCH 23 AND LEFT IMMEDIATELY FOR FARRAGUT, IDAHO. FINISHED BOOT TRAINING MAY 9TH AND WENT HOME ON 15-DAY LEAVE.



Erva and Diane
Erva's Leave



Barbara and Erva
Erva's Leave

STARTED BACK TO FARRAGUT MAY 22 AND ARRIVED MAY 24TH AND WAS PUT IN O.C.U.

LEFT O.C.U. MAY 29TH FOR SAN DIEGO FOR RADAR SCHOOL.

[Although Erv never mentioned it in his diary, Barbara and Diane took a train trip to San Diego, California, in June to visit him while he was stationed there. While in San Diego they visited relatives, took Diane to Balboa Park and Zoo, to Coronado Beach, and to Coronado Island by boat. Diane was 4 1/2 years old. Nothing personal was written in his diary. It appeared as though he completely detached himself and his feelings from his military experience.]

FINISHED SCHOOL JUNE 27TH AND WAS SENT TO CAMP ELLIOTT JULY 3RD AND SENT TO THE DESTROYER BASE.

LEFT THE DESTROYER BASE JULY 4TH FOR PORTLAND. ARRIVED IN PORTLAND JULY 6TH.

LEFT PORTLAND JULY 12TH FOR SEATTLE FOR THREE WEEKS C.I.C. (Operations Conversion Unit) SCHOOL. ARRIVED SEATTLE JULY 14TH.

[Following his radar training, he was assigned to the U.S.S. Cecil, and his first port and training station was Seattle, Washington. The following letters were written to Barbara and Diane from the Seattle Naval Station.]

APA Pre-Commissioning School
U. S. S. Cecil 96
Seattle, Washington

Mrs. E. E. Thaxton
C/O L. E. Crays
Route 1
Las Animas, Colorado
July 20, 1944

Dear Bob and Diane,

Well we finished another day at school, and it wasn't bad at all. We have a swell bunch of instructors, and we are starting on some interesting work. It is similar to drafting, only it has to do with plotting the ship's course and speed and that of any other ship we might see. He told us today we would be the flag ship. There would be about five more similar ships behind us, a bunch of destroyers behind them, and an aircraft carrier behind that, yet. Besides, there are several smaller ones along, so we will be pretty well protected. We will also have all the big shots from both the Army and Navy aboard.

I got your letter today with the two dollars in it. I'll bet I have the nicest wife in the world. I sure do thank you, but I didn't really need it. They had a notice on the board today that we will get paid tomorrow. I am supposed to get \$45. I still haven't got the \$10 you sent yet. I wrote them last night, so I imagine I will hear from them tomorrow. I don't think I will need all of that, so don't be surprised if I send some home. I would rather write for some than to carry so much with me. Someone might pick my pocket - ha! [Dad did have money stolen. He learned to fold all his money together, put it in the front buttoned pocket of his bell bottom pants, roll them up, and place them under his pillow while he slept.] I may have to buy another undress blouse since mine was swiped. We wear them to school, so I will probably need another to have a change.

I got your box of stationary today. It has sure been a long time coming. I think it was mailed July 7th. I got my dress blouse out of the cleaning today, and it sure looks a lot better. It is the first time it has been cleaned since I have been in the Navy. I have to take a pair of pants over too, as soon as I get around to it. I had forgotten Madge [Gall, Mom's cousin and one of Aunt Fern Gall's daughters] was here. I don't know when I will get to see her. Our side of the barracks gets liberty Friday, then not again until Monday. I don't imagine we will go to town much at night. We will be off the weekend after this coming one.

So, the Japs are asking for peace. It will sure be a happy day when we all have peace, and we can go home. You say you saw "Passage to Marsielle". We saw it in full in Portland. It was very good, wasn't it? [Movie attendance soared during the 1940's. Workers on the home front and military personnel had few other places to spend their first steady income in years. Many movies featured patriotic themes.] I haven't been to town once since we have been here. I may have to go in as soon as I hear about the money order.

So, you are still working at Garvey's [Garvey McBride owned one of the grocery stores in Las Animas]. How do you like it? You had better take it easy until school starts. You will be a rich woman when you get your \$125 a month plus your \$80, won't you? You will be making so much money, I bet you will want me to stay in the Navy from now on. It will be pretty nice for you not to have to worry about finances, won't it?

Has Archie decided anymore about the place? Mom said he had several bites on his place. I was surprised to hear Hazel had bought Herb's [Monhollon] place. When do you figure on moving in? It will be a lot less work for all of you in town and also a lot handier. Have you found out how you will ride to school yet? Did Paul and Etta [Braly. Etta was a school teacher too and good friend of Lola and Ray Monhollon. The Braley's eventually moved to Canon City when the Lee Colvin's, Herb, and Ray Monhollon's established a housing development in Canon City] decide what they are going to do yet? It will be nice if she teaches out there, too.

I got my first [Bent County] Democrat today since I left San Diego. It was transferred from Portland, too. I didn't thing they transferred anything but first class mail. You asked about sending those blades and cream up here. I will be here long enough to get them I'm sure. It takes air mail two days to get here. I got some in Portland in one day.

What did Uncle Lee [Colvin] do about the place in Canon City? I don't suppose he would have any trouble getting a job up there, and it would be a good time to sell his place there [in Las Animas]. As you say, guess the folks will be the only ones left there pretty soon. They will probably get the idea someday, too.

So Dunk [Raymond A. Dunkin from Las Animas had his basic training with Erva in Farragut.] is on his way across [Pearl Harbor]. Did he have any schooling here, or will he get it over there? I guess I am about the luckiest one of the three, don't you think? Frank [McVay from Las Animas also was in basic training with Erva] sure got a tough break. It is nice that you, Rose [McVay], and Irene [Dunkin] can see each other and talk things over. I wish the fellows could get together again. Maybe we will someday.

I haven't read the Democrat yet, and I am about out of anything to write about, so will sign off. Write soon, and thanks again for all the nice things you have done for me. Maybe I can pay them back someday, I hope.

Lots of Love, Erva

July 21, 1944

Dear Bob and Diane,

Everything is all in one big mess here again tonight. It seems they just get things started one way then someone changes it. They have changed the liberty schedule about three times since we have been here. The way it is this time all of our bunch, except three, have liberty at the same time. I imagine I will go in tomorrow night and see about that wire you sent. I didn't get an answer from them today. If I don't get one tomorrow, I will go to the office in town and they can send for it.

I got two more letters from you today, and one of them had two more dollars in it. Now listen!!! If you don't quit sending me money, I am going to have to come home and paddle you. We got paid today, and I got \$45 and will have the other ten when I get to town to get it. Besides I will have some more in a few days from ships service. I am going to send some of it home because I don't want to carry it all. They sure have the gambling games going around here already. I can see five games going on from my bunk. Some of them will probably be broke by morning. I "lose" mine fast enough without gambling it away. The other one of your letters came from Portland.

We didn't do much in school today. We had two lectures this morning and then we got paid at 10:30 a.m. We went to school all afternoon. Our other man that was sent to gunnery school got here today, so our whole gang is here now. He said he didn't do a thing with guns down there. All he did was mess cook. He was the only non-rates man in the bunch, so I guess that is what they sent him for.

One of our lectures this morning was on duties aboard ship. They made it plain that when we were aboard ship, our letters would be censored. I probably won't get to say much in them. You will have to be careful what you write, in regard to our location, etc.

I was glad to hear the folks got so much fruit to can. It will keep you all plenty busy for a while, but it will sure be worth it. How is the price on that stuff up there [Canon City]? I suppose they are all making good money from it. [About twenty million home "victory gardens" produced forty percent of the vegetables grown in the United States.] I am like you. I think it is a good thing your plans were made so you wouldn't have to go live with Irene. She is just as nice as can be, but the kids might not get along. We wouldn't want to have any trouble with them because I think we will enjoy their company when this is all over. That does throw quite a load on her having his mother leave.

You were asking what Mrs. Sunday [A friend of Mom and Dad who lived in Lamar] had to say to me. I will send her letter, and also the one from Belle [Aunt Belle Honnell, a sister of Grandmother Monhollon], so you can read them. It is funny Dunk

didn't get a letter in four weeks at Treasure Island. I wrote to him while I was in school and was wandering why I hadn't heard from him. So he also loses his gear. We still don't have our lockers, but I think we will get them soon. I hear we are supposed to move to a new barracks tomorrow.

I am glad to hear Diane is all right now. [From my baby book--July 8th, 1944, at 4 1/2 years old, you had measles. Daddy was in the Navy and you and Mommy were with Grandma and Grandpa Crays] That is one disease over with, anyway. I got the pictures of Larry's [Malcolm Crays] house. It looks like a pretty nice one, even though it is a little small. That sounds like he got a pretty good deal there. He will probably be settled now. His time should be a bit more his own on a job like that. [Uncle Mal had quit working for J. C. Penney Company and had purchased the franchise for a Standard service station in Fort Morgan. He later managed a Continental station.]

I am sure glad you liked your job of checking. It is nice you didn't have to do any lifting. I wish I could come home to help you move. It would be a pleasure. I think it will help the house a lot to enlarge that dinette. That fruit cellar sounds like a good idea. (FOR YOU ONLY)

You said in your letter you could keep me busy for a couple weeks yourself - I am surprised at you giving up in two weeks. I intend to keep you busy the rest of your life - ha! It would be nice, wouldn't it? I lay awake nights thinking about it.

I hope you do get to go to the cabin with the Dodges and over to Canon City. That would be a nice trip, and I know they would be a lot of fun.

So Ted [Monhollon] is in India, maybe. I imagine he is seeing some action alright. She never did say what he was doing with radar, did she? It was nice Frankie [Monhollon] could teach right in Canon and is so close to the folks [Laura and Herb Monhollon].

About Mr. Shenk - The way he told me about Marybell [a J. C. Penney employee] was that she was just going to work right up until time to quit without telling him. There is no doubt that he does make mistakes, and I know he is very much set in his ways. But I also know the help at times did try to run over him because he was so easy. You do have to clamp down in a case like that once in a while, or they would just keep doing it. It might also just be a misunderstanding between the two, but anyway, it is too bad it had to happen.

I am like you. I am glad you didn't go to work in the store for several reasons. It would be lots longer hours and harder work than teaching school, and I imagine Ray is about right about how the help would feel towards you if you made a bonus. You know how Buck dislikes anyone that has any get-up-and-go that goes after sales. If you did, which I know you would, you know how much troubles it would start. Buck doesn't need much of an excuse to start crabbing. I think he just wouldn't want to have any trouble among them, Buck and us. Anyway, I am glad it is this way, aren't you? I do think he has changed a lot since I worked for him. I don't know whether it is because he feels too tough or what, but I guess it is just one of those things. I really do think that is the reason he didn't put you on.

I was interrupted a minute ago. About twelve of us had to go over and sweep out a barracks. We are supposed to move in it tomorrow if they get the beds. I don't know what is the matter with the one we are in, but I guess they do.

It drizzled rain most all morning. It has been nice and cool the last two days. Day before yesterday they said it was the hottest day here since 1941.

They just brought my notice in that my wire was in the office in Seattle, so I guess I will go in tomorrow night and get it.

We'll quit now and go to bed. How's the thumb-sucking coming along? I haven't heard anyone say anything about it lately. She must have quit, I hope. Lots of love and a great big kiss to you both. Erv

July 23, 1944

Dearest Bob and Diane,

We just finished captain's inspection, and I am really glad it is over with. It was really hot out there today standing in the sun with our dress suits on. I am sure glad I had my blouse cleaned this week because this guy was pretty strict. He criticized quite a few of them, but I got by all right. This inspection is sure a lot of bunk. We got off class at 3:30 and had to go to the barracks, clean up, and change clothes by 4:00. We stood out there until nearly 5:00. Now we have to change to undress blues to go to chow. Then I have to go with some other guys to clean up the ships service. I will have to change to my overalls. That is a lot of changing just for a little formality.

We have been having lots of lectures the last three days, so naturally our classes have been cut down. We had a gas mask drill yesterday, learning how to put them on and how to take care of them. Today we had another drill, only we first had to put on our masks and go into a room filled with tear gas. Then we had to loosen our masks a little and take a whiff as if we were testing an area to see if the gas was gone. We adjusted them again, and, after a minute, we took them off and went outside. They had us stay in just a second so we could get a little of it. It is really named right because it really makes you cry. They have an eye wash in case you get a little too much. After we did that, we had to go in the building with our masks off and fastened in the case, take them out and put them on in the room filled with the gas. Then we stayed in for a while and then left. I got by swell in that. It doesn't take long to put them on and adjust them, so you can hold your breath until you get them on. They say we should learn to take them out of the case, put them on, and test them in eight seconds. Each man aboard ship will be assigned one, and we are responsible for keeping it in working order.

We went to town last night, and I got the \$10 you sent me. Thanks again. As soon as I can, I am going to send part of it back. I will probably just get a money order and mail it to you. Jack [Moorhead] and I went to a show and didn't get out until about 11:15 p.m. Then we came back to camp. There isn't much else to do in these places. Two of the fellows said they were in the USO, and they had a notice there that someone was wanting some service men to go on a fishing trip and to a house party afterward. I would like to have gone on the fishing trip, but I don't care about the house party. We aren't off this weekend, so it doesn't make any difference.

You said you saw Roberta, and that Bernard was just fine. I have intended on writing him, but I knew his address had been changed so just never have done it. I owe

some more letters. It seems by the time I get some written to you and Mom, I don't get any farther.

I am glad you are getting along so well with the remodeling. How long a vacation does Dad C get? I imagine you are getting anxious to get moved in.

It is too bad about the hail storm. Did it reach out in the country very far?

I don't know for sure where we will get in our practice course, but I think we will just go down the coast probably to San Francisco or someplace like that.

I am sure glad you are liking your work so well, and that it is easy for you. It will help your finances a little, and I will try to help a little this time.

It looks like hair cuts and that sort of thing are going up in Las Animas as well as out here. I don't know what they are in town, but they were plenty high in San Diego. We get them on the base here for 25 cents, but I haven't found time to get over since I have been here.

I am like you. I don't believe I would give Diane a permanent for a while at least until summer is over. It would be so hard to keep fixed in warm weather.

One of our fellows asked for an emergency leave today, and it looks like he is going to get it. He is having his little daughter's eyes operated on. It didn't seem to be very hard to get in a case like that. We have another fellow that is expecting to be called home soon. His wife is going to have a baby, and the Red Cross said her case was questionable. They are going to let him know if anything happens. They only gave the one guy ten days, including traveling time, so that isn't very long. I naturally would like to go home too, but I would hate to miss out on this school. We need all we can get out of it. One of the women in the office told us that one of our officers aboard ship, who is also an instructor, wrote a letter to someone saying that our bunch was the most advanced group he has had in school. That made us feel pretty good.

I suppose my little girl is full of vim again after her sick spell. Maybe her mommy has recuperated too, I hope.

There aren't very many in our barracks tonight. About half of them went on liberty, and I don't know where the rest are. There are six of our bunch sitting around here writing letters. The other three rated liberty.

I can't think of anything to write, so better close for now. Wish I was home today. It is sort of lonesome here with nothing to do over the weekend. Write soon.

Lots of Love, Erva

P. S. I got this card at the USO and thought it would be something to remember Seattle by so will send it home.

July 26, 1944

Dearest Bob and Diane,

Just finished chow and have a little time before I have to go on a working party, so we'll try to write a little. We have to go up to the recreation building at 9 p.m. and

sweep and swab it out. It will take about an hour to do it. We all have to have our sea bags clean for inspection Saturday, so I washed it this evening, too. They really get dirty when we move from one place to the other.

We are still going to school and learning a little, I hope. These Gold Braids we have as instructors don't know very much about what they are doing. We have to take it slow and figure most everything out. Most of it we are having now is just a review of what we had in San Diego. Every instructor has different ideas, so we have to change with them. We had a movie this evening, and it showed what goes on in the whole communication room. It is really interesting. The communication officer of our ship said he thought we would change jobs every half hour and would rotate from one to the other. There are twelve of us, so there will be four on at a watch with one officer. Therefore, we will have to work four hours on and eight off. Of course, in a battle zone, everyone is on 24 hours a day if necessary.

On our schedule, we have to go swimming, too. We went in yesterday, and they made us all swim around the pool which is about 75 yards. Today we had to jump off the tower four times and swim the length of the pool as if we were abandoning ship. It about poohed me out the first time, but after that I was alright. We also learned how to get out of a life jacket and also to get into them in water. In case of burning oil on the water, we would take them off and stay under as long as possible or until we could get out of that area. Out of the nine radar guys, five of us were non-swimmers, There are two of them that still haven't got around the pool.

I didn't get to write a letter last night as Jack and I went to town. He had to buy some things, so I went with him. The big Penneys store was open, so we went all through it. It really is a swell one. There are about six floors, and they are all big ones. They even have a photograph studio in it. It made me want to go to work.

I am glad Diane is feeling all right now. I suppose she is hard to hold down after staying in bed a week. Mom talked in her letter like she thought Dicky [Richard Thaxton] was taking it.

Say, that was a pretty good joke you told me. How did you like the one I sent? Here is another one I heard. It is about an Englishman who takes his secretary to bed with him. In case anything comes up, she can take it down. Here is another: A secretary sits on her boss' lap and all the business goes in the hole. How would you like to be my secretary for a while?

I am glad everyone liked my picture in at the Pharmacy. I would like to see it myself.

How come Florence Thaxton was in San Diego when we were there? It is too bad we didn't know it.

I hated to hear that Roxie and Doris have quit the store. They were both good help, and Doris will be hard to replace in the windows. Mr. Halvorson owes me a letter, so I will probably be getting one before long. It is too bad they can't take a vacation. It is funny the Shenks [Roy and Fern] didn't go up to our cabin. I suppose they just hated to ask for it.

You asked me what our school was now. There isn't much advanced schooling as far as the operations are concerned, only just the practice. Most of the actual operation comes from practice on the gear. We could go to school for ten years, and if we didn't get

to work on the gear, we still couldn't operate it. That is one thing wrong here - they don't have any gear, so all we are getting is just plotting and working problems.

So Johnny Elder is in Bremerton, Washington? That is pretty close to Seattle. You have to take a ferry over there. I would like to see both him and Kenneth Rogers.

I'm glad your folks have decided to keep their place because, as you said, it will be a cheap place to live after the war. These jobs may not be so plentiful then.

It sounds good that they are going to start selling new cars before the war is over, doesn't it? I suppose they will be plenty high for a while, but they will probably come down all right. It would be swell to drive out a new one, be able to get gas to go in it, then just start out for the most secluded spot we could find for a while. [Almost anything that Americans ate, wore, or used was subject to rationing or regulation. Rubber became the first scarce item. The government ordered rationing of tires. Many people put their cars up on blocks for the duration. If people walked, they risked wearing out their shoes. By 1944, the annual allotment was two pairs per person, barely half the average number purchased before the war. Gasoline and fuel oil were rationed. Home thermostats were lowered to 65 degrees. Congress imposed a nationwide speed limit of 35 mph. Sugar quickly disappeared from grocery shelves and the government soon rationed it at the rate of eight to twelve ounces per person per week. Butter was limited to one pound per person monthly. The food restrictions resulted in a black market, especially in meat. One of the most highly desired items on the black market was women's stockings (no silk from Japan and nylon was needed for parachutes).] I don't think I will ever want to be in a crowd again after I get out of here. This Navy would be alright for some of these young kids that don't have anything to think about but running around. It is no place for a guy like me with a nice family to go home to.

I don't know what we will try to do this weekend. One of the fellows got a list of all the parks and museums around here, so we may see some of them. No doubt there is plenty to see if we knew where they were and had time to go.

I am about worn down, so better quit for now. Keep up the good work writing, and I will try to do the same. I'll be thinking of you.

Love, Erv

July 28, 1944

Dearest Bob and Diane,

Just finished doing my washing, so we'll try to get some letters caught up. We went to town last night to get our hair cut for inspection Saturday, so therefore, I am sorry to say I didn't get any letters written. I have been doing really well the last couple of days. I had one from you and Mrs. Halverson yesterday, and today one from your mom, Mr. Shenk, the package you sent, and the Democrat. I almost forgot--- one from Aunt Monte [Bill Thaxton's wife], too. I was sure surprised to get it, but it was a very nice letter. As soon as I find time, I will have to answer it.

We went to the show last night and saw "The Adventures of Mark Twain". It was a swell show, and you want to see it if it comes to town.

One of our radar guys got a letter yesterday that he was a father for the second time. We were all going to chip in and send something to it, but the store was closed. We'll have to postpone it. It was his second boy. He wanted a girl, but he said they would try again. He tried to get leave to go home, but he couldn't get it. He was worried that things wouldn't go just right, but I guess they went along swell.

I guess we are through with our swimming for a while. Now we have physical exercise one hour a day for awhile. We are all a little stiff today because it has been so long since we have done anything like that.

We had an exam today on radar, and I got 29 out of 30 right, which wasn't bad. We were doing some plotting today, and they were going pretty fast. The instructor told us regardless of how fast the reports came in, not to get excited. That was one thing we were picked for. They thought we would be cool and calm all the time. I can imagine being in a battle zone where we had to keep up with about two or three raids of planes or ships and be figuring out courses and speeds of our ships. We'd also be figuring out where we will be at a certain time, where the enemy will be and about a dozen other things, all while not getting excited. It is sure amazing what you can do when you know how. They can figure out things that I didn't know could be figured out.

Mr. Benzley, our communications officer, told us today that he doubted that our ship would be done on schedule. He said he was not supposed to say so, and asked us not to mention it. If we do happen to finish school before it is done, I think the whole bunch will see if we can get off, but I doubt it very much. Some of the fellows have been overseas for some time and are still having trouble getting leave.

I am glad you are going down to Lamar. You can find out how everything is going along down there. Mr. Halvorson said he and Newell were decorating the windows now.

Your folks will do alright if they can rent their house for \$35 a month, won't they? That will about keep up both places, won't it?

How is Hayward [Gall] by now? It looks like he is going to have to take it a little easier. Now would be a good time for him to sell out. Is Ray figuring on a large farm up there [Canon City] or just an acreage?

That is sure too bad about Bruce Purvis' little girl. We don't realize how lucky we are to have one that is healthy even if she is a little naughty at times.

It is too bad both your folks and mine can't get their papering done. I suppose Wadhams [a local painter and paper hanger] is plenty busy all the time.

That going to the cabin sounds very interesting. I wish I could go with you.

You asked what A.P.A. meant? A.P. is just a symbol for transport and the other A means attack, so therefore, it is an attack transport. We were working problems the other day figuring out how to land the landing barges and how to get them in on the right course and speed. The instructor said we usually stayed back about ten miles, so that isn't so bad.

Mr. Sherk and Mr. Halvorson both said merchandise was very hard to get now, and I guess some of it isn't so hot. I guess they are both having labor troubles. Mr. Halvorson said Mrs. Marten was coming to Seattle to see Delmas in August. I supposed

he was gone before now. If you can, you might find out his address. I might get to see him.

It has really been hot here the last few days. We just about roast in these buildings. They don't have much insulation in them. I hope Drew Pearson [war commentator] is right in his predictions. I don't see how it can last much longer. Regardless of how long it takes, it will be too long.

I am about run down, so will have to quit. Sorry I didn't get one to you last night. We don't have any time at all to write in the daytime now. Keep up the good work, and I will do the same.

Give my little gal a big hug and kiss, and you might keep one for yourself. Maybe someday I can deliver it in person.

They keep us busy in the daytime, and I get by pretty well. When I go to bed at night, I really do think of you both a lot and wish we were together.

Good night and lots of love, Erv

July 28, 1944

Dearest Bob and Diane,

Just got stripped down to my overalls and undershirt to try and keep a little cooler, so we'll try to write a letter. It has been another hot day here and looks like it will stay that way for awhile. I got a letter from both you and Mom this morning and another from you this afternoon, which makes me feel pretty good. I sure do like to get them. The one you wrote Thursday morning I got this afternoon. That is the fastest one I have received.

You said you went to La Junta to do some shopping. I suppose all the Penney stores are in about the same shape. It looks like merchandise would open up pretty soon.

I won't know my little girl when she gets all curled up. I imagine it will change her looks a lot. I will keep that hug in mind and collect when I get home. I hope I don't have to wait too long. I bet she is growing pretty fast. I noticed a difference in just the short time I was gone before.

It is too bad you can't get your house finished, so you can get moved in. I suppose everyone is busy now.

I am glad you are going up to the cabin, so you can enjoy a little of that cool Colorado weather and also some fishing. You asked if you could use my fishing pole? Now listen - when we were married, we decided to share and share alike. What is mine is yours. The only draw back is you have to catch a big fish for me, or no go.

I hope Frankie and all of them can go over. I know you will have a nice time. You ask if we ever get fish up here. We get them every Friday noon. I don't know just what kind all of them are, but we do get some halibut. You can't hurt the pole, and, if you do, it doesn't make any difference. I have to work it over and varnish it anyway. By the way, in case you don't know how to string it up, there is some small line in one of those metal cans called leaders. I think there is some already fixed with loops in them for the hooks. All you have to do is tie the end of the line onto one of the loops and slip a hook over the

other two loops. I think there are only a couple hooks left that are the right kind, so you better buy a package. They are called Eagle Claw and are the only kind you want if you use bait. There are plenty of flies if you use those. I don't know why I am telling you all this - some of the folks probably know more about it than I do. Anyway, have a good time for me, too.

I suppose Diane did get a kick out of watching Earl [Thaxton] milk the cows and also riding them. They make nice neighbors, don't they? How are Earl's crops this year?

I can image J. R. [Shenk] getting disgusted with Buck [a J. C. Penney employee]. I know I used to get angry myself, and I was just the flunky. I know he gets mighty disgusted trying to keep help. He wrote me a nice long letter, and I really enjoyed hearing from him and all the store news. He also told me all about the ball games and also fishing. I guess he didn't do so well over on the Gunnison this time.

I guess we go out on the island a week from Wednesday. I am afraid we will both be without mail for a few days, but it will be nice to read them all when we do get them.

Here is another joke I heard - A young farm boy was in the Navy and was writing home of the things he missed. The thing he missed most was the pot under his bed. His mother wrote back and said, "That's alright, son, you missed it when you were home, too."

They are sure getting strict around this place. We have to march just so to and from classes. Two bunches of guys weren't doing it just right, so they had to forfeit their liberty and march for two hours this evening. Some more guys weren't out of their bunks by 6:30 a.m., so they had to do the same.

We are still getting physical exercise an hour every day. I hear we are going to get some tumbling, too. I don't mind this at all because this exercise sure makes me feel a lot better.

I see where Dad sold a farm. Mom said he also sold a house. It looks like they are doing all right. He said if he could he wanted to put in a floor furnace before winter. I sure hope he can. It will be so much handier and also a lot cleaner on their new paper.

Have got to quit for now. Goodnight and a big kiss to the best wife in the world.

Love, Erv

P. S. I don't know whether I thanked you for the blades and cream or not, so thanks. I found out some more about what A.P.A. means: Assault Personnel Attack.

July 30, 1944

Dearest Bob and Diane,

It is another quiet Sunday morning here. We have just finished chow, so will try to catch up on a little writing. We went to town last night and got a pair of shoes fixed, then went to the show. They really gave us our money's worth. We went in at 8 p.m. and didn't get out until 12:30 a.m. One of them was "Two Girls & A Sailor". I forget what the other feature was. They also had two reels of news. It was a good show. We are going in

this afternoon to try to find something to see. I imagine there is lots to see if we knew where to go. One of the fellows said he saw a notice in one of the USO'S, where they wanted service men to go salt water fishing this morning at 4 a.m. That would have been some experience. Maybe we will hear of another chance some day.

We noticed another sign that was asking for service men to go on a boat trip for the whole weekend. It would go up to three different islands here in the Sound. One of them was Whidbey Island, which is the one we will go to for our school.

I see by the paper where Rommel [German Military Leader of the African Campaign] is reported dead. It is too bad they didn't get Hitler. That would put two of them out of the way. They [the Allies] sure keep pushing through. I hope they keep it up. It looks like the Russians are soon going to be at Berlin. I imagine things will change when they get there.

I didn't get a letter yesterday from my wife, but I got two Friday, so that made up for it. I will get one tomorrow.

I picked up some more postcards last night that I am going to send home to put in our book. I don't know when I am going to get to a post office to get a money order to send home. I could have wired it home last night, but a money order is a little cheaper.

I think I told you that one of our guys has a new baby boy. We have a lot of fun kidding him about us being the boy's "Uncle Rodney Radar", so he has seven uncles. We were going to all chip in to send something to them but the stores were closed, so we didn't get to. He is a swell fellow. The whole bunch are pretty nice.

How is everything at home? I suppose you are all excited getting ready to go to the cabin. I don't blame you. I would be excited too if I could go. Maybe it won't be long until we can go up and stay awhile.

The fellow with the young son just went over and called his wife. She is still in the hospital, so they connected a phone right to her room. He said it only took about 15 minutes to get the call through to Iowa. I have been thinking of calling you, too, but I just haven't been around a phone at the right time. At night and during the middle of the day these phones are just lined up waiting for calls.

What have you found out about the hail in Canon? It will be too bad if they get hailed out the first year they are up there. It was lucky they did get some of their cherries out anyway.

I dread to see these Sundays roll around. It gets so lonesome staying around the barracks. Yet, when we have liberty, we go to town and see all those guys with their wives and sweethearts having a good time. Here we are, twelve hundred miles apart, with nothing but memories and a little hope that the war won't last too long. I came back to the barracks feeling worse than if I hadn't gone out. If we didn't have such a swell bunch to run around with, we would all go nuts.

I can't seem to think of much to write about, so I guess I will have to quit. Write soon and lots.

Lots of Love, Erva

P. S. Tell my little gal to catch a big fish for me up at San Isabel.

TEACHER'S APPOINTMENT AND CONTRACT

Mrs *Barbara L. Thorton*
Las Animas Colo.
Las Animas, Colorado, *July 10*, 194*4*

At a regularly called meeting of the Board of Directors of School District No. *6* in *Bent* County, Colorado, held this *10th* day of *July*, 194*4*, you were employed to teach in the public school of said district for the period beginning ~~Monday~~, *Tues Sept 5*, 194*4*, and ending *May -*, 194*5*, at a salary of *One hundred twenty five* ^{*no*}/_{*100*} Dollars per month, payable monthly or in twelve monthly installments in school warrants as provided by law. *9 mcs ten*

The conditions of your employment are that you will faithfully observe the rules and regulations adopted by the Board for the government of said school; that you will prove your professional spirit by belonging to your County and State Education Associations; that you will exercise reasonable diligence in looking after the preservation of all the school property under your jurisdiction; that you will make promptly and correctly all reports of the school required by the County Superintendent; that you will keep a correct register of the school, and file the same with the President or Secretary of the Board or the Principal of the school at the close of the school year as required by law; and that you hold a legal Certificate under the laws of the State of Colorado.

A further condition of your employment is that you will not at any time after *signing contract* apply for or take active means to secure employment other than as a teacher in the *Riley* public school if the period of such employment covers any portion of the term the school is in session; unless you first secure the consent of the Board and Superintendent to do so; and it is hereby provided that in case you violate the foregoing clause the Board may terminate your employment under this contract by giving you a written notice to that effect. Last warrant will be held until conditions of contract are fulfilled.

Your resignation after *signing contract* will not receive favorable consideration.

No teachers shall be dismissed without good cause shown, which includes a hearing.

Other requirements: *This contract becomes void if not signed and returned immediately. That you are to cooperate with the Principal in giving all children any advantages possible.*

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS, SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. *6*

Attest: *George Jacobs*, Secretary
Floyd Marcum, President
Treasurer

I hereby accept the above employment upon the conditions stated.

25 *Barbara L. Thorton*, Teacher

August 1, 1944

Dear Bob and Diane,

Just got my washing caught up again for another day or so, and now I have dishwasher hands.

I am sort of poohed tonight. We had tumbling today in our physical fitness, and we had about twenty minutes of strenuous exercises first. Some of these instructors sure don't know much about starting a guy out easy. They do them every day and are in good shape, but it has been nearly three months since we have done anything like that. We didn't get much tumbling done. The instructors had to start by just teaching them the forward roll. Most of these guys look like they have never done anything like that. I enjoyed doing it, but it does make me a little sore and stiff. I guess I am getting old.

They told us today in school that the schedule had been changed again, and we will go to the island Saturday instead of next Wednesday. We will be there five days instead of three. They said they wanted us to get some extra training since we were the main ship in the convoy. They want us to be red hot. I bet they will sure get a surprise, ha! Our communication officer does seem to be pretty well-pleased with us. He stops every morning and talks to the nine of us just on his own. Most of these officers sure don't do that.

So you are working again for Uncle Lee [Lee Colvin was the butcher for Garvey McBride at Garvey's Victory Market]. How long are you going to work this time? If the butchering is too hard, I wouldn't do it. After all, it won't be long until school starts.

I don't know how Jorgenson [Richard] and some of these guys get so many furloughs. As I told you the other day, the fellow that has a new son couldn't get one. The chaplain told him there wasn't even any use to ask for one. I guess you just have to know the right people. The other fellow that did get an emergency leave had to have it signed by five different officers from our barracks, C.P.O. up to the Captain, so I guess you have to have a pretty good excuse. Some of these guys are back from overseas duty and can't get one. I guess that is some more of their good organization.

I haven't seen Madge [Auntie Fern's daughter] yet. I don't know when I am going to have much chance now since we are leaving sooner than we expected for the island. I will only be off two nights this week, and I don't know whether I will get to town then or not. I will see her if I can.

I suppose by tonight you are up to the cabin where it is nice and cool. Be sure and tell me who all got to go and what all you did while you were there. I would sure like to be there, too, but our day is coming, isn't it? I hope it isn't too far away.

We keep pushing the Japs and Germans back on every front which looks pretty good. It looks like the Russians will soon be in Berlin. I am anxious to see what this new secret weapon is the U.S. has. I only hope it is a good one, and we have plenty of them.

I forgot to send those postcards home last time, so I will send part of them in this letter and part in the next. There seems to be some nice scenery around close if we could just see it. We went to town yesterday and went out to the museum. It was a pretty good one, but all they had was art. I guess I don't know enough about it to enjoy it. They didn't

have any mounted animals or anything like that. There are a bunch of parks, but we didn't go to any of the rest of them. We came back to town and went to the show. They really give you your money's worth out here. They had three full shows for 45 cents. They lasted over four hours. I don't see how they can make any money like that.

I hope Don [Colvin] is on his way home. He has been gone a long time without any leave. I guess they aren't taking many in the service now.

So Lester [Powell] got an honorable discharge. I guess he is just too old. He should never have joined in the first place. I suppose he will go back to barbering.

Tell Diane she had better catch a lot of worms and grasshoppers for Mommy to fish with up at the cabin. Her mommy used to catch them for her daddy, didn't she?

I guess today is Dad's last day at the base. I hope they can keep on making some deals. Mom said the trouble was finding houses to sell.

I am about run down again, so will have to quit. I am sending an extra super hug and kiss to you both tonight, since you are up to the cabin. If you remember, we spent the first night of our honeymoon at the cabin over six years ago.

Goodnight and sweet dreams from Daddy Erva.

August 3, 1944

Dearest Bob and Diane,

I didn't get to write last night, so we'll try to get a note off this morning. We only have two nights off this week. Since we are leaving Saturday for the island, we decided we had better go in to town. We went to the show, "Goodnight Sweathart". They also had a vaudeville that was plenty good.

We are still taking physical fitness. The last two days we have been tumbling. If they keep that up, we won't have any men left. We had two that were excused because they couldn't take it. Yesterday another one threw some vertebrae out of place and had to go to the dispensary last night. He still isn't back, so I don't know what all they found wrong with him. All we are doing is diving. The instructor picked me out to show them how to do each one. It feels pretty good to do some of that stuff again.

They have picked out eight more men from these guys that just came in from Farragut. They will be radar strikers. They won't get much schooling, only just out on the island and what we can help them with. They will be our standbys or assistants. That is one reason we feel like we have a pretty good chance of getting a little boost. I don't think they will leave us in the same class with them. They are all Seamen Second Class. Our communication officer had us talk to them yesterday and give them some pointers. He sure seems to be well-pleased with us. He was talking to one of our groups the other day, and he said they thought we were a very superior group of radar men. The other officer told another one of our men about the same thing. If they think that much of us, we should do alright.

I was glad they didn't have any hail at Canon, and you got some more cherries. I got the pictures, and most of them are pretty good. I will keep the two of Diane. They

were good of her, don't you think? I will send the rest back as they will mean more to Dot and Neil [Davidson]. I don't have much of a place to keep them anyway. I was sure glad to get them.

Mr. Aalberts [fellow shipmate], you remember, I have his picture in that one of the six of us? He asked for a picture of you and Diane to send home to his wife, so I gave him that old one of you taken about the time we were married and one of these last ones of Diane. He is a swell guy. I know he really enjoys his family and home life. He was sure down because he couldn't go home when his boy was born.

I suppose you are back home tonight after your trip to the cabin. Be sure and tell me all about it and who all went.

You said some senator said the war would be over by December 1, and it was possible the Japs would be whipped first. That senator probably heard that there was a pretty tough bunch of radar men getting ready to go over, and he thought the Japs would probably just give up. Ha!

Have you decided when you are going to move to town? Mom said Wadhams had never come to paper their room yet. If you wait for him, you never will get in.

I guess Dad is all through at the base now. I hope he can make some good deals. He said if he could, he would sure like to put in a floor furnace before winter. It would sure be swell alright and a lot cleaner than the old heating stove.

They changed the schedule again today. I guess these new radar men won't get to go up to the island. This is sure a crazy set up. I don't know how they can expect them to know anything if they don't go to school. All the training they will get is on the cruise. I guess they don't have very much equipment aboard.

Since there will only be nine of us, they say there is a good chance that we will get to fly over there. I hope so, since I have never been up. If we go by plane, it takes about 20 minutes. If we go by bus, it takes about five hours. We have to go to school seven days up there. I guess we will really have to work because they want us to get all we can in such a short time. They say we will go to school all day and until nine at night, including Sunday. I guess we won't have to look for anything to occupy our time, but we need a lot of it.

I got my pay from over at ships service yesterday. I got \$6.50, which will always come in handy. I still haven't had a chance to get to the post office to get a money order to send home but will try to before we leave Saturday.

It is time to quit again for now. I can't figure why you haven't gotten a letter for three days. I have written most every day. Write soon.

Gobs of Love, Erva

P.S. Here is a Chinese Poem I found:

*Nice night
in June
Stars shine
Big moon
In park*

*on bench
with girl
in clinch
Me say
me love
She coo
like dove
Me smart
Me fast
Never let
chance pass
Me say
get hitched
She say
okay
Wedding bells
ring ring
Honeymoon
everything
Settle down
Married life
Happy man
Happy wife
Another night
in June
Stars shine
Big moon
Ain't happy
no more
Carry baby
Walk floor
Wife mad
She fuss
Me mad
Me cuss
Life one
big spat
Nagging wife
Bawling brat
Realize
at last
Me too
damn fast!*

August 5, 1940

Dearest Bob and Diane,

Well, today is the day we leave for the island. Our officer got us out of classes this morning so we could get our stuff ready to go by noon. I have a lot of running around to do to get ready. I want to get another undress blouse, go to the post office and get a money order, go to ships service and get my check cashed that they gave me the other day, get my clothes packed, shower and shave. I am sure anxious to take that plane ride. You don't get a chance to take one free very often.

We went to town last night and went to the roller derby. Boy, that is really something. I didn't have any idea what one was like. They had a team from Seattle playing one from San Francisco. There were a men's team and a girl's team. Talk about rough. That makes football look like a sissy game. There was one girl on each side that were really a match for each other, only one was a dirty player. The other one would take it just so long, and then she would turn loose. They got in two fist fights besides a lot more just passes they made at each other. One gal caught the other one and gave her about four or five upper cuts and knocked her down. The second time they started pulling hair. They were just as hard as nails. I haven't laughed so much in a long time.

I got two letters from you yesterday. One was from Pueblo and one from Rye. I was sorry you didn't catch any fish, but I imagine you had a lot of fun trying. Even I would enjoy it. I am sure glad they have started that road through there. That will add a lot to the value of our cabin. Don't look for too many letters while we are up to the island because we will be plenty busy. I don't imagine the connections are too good out of there. I won't get any mail at all while I am up there.

Had a long letter from Mom and Dad yesterday. I guess Dad and Pruett [Ezra Thaxton's business partner in real estate] are really going to town. He said they had several more deals lined up too. I guess they have made some lately. I sure hope they can keep going because they can always use the money. This may not always last.

I suppose Diane had a big time up at the cabin and over at the lake. I will send the money order home. I also have some more cards and things to send home. I sent my Blue Jackets manual and another book home last night as I don't need them here. There is no need to carry them around anymore. Let me know if you get the money alright. Had better quit now as I have a lot to do. Be sure and keep writing as I will really miss your letters the week I am gone.

We ran into the three fellows this morning that we went to school with at Point Loma. They are assigned to another A.P.A. here at the station.

Goodbye and lots of love, Erva

LEFT SEATTLE AUGUST 7TH FOR WHIDBEY ISLAND. ARRIVED WHIDBEY
AUGUST 7TH FOR SIX DAYS C.I.C. SCHOOL. WENT UP IN A B-26 BOMBER.

August 7, 1944

Dearest Bob and Diane,

It is just 8 o'clock, and we have had chow and have seen a show already. They have an early show at 5:45 p.m. and another at 8 p.m. It was "The Chinese Cat", with Charlie Chan. It was a good mystery show. The one last night, "A Wing and a Prayer", was really good. Tomorrow night is "The Frisco Kid". I think I have seen it, but I will probably go with the rest of them.

We had another interesting day at school today. We are getting a lot of things that we have never had before. I am sure glad we will get to stay the full week because we can sure use it.

They sure feed us good up here. If I keep eating, I will gain some more weight. I weighed the other night, and I am down to 152. According to the chart, I am only one pound overweight, so that is almost perfect, isn't it?

It really gets cold up here. We nearly freeze early in the morning and late at night. Even in Seattle we have heat in the barracks every morning.

I sure wish I had my fishing pole up here. We are right on the edge of the water. I heard one fellow tell another yesterday that he caught ten bass. I would sure like to try it, but, of course, I can't.

Mr. Aalberts took us over after the show and bought us all a malted milk on his new boy. He is really the proud poppa. His wife sent him some pictures the other day of her and the baby in the hospital. They were good pictures for inside pictures.

I suppose you are all rested up from your trip by now. Have you done any more with papering the house? I know you are anxious to get moved.

I missed not getting your letter today, but I will enjoy reading all of them when I get back. What kind of connections are my letters making from up here. I imagine they go out pretty fast.

This morning we practiced landing boats and sending them to different courses, etc. by radar. We had two landing boats in the water to practice on. It was very interesting, and it is surprising what you can do with them. Our school is so secret they keep a marine guarding it all the time with a sawed off shot gun.

Honey, without your letters, I can't seem to find anything to write about. I better close for now. Goodnight and sweet dreams.

I love you, Erv

P. S. I would sure like to see you and my little girl tonight. They have a small radio in our barracks, and it is playing some lonesome music. Being on this island out here in nowhere doesn't help any either. I guess it doesn't hurt too much anyway, does it?

August 8, 1944

Dearest Bob and Diane,

How is everyone getting along by now? We have had another big day at school. We aren't getting anything very hard now, but just a lot of good practice. They told us today we would get a vacation tomorrow. For some reason they declare Wednesday to be our "Sunday" at school. I don't know what we will do. We have been inquiring around about fishing and found out that it was quite a ways to go where you could rent equipment and a boat. We also found out that it was a rich man's resort, so that lets us out anyway. We also have been asking about the nearby towns to try to find some place to go, but haven't found out very much yet. Victoria, Canada, is just across the bay from here, but it is out of bounds. You have to have a special permit. We don't know how to get across either, so that is out. It is a shame to be this close and not get across, isn't it?

Mr. Chittenden's wife is still in Seattle, so he went in this evening and will come back tomorrow night. I don't know how she can stay away from her family that long. She has been following him for about two months. She is working in Seattle at a laundry, I think. I wish my wife was that close, don't you? Jack said if we were going to be in Portland awhile, his wife might come out. That would be nice for him, wouldn't it? [The war caused much geographical mobility. When men volunteered or were drafted into the armed services, their families often followed them to their training bases or points of debarkation. California, the center of much defense production, gained 1.4 million newcomers.]

I went over to ships service this evening to try and find a souvenir of Whidbey Island. About all they had was some cards, so I will send them home. Jack got one in Seattle of the bridge coming over the island, so I am going to get some of them when I get back there.

Some of these guys in the barracks must have got paid today because the crap games and poker games are going strong. That is all some of these guys do. I would rather send mine home to my wife, so we can enjoy it together when this is all over. I hope it isn't too long. It looks like they are still hitting on all the fronts.

I wrote a letter to Mr. Sherk this morning, and I have about six more to write to get caught up again. Maybe I will get some of them caught up tomorrow. We told Mr. Chittenden to go by the barracks tomorrow and pick up our mail. If he does, it will make the week a little shorter having something to read.

It was really foggy here this morning. We were directing boats around again.

They really needed it today. We couldn't even see the water most of the time, and it is only about 100 yards from school. I know they couldn't see very far out there. That is one of the important uses of radar. It sees as well at night or in fog as it does in the daytime. We can direct a ship through channels and around islands, etc., at night and be several miles away. That is something, isn't it?

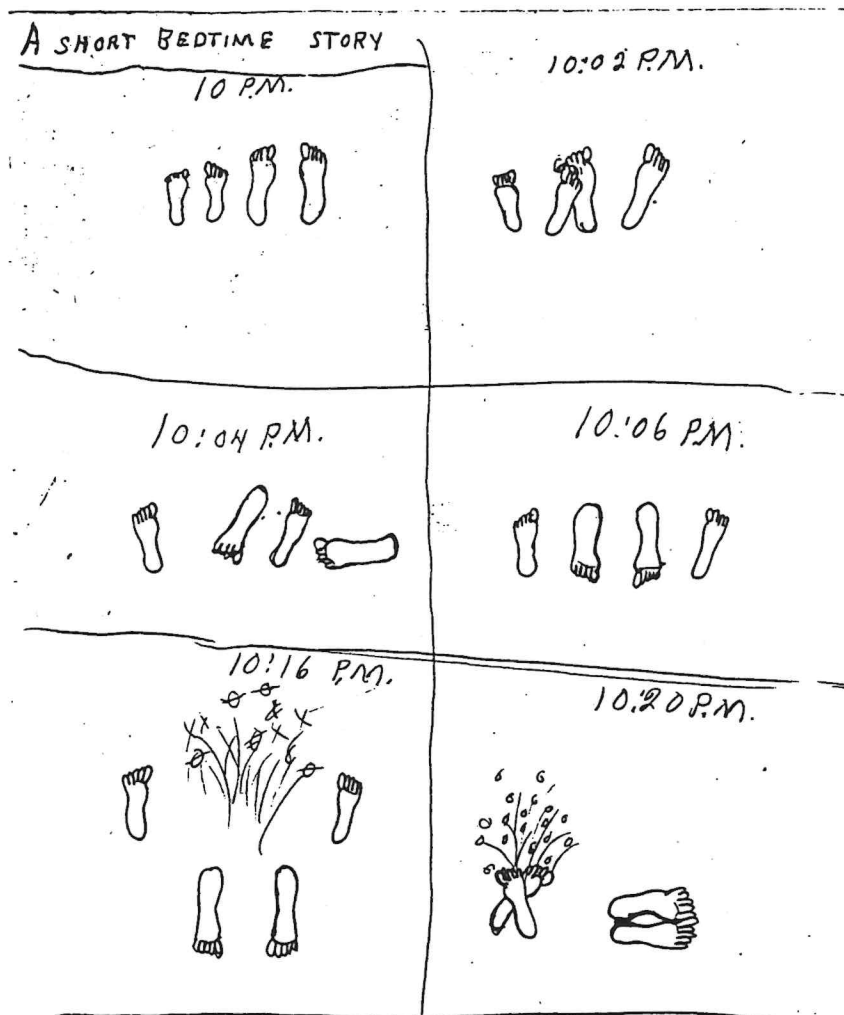
The other radar bunch that was up here going to school was supposed to go back today by plane but they couldn't get one. They will go back in the morning by bus. They only got three days. There will probably be another group up tomorrow or Thursday to

start. I am sure glad we will get six days instead of three. This is one thing you never get too much of.

Did you get the pictures back I sent? They were all pretty good, weren't they? I keep my pictures in my stationary box, so I can see them most every night. That helps some, but I would rather see you in the flesh. It is about time for lights out so have got to quit.

Lots of Love, Erva

P. S. Am sending you "A Short Bedtime Story".



Here is a little kid time story I would
sure like to read to you tonight.
I found this on one of the finds and
thought it impressed me. thought better
than I could in words.
you can try this up when you get
through with it. ha

August 10, 1944

Dearest Bob and Diane,

Just got back from the show, and it was very good. It was a take it or leave it! They had a colored orchestra from the island play after the show and they were good.

We had today off, and I really haven't done a thing. It rained all day so we couldn't get out. We stayed in and did as little as possible. I washed early this morning, then wrote a letter to Aunt Monte. After chow, we sat around and played rummy all afternoon until about 4 p.m., then went to ships service and got some more stationary. Then we went to the show. You see we have had a "busy" day.

I sure hope Chittenden [fellow shipmate] brings our mail back tonight because I really miss it. I should have a nice stack by now.

It has really seemed like Sunday today. Four days of our time up here are gone, and we only have three left. It won't be long until we are back in Seattle.

It sure gets cold up here at night and has been cold all day. It was real chilly in the barracks all day.

How is everyone at home? Okay, I hope. I suppose you are still waiting to get moved. It won't be long until school starts, will it? It will be a long grind for you, but maybe it will keep your mind occupied for a while anyway, huh! I know you dread to start on it. Anyway, the money will come in handy. Maybe we can enjoy it more after this is over. We will sure plan on having some time off before I go back to work and really enjoy ourselves.

My watch has begun losing time, so I am afraid I am going to have to have some work done on it when I get to Portland. It has done pretty well considering what a little bit of work has been done on it.

We were talking yesterday if we could get the whole crew together when we go to Seattle, we would have a group picture taken of the whole radar bunch, including our two officers. They are really swell guys. They talk and laugh with us just like we were the same rank as they. We really have a lot of fun in school with them.

Honey, this isn't much of a letter, but maybe I will have more to write about when Chittenden gets back with some letters. I hope he has lots of them.

Here is a great big kiss. Maybe that will make up for the short letter. How is my little girl getting along?

Goodnight and sweet dreams, Erva

August 11, 1944

Dearest Bob and Diane,

Well, I had the pleasant surprise this morning of having seven letters: four from my wife, two from Mom and one from Dunk. I sure enjoyed getting them, and I think maybe I can make it for a couple more days now until we get back to Seattle.

We didn't do very much at school today. We were supposed to touch some planes out today, but they were busy with the fire control unit, so we didn't get to. Probably we will tomorrow. It will be good practice for us. Only two more days left now, so we will have to make it count.

I haven't written Bill Sunday yet, but I will try to as soon as I can. I was glad he did drop out to see you anyway. So you had tough luck with the car. It was sort of tough driving home without brakes.

That sure was too bad about Mrs. Farris and Harry Everhart. I got the Democrat, and I noticed that Mrs. Elmer Gill also died. It seems the time comes for a lot of them even if they aren't in the service. I guess it doesn't make any difference what we are doing. When the time comes, we have to go and not before. That was sure a surprise about Harry Everhart, too. He was young and strong, too.

So you splurged and bought your husband a birthday present. I hope you didn't go too strong. You didn't need to get anything. You know your husband couldn't do very much for you on your birthday. I will try to let you know when I get back to Portland.

They told us today that the plans had been changed again, and we will probably only be on our cruise six days instead of nine. I suppose we will get to Portland a little sooner than we expected.

I was so glad to hear that Dad had sold two farms. Those \$600 kind count up pretty fast. I also saw it in the Democrat. I guess the other one was a smaller one, so they probably didn't make as much on it. Every little bit helps. Mom said they put in for a floor furnace and would soon know if they could get it. I am sure glad they are going to get it while they can. I hope they can keep up the good work.

That would really be the climax if Frank McVay had to go to the Marines, wouldn't it. If he is in the hospital corps in the Marines, that sounds very much like the amphibious forces, which isn't good. They are the ones that go in on those islands in the first wave and battle it out with the enemy. In the show tonight "Gung Ho", that is what it was about-- the Marines going in on some of the islands. They really had it tough. I am glad I am wearing the good old blue and white. At least we will be back a ways rather than fighting it out hand to hand.

I am glad you are going to bring some dresses down for Mom to try on. I hope she can get caught up a little, and they can get on their feet again. I know they are happy to get their house papered and a little nearer finished. I know it will look swell.

So you are going to work again at Garvey's. You will be making too much money the first thing you know.

I was sorry to hear your dad has a boil on his arm. I can sure sympathize with him. I had nine on my neck and arm one summer, and boy, I really suffered.

You mentioned for me to call if I got a chance. I have been planning on it but just haven't been to the right place. I think if I call, it will be early some Sunday morning. The connections go through quicker, and I am sure you will be home say about 8 or 8:30 there. At night it takes forever to get a call through. Around these bases the phones are just lined, and it takes a long time to even get to the phone. Don't be surprised if you hear the phone ring you out of bed some Sunday morning. Mom C. sure has tough luck with her ears, doesn't she? That is twice she has got a bug in them. I hope she doesn't have any more trouble with them.

You should have a little of this cool weather there. Some of the guys wear their sweaters and jackets around all day. It gets plenty cool at night. I have my sweater here, but you know your husband. He doesn't wear it. It is so damp here that it takes a long time for clothes to dry. I washed some early yesterday morning, and they aren't dry yet.

So Al and June Schroeder got in a lucky blow. I guess everyone is going to get ahead of us. They will make a couple of swell parents.

It sounds like your daughter is getting off to a good start with the young men. I don't know where she gets that, do you? Ha! I bet she will do alright by herself.

They are having a big dance here on the base tonight and are bringing in 200 girls. None of us are going. I guess we must have other attractions of our own. Jack was a little disappointed this morning. He only got one letter from his wife. He couldn't figure it out, but it is possible that they missed part of the mail in Seattle. I was proud of my wife and mother, anyway. Six in one day isn't bad, now is it?

It is getting late so will quit for tonight. Wish you were here tonight to see the water and the island. It isn't so pretty right around camp, but we can see the pine trees and things out a ways and on the other islands.

Be sure and send the pictures when you get them finished.

Good night, Dearest, Erv

August 14, 1944

Dearest Bob and Diane,

Most all of the guys in the barracks are getting ready to go on the cruise tomorrow, but I was lucky enough not to have to go. They are taking all of the new radarmen, and they drew names out of a hat for two of us who had gone to school to go with them as instructors. Jack and Mr. Johnson were the unlucky ones. I am glad we didn't have to go. They say we wouldn't get much out of it because they don't have much equipment aboard. They just told them that there would be crews from six ships aboard, totaling about nine hundred aboard. I guess it will be pretty crowded. They leave Tuesday morning and get back Thursday night; stay in all day Friday and go out Saturday; stay out until Monday night; stay in Tuesday and go out Wednesday; and come in Friday. It will last only nine days, but it will be strung out for nearly two weeks. I hope we get to go back to Portland instead of staying here, but I doubt if we will. I don't imagine we will have much to do here, maybe a working party now and then or a guard for a couple hours. That won't be bad. Jack sure hates to go on the cruise. He just happened to draw the wrong card.

We went to town yesterday, and he tried to call home. He put the call in at 12:45, and we waited 3 1/2 hours. When they finally got it through, his wife wasn't home. He had the call transferred to his father-in-law's place. She wasn't there either, so he just got to talk to her folks. He was really disappointed. When I call, I will call early in the morning, and I think it will go through a lot faster.

I would like to find something to send Diane, but I haven't been able to find anything. We don't get in town very much when the stores are open, so it is hard to find anything. What would you suggest? You might also suggest something I could get for her mommy. I thought maybe the phone call would please her as much as anything, huh? I sure hated to hear about Warren M. Dick and Pete Jerman. They haven't been in very long, have they? I got three letters yesterday and three more this morning. I was sure glad to get them. You said you had sent a present by air mail, but I haven't got it yet. I imagine I will before long. I sure thank you for it anyway.

So you are having tomatoes and cantaloupes out of your garden. That sounds good. We have been having cantaloupe quite a bit here lately, but they aren't as good as we get at home.

I guess you will soon be moving, won't you? It will be nice to have it all clean and nice to move into. Did you get the dinette all finished? I know it will be nice. I guess the folks are getting theirs fixed up. Mom said they were going to get the furnace, which will be very nice. It will be another job getting it in. It will save them a lot of work when they do get it in.

You mentioned that they might get Fay Snider at Rixey. I thought he took another job down by Lamar. They probably will pay him pretty well too, if they can get him.

I thought I would send the Farris kids a card, but I don't know who to send it to. I guess I will skip it. I guess the flowers you sent will do for both of us.

I was glad you got to go to the rodeo in La Junta. I know Diane must have got a big kick out of it, and I know you all enjoyed it. It seems you can get Mom to go places when no one else can. You will have to do it more often.

So Dad and Pruett are still going to town. I hope they keep it up. It would be swell if they could sell that Raunds ranch, As big as that is, it should make a real commission. That would fix them up for the winter. It will be a pleasant feeling when they get all out of debt, and it looks like they are going to.

You asked if all the radar guys were married. Yes, they are, and I will tell you a little about all of them. Mr. Aalberts got a letter from his wife. He said his oldest little boy was looking at that picture we had taken of the six of us and wanted to know who that other Daddy was in the picture. She said he seemed to think that I looked like his daddy, so the others didn't count. I was the only one who looked like a daddy. He works in a dry goods store and has a wife and two boys.

Mr. Johnson is manager of the Kline Brothers Warehouse in Chicago. He is married, but has no children. I think they lost a boy. Chittenden has a boy and a girl, and he works as a butcher in a packing house. Smith raises pure bred hogs back in Iowa and has a wife and one boy. McMilley is a linotype operator in Chicago and has one child. Moorehead has a boy and a girl and worked for an electrical contractor while he was in California. Church works in a sugar factory in Twin Falls now, but was formerly from Rocky Ford. He is married and has one girl. She is the one that had the operation on her eye. Cox is from Denver and is a tobacco salesman. He has a wife and, I think, one child. He is formerly from Ordway. Then there is your husband. He was a J.C. Penney man, and he has an extra special wife and one mighty nice little girl. He is going to see what he can do about another child when he gets home. Don't tell his wife though. She might get over anxious, ha!

I was sorry to hear about Dad C's sister. How old was she? That leaves him all alone as far as his own family is concerned, doesn't it? I will send a card as soon as I can get where I can find one. I hope they can see all the folks while they are back there.

You mentioned which one I would rather have, the bracelet or the ring. I am glad you decided on the ring. As you say, I can wear it forever, but I wouldn't have any use for the bracelet after the war. I know I will be proud of it , but you didn't need to go so strong for me. You know I am just a poor Gob.

It is about chow time, so I am going to have to quit. We went to the show Sunday and saw Bing Crosby in "Going My Way". It was very good. You should see it.

Here is a little poem one of the fellows found in a magazine, so I copied it off to sent to you:

I Dreamed of You

*I dreamed of you last night, my love -
I dreamed that you were here
And we were free of hour killed
with waiting and with fear.
I dreamed the war was over and
the boys were back again
Not quite as eager as before now, but not
too much like older men.
You had not changed so much yourself -
Your kiss was just as sweet
and when you took me in your arms
my vision was complete.
We walked along the garden path
between the roses red,
and out of all the days gone by
we planned the years ahead.
I know it was a dream my love
just one more thought of you
but have you never hear it said
sometimes a dream comes true.*

Pretty nice, don't you think? It sort of runs along our line of thought, doesn't it?

Gobs of Love, Erv

August 15, 1944

Dearest Bob and Diane,

I had a very pleasant surprise today. I received a letter from my wife and also a package. It wasn't a very big package, but is sure was full of something. I was sure thrilled with it. I have never seen one like it before. Most of them are just plain, but this one is different. You mentioned in one of your letters that you hoped I would like it and would wear it - SAY!! I am tickled pink with it and very proud of the one who gave it to me and very happy that once upon a time she said "I do" and decided to come live with me forever - all except part of World War #2. I hope that it isn't too long until it is over.

You shouldn't have gone so strong for me, as I know a ring like that doesn't grow on trees. Anyway, I sure thank you, and I will pay you back with interest when I get home.

The rest of the crew took off this morning on the cruise, and I don't envy them with 900 aboard. It isn't a very large ship, either. There are about 80 of us left here from our ship. We haven't done much of anything, only clean and scrub the barracks twice today--once this morning and once at noon. They have another one of these 90-day-wonders around here that is a lieutenant. He had to give us his little piece this morning about how he didn't see how our officers could let us get so disorganized. We told him we had just moved from downstairs to upstairs this morning, and we hadn't had time to get straightened up yet. He said in the Navy there is no excuse, Nice guy, huh? There are several like him in the Navy. So far, the ones I have seen of our officers aboard our ship are all pretty nice guys. This guy is supposed to be on the base to teach military courtesy. He could learn a little himself.

I wrote Bill Sunday a letter this morning. I may be able to catch up on some of my mail this week if they don't catch us for some more work details. There is another ship's crew moving in here today to fill up the rest of the barracks. They moved us upstairs and all on one side this morning, so we are the lost sheep again. I wish they would send us to Portland, but I guess we will have to wait for the rest of the crew. We have quite a bunch of Negroes in here now, too.

Jack sure hated to go on the cruise this morning, and I don't blame him. How would you like 160 people to be sleeping in your private bedroom? That is the way it is here. You can hear every type of snore and every tone from A to Z. I had a pair of socks stolen yesterday over in the wash house, and Aalbert's had a pair of overalls and shirt stolen. I had a big washing out there. I guess I was lucky not to lose any more than that. For a while we were hanging most of our things on our bunks to dry, but they won't let us do that anymore. I guess we will just let them be swiped. There were two guys who didn't show up for mistro this morning who were supposed to go aboard the ship. Missing a ship in war times is the same as desertion, so I don't know what they will get. I would hate to be in their shoes.

Did you ever get the books I sent home? I don't use them and I needed the room, but I also wanted to keep them.

We just had mail call again, and I just got a paper that you sent me at Camp Elliott dated June 30. It has all of the addresses on it that I have been to since then. I guess I told

you about the one from the Penney Co. that went to Farragut and had every other address on it that I have had? You could hardly see the envelope for the writing.

I think I have liberty tonight, but I don't know whether I will go in or not. I don't think any of the other fellows are going in because they have a show of some kind going on at the recreation hall. I want to get a card to send to the folks as soon as I can.

I just bought a paper and see where the Allies have opened up the 4th front. [Invasion of Southern France. Vice admiral H. Kent Hewitt's Western Naval Task Force lands three American divisions between St. Tropez and Cannes on the Mediterranean coast of France] It looks like they have the Germans on the run for sure now. I hope they keep them that way.

I have got to quit now and see what all the good war news is. It seems that about all we are doing here is just reading and hoping. Good bye and thanks again for the nice present.

Lots of Love, Erv

LEFT WHIDBEY AUGUST 16TH FOR SEATTLE.

August 16, 1944

Dearest Bob and Diane,

We just had mail call, and I was lucky enough to get three letters - two from my wife and one from Mom. I am gradually getting caught up a little on my writing. I wrote Dunk this morning. Now I will write you and Mom this afternoon. We sure have the life of ease so far since we got back to Seattle. All we do is sit around our bunks and write letters and read. Once in a while we have to clean the barracks, but that only takes about thirty minutes. We should get caught up on our loafing if we stay here until a week from Friday.

I went to town all by myself last night. Jack and Johnson were out on the cruise, and Aalberts was invited out to a friend's house for supper who is from his home town and is stationed here in Seattle. The rest of them didn't want to go, so I went in anyway. I sort of enjoyed it. It was the first time I have been alone in about five months. I went in and got the card off to the folks, then went to a good "shoot 'em up Pete" show. It was the first of that kind I had seen since I was home with you. I wish you had been here to go with me.

I haven't heard from Frank except the one time in San Diego. How does Irene run around so much with the business out at the Fort [Lyon V.A. Hospital] Does she have anyone to stay with her kids yet? I was glad to hear from Dunk the other day. He didn't say much but it was nice to hear anyway. He said he had been to Wakaki Beach on one of his liberties, along with a couple other places. He is seeing some nice country.

It looks like the Davidson kids will have a pretty nice start, doesn't it? That is more than most of us will have after several years of hard work.

So Dad isn't feeling so good. I hope he doesn't get down now that things are looking so good their way. He said there had been several fellows out to look at the Raunds ranch, and that one of them called and might take it. Boy, I'll bet that would be a real commission. I hope he makes it.

So you got a letter from Mrs. Aalberts. He said that she had written you. They seem to be a very appreciative family. He, Jack and I run together more than the rest. They both will drink a beer or two and that is enough, but the rest of the guys like to sop it up by the hour. Johnson is very congenial. He will or won't, depending on the crowd. Jack, Aalberts, and I pretty well agree on things. Neither one smoke, just occasionally. About all we do when we go to town is go to a show, drink a malt and come back to the barracks. Mrs. Aalberts sent a box of candy and had it marked for Aalberts and all the Uncle Rodney Radars. That is the way we signed the card we sent them.

It would really be tough if we didn't have some nice guys to run around with. Some of these guys around here I wouldn't care to mix very much with.

I am glad Diane and Suzanne [Gloss, Aunt Alice and Uncle Howard's only daughter] get along so well together. They should make quite a pair. How long is Alice going to stay there?

You asked about getting a Navy book to put the photographs in. I think I would just put them in our other album because we probably won't have very many. We have lots of room. I would like to see the big ones we had taken, but I guess I can't for a while.

I saw a fellow over in the chow hall today that was in our company in boot camp, but I didn't get to talk to him. He is the first one I have seen since I left there.

I hope all the predictions are correct about the Germans being licked pretty soon. I guess they are going much faster than they expected. I don't see how they can last much longer. When they get them, they will make quick work of the Japs. I see today where the Japs admit that their air power is only 1/3 as good as ours. That also sounds good.

I am glad your folks have the septic tank about finished. It will be quite an improvement, won't it? I found some more cards in town last night, and one of them is the bridge that goes across to Whidbey Island. It is pretty, don't you think? I wrote a note on the back of it in case you don't see it.

You said you were going to try and put away your \$80 every month when you start teaching. That will count up pretty fast, won't it? If we should happen to get a rate when we go out to sea, along with our 20 percent extra for sea duty, I could send some home, too. Besides, the \$200 or \$300 we will get when this is over should make us a nice little pile, which we will sure enjoy, won't we? I can hardly stay here when I think what a good time we could have if I was home. I guess being away makes us appreciate each other more when we do get back together again. I hope it isn't too long.

I saw a cartoon the other day, and it was about a sailor. He said he had spent the best years of his life in the Navy. If this isn't over pretty soon, I will be saying the same thing. Nothing much is happening around here now, so there isn't much to write about. I'll sign off.

Oceans of Love, Erv

August 18, 1944

Dearest Bob and Diane,

We just got through having a pay day along with barracks inspection, so now I will settle down to write a letter to my wife. I got the big sum of \$5 today. I am really in the money, don't you think? I got \$10 the fifth, so that makes me \$15 for the month. I am doing very nicely, though. I have my check from the Penney Co. which I haven't cashed yet.

There isn't much to do, and we don't go to town very much. Jack is in from the ship on liberty, and we are going in tonight. I think we will go to the roller derby again. It is really good. I guess this is the last liberty he will get while he is on the cruise. He said it wasn't so bad, only they didn't get much practice on the gear out there. He said he was talking to a rated man out there, and he thought we would get a little higher rate as soon as we go aboard ship. He said there were supposed to be twelve rated men in the radar gang, and there are nine of us who have gone to school. I know there aren't any men going on that are already rated, so it looks like we might get it if he knows what he is talking about. If we do get that with our extra for sea duty, I can send some home to put in the pot with the rest, huh! Seamen First Class get \$66 a month and Third Class Petty Officer gets \$78. Of course, that is before everything is taken out.

I had a letter from Aunt Zelia today. I suppose you got the same one. They seemed to enjoy having us and want us to come back again some time. Before I forget it, starting Thursday, you can mail your letter to Portland again. We will go down Friday and will be there to get them Saturday. Our address will be:

A.P.A. 96
U.S.S. Cecil
Rec Barracks
Portland, Oregon

That may not be exactly right, but it will get there anyway.

I got Frank McVay's address today so will have to write him. I think he still owes me a letter, but will write anyway. I don't know what all of those letters mean, but I don't envy him anyway. He is moving about as often as we are. Jack said out on the cruise that they didn't have to do a thing except fool around the radar rooms part of the time. The deck hands and a lot of the others got all kinds of dirty work: painting and sweeping and swabbing the deck. They told us in school we would have it a lot nicer than most of the others. I am beginning to believe it.

The poker games and crap games are going good already, and some of these guys will be broke by night. These Negroes really go in for that. They have been shooting dice at 50 cents a throw. That could count up pretty fast.

They have out a new badge or insignia that we have to sew on our sleeve. It is for the amphibious forces. We were supposed to have them for inspection tomorrow, but they let us by without it since we couldn't get to town to get one.

It will soon be show time, and I have to clean up. Better quit for now. I forgot to tell you we got to take a ride in a jeep while we were at Whidbey. It was raining one morning, and we tipped a guy to take us to school. There were ten of us in one little jeep, so you can imagine how we were stacked in there. That is just one more of the experiences I have had in the Navy.

Write soon, honey, because I sure hate to miss them. How's my big girl coming along? Mom said she was sure growing. I wish I could find something to send her. She would get a kick out of getting something in the mail.

Lots of Love, Erv

August 20, 1944

Dearest Bob and Diane,

Well, we just had another mail call and no letter from my wife. I just got a card from Archie [Thaxton]. I wrote one to Mr. Halvorson and one to Frank McVay. I am almost caught up again.

We are just sitting around waiting for captain's inspection at 4 p.m. They are sure getting tough on this base. One of the officers on the other ship, who is in our barracks, is really a pill and tries to stir up everything he can to make us look bad. He makes their guys sweep and swab their part of the deck three and four times a day. Yesterday was barracks inspection, and they swept and swabbed their part three times by noon. That is going too far, don't you think? Then he called it to the attention of the inspecting party that their side looked so much better than ours. Some of these guys sure try to polish the old apple to get a rate. (Time out for inspection).

After so long a time, we got that over with. We went out at 3:30 p.m. and were supposed to be inspected at 4 p.m. The officers got there at 4:45 p.m., and we had to stand out there all that time. They have also thought up a job for us Monday. They have a list of quite a bunch of us to report for a work detail. I don't mind though because this old sitting around all day does get tiresome, and I don't feel as good as when I am moving around.

Jack and I went to the roller derby last night and really enjoyed it again. They sure get rough. They had two midget women that went around during intermission selling small Bibles and giving a picture of themselves away with it. I bought one for Diane, and she can say it is her first Bible. I will send it home the first chance I get. Some of them wear them on their dresses or around their necks. These women were sure small. I doubt if they were much over three feet tall. One of them looked to be about 45 and the other a little younger.

I guess Jack won't get any more liberty until we get to Portland. He is on watch on the ship and won't get off Monday night when the ship is in. I don't know how my luck stays so good. I haven't had a watch to stand since we left boot camp. Some of our guys have been on several times. Three of our bunch drew it over the weekend, and two of them were on last night. I guess they know I like my sleep too well.

We have a Spanish fellow that has been in some movies, and he is sitting here playing the guitar and singing. He is pretty good. You could never tell by looking at him that he could get in the movies. He is singing Spanish songs.

Honey, my mind is a blank tonight, so will have to close. I will try to do better tomorrow. I hope I get a letter from my honey tomorrow, because it will be a long time until Monday.

Goodnight and sweet dreams, Erva

August 21, 1944

Dearest Bob and Diane,

I did better today. I got two letters from you and one from Mom and Dad. I was sure anxious to get them. I haven't put in as bad a day since I have been in the Navy as I did yesterday. We didn't have a thing to do, and I thought the day would never pass. We were supposed to be put on a working party this morning. We went out at 8 a.m. and waited around until about 10 a.m. Finally an ensign came around and asked if we were the working party. We told him we were. He said they hadn't found anything for us to do so far, so we didn't have to work. It seems they have so many men they don't know what to do with them all.

So you finally got Mom C. to go through Halstead. I know you are all relieved to find out what the trouble is and that she may not have to have an operation. Is the medicine doing her any good so far? It is too bad they couldn't go see Cloud and Edna [Crays] while they were there. I know they would have had a good time.

So you have an official announcement that you were born, huh? I don't know whether I was or not! I sure didn't feel like it yesterday.

What were the Sundays doing up in Las Animas? I know you were glad to see them, and it will be nice if you can go down for the party. Diane is getting to be quite the young lady, drying the dishes, etc.

I sure hated it that I missed Kenneth Rogers at Whidbey Island. There were a bunch of aviation ordinance men in our barracks from Norman, Oklahoma, and I asked one of them if he knew Kenneth. He said no. He was probably in some of the other barracks around there. Aalberts has sure been lucky seeing people from his home town. He has had three different ones come to the gate and call for him, took him to supper and showed him the town.

Mom said they got their floor furnace for sure now. I know they are anxious to get it in. Their place will look pretty nice when they get it all finished and painted. Dad said they still had lots of deals working. It sounds like Pruett made a good buy on W. W. Wilson's house. He should make some money on it. Where are Pleas and Florine [Pryor] wanting to buy-- in town or at the Fort? I don't blame him for wanting to buy since Uncle Sam isn't going to get him.

How is Larry getting along with his job? I know they are happy to get back to Fort

Morgan and be in a house of their own. I suppose Neil is still working pretty hard. He should try the Navy for awhile and have a life of ease - Ha!

It has been a little warmer here the last couple of days, but the nights are always cool. I guess some of us will go to town tonight as this may be the last one we will have while we are here. We are supposed to have Wednesday and Thursday nights off, but, since we are leaving Friday, they may not let us out. We will probably go to a show. It seems that is about all there is to do. There isn't even that on the base.

Our whole bunch is anxious to get to Portland and see if we can get a leave. I imagine it will depend a lot on how much time we have until the ship is commissioned. It would be nice to be home again, but I am not counting too strong on it.

There is no news here so will close. I sort of think I will get another letter from you this afternoon, but I may be disappointed.

Lots of Love, Erv

August 21, 1944

Dearest Bob and Diane,

This is another long Sunday with nothing to do. I am in better spirits though since I talked to my wife this morning. It was sure good to hear both of you. I never did hear what Diane said. It sounded like you both had your mouths full of something. I hated to reverse the charges. These are all pay phones here on the base, and I didn't have enough change to make it. I think it will only be about \$1.60 - and worth it!

We didn't have a mail call this morning because the mailman was asleep and didn't go to the post office after it. We will probably have one this evening. I hope I have a letter, since I didn't get one yesterday. I am glad the folks sold their house and got a good price for it. It is nice you had your arrangements all made to move before you sold it.

I suppose Diane was excited when you told her I was calling. It sure didn't take long to get it through. The operator took your name at 7:45 a.m., and I was through talking and back to the barracks at 8:10 a.m. That is better than waiting four hours like Jack did in the evening.

I think my eyes are beginning to need checking again. I seem to be having some headaches lately, and usually I never have one. If I get a chance in Portland, I will see our doctor and see what he thinks. It was a year in May since I got these glasses, so I imagine that is what the trouble is.

I guess most everyone must have gone to town today. There is only about a dozen of us left here in the barracks.

I looked up Madge's address, and it just has the street number and no other name. I wouldn't be able to find out if they have a phone. I will only be in town once this week, I think, so don't know whether I can get out to see her or not.

7 p.m.: Just got back from chow, and we still don't have a mail call. I guess the mail man is just too lazy to walk over after it. The other ship in the barracks had one this

morning and one this afternoon. This has been the longest day I have ever seen. A few like this, and we would all go nuts. There isn't even a show to go to on the base. If they put us on a working party tomorrow, maybe it will make the time pass faster anyway.

I see by the paper where Mr. E. R. Walker wants to buy a cabin in Rye or Buelah. I don't want to buy one, but I would like to go enjoy the one we have.

I don't envy your job of moving. I suppose you will have a little more room there than you have had. Also you will have a good garage and store room.

Have you found out yet how you will ride to school? It won't be long, will it? Diane will be wanting to go to school all the time when you get in there.

I have got to quit and help sweep down, so will close for now.

Lots of Love, Erva

August 22, 1944

Dearest Bob and Diane,

Just finished doing a hard day's washing and now will write a letter to my wife. We were put on a working party this morning, and we had to paint the shower room. I didn't mind that at all. In fact, I enjoyed it. It made the morning go by lots faster.

Johnson was in off the ship last night, so he, Aalberts and I went to town. Aalberts wanted to try and find something to send his wife and boy, so he and I went shopping. Johnson went to the USO and wrote some letters. We went over to the Penney store and several others and looked around. The stores here stay open on Monday night rather than Saturday. I looked for a pair of leather hauraches for Diane, but they had sold out. They had some cloth ones but none small enough for her. After she gets up to size 12, it will be easy to get them. That is where the run of sizes change. They sure have a nice store and most everything in it. They even have engagement and wedding rings, men's rings, pen and pencil sets, watch repairing and also a photo studio. I got my company check cashed while I was in there, as I might not get a chance for awhile in Portland.

We just have two more days here. Then we will start for Portland. They put a notice on the board today that the train would leave at 9 a.m. Friday morning. Everyone is sure anxious to get back there. It is a much nicer camp than this.

We just had a mail call and I had one from you, one from Mom and one from Frank McVay. I also had another from you yesterday afternoon. They sure help a lot. I guess Frank has been around some to. He said they went to New York awhile back, and he got to see lots of things. He is in the Marines and has a green uniform. He said the best he could get it, is that they would go in after a landing had been made and set up bases. He said they were getting all kinds of training in judo, rifle practice, hand-to-hand fighting and all that stuff. Part of the time they go out and live in pup tents. He said he enjoyed it though. I guess he just didn't like electricity. I guess I have been pretty lucky so far. At least I will be sitting out a few miles, and he will be doing the going in.

So young Neil [Briggs] sucks his thumb. Tell him if he needs any help in breaking it, that we can give him a few pointers. By the way, how is ours coming along? She must be better, since I haven't heard anything about it.

You misunderstood my letter about Jack sleeping with 160 guys. That was me here in the barracks. I guess from what they said the other day, that there are more than that aboard the ship together, and they aren't gorgeous blondes or redheads either - ha! I am glad your folks came out alright on their house. It is a relief to get rid of one of them anyway. Now is the time to sell alright.

I hope Calkinbourne was right in his prediction that the war was nearly over. I could be ready to start home in 15 minutes if they would say the word.

When I called, I didn't mean that it was definite that we couldn't get but 10 days if we got leave. We will put in for 15, even if we don't get it. I think we will all go in together and see what we can do.

I was just like you. I had so many things in mind to talk about over the phone, but when I heard your voice and Diane's, I forgot everything. I am glad you got our studio fixed. That will keep it from getting any worse.

We went to a show last night after we got through looking around the stores. We didn't get out until 12:30 a.m. We saw "Follow the Boys" and the "Uninvited". They were both pretty good.

That fried chicken, roasting ears, and fresh peaches sound pretty good. We get the roasting ears and fresh peaches once in a while. When they fix chicken, it is usually creamed. The other day, they fed us some that wasn't just right, and the whole bunch had the back door for a couple of days. We're okay now.

I just bought a paper, and I see the Yanks are still going to town. It looks like those guys would give up pretty soon. I see they have another working party up for tomorrow morning. Smith and I are on it from our bunch. There are twelve altogether on it. If it isn't any worse than the one this morning, I guess we can stand it.

It is chow time, so will have to quit. I would sure like to see my wife tonight.

Lots of Love, Erv

August 23, 1944

Dearest Bob and Diane,

Just had mail call and no mail from my wife today. It seems the mail isn't very regular. Sometimes it takes three days, and other times I get them in one day and a half. I got one from Mom and Dad.

I suppose you are getting all moved and straightened up by now. I know it is a big job. It will be nice when you do get fixed up again.

I just found out I am on a watch from 2 - 4 a.m. This is the first one since I left boots. I was supposed to have liberty, but they changed us around again. None of us get liberty Thursday night, so I guess I have seen about all of Seattle I will see.

We were on a working party again this morning. We had to go over and clean out another barracks. We were only there until about 10:30 a.m., and then we were through.

They had a boxing show over at the recreation building last night, and it was pretty good. They had seven bouts between this station and Sand Point, which is a naval air station. There were some good scrappers in the bunch.

I see by the morning paper that Paris is free once more. That sure sounds good, doesn't it? The way they are closing in, it doesn't look like it could last much longer in Germany.

How is Mom C. feeling now? I hope that medicine will help her. It will ease her mind to know that it could have been a lot worse.

Just one more day and we will be on our way back to Portland again. It doesn't seem like we have been up here five weeks, but we sure have. It doesn't seem like we have been here as long as we were in San Diego, but we have been here two weeks longer.

Will you have room for all of the furniture in the new house? It will sure be nice to have a garage and all that good store room, won't it? I imagine it is a lot nicer since you enlarged the dinette.

Dad said they were still plenty busy, but guess they are slowed up on some of their deals getting some titles cleared up. Also it takes time to get the loans through. I guess they are about to get the house pretty well finished on the outside. I would like to see it when they get it finished and painted. It will be a neat little place.

Well, I will be a year older tomorrow. I hope I don't have to spend another one here. It is chow time and I have to clean up, so will close. Hope I get a letter tomorrow, maybe two.

Sweet dreams, Erv

LEFT SEATTLE AUGUST 28TH FOR PORTLAND.

August 29, 1944

Dearest Bob and Diane,

I didn't get around to write last night, as I didn't know what to write in regard to my leave. I still don't know for sure, but it looks very doubtful now. We all worked from 8:30 this morning until 2:00 this afternoon and still didn't find out anything. Cox got his and left this afternoon. Aalberts got his and will leave tomorrow, but they didn't mention any of the rest of us. It looks sort of hopeless. We all put in for them at the same time, so it looks like they would have told us all at the same time, too. Cox put down on his for a reason for leave was that he had to straighten out some domestic troubles. Of course Aalberts put down that he had a young son that he had never seen. It looks like you and I will either have to have a baby or a fight before I can get home. I don't begrudge Aalberts his, but I don't see why we should be penalized just because we get along alright and don't have any family trouble.

Smith pulled a surprise on us the other day. He has a new baby at his house, too. It was born August 12, and he hadn't even mentioned it to us. He didn't put it down on his request for leave, so I guess he won't get one either.

If we don't get to go home, I think Johnson, Jack and McNelley's wives are all coming out, while Chittenden's is still here. With Cox and Aalberts gone, I guess Smith and I will just have to suffer in silence all by ourselves. I guess we were enjoying each other when they weren't, so I guess it is even. I guess we will just have to save our money and really throw one when this thing is over.

I got three letters from you and two from Mom and Dad this morning. One of yours had been delayed and was sent to Seattle.

You asked about the roller derby. The idea is that they have five on each team, and they have a circular track like a race track. They all start skating around the track and try to get a man in the lead. He gets clear around ahead of the others to see how many he can catch up with and pass in two minutes. Nearly always there will be one from each team get in the clear, and they try to beat each other around. They also try to knock each other off the track. They hit each other with their shoulders or elbows, and sometimes they get a little dirty and use a fist. The girls sometimes skate up behind and get a handful of hair. Then there is usually a fist fight which follows. Nice girls, huh? By the way, the roller derby has moved down here now. San Francisco plays against Portland, so I imagine we will go one of these nights to see what this one is like.

I am glad you have your place all finished now. I know it looks plenty nice. It will be nice to get it all straightened up before school starts. I suppose Diane is enjoying her toys in town now. She will probably be a lot better satisfied. She will just have to be a little more careful about the streets. I know you will have a good time at your party. Be sure and tell them all hello for me. I had a letter from Belle the other day.

It has sure been warm in Portland, a lot more than it was in Seattle.

Dad told me in his letter how well they had done this month. I hope they can keep it up a while longer anyway. They talked like they are going to buy an electric stove as soon as they can find one. They also hope to get over some more deals.

We all came to town again tonight to do our writing. It is so much nicer than writing on our knees.

We went down to the ship yards this morning to see about our leave, and we ran into one of our officers. He took us all through our ship. It is really a big one or it looks big to me. They are getting along pretty well, but there is still plenty of work to do on it. One of the foremen said he was sure it would be finished by the fifteenth. There is some scuttlebutt that we will go to San Diego to install the radar gear, and that will take three or four weeks. We will also do some practice landing with troops, so that will also take some time. A lot can happen in that length of time.

The fellows are ready to quit, so guess I will too. Goodbye, honey. I still have a little hope that we may hear some good news tomorrow. I admit, though, I have lost most of it. I would sure like to see you.

Lots of Love, Erva

August 30, 1944

Dearest Bob and Diane,

This is another hot day again. We can sure tell a lot of difference between here and Seattle. We haven't done much today. The barracks was getting so dirty that a few of us pitched in and cleaned it up this morning. They haven't got organized yet, so they hadn't put anyone on the cleanup detail. They have one up now, so I won't have to the rest of the week anyway. All of the radar guys are on watches for the rest of the week. We will guard the radar equipment aboard the Ozarks only about two blocks from here. We will guard about eight hours a day. Some of us will probably hit the night shift, and that won't be so good. Maybe it won't be too bad. We will at least get to see some radar gear, and maybe we can work with it a little, anyway.

I didn't get any mail this morning. Since I got two from you yesterday, I really didn't expect one. It is about time for mail call again, and maybe I will have one then. I hope so anyway.

Your time of freedom is getting pretty short, isn't it. About another week, and then you will be plenty busy. I suppose you have a lot to do out at school getting organized and ready to start. What grades did you say you will teach? At least with so many teachers, you won't have so many different grades to fix lessons for. Did Fay Snyder get the school? It is nice that you and Etta can go out together. I know she will be nice to work with. Do you see much of them anymore? What has Uncle Lee and them decided about Canon? Will they go up if they do find a place?

It is hard to keep our sheets and pillow cases clean here since our barracks is right next to the railroad, and the soot sure settles in here. About two days and they are just black.

I cleaned my stripes on my dress blouse today. They say we will have captain's inspection Saturday, so I guess they are going to start that here too. They are also going to have bag inspection to see if we have enough gear to go aboard ship. I have everything that was issued me except one suit of shirts and shorts. I was going to buy another suit today, but they didn't have my size. That was part of what was swiped from me.

I thought if I came home, I would bring some of my briefs back with me. I guess I will have to skip it. A lot of the guys wear them, so I guess they don't care.

I suppose you are all straightened up now and really enjoying life in town again. It is nice to have a nice yard to rest in too. Does the back yard have a lawn? I know Diane is enjoying the yard and her toys again. Are there any kids around there for her to play with?

I sure wish I were on my way home with Aalberts to see my honey, but it just couldn't be.

It's chow time now so will quit. Wish you were here tonight. We would take in the town.

Goodnight, Honey. Erv

August 31, 1944

Dearest Bob and Diane,

It has really cooled off today. We are sitting around the barracks actually shivering, and yesterday we nearly roasted. We went to town again last night and went to the show. We have done pretty well this week. We have gone to the show every night, and it hasn't cost us a cent, only bus fare to town. They usually have free tickets at the U.S.O. for different theaters, so you can take your choice. We also can go in and get free eats any time we want, so it is a pretty cheap place to be.

Most of the radar guys were put on a watch list this morning. There are eight of us, and they divided us in two groups of four each. Each group will watch for 24 hours straight. In other words, two guys will have to stand eight hour watches and two four hour watches. Then the next time we are on, I suppose we will alternate. We will just be on every other day. I don't know yet which shift I will be on yet, but I hope it is in the daytime. Jack and I are on the same shift, so we will have our liberties together. It is too bad since these guys are all having their wives out that they have to stay in every other night. I don't know when they intend to be here.

I suppose Aalberts will be home today, lucky guy. We got our papers back this morning, so I guess I will send them home to put in our book. If I can't come home, I will send home the proof that I tried anyway.

Some of these guys really spend the money. Smith and McNelley both wrote home for \$100 when they thought they might get home. They have had it less than a week and Smith said yesterday that he only had \$75 left. Twenty five dollars a week is pretty stiff to spend on a Navy man's salary. Some of these guys really go for the beer and liquor. I don't see how they can afford it. I am sure I couldn't. Some of these guys get paid and go on a couple drunks, then they are broke until another pay day. I wouldn't like that.

We went over to the Ozarke this morning to see where we had to guard and to get our passes, etc. We sure have a lot bigger and nicer ship than the Ozarke. The radar room in this one is so low that a tall man couldn't even stand up straight. It is a lot more crowded than ours. I don't know just how long we will have to stand watches over there, but it will be at least six days. The Ozarke crew is on the practice cruise now. There is a rumor that they will have to stay at Seattle when they come back because there isn't room here until we go. If they don't, we will probably have to stand them until around the fifteenth. I don't think it will be so bad since there is lots going on all the time. We will look tough whether we are or not. We have to wear a forty five while we are on. I don't suppose they are even loaded, but we have to carry them anyway. They sure waste a lot of time around a job like that. It seems about two thirds of the workers were just sitting around.

We have a bunch of Negroes close to our bunks, and I sure get a kick out of listening to them talk. They are sure happy. They talk and sing all the time. Some of them get started singing church hymns and spiritual songs once in a while, and they are pretty good. I think one of them is sort of a preacher. Last night there was a gorgeous big moon shining through the window right in my eyes. If I were at home, I bet with a little persuasion I could have become pathological, ha! It would be nice to enjoy a few of them

together, wouldn't it? I thought for awhile that I might be home for Labor Day, but I guess this will be the third holiday I will spend sitting around camp.

Lots of Love, Erv

September 2, 1944

Dearest Bob and Diane,

I didn't get a letter off to you yesterday, so I had better get busy. It seems nothing happens around here, and there just isn't much to write about. We had captain's inspection this morning at 8 a.m., and we fooled around there for about an hour and a half. They told us we had to have a full sea bag to go aboard, and they think we should have more clothes than were issued us at boots. I guess I am going to have to buy some more. I will have to buy three pair of shirts and shorts, some more sox and hats, and I don't know how much more. I don't know how much it will cost me. Some of the guys aboard are survivors and don't have very many clothes. It will cost them plenty, and most of them don't have any money to get them. I don't know what they will do in a case like that. We will have a payday again Tuesday. I don't know how much I will get, but I imagine either five or ten dollars. How would you like to teach for that much money. Ha! I got two letters from you this morning and one from Mother. We went to a show again last night and saw "Women Courageous", "The Deerslayer", and a vaudeville. They were all pretty good.

So Diane is thrilled over her permanent. I can just see her strutting around. I bet it changes her looks quite a bit.

I don't know why you didn't receive a letter for two days. I have written every day except one, and that was last Sunday. It seems this mail does get mixed up once in awhile. I was sorry you all went to the train, and I wasn't on it. I might know my wife would have a big reception for me. I would like to have been in on that reception myself. I was sure disappointed too that I didn't get to come home. I have been lying awake every night thinking of what we would do when I did get home. I guess it will have to wait.

I was sorry to hear Mom C. isn't feeling so good. It may be the medicine is just taking effect.

So you have your school work all worked out. I know it will be quite a change and will take a little time to get adjusted. I sure hope I can get my rate, so I can help you put some in with our little nest egg. I know you are going to do swell, and I hope I can put in my little bit. We will really enjoy it when I do get home, won't we. You said if it weren't for school, you would be on the train coming out here. I sure wish you could, but I know it is impossible. Anyway, we will just have to save our money and hope it won't be long until it is all over.

I saw a piece in the paper where they are going to release about two million soldiers as soon as Germany falls. They didn't mention the Navy. I suppose it will take awhile to get the troops back, etc. If the war would end, I don't think it would be long until we would get to go home.

Cox was the other one who got to go home. He lives in Denver.

It will be nice for Hayward and Fern to move to Canon. He can get a place that won't take so much work, and he won't have to be out in the weather so much.

I was surprised to hear that Ed Hayhurst quit Garvey. I didn't suppose he would ever leave him. I imagine he will be hard to replace right now. He has been there a long time. I think the teaching will be better than the checking job. You will at least have Saturday and Sunday off, all holidays, and also a vacation at Christmas. This way you will have your certificate completed too.

I don't see how Richard Jorgenson gets so many furloughs. He gets one every month or two.

Mom said Archie had about decided to go on a farm. Jim Gill has a farm close to his and will furnish most of the equipment, so I imagine he will do it. He has been wanting one for a long time, and I don't suppose he will be satisfied until he gets on one. With any luck, he should make some money out there because I know he will work at it.

I have to stand a radar watch over on the Ozarke from 4 to 8 p.m. tonight and from 4 to 8 p.m. tomorrow. That isn't such a bad shift although it could be better. Jack is on from 8 this morning until 4 this evening. We may have to move out on the ship even before it is commissioned, but I don't think that will be so bad. We will still have liberty every other night. I have to go do some laundry before I go, so better quit.

Lots of love, Erv

September 4, 1944

Dear Bob and Diane,

I fooled around all day yesterday and didn't get a letter written to my wife, so will write the first thing this morning. Yesterday morning I was busy washing and marking clothes. Yesterday afternoon we went to the football game and then stayed in last night and went to a show. I will have to do better, or my wife will be getting a divorce.

We are supposed to have a bag inspection today to see if we have enough clothes to go aboard, and they are all properly marked. I am going to have to buy quite a few, I guess. That isn't going to be so good on the pocket book.

We sure enjoyed the football game yesterday. It wasn't too fast a game, but there was some good teamwork. Seattle won 21 to 13. Dutch Clark is the coach for Seattle, so we got to see him at a distance. They also said over the loud speaker something about Eddie Canter being one of the officials or something, but we couldn't tell for sure. (Time out! They are coming for bag inspection now. They aren't quite ready, so I will write a little more.)

I went out with Jack to see about a house for his wife, and he found a three room apartment for only \$25 a month. He called his wife the other night, and she is going to come out and intends staying a month if we are here that long. She is going to bring her two kids, so she will have her hands full. Places sure seem a lot easier to get and lots cheaper here than they were in San Diego. This place is rented to another serviceman's wife. She is going to her husband for two months, so she rented it out for a month. It is swell that Jack's wife can stay so long. We will probably go aboard ship soon, but we will

still have every other night off. Since we are standing radar watches, he will just get to see her about every other day and night. They will have cooking privileges too, so that makes it nice. He told me yesterday that I had a dinner date with them Sunday, so I will get to meet her. Wish you were here, so we could make it a foursome. We could have a swell time, couldn't we?

When we go aboard ship, you will have to be careful what you say in regard to where we are going, etc. because they say our mail will all be censored.

Well, tomorrow you start to work, don't you? I bet you dread starting in on it.

We didn't have mail call yesterday, so I should have a nice bunch today. I sure miss getting them. I don't know what we will do when we go to sea and don't get one for several days.

Don't get excited if you get a letter with the address C/O Fleet Postmaster, San Francisco. I think that is what it will be when we go aboard ship even though we may be here for quite a while even after it is commissioned. The way the talk is now that after we leave here, we will have a lot of running around up and down the coast before we actually go across.

I see by the paper that the Yanks are inside Germany now. Some of us bet the other day on when Germany would quit. I bet the 15th of September. That gives them eleven days so the Yanks will have to work fast. I hope I win the bet since the other guys bet a little longer.

I stood my watch Saturday and had a very quiet time. I will be on tonight from midnight until four in the morning. There aren't many working those hours, so there isn't much to do.

We just finished bag inspection, and I wasn't as bad off as I expected. I just have to buy some handkerchiefs, three pair of shorts and shirts, a whisk broom, and some sox. We also had some more news this morning. We may have to go back to Whidbey Island. Our officer said he was fighting it, but he didn't know whether he could do any good or not.

We have already had that training, and he said there was no use going back again. That will be the last straw with all these guys' wives coming out. McNelley's wife left this morning from Chicago. Johnston's wife will leave in a day or so, and Jack's wife is supposed to leave today or tomorrow. Maybe Smith's wife is coming too. Chittenden's wife is still here too, and Cox and Aalberts are home. That would be a first class mess. I sure hope it falls through. If it weren't for them coming out, I wouldn't mind going back up there. They don't have all these officers up there hollering at you all the time.

How is my little girl getting along in town? If you see Roberta, you might send Kenneth's address as I might possibly get to see him. Time to go to chow, so will have to quit. Goodbye.

Gobs of love, Erv

September 5, 1944

Dearest Bob and Diane,

Just got your letter, and it was really a swell one. It was the kind of a letter that makes you want to go "over the hill" as you would say in Navy terms. Jack is sitting here raving about the one he got too. His wife is going to be here Thursday morning instead of Friday, and he is all smiles. I know how he feels.

I got your other letter yesterday evening and received the pictures. That sure makes me homesick when I see you all at the cabin. Lee's brother reminds me a lot of Granddad Monhollon in the picture.

I am a little sleepy today since I had to get up at eleven and didn't get back from my watch until 4:30 a.m. and up again at 6:30. I will be off all day today and then have another shift Wednesday. I think I will draw the day shift then and will be on for eight hours.

I know Diane is thrilled with her school books. It will do her some good too. I don't think she will have any trouble learning the way she learns everything else.

It sure stays warm here. I noticed in the paper yesterday that the forestry service was getting pretty nervous over the weather conditions. It said with the temperature so hot and the humidity so low, it was dangerous for forest fires.

It sounds like your mom did alright on her washing machine. It is too bad we don't have something to sell.

We had payday today, and I got eleven dollars. I don't know where the extra dollar came from, but I guess they do. I sure wish we would get our rate soon, so I can send some money home. You said you were going to save every penny you could so we could have the works. I just hope I can put some with it, and we will have double the works. It sure would be swell to be able to buy a new car and have a little left to enjoy life a little!

We were just delayed a little. Our names were all called out over the loud speaker to report to the master at arm's shack, and we found out that we are definitely going back to Whidbey Island. They don't know for sure whether we will go this evening, tomorrow, or the next day. It is sure a mess with all the wives coming. I guess we still hit it the luckiest by you coming to San Diego instead of out here. Just keep writing your letters here as we will be back here before we go aboard ship. I won't get a letter again for a whole week. You sure never know what to expect in the Navy. Our officers sure hated it, and they said they did their best to talk the commander out of it but couldn't. I don't know what they will do to keep us busy up there, but maybe they do. The officers in charge of the school up there I know will have a fit when they hear we are coming back. They didn't have room for us before since the schedule is already made up. I personally don't mind going up there because it is nice and cool, and we don't have all this formality that these other camps have. There really isn't any work to it either. Maybe I can run into Kenneth Rogers this time.

I went over and filled up my wardrobe again, and it cost me about three dollars. I still have to buy another hat and a whisk broom. I hope I don't get any more swiped. I still haven't got to a post office to get a money order to send home, but maybe I can up at the

island. We never get to town here when the stores are open. I intended to go to town Saturday afternoon and try to get a package sent home, but I guess I will be gone again by then. We usually get off at 1 p.m. here on Saturday, so that would have given me some time to look around.

Our officer told us that a lot of officers on our ship tried to get liberty too, and they were all turned down. It seems that the commander wants us all to get as much training as possible. He probably wants the crew aboard his ship to be pretty good, so he can save his own hide.

I am sending a little clipping one of the guy's wives sent him. It is pretty good. It is time to go now. Don't be surprised if your next letter comes from Whidbey Island. I will sure miss your letters. Goodbye, honey. I LOVE YOU!

Erv

In an American mining district, Mrs. Brown presented her husband with a 12 pound boy, and Mr. Brown was so delighted he went to the news office and told them he had found a 12 pound nugget of gold as good as any to be found in the West. The paper naturally sent a reporter to get the particulars, and this is what happened.

Does Mr. Brown live here? He does. Is he in? No. I understand he has found a nugget of gold weighing 12 pounds. Mrs. Brown, seeing the joke, said yes. Can you show me the exact spot where it was found? I am afraid Mr. Brown would object as it is private. Is the hole far from here? No, it is quite handy. Has Mr. Brown been working the claim very long? About 10 months. Was Mr. Brown the first to work it? He thought he was. Was the work difficult? It was at first but was easier after getting the shaft open. Is the water plentiful? Just sufficient to carry on the work. Has he got to the bottom yet? Not quite, almost. Do you think there are any more nuggets? Yes, if the claim is properly worked. Has he worked it since he found the nugget? No, but I told him it was time to begin. Did you help him? Yes, I did my level best. Would he sell the claim? No, he finds pleasure in working it himself. Could I see the nugget? Sure, and she brings out the 12 pound boy for inspection. Exit reporter hurriedly!

LEFT PORTLAND FOR SEATTLE SEPTEMBER 5TH. LEFT SEATTLE
SEPTEMBER 6TH FOR WHIDBEY ISLAND.

September 8, 1944

Dearest Bob and Diane,

Surprise! Here I am at Whidbey Island again. I really get around, don't you think? They tell us one evening, and the next morning we are gone. We came up to Seattle on the train and then took a bus up to the island. We really suffered on the train from the heat. We were on a civilian train, so we had to wear our dress blues. They were really hot. After we got to Seattle and started on up here, it started getting cooler. Before we got up here, we were shutting the windows. We nearly froze last night. I didn't bring a sweater because it was so hot down there that it never dawned on us to bring one. The instructor

because it was so hot down there that it never dawned on us to bring one. The instructor is going to try to get us a plane clear back to Portland. If he does, it won't take us so long to get there. The school is just the same as it was before. They may have a few new things worked out, but most of it will be just the same. The two guys that were on leave weren't back yet, so we brought two of the new guys with us. It is sure tough on the guys whose wives were coming. McNelley's wife was supposed to be in about 7:30 yesterday morning, and we were supposed to leave at 7:45. He thought he might get to catch her at the depot, but her train was late. She didn't get in until about 10. He left a note to have her paged when she got in. He got a wire from her today saying she was okay and would wait until he came back. He was somewhat relieved. Jack's wife was supposed to be in this morning, so he also left a note for her to be paged and gave her the address of the apartment he had arranged for. He is going to call her tonight and see how she made out. They are going to try and arrange it so the two of them can stay together until we get back. It will be less lonesome for them and cheaper too. McNelley had rented a room at a hotel and was going to pay \$4.50 a night for it. That would have been a little expensive. Johnston's wife can only stay a week, so he wired her to come on up to Mt. Vernon. He will go in of nights and see her, and then he is going to try to get permission to ride back with her on the train. Johnson has a cousin here on the island who is a pilot, and he has his wife in Mt. Vernon and drives back and forth. Johnson can go and come with him. That will work out pretty nice. We are in different barracks this time than we were before. We are about one and a half miles from the show, but I think we will walk over pretty soon. That is all there is to do here.

You say you and J. R. had a good visit. I know it is quite a strain on those guys with no help. Yes, I knew we were supposed to get a ten dollar raise (All employees of J. C. Penney's who were in the war) every six months we are out. That order came out awhile before I went in. That all helps out, doesn't it. What does he think about our chances after the war? I hope they are good. I know it will take quite awhile to get all these men straightened out after it is all over.

I was sorry I missed out on the steak dinner at Neil and Dorothy's. I could stand a good "home grown" steak. You asked me about voting. I think I will just skip it. They asked us when we were in Seattle who wanted to vote, and we could fix up the paper then. I didn't fool with it.

How is school by now? I suppose you are getting in the swing of it again by now. I am glad Mom C. is feeling better. It may be when she gets used to taking that medicine that it won't make her so weak.

I haven't seen Kenneth Rogers yet. He may even be gone from here by now. If I don't see him pretty soon, I think I will call the main office and see if his name is on the register.

We didn't get located last night until about 9:30, so I didn't get a letter written to you or Mom either. Maybe we will get squared away now for another few days.

I sure will miss my letters this week, but they will be nice when I do get them.

Aalberts and Cox will sure be surprised when they get back from their leaves, and we are gone again. I imagine this is the reason the rest of us didn't get leaves. They were probably figuring on sending us to this school. We asked our officer today when he thought we would get our rate, and of course he wouldn't come right out and say. He said

as soon as we went aboard ship, he would see what he could do for us. I know both of them will do all they can for us. He said he knew we had enough experience and knowledge of radar to get it, but it seems they can't give them until we do get aboard. I hope our officers aboard ship feel the same way.

I guess I told you I had another nice letter from Aunt Montie. Goodnight, honey, and don't work too hard. Here is a big hug and kiss for you and my little girl.

Love, Erv

September 9, 1944

Dearest Bob and Diane,

Two of our six days here are gone. They have slipped by pretty fast. We have been doing about the same things we were doing before, but we never get too much practice. We really do have a lot of fun while we are going to school up here. All of the instructors are swell, and one of our officers came up with us too. We have a fifteen minute intermission a couple times every morning and afternoon, and we usually go out and play horseshoes or football here. Today our officer came out where we were and suggested we play touch football. We had a big time, and he was the biggest duck in the puddle. It is too bad the Navy doesn't have more men like him. They have a bunch of officers up here going to school too, but he doesn't mess around them very much. We are supposed to get some plane tracking this time that we didn't get before. Our officer told us today that it would take us several days to get the ship loaded after it went into commission. We also heard that it didn't come up to the speed it should have on the test run. He talked like it might be possible that they might even take it to San Francisco or some place to work on it. But of course that was just a guess. We will have to spend quite a little time up and down the coast training for the trip.

Did Irene ever hear where Dunk was? Everyone seems to think we will get some of our training at Pearl Harbor. We will practice with the troops making landings etc., and I guess we may be part of it there. It will be nice to get to see it now that it is quieted down.

I guess you have finished your first week of school by now. It is nice that you do have a couple of days off a week to do other things you want to do. How many teachers will there be out there? I suppose Diane has plenty to keep her busy in town now. Her toys will be just like new to her now after not having them with her for awhile. We will probably have to get her a big doll this year since hers is about gone. By the way, it won't be long until Christmas is here again too. I wonder where I will be by then. I hope I am in the United States, and maybe my wife can come see me. I imagine we will be gone about then though. It would be nice if we could spend Christmas together, wouldn't it. We will probably be taking packages to Tokyo about that time. I hope we take enough over that he will give up. They seem to keep the Germans backing up all the time.

With no mail coming in and not much happening here, I can't seem to find much to write about. Maybe I can do better when I get back to Portland. Be sure and keep

writing because by the time this week is over, I will need a lot of them to give me a lift. Goodnight and sweet dreams to a swell wife and daughter.

Lots of love, Erv

P. S. I just heard a news report saying the Germans were still retreating, and we were bombing over in the Philippines. It sounds good anyway.

September 10, 1944

Dearest Bob and Diane,

It is Sunday morning and just another school day here. They have a crazy idea up here of keeping Wednesday as Sunday. We have finished three days of our schooling, and it has been a lot of fun besides a lot of good practice. In this plotting, etc., we can't have too much of it. We have been getting our exercise up here too playing baseball, football, and pitching horseshoes.

Johnson went in to Mt. Vernon last night as his wife was supposed to have been there. He hasn't returned yet, so I don't know how they made out. McNelley had a letter from his wife yesterday, and she and Mrs. Moorehead got to Portland alright. It just happened they got a room just a couple of blocks apart. They can visit, and maybe the time will pass faster until we get back there. The guys felt a little better when they found out they got located all right. McNelley's wife can't stay but a few days, but I guess Jack's wife is going to stay a month or until the ship leaves. That is pretty nice that she can stay so long, isn't it? I wish mine were here for that long too.

We went to the show last night and saw "The Dead End Kids". It was an old show but was good.

I went over to ship's service yesterday and got a card to send to Granddad Thaxton for his birthday. Aunt Montie told me when his birthday was, so I thought I would send him a card. He will be ninety years old. That is pretty old, isn't it?

How is school teaching coming along? I imagine the time will pass by pretty fast for you now since you are busy with both school and home. What does Diane think about you going to school every day? I bet she wants to go with you. It won't be long until she is going herself. It doesn't seem possible that we have had her that long, does it? The last six years have rolled by pretty fast, haven't they? I wish the next few months would roll by a little faster.

Honey, this is just a note, but it is time to go to school. I can't seem to find anything to write about either, so I had better quit. I will be expecting a nice bunch of letters when I get to Portland, and I know I will get them. Goodbye, honey, and don't work too hard.

Lots of Love, Erv

September 12, 1944

Dearest Bob & Diane,

Just got back from the show, so we'll drop you a line before hitting the sack (bed to you). We usually go to the early show at 5:45. That lets us out at about 7:30, so we have some time before lights out.

We just have one more day left here now. The time has gone by pretty fast up here. We are supposed to leave by bus Wednesday morning at 8:30. If we get to Seattle by 12:30, we can catch a train on to Portland. If not, we will have to wait until 4:30, and that would put us in Portland pretty late. Jack and McNelley have both had some letters from their wives, and they are getting along swell. They have been running around together and enjoying each other's company. These guys are sure anxious to get back to see them. I know I would be too, if my wife was there waiting for me. Johnson has been making good connections riding back and forth with his cousin, so he is with his wife every night now. She can't stay but just a few days.

I am anxious to get back and get some mail. It seems we don't know a thing that is going on except what we read in the papers. I am anxious to see what is going on back in civilization.

Since you have been teaching for a whole week, I suppose you are really in the groove now and going strong. How many kids do you have?

I suppose the folks are gradually getting their place fixed up. How is Dad coming with his deals? I can see him running around like a mad man trying to get some of them over. I sure hope he can connect with some of them. How is Mom C. coming along with her medicine? I hope it will do her some good.

I see by the papers where they are starting the main drives on Germany now. I hope they give them all we have.

If I stayed up here long, I would sure get plenty of sleep. I went to bed last night at 8:45, and I am still sleepy tonight. It is real cool here of nights, so that makes swell sleeping. It really cools off in a hurry when the sun goes down. It has been foggy most all day today, but it did clear up enough this afternoon to send out planes to work with. I think we are really getting more practice this time than we did last time we were here.

You will have to excuse the pencil as I just ran out of ink, and I didn't bring any up here with me. As usual, I can't think of anything to write, so will have to quit. Goodnight, Honey.

Lots of Love, Erv

LEFT WHIDBEY ISLAND SEPTEMBER 13. ARRIVED PORTLAND AND REMAINED AT THE RECEIVING BARRACKS UNTIL SEPTEMBER 15 UNTIL THE SHIP WAS COMMISSIONED. WE WORKED UNTIL SEPTEMBER 25 LOADING AND PREPARING THE SHIP FOR SEA.

September 14, 1944

The George A. White Service Men's Center
Portland, Oregon

Dearest Bob & Diane,

I guess you can tell by the stationary that we are back in Portland. We got in about 5:30 this evening, so decided I would come to town and write. I guess the way it sounds we will go aboard ship Friday as scheduled but don't know how long it will be before we leave. We will all be restricted to the barracks tomorrow night, so there won't be any liberty. I guess they are afraid some of them wouldn't show up. We will probably be kept pretty busy when we get aboard loading stuff and guarding equipment. We will only get liberty every other night. I am sort of alone tonight since Jack, Johnson, Chittenden and McNelley all went to see their wives, and the rest of them headed for a beer joint. I didn't see Aalberts out at the barracks, so I imagine he is in town someplace. These guys were sure glad to get back to their wives. It is going to be kind of tough if we do go aboard Friday, and they only get every other night off.

We couldn't get our mail out at the barracks tonight, so I will have to wait until tomorrow to get it. I have sure missed it this week. I am sorry I have missed a couple days writing, but there just wasn't a thing out there to write about.

We were lucky in catching a train in Seattle, or we would have had to wait from 12:30 until 4:30. That would have put us in here pretty late tonight. We just got there about ten minutes before train time, had to get our tickets, and just made it.

I sat by a nice old lady coming all the way down, and we had a very nice visit. She had two sons in service, so she had lots to talk about. We were lucky enough to get a nice coach this time that was air conditioned. It wasn't a bad trip at all.

I guess I will sign off tonight and go to a show since I can't think of anything to write anyway. I promise when I get some mail tomorrow I will do better.

I sure wish I was going to see my wife tonight too. Goodnight, honey.

Lots of Love, Erv

September 15, 1944

Dear Bob & Diane,

Well, we are all packed up and ready to go aboard ship in the morning. We have to be up at 5 a.m. and ready at 5:15 a.m. We have to lash our gear tonight and stay at George White's USO. We have the christening tomorrow, so we have to get moved and cleaned up by 10 a.m. I guess it will be a formal affair, and I wish you could be here to see it. The other guys wives are all going. They have to get a pass to go in the shipyards, and then they can just stand on the docks. They aren't allowed on board, but they will be able to see what is going on. As you notice, my address will be changing too. You will

have to change my address on your letters. I suppose it will take a little longer to get one now since they have to go clear to San Francisco and back.

I sure had a nice surprise today when I received 14 letters and two papers. That isn't bad for a week, now is it? I had one from Dunk and all the rest were from you and Mom. I was glad to hear from Dunk too. He couldn't tell much, but he is on a ship of some kind. The way he talked he didn't think he would get a rate soon. I don't know why unless he happens to have all the rates filled. Some of our guys talked to one of the officers on our ship this morning, and he talked favorably for us to get rates. I suppose since our ship is new there is more opening for rates. They can't give it too soon. I think our 20% sea pay will start tomorrow. It won't amount to very much, but every little bit helps. The way they talk, we will put in quite a bit of time loading the ship. I guess we work until 10:30 p.m. of an evening when we aren't on liberty. Jack found out today that he won't be off over the weekend. That isn't so good. I hope we don't pull out too soon, so he can have some time with his wife. She has come all the way out here. McNelley has the weekend off from noon Saturday until noon Monday, so that will be pretty nice. Jack said if his wife didn't have something planned, they might come in, and we would go someplace together. I would like to meet his wife.

You have quite a class at school, don't you? It was nice that they did take a few of them away from you. I am glad you have a nice room and nice people to work with. It will make it a lot more pleasant.

You said you saw "Song of Russia". I saw that too, and it was a very good show. I saw "Come Here, Private Hargrove" last night and it was good too. These free tickets they give out have come in pretty handy. It sounds like the grapes and things out at the ranch are doing okay. Too bad you don't have a few of them in town. You say all defense work will be stopped as soon as Germany quits. That will be some let down for a lot of people, won't it. They must feel that we have enough to lick the Japs.

I sent Mom a card today for her birthday. I wanted to get something to send, but it seems we never get in when the stores are open. I guess I will have to skip it for now. Maybe what you got will do for both of us. Get whichever you want. I know she will appreciate it. You are having tough luck with the car lately, aren't you. It seems there is always something wrong with them. Dad T. said he had to have the clutch fixed on his too. I guess they are still going to town. He mentioned several deals they had finished and are still working on a lot more. He said he thought he would soon be out of debt. That would be a pleasant feeling for them once more. I am glad Mom C. is feeling so much better.

Aalberts was here waiting for us when we got back from Whidbey Island, and Cox got back this evening. I guess we are all ready to move again. I was glad you don't have to take much out of your check for income tax, etc. Every cent we can save is just that much when this is over, isn't it? I hope I can contribute some before long. I never have been at a post office to get a money order made out to send the \$20 home. If I don't before I go out, I will send a wire home. I was talking to some radar guys that we went to school with in Seattle, and they just got back from 21 day leave. I don't know how they did it, but the whole crew got one. I suppose it was because they have a little longer before commissioning.

Aalberts is here to go down and eat chow, so I will quit for now. Goodnight, Honey.

Oceans of Love, Erv

September 17, 1944

Dearest Bob & Diane,

As you no doubt can tell by this letter, I am an old Salt now. I have been aboard for two days. They have really been working us. We had commissioning yesterday morning, and then we started working yesterday afternoon and worked until about nine last night. We started again this morning and worked until 5:00. Half of us had liberty, or we would have been working yet tonight. We are supposed to work until 10:30 at night, but it rained us out last night and is raining again tonight. I was just soaked last night. We are unloading stuff for the ship. We have put five freight car loads of groceries aboard and they say we have five more to go. That is a lot of groceries isn't it? The bunch I was with unloaded one whole car load of flour and then helped unload some stuff on another car. Besides that, others are loading all kinds of other supplies. They say it will take at least ten days to get it loaded. If anyone had told me that you could put as much stuff aboard as we are, I wouldn't have believed them. If we put as much aboard every day for ten days as we have the last two, we should have plenty. I heard today that we would probably be down at San Pedro or someplace down there for two or three months. I hope that's right. I don't know how long it will take us to learn the ship well enough to find our way around. It sounds funny, but there are so many compartments and different decks that you can get lost easily. We all just wander around until we find what we are looking for. We haven't had any trouble getting your mail aboard. I got one yesterday and two today. I am not going to be able to write as often as I have been, especially when we leave. Even here we don't have time to write during the day or night when we are aboard ship. Of course after we get loaded, we won't be so busy. I am going to send this one without a return on it. We aren't supposed to write except on the ship, so they can be censored. I just wanted to tell you so you wouldn't worry if you didn't get a letter for a few days at a time. There is some scuttlebutt that we will even be limited on the amount of letters we can write when we go out, but I don't know if that is true.

I bet Diane was strutting when she did the drawing at the pharmacy.

You asked what the difference was in a flag ship and a transport. They happen to be the same in our ship. The ship is a transport and the flag ship means it is in command of the entire fleet. All the big shots will be aboard our ship. We will have to be on our toes. We are going to have a nice room to work in. I guess our 20% extra pay was supposed to start yesterday, so I should be getting a little more money soon. It won't amount to very much. If we get our rate, that will help quite a bit. I don't see why it should cost \$40 to install the electric stove. If I remember right, it only cost \$5 to put it in our house. Of course we had already put in the line for it, so that might make a difference.

I haven't seen a paper the last couple of days, so I don't know how the war news is going. I hope they keep pushing right on in.

I bet the kids did have a swell time at the carnival. I suppose Johnny [Davidson] was as crazy about the merry-go-round as Diane was.

The Presidential job sounds pretty good, doesn't it? I am glad you are going on and teaching because you will have your certificate. When I get home you won't have to bother getting it then. I will keep you so busy making love to me that you won't have time to work any place else. You should get your certificate since you just need one more year.

Say, one of the fellows here is going to give me a guy's address here in Portland to use as a return address on the envelope. In case you should not get it, it would go to him instead of being opened at the post office. If we put our ship address on them, the post master takes them to the ship, and they are censored there.

I think our line should be pretty lucky about getting out after this is over, because there won't be much use for radar after the enemy is wiped out. They use it some for navigation, but it won't be so important then. Jack couldn't get off this weekend as he was on the wrong watch list. I was lucky enough to have tonight and tomorrow night both off. I was going to work for him and let him go, but they wouldn't let us change. I have got to call his wife and tell her too. I met them the other night, and we went to a show. I sure like her, she is a swell sport and a lot of fun. They have two nice kids. They were going to have me out for dinner over the weekend but I guess we won't have any more liberties at the same time. When he is off, I am on. That isn't so good. I hated it that he couldn't get off this weekend since we will be here such a short time. I know if my wife were here, I would appreciate someone working for me so I could be with her.

You should have seen me tonight before I took a shower. After helping unload a carload of flour, I had about half of it on me. I don't know whether your letters will be censored or not after we leave, but the ones I got today weren't. All you have to watch is mentioning anything about our destination or when we will leave, etc. I am about run down now, so will quit. If you don't get a letter as often, don't think I am not thinking of you. I do every spare minute I have. Goodnight, Honey.

Lots of Love, Erv

September 22, 1944 (The first Naval Censored Letter)

Dearest Bob & Diane,

Another week has about gone and we are still plenty busy. There is plenty of work aboard ship, but I think after this week we will be pretty well caught up. We are getting along swell aboard ship. We are a little crowded, but not bad at all. There is sure a lot more room on one that I thought there would be. We have very good chow too.

I was sorry to hear you haven't been feeling well lately. You don't want to let the school get you down. You and your mother had both better forget about doing much canning this year. Mom T. shouldn't be doing so much of it either.

I know the folks were anxious to get their step in. Did Dad have anyone to help him or did he do it alone? That is too much work to try it by himself. When they get that in, it won't take long to get the porch finished. That will help the looks of it a lot.

Who is running the Toggery [women's clothing store in Las Animas on Southeast corner of 6th and Carson] since Tiny [Faustina Bennett] is gone? That is too bad about Mrs. Decker. If Lee [Colvin] quits and with Ed gone, Garvey [McBride, owner of the Victory Market, across from Bent County Courthouse] will have to start doing a little work himself, won't he? They will miss both of them, and they will be hard to replace. You said Lee could only work a couple of years more, anyway. How come? Does Garvey have an age limit or what?

I am glad Mom C. is feeling better. This medicine may straighten her out alright. I don't know what they will do about services aboard ship. We worked last Sunday, but I imagine they will get started soon. We have a very nice chaplain aboard. Jack's wife is still here. He gets to see her every other night. It is about time for lights out, so will quit for now. How is my little girl getting along? I suppose she has found someone to play with in town.

Lots of Love, Erva

SEPTEMBER 26 WE LEFT THE COMMERCIAL IRON WORKS WITH CAPTAIN R. G. HALE IN CHARGE. J. W. LABELLE AS EXECUTIVE OFFICER. WE WENT DOWN THE WILLAMETTE RIVER INTO THE COLUMBIA AND OUT IN THE OPEN SEA ON OUR WAY TO SAN FRANCISCO. THE OCEAN WAS PRETTY ROUGH AND A LOT OF US WERE PRETTY SEA SICK. OUR GYRO COMPASS WENT BAD AND WE NEARLY HIT ANOTHER SHIP THE FIRST NIGHT OUT. A BLIMP CAME OVER US THE NEXT DAY AND SIGNALLED OUR LOCATION TO US AND WE CONTINUED ON OUR WAY. WE ARRIVED UNDER THE GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE ABOUT 5:30 SEPTEMBER 29. WE HAD ONE LIBERTY THERE. WE LEFT OCTOBER 1 FOR SAN PEDRO WHERE WE PICKED UP TROOPS AND EQUIPMENT AND MADE PRACTICE LANDINGS AT SAN CLEMENTE, PACIFIC BEACH AND OCEANSIDE. WITHIN TEN DAYS OF PRACTICING, WE COULD UNLOAD THE SHIP IN TOTAL DARKNESS. WE LEFT THE TROOPS AND EQUIPMENT AT OCEANSIDE AND WENT TO SAN DIEGO AND PICKED UP MORE TROOPS AND PRACTICED FOR TWO WEEKS. WE TOOK ON MORE PROVISIONS AND WENT BACK TO SAN FRANCISCO. ANCHORED IN THE BAY FOR EIGHT DAYS. WE HAD TWO MORE LIBERTIES THERE.

October 2, 1944

Dearest Bob & Diane,

I suppose you have been anxiously waiting for a letter. As usual we have been on the move again. We went down to San Francisco from Portland. We stayed there over night and all the next day, then left in the evening and came down to San Pedro. We went

under the Golden Gate Bridge at San Francisco, and it was quite a sight. We got liberty tonight, so we all went into San Pedro. There wasn't a thing there, so we took a street car and came to Long Beach. It is now 10 p.m., and we just got here and had supper. Our liberty was supposed to have started at six feet. It took quite a while to bring us ashore in the landing boats. We anchor out in the bay about two miles. I suppose you got the letter I wrote at San Francisco. I started a letter two other times while we were moving, but I was so sea sick I couldn't write. I couldn't have mailed them anyway, so I guess it didn't make much difference. I didn't get sick coming down from Frisco to Pedro, but those first two days were plenty tough. About half of the guys were lined up around the deck hanging over the side. I didn't do so bad until I started watching one of the scopes on the radar gear go around. With that and the ship rocking too, it was just too much. I guess maybe we will get over it though in time. It was cloudy and windy the first two days which didn't help any either. Yesterday and today it was nice and calm, and there is a great big nice moon shining on the water. Now if my wife and I were taking a pleasure trip on a nice calm sea like that, it would be pretty nice. If you don't get letters regularly don't worry because we will be here for at least two weeks. Then we have to go to San Diego and pick up troops, and we will practice with them for awhile. I don't know how the mail connections will be from now on. When we are out at sea, we can't mail any until we come in. While we are here, we will go out during the day and come in of an evening. My mail hasn't caught up with us either, but they think we will have some tomorrow. I hope so because it has been about ten days since I have had a letter. We didn't get liberty while we were in Frisco, or I would have tried to get hold of Claude Settle [Leona Settle's husband]. Did you catch in my letter when I mentioned his name to let you know where I was? When we do move, I will do the same if I know anyone close to where we are. I thought I would write this one in town to let you know what was happening, but I may not have a chance to write here anymore. It seems there just isn't anything to write about or that we can write about at sea. I know Mom is having a fit because I haven't written them, but I just haven't had time or any place to write. We are standing a lot of watches now. We usually help work around during most of the day, and they won't let us sleep in the daytime anyway. From 3:30 Friday morning until we get back to the ship tonight, which doesn't look like it will be until pretty late, I have had three hours of sleep. You see we don't have much time for mail or anything else. We put in a complaint to our officer, and he is going to see what he can do for us. He agrees that we have more than our share to do. If we have to stand watches most of the day and night, we should be able to go to bed when we do have time during the day.

Our ship isn't so bad. We are a little crowded in our quarters, but not too bad. We sleep in bunks four high. We have swell chow. All of the time we are at sea, we have to wear a big life jacket. They are pretty bulky to wear all the time, but it is regulation. We have been doing a pretty good job in radar so far. We have kept them from having some trouble in their navigation by getting some good radar fixes and plotting our courses, etc. The captain seems to be very well pleased.

I am going to use Aunt Zella's return address on this so it won't look like a service man's letter. Don't say too much about what we are doing because they don't seem to want it out. We are at a USO here in Long Beach. It isn't bad but nothing like Portland. I was surprised at San Pedro. It is just a stop in the road and plenty junky. Long

Beach seems to be pretty nice. I thought if we should happen to get our liberty some day early in the afternoon, I would go see Zella and Node. It only takes a couple hours to get there from here.

How is everyone at home? I know you are all plenty busy. I sure hope we get some mail tomorrow. I sure miss them. It is getting late, and I have to write Mom too. Goodbye, Honey, and I love you.

Erva

P.S. I would sure like to see you and Diane.

October 1, 1944

Dearest Bob & Diane,

I have a little time this evening so will try to do a little writing. I have started on two different times in the last couple of days but I had a good taste of sea sickness, so writing didn't agree with me. That is really miserable to feel like that and can't do a thing about it. There were a lot of the boys in the same condition too. I guess it gets a lot worse at sea at times, but personally I would just as soon it wouldn't. I feel pretty good again this evening. We have been standing a lot of watches and losing a lot of sleep, and that hasn't helped any either.

How is everything around home by now? Have you seen Claude Settle lately. I have been wondering how he is getting along. I haven't had a letter for a few days, so I am anxious to get some. It will be nice to have a bunch of them when I do get them. I suppose school is rolling along smoothly by now. It won't be long until you will be having a payday, will it? They always come in handy, don't they? I still have some money to send home when I get a chance to send it. We haven't had much of a chance to spend any lately. They just opened ship's service tonight and still don't have all of their stuff ready to sell. We have sure been hungry for sweets lately.

How are my little girls getting along? I would sure like to see all of you. We haven't heard any war news lately so don't know how it is coming along. It could be all over, and we wouldn't know it. I guess that is too good to be true.

I am getting so sleepy I can hardly hold my eyes open so will have to quit for now.

Lots of Love, Erva

October 2, 1944

Dearest Bob & Diane,

I know both you and mother could shoot me for not writing more often. It seems we are so busy with watches, etc. that I just don't get around to it. We have been standing a lot of night watches, and we have lost so much sleep that when we do get a chance, we turn in. I am on a watch now from 8 p.m. until midnight, and we get up pretty early too. That doesn't give us much sleep.

We are all feeling swell and we have very good chow. This is sure a good big ship, and it looks even larger out away from the docks where you can get a good look. I had two nice letters from you and from Mom and also the paper today, so I was pretty well-pleased.

What is Tiny taking those baths for? I suppose they would do anyone a lot of good. I know they would for both of our folks. That is plenty cheap too. So Lee Colvins' have decided to go to Canon? Did he and Ray Monhollon decide to go together, or did he find something else? It will be like getting out of jail for him to get away from Garvey. I don't know how he stood it for as long as he did.

Have you folks been doing any canning? You should forget all about it this year. You and Mom C. both have too much else to do, and she doesn't feel up to it either. Mom T. is doing too much too. They sure have a nice bunch of stuff canned. I suppose fruit is still plenty high there. So, you folks listened to Dewey's speech. [Thomas E. Dewey, Governor of New York, was the Republican candidate for President against F. D. R. in 1944. He later ran against Truman in 1948 where pollsters predicted he would soundly defeat Truman. Truman won, receiving 49.6 percent of the vote. The Crays' were strong Republicans and would have strongly supported Dewey in both elections.] I could have gone to hear him, but didn't. I know Mom liked the present you got for her. I sure hated it that I didn't get anything for her, but it was just one of those things that couldn't be helped. I guess Dad is still going to town in real estate. People must really be going wild since they have a little money. It is too bad we can't find a real good bargain in something, so we could make a little profit. Dad mentioned they had bought two small houses themselves, and sold them to make a nice profit. If a fellow had lots of money, he could sure make it now. I suppose Dad C. is still getting along swell up at La Junta. Is he still working at the same thing?

I didn't get to meet Golden Graham at that address you sent. He was lucky to be transferred to the same place his wife was. Have they ever found anyone to take his place there yet?

I am out of anything to write as usual, so I had better quit. I have got to write the folks tonight too. I haven't written them for several days.

Lots of Love, Erva

October 3, 1944

Dearest Bob & Diane,

It is just 4 a.m., and I am on guard. I thought this would be a good time to catch up on some letters. At least it is nice and quiet this time of the morning. We are still keeping plenty busy, but I think it will slow down a little pretty soon. These night guard duties make it a little tough on sleep, but I guess we will survive alright. I missed my letter from you yesterday, but I imagine I will get two or three Monday.

Jack has the weekend off, so he will get to spend it with his wife. I guess she is going back home pretty soon. Johnson and I went to a show the other night and saw "The Seventh Cross" with Spencer Tracy. It was a very good show.

How is school coming along so far? I imagine it is quite a job herding that many kids around all day. I don't think I would make a very good school teacher. I was glad to hear the folks finally got their step in. It looks like they will soon have their place finished. They have been working at it for a long time. I know they will enjoy their new furnace a lot this winter.

Has Uncle Lee decided what he is going to do yet? I don't blame him for wanting to get away from Garvey. He has been there for a long time. How was the fruit crop around Canon this year? I suppose they are all working themselves to death. Ted [Monhollon, Herb and Laura's son] has sure been moving around, hasn't he? Did you ever find out whether he was a radio technician or a radar operator. We got five new radar men in from Point Loma yesterday. They dropped five of the others we had that just started. That makes us fourteen men that have gone to school and about five left that haven't. These other fellows haven't had any of the training at Seattle or in Whidbey Island.

How is Larry [Malcolm Crays] doing in his new job? I imagine it would be easy enough to sell stuff now if they could just get it. I would like to see your place now since you have it all fixed up. I bet it looks very nice. Painting the outside will help it a lot too.

I am out of news so will close for now. Goodbye, Honey.

Lots of Love, Erva

October 5, 1944

Dearest Bob & Diane,

I feel much better this evening. We had mail come aboard today, and I got twelve. I had a busy evening just reading mail. I sure miss getting them. I am sorry that my letters are so far apart, but I don't get a chance to write every night. There isn't much to write about anyway.

It sounds like you had a nice time at Mom's birthday party. I would sure like to have been there. The eats sounded plenty good, and I know Mom was well-pleased with all the gifts. I would like to see your school room. It sounds very interesting the way you

describe it. It won't be long until you will be putting on your Thanksgiving and Christmas programs. That will mean a lot of additional work too. I remember when we used to put them on out at Cornelia [Cornelia School was a country school north of Las Animas], and we did have a lot of fun.

We went ashore the other night, messed around awhile, and came back out. It seems we didn't have much time, so we didn't get to see much. I was supposed to have liberty tonight, but I didn't go ashore. It is usually late when we get off. By the time we get there, it is time to come back. I would like to get in before the stores close some time, but I don't suppose we will.

It sounds like the folks are getting their place fixed up pretty nice. It will look swell when it is all finished with their new furniture, etc. I wish we were fixing up a home of our own instead of what we are doing.

I saw a paper the other day, and it looks like we are still going pretty well in the Philippines. I hope they continue to do so and also with the Germans.

You asked about what you could send me for Christmas. Why don't you just forget me this Christmas. There really is so little we can use here. Besides you got me such a nice ring for my birthday that it is plenty for both. I really mean it. It is hard to tell where we will be by then. It might have to be transferred around a lot and maybe lost, so just skip it. The time for such things isn't very far away, is it? I don't know how I am going to get anyplace to do any buying, but maybe I will someday. We have about all the stuff now that we have room for in our lockers. The best Christmas I could have would be for us to be together again, but I suppose that will have to be postponed.

I would like to see those movies of Irene's. Has she heard where Dunk is yet? I haven't written to him for some time. It seems I get farther behind all the time. I wouldn't think Frank would make a very good S.P. He isn't the right type of guy for that.

You said you would have a pay day Friday. They are pretty nice things to have aren't they? We should have one this week too, and I am anxious to see how much I get this time. It sounds like you are doing alright if you put as much in the bank as you were going to put. That will all come in handy some day. Since we don't need it right now, I wish the folks would keep what they owe us until they get their place finished. I know they won't. I don't blame them for wanting to get all paid up. I know you will enjoy B. & P. W. [Business & Professional Women] again. It seems there is a lot of the old bunch that are gone from there now, but I suppose there are still plenty.

The water has been pretty calm the last few days. I haven't been sea sick, so I am enjoying it just a little more. I can think of a lot of things I would rather be doing. It is about time for lights out, so I had better get my bunk made. I hope I get another letter tomorrow. I really enjoy getting them. How's my little girl getting along? I would sure like to see you both. Goodnight, Honey.

Sweet Dreams, Erva

October 10, 1944

Dearest Bob & Diane,

Just finished taking a shower and shaving. I have a little time before I go on watch, so I will at least start a letter. It seems our days and nights are so full we don't have much time to write. I haven't had a letter for a couple days now, but I expect I will be getting some soon. It was sure nice getting that bunch the other day. I haven't written my change of address into the Company [J.C. Penney] yet. I owe Mr. Halverson a letter, so I will have him change it. I haven't heard from him for quite awhile, but I guess I do owe him a letter. I suppose business is still about the same. How is Mr. Sherk getting along with his help, etc? I know they have plenty of troubles. I hope he is still feeling better. It is bad enough to have to stay on the job if you feel good.

So you and Irene are joining the B. & P. W. I know you will enjoy it, and it will give you a change to see some of the girls. It is nice you and Irene can run around together some. You can enjoy each other's company since you have something in common.

It is too bad Neil is losing his help. The Army might get Glenn yet since they are still taking a few men. He wouldn't feel so good if they did grab him up. Those guys don't know how lucky they are. Does Neil have anyone else in mind? I imagine it will be hard to find anyone.

You should feel pretty good since you are the highest paid teacher on the job.

So Bernard [Hendin] is in France? I never did get a letter written to him since his address had been changing so many times. I suppose we won't get together until the war is over. How come Roberta [Bernard's wife] and her mother are going to Florida? I suppose on account of Mr. Roger's [Roberta's father] health.

It has been swell on the ship lately. Some of the nights are moonlit, and it really is pretty on the water. It would be a lot nicer if you and I were going on a pleasure cruise instead of the way it is.

I would like to see Diane with her hair all curled up. I imagine it does change her looks a lot. When is teacher's convention? I hope you can see Jack's wife. I know you will like her.

I don't know when I will have liberty again. I was supposed to have had one the other night. I didn't have anyone to go in with, so I stayed aboard. I would like to send some money home soon and also my watch. It is time to go on watch so will have to close for now. Write when you can.

Lots of Love, Erva

October 18, 1944 (The top section of the stationary was removed by censors - probably because it had the base address)

Dearest Bob & Diane,

This has been a very quiet Sunday. We have sat around all day and haven't done a thing. I did have a nice surprise of five letters this morning. Three from my honey, one from Mom and one from Mr. Halverson. I also got one from Mr. Shenk yesterday. I guess Mr. Halverson is also having help trouble. Theo Kelley quit because she couldn't get anyone to take care of her boy. He hasn't found anyone to take her place yet. He said he sure wished I was back on the job, as he was getting tired of doing all the work. Maybe if I stay away long enough, he will learn how to appreciate his help a little more, huh? He also sent me the *Pay Day*. It was all full of the fifth war band drive news. The Co. went over with a bang again with \$85,500,000. They have a grand total of over \$200 million up to date. That is a lot of dollars for one outfit to sell, isn't it? Mr. Shenk said Elmer [Parks] had been home for seven days. He seems to get a lot of leaves, doesn't he? Mr. Shenk said he was going to try to go deer hunting up around Canon for a day or two. He also said he had been out practicing shooting and getting ready for duck season. He said if I would come home, he would promise to take time out and go hunting with me. I will sure miss my hunting this winter in addition to all the other things that I have been missing.

I was sure surprised to hear that Diane was reading already. I didn't suppose she would be that far along for quite a while. I guess she is just naturally smart like her mother. I won't know her when I do get home. She will have changed so much. Starting in this early, she should have a good start for next year. I suppose the reason she learns so fast is that she has always liked her books.

I was glad to hear you are getting hot lunches at school now. I know how you always hated to take lunch, and I don't blame you.

What is wrong with Bill Hurd [Octavia Beck's brother]? I can't imagine him wanting to enlist. He has a good job and doesn't have to go. After he is in awhile, he will wish he was back punching cows. This is a bad time for Neil to be without help too, isn't it? How come Neil is going to sell all except his steers? I suppose it will make a lot less work for him.

Did Dad say what kind of a ship Sanchez was on? Jack got a letter from a guy we went through boots with. He also has made one trip across and is now back home on leave. Maybe we have been pretty lucky after all.

It sounds like you are doing alright with the bank account. That will soon count up if you do that very often. I think I will be able to help a little too, one of these days.

Do you know Sara and Bill Forest's address? I would like to get in touch with them, but it seems I have lost their address. How are Mom and Dad Crays feeling by now? I hope the medicine is doing some good. I guess Dad's business is still holding up in good shape. They are soon going to have their place finished and be in good shape again. It will be quite a relief for them. I have got to quit for now and go to bed.

Goodnight, Honey. I would sure like to be with you tonight.

Lots of Love, Erva

October 18, 1944

Dearest Bob & Diane,

Another day is about gone. It has been another pretty busy one. They got three of us up at 3:30 a.m. this morning to stand a watch. We just had time off for breakfast, and they called another one. We didn't get off it until 2 p.m. Had chow, and then we had to clean up our rooms and bulkheads and didn't finish until chow time this evening. I wouldn't be surprised if they get us up again tonight. It seems during this training period they try everything on us. I guess it doesn't hurt us too much; only we could use a little sleep sometimes. I counted up the other day, and I had seven hours sleep out of sixty six. That isn't so good. I imagine when we finish our training, we will be more on schedule.

I spoke to the officer in charge the other day about those courses I was telling you about, and I can get the one on typing. I am going to wait until we get on schedule because now we never know from one minute until the next what we are going to be doing. We usually have one drill after another. I am anxious to get started on it. They also have courses on business management, bookkeeping and accounting. If I find time to get the typing, I think I will take them too. We can't take but one at a time. There is a small fee on the first one. Then we can take as many as we like as long as we finish them satisfactorily without any charge. That is really worthwhile. I just hope I can find time to take advantage of it. Jack is taking one on electricity too. The only catch to typing is going to be to find a room available with a typewriter in it. They sure have a wide variety of courses to pick from.

How is school coming along? It won't be long until you will be putting on Thanksgiving and Christmas programs. That is always a lot of work.

We haven't had any mail aboard for several days, so I am getting a little anxious to get some. I should get a nice bunch when it does come though. I imagine your mail comes in bunches too, since they are sometimes held up on board awhile.

I suppose my little girl is still learning fast in her books. How many different kinds did you get her? I have been thinking of trying to find her a bracelet for Christmas. It would be easy to send home and besides she has lots of toys anyway. I am still wondering what to get her mother, but so far I haven't hit on anything. I would like to have a few suggestions. I am afraid it will be here before we can think about it. I would sure like to be home for Christmas, but I imagine that is an impossibility. It seems to be the scuttlebutt around here tonight that we will have to get up at 1 a.m. in the morning on some kind of maneuvers. I guess I had better retire since I didn't have much sleep last night. I hope I get some mail soon, because I sure miss it. Goodnight, Honey.

Lots of Love, Erva

October 19, 1944

Dearest Bob & Diane,

I am still pretty lucky in getting your mail. I have had one every day for the last several days. We haven't had mail call today, so I don't know if I will have one or not. Sometimes they come in bunches, and we don't know if any are missing or not. Why don't you number your letters, so I can tell if I get them all.

I bet you did have a nice time at the class party. I would like to have been there myself. The lunch sounded very good. How do you like being President? I suppose there will be a lot more work for you to do. Did Margaret Rice tell you what kind of a ship John was on and what the number of it was? It would be a little easier to find if I knew that. Chances are very small that I would ever run into it, but it could be possible.

It is kind of bad that Dad has to lay off a couple weeks now that things are going so well. It is just one of those things that can't be helped. I guess Pruett [Ezra Thaxton's business partner] has gone deer hunting too, so I know Dad feels he should be there. He has been doing too much of the heavy work around home, too.

How far out is the farm Archie is going on? I know he is all excited about getting started. They will have a hard time keeping up with Dicky [Richard Thaxton] when he gets out where he has that much land to run on. He will probably be with Archie most of the time.

The ocean has been pretty calm lately, so I haven't been a bit sea sick. You get used to it, so you don't notice the ship roll much. When we get out where it really gets rough, I don't know whether it will bother me more or not.

So, you have finished five weeks of school. No doubt it seems like ages to you, but it seems like it hasn't been anytime to me. It is funny about being in the Navy. It will soon be seven months since I came in. As far as the Navy is concerned it doesn't seem like I have been in half that long. I guess it is because we are so busy and move so much, we don't have time to think of it. When I think of you folks at home, though, it seems years since I left.

Some of the officers got hold of some fish hooks some place, got some cord, were fishing over the side and were really doing alright. There was about six of them, and they caught a bucket full of mackerel in just a few minutes. That really gave me the fever. We have talked of getting some hooks. We didn't know whether it would be permissible or not, so we hadn't done anything about it.

Leonard Walker really is going up in a hurry, isn't he? He has had a lot of experience though, even before war declared. He went to C.M.T.C. for several years when he was going to school, and I think he was in some other branch after he finished school.

You said you had an appointment with Dr. Lamme. How are your teeth coming along? I hope they don't bother you any more.

I haven't had my eyes checked yet, but when we go in to port I am going to. I think I will also get an extra pair in case I break these when we get out to sea. One of the other fellows did that and they only cost \$10.00. The Navy pays part of it, which is the reason it doesn't cost any more.

Has Auntie Maude and Lee found a place in Canon yet? I suppose they are anxious to get moved, too. Does the \$3,000.00 they are asking for their place include Dad Monhollon's, too?

[This is the Colvin place at 4th and Locust in Las Animas].

Johnson, Moorhead and I are standing on extra watch tonight. We are expecting another ship to meet us, and we want to pick it up as soon as possible. This gives us a little time to write letters. I really need a lot of it to get caught up again. Goodnight, Honey.

Lots of Love, Erva

[October 20, 1944 - Invasion of the Phillippines]

October 21, 1944

Dearest Bob & Diane,

It is 3 a.m. in the morning and kind of a funny time to be writing a letter. I received ten nice ones in the mail yesterday, so I thought I had better get one off to you. We sure get a lift when we have mail call after a few days out. They still don't have it all sorted yet, so I may get some more yet. You said there was a couple packages on the way too. They don't have them sorted yet, but I imagine they will be among them. I can't imagine what you could be sending. I know I will enjoy the package from Auntie Maude.

Dunk has really been getting around, hasn't he? I guess I have been pretty lucky after all. I would like to know what kind of a ship he is on. I hear they are doing a lot of fighting over there now, so I imagine he is on it again.

That is too bad about Dr. Fickel [He was the family doctor in Las Animas. He built the home on the corner of Grand and 6th and the hospital right behind it. He built the apartment houses on 5th and Grand]. I guess everyone is just going too fast these days. You said you had lost ten pounds. Now listen, you had better take it a little easier. Do like I am. Take it easy and get fat. I am back up to 157 again. I guess the salt air agrees with me. Only I don't get much of it since we are inside all the time.

What makes Don [Colvin] think he will be released? I imagine he is plenty anxious to get home even if it is only a furlough. He has been up there a long time. I haven't seen or called Sara yet, but I think I can soon. Do you remember the last time we saw them? I wish we were there together now. We sure had fun, didn't we?

That was tough luck about Irene wrecking her car. She was lucky she didn't get hurt. I just wrote to Dunk a couple of days ago. I have owed him a letter since August. I have got a few caught up the last couple of days. I won't mention it to him.

What seems to be the trouble over at the Bent County Bank? I am glad you did change since Bill Scott is out of there. I just wondered what the trouble was. I would hate to lose the money. The way you are adding to it, it would be worse yet. You asked about putting some in the post office. Can it be drawn out very easily from there? I have never heard how they work it. There might come a time when you would want some in a hurry.

You might check up on it and if you decide to, it is okay with me. I am glad Dad is feeling better again. Mom said he was down to 146 pounds. That is too light for him. I suppose J. R. is back with a nice deer again this year. You were right when you said we were going to do that someday. Sometimes I get to thinking of all the things we are missing, and it sort of gets me. We will make up for all of it someday though. I hope Larry can have some luck this year. How is he liking his new job. I imagine his business is good.

We are getting a little poohed from losing so much sleep. It seems we never get a full nights sleep. I never even undressed last night. I just layed down on my bunk and slept from nine until eleven and then had to go on watch until two a.m. We had reveille at 2:30 a.m., chow at 3 a.m., then started our regular watch. The bad part is we can't sleep in our bunks in the day time even though we aren't on watch. There are six reasons why Navy men die young - ha! I think maybe we will survive though. Two hours really isn't quite enough though.

I was sorry to hear about Pete Colt. We will probably hear of a lot like him before this is all over. I am about run down so will close for now. I hope I get some more mail today. I guess I am never satisfied.

Lots of Love, Erva

October 22, 1944

Dear Bob & Diane,

I just got back aboard ship and had a nice letter from you and Mom, so will try to answer them now. Jack, Aalberts and I got a special liberty today to go ashore and get an extra pair of glasses. They both got theirs, but I think mine need changing. There didn't happen to be a doctor in to test them, so I will have to go back later. The Doctor said it would be a few days before I could go in again. We had to go out to the Naval Hospital to have them checked. We get service men's rates. Jack's only cost \$9.50. I paid \$25.00 for my old ones just like them. My eyes have been bothering me some lately, so I am sure I will have to have them changed. Our work is pretty hard on the eyes.

I received two nice packages in the mail yesterday. One was the package from your folks and the candy and nuts you sent. I haven't got the one from Auntie Maude or the one you said you sent yet; but, I probably will soon. That sure is a swell *Bible* Mom and Dad Crays sent. I had picked up a small one in a U.S.O., but it wasn't very complete. That is one that will really last, and I sure appreciate it. Be sure and thank them for me. I also enjoy the candy from my wife. You know how I appreciate sweets of any kind. I know a sweet wife and little girl that I would appreciate a lot more if I could just have them, but I guess I will have to be satisfied with just candy.

I enjoyed your poem you sent and I have it put away with some of those to keep. It was pretty clever.

I imagine Bruce Purvis was glad to get home. He has been across a long time. Also Mike Etchart will be able to tell a lot of stories when he gets home. I guess he has really seen plenty.

It is a good thing you got your new coat early because I don't imagine the choice is very large this year. The gold will look good on you. It will be a little brighter and a change from your others. The style of it may be very appropriate one of these days. I would sure like to have some pictures of you. If you get a chance to take some, be sure and have some made for me. If you think of it sometime, you might send a picture of us taken at your folks' place when we were civilians. I don't want to forget completely what it was like. The ones taken by the car, remember? [This was a major purchase at the time, as the slogan for America became "Use it up, wear it out, make it do, or do without."]

So you finally got your first bond? I have been wondering when you would get it. I got my check from the company yesterday. They always come in handy, but I don't need them. I am going to write to the company and have them sent to you. We may be someplace where we can't get them cashed either. I am going to send home some money too. I will send that that I wrote a check for and a little besides. It seems I never get in town to do any shopping. It is hard to get it wrapped and mailed aboard ship, so I thought you could use it and buy both your folks and mine something for Christmas. You can explain to them why I didn't send anything from here. You can probably get them something nicer if we get it together. It seems funny thinking about Christmas this early, but by then, we may not be able to get anything.

Have you heard any more from Don? It will sure be swell if he does get to come home for Christmas. It won't seem much like Christmas not being at home to watch Diane open up her packages.

I guess they have been doing good over in the Philippines. When they get them back, I think it will be a big step toward taking Japan.

It is about bed time, so I had better sign off. Goodnight, Honey.

Lots of Love, Erva

October 26, 1944

Dearest Bob & Diane,

I haven't had a letter for a couple of days, but I guess I had better get some written anyway. We don't get ashore every day to take mail, so I imagine your mail doesn't come very regular either. I still haven't received the package you said Auntie Maude sent, but I probably will get it the next time we get mail. I filled out my ballot this morning. I have to have it signed by an officer. I will have that out of the way. I notice there is quite a few in the county that don't even have any opposition. They must be getting fed up on politics. The last time I was in port, I got a bunch of Christmas cards. Now I have to get them addressed and in the mail. It seems pretty early to be sending them, but we have to get them off now because we may not be able to much later. I would sure like to be home for Christmas, but I know I won't have any such good luck.

I saw a fellow in town the other day that was in boots with me. He said he hadn't been doing a thing so far, but he said they were about to catch up with him. He said he saw Sanchez here the other day, so I imagine Sanchez' ship was here in dock for awhile since he had a leave. That is the first one I have run into from boots.

I suppose you are still busy with your school. It doesn't seem possible that two months of it have rolled by already. I imagine the other seven will go by just as fast. They are still keeping us pretty busy with maneuvers, but they are pretty interesting. We will get a lot of good out of it, too.

How are Mom and Dad Crays feeling by now? When are Lee's going to move to Canon? That would be a swell place to locate. Did you get to see Jack's wife while you were in Canon? I suppose she had lots to tell you about her trip. She seems to be a good sport and a lot of fun. I think you will like her a lot. I didn't get to be with them but just one evening, but we did have a lot of fun.

As usual I don't have anything to write about, so will have to close and hope to get some mail before long. I tried to get hold of Sara and Bill, but I guess they were gone someplace.

Lots of Love, Erva

October 29, 1944

Letter written to Neil and Dorothy Davidson (Barbara's sister)

Dear Dorothy & Neil,

How is everything out on the ranch by now? Barbara was telling me you have been having a little help trouble. I imagine a good man is hard to find right now. It is too bad you couldn't get Dick Moore. I imagine he would be alright. She said she thought Bill was going to enter the Service. After he is in about a month, he will wish he was back punching cows.

I suppose Barbara told you that I was a little sea sick the first two days we were out. The old ocean has been pretty calm the last few days, but we haven't been out where it was very rough. I don't know how I will do when we get out where it really gets rough, but I hope it doesn't bother me. That is really a tough feeling.

I guess Barbara is pretty busy now since she is teaching., but imagine it makes the time pass faster for her. We move so fast that we don't have time to think about the time.

It is about Christmas time and I am in need of a little assistance and was wondering if I could call on my in-laws for it? I am going to send some money to you as soon as I get a chance and was wondering if you would find something nice for Barbara and Diane. We don't get ashore very often and when we do, it seems that stores are usually closed. I haven't had much luck in finding anything. It seems pretty early to be thinking of it, but I may not be any place where I could get anything later. You will probably be able to pick them out something that would suit them better than I could. I thought I had better write you before I sent money to you, or you would probably be

asking Barbara what I was sending money to you for? I hope it won't be too much trouble for you, and I will really appreciate it.

How are the two little fellows coming along? I imagine they are growing plenty fast. I would sure like to be home with you all for Christmas, but I don't imagine there will be any such good luck.

It is about time to go on watch, so I will have to close.

Love, Erva

October 30, 1944

Dearest Bob & Diane,

I just finished a nice hot shave and shower and have a little time before going on watch, so I will try to write a letter. I don't know where I found all the ambition today. We didn't have our regular watch today, so we had to help scrape paint off the bulkheads, and put a coat of paint over it. After we had chow this evening, I washed socks, my dress jumper and read a story. I have a watch tonight starting at 10 o'clock, so I think that will make a pretty full day. It has sure been nice weather out here lately. We have a full moon tonight, and it is really pretty out. It would be nice if we were up at the cabin enjoying it together, wouldn't it? I dreamed last night that I was back and starting to work at the store. We had a big party to celebrate the occasion. I would like to be celebrating something like that.

How are you and my little girl doing with your school work? I would like to see her studying. I bet she keeps her Granddad busy. How is Mom and Dad Crays getting along? I haven't had any mail for several days, so I haven't heard how Dad T. is either. I hope he does get straightened out soon. I can't imagine him being that light. I haven't weighed lately, but I imagine I still weigh around 155 pounds, which is pretty good for me. One of our officers was talking with us the other day and we decided we needed some exercise. As soon as we get on a little more definite schedule, we are going to start doing some exercises. It will do us a lot of good because we are inside most of the time and don't get much fresh air and sunshine. It really felt swell being out all day today.

I bought a bunch of Christmas cards the last time I was in port. I have to get them addressed and mailed before long. It seems pretty early to be sending them, but it is hard to tell whether we will be able to mail them by Christmas time or not.

I received the packages from you and Mom and Dad Crays, but I haven't the one from Auntie Maude yet, but I suppose it will be in the next bunch of mail we get. How did Larry and Mr. Shenk make out deer hunting? Have you heard anything more whether Don is coming home or not? The war news sounds pretty good lately, but I guess they are having quite a battle over there.

It is time to go now, so I will have to say goodnight.

Lots of Love, Erva

November 1, 1944

(Uncensored letter)

Dearest Bob & Diane,

We just got in Los Angeles and thought this would be a good chance to write you a letter. I know your letters are very irregular and so are mine. We have been out on maneuvers, and some times we would be out for seven or eight days at a time. Of course our letters weren't mailed. We are in dock at Long Beach now for a few days, and then I don't know where we will go from here. We have heard so many stories about when we would go across that we don't know which to believe, if any. If your letters are even more irregular, don't be surprised or worry about it because we may be on maneuvers for some time yet. We have heard that even when we get to Pearl Harbor or some place like that, we will have practice maneuvers for awhile there. During our practice maneuvers here, we have been all along the coast from San Diego up to San Pedro. We had about 1200 soldiers aboard to practice with, so it was quite a mad house. We even made several landings at night and unloaded all of the landing boats and filled them with machinery and troops. Then they landed in the middle of the night. It is funny what you can learn to do in the dark. All of those landings have to be done without a light of any kind on deck, so you can see it is quite a mess. We enjoyed it though and really got a lot out of it. We took all of our flag officers aboard yesterday. There was about one hundred of them counting officers and men, so that has made us a crew of about 600 now. Besides the troops we had aboard and their own equipment, we had about forty large pieces of equipment such as trucks, cannons, bull dozers, etc. We got our first mail yesterday for about nine days, and I had eleven letters, a paper and the box from the folks. I still haven't got the package from Auntie Maude or the one you said Mr. Halverson sent.

Jack and Aalberts came in to L.A. last night, and Jack got to be with his folks. I wish I was on the same liberty section as they are, but Johnson and I get along alright. The rest of the guys don't care for shows or anything and just sit in for all night and drink. I don't get much kick out of sitting there watching them do it. When Jack and I went out together, we always went to a show. I had intended going over to Node and Zella's tonight, [Node Elkin was Grandmother Thaxton's brother] but some of them decided they would like to go to Hollywood and see the Hollywood Canteen. It will be nice just to say we have been there. Some of the guys went last night, and they said they had a swell show there. I think I will have another liberty or two here, so I can see the folks then. I tried to call Sara while we were in San Diego, but I couldn't get a hold of her. I guess she was out. I sure wish you were here to go out with me tonight, and we would really look the place over. For as long as we have been around the coast, I really haven't seen but very little of these places. It is pretty hard to get around when you don't know what to look for or where to go, so we end up with a show.

I sure have an awful time trying to write a letter aboard ship any more. There just isn't anything to write about. I imagine they are pretty dry, too. I got that letter from Diane while you were in Canon, and I sure enjoyed it and the pictures. Her hair sure

changes her looks, doesn't it? She looks pretty nice to me. I was glad you had such a nice visit with Jack's wife. She is very likable and easy to get acquainted with.

We have sure been putting in the hours while we were out. We had so many of these drills at night, and then we couldn't sleep in the day time. Since we have been in port, we have been running errands mostly.

I know Node and Zella will be surprised to see me. We usually get off about one o'clock, so I can get out to Glendale by 2:30 or 3:00. That will give me quite a little time with them. We thought we might get two or three days off while they were working on the ship, but we couldn't make it. They issued an order before we even hit port that there would be no leaves.

I hope that if we do go across, we can get a leave when we return. I have been thinking, as you suggested, that if I only had about a week, you could meet me half way. We could really enjoy a week together, couldn't we? Here I am dreaming about a leave before I even start across, but it doesn't hurt to wish anyway. One of the officers passed the word around trying to find out if anyone could speak Chinese. That makes us wonder if we are going there instead of around Japan. It sounds like they really have the Japs on the run now. I see by today's paper where we bombed Tokyo. That is really doing alright. I don't think it will take so long to finish them up. That is another reason why we think we might go to China. It looks like they need the help more over there. It doesn't make any difference which we do go to. I don't think as far as we are concerned we will have much trouble. It seems the Jap fleet and air power is about shot. The new captain that we took aboard yesterday has been in nearly every major battle over there, so he should know his stuff. I can't imagine why an APA is getting so many high ranking officers aboard. They all say we have the best radar set up they have seen. The captain sent down a notice the other day that we had done very good work during our maneuvers, and we seemed to be about the only one that did get one. That made us feel pretty good. The commandeer on our ship won a Presidential citation on one of the major battles during the first of the war. He seems to know his stuff, but everyone, including the officers, sure hate him.

It sounds like you are doing alright with the bank account. You don't want to cut yourself too low because, after all, you do have to go out and spend some of it. I still think I will be able to send some of mine home before long. I think I told you I am having my company check sent to you from now on so that will be a little too. If we can't enjoy it now, we sure will when this is over, won't we?

The fellows are ready to go eat supper, so I will have to quit for now. I will try to write you another letter tomorrow and answer your letters. I can do that aboard ship. Also Mom and Dad's.

You better not mention much of this outside the family, but I thought I would like to let you know what the scare was. We never know when we will have the chance again. I love you and miss you both more and more every day.

Goodnight, Honey. Erva

November 7, 1944

Dearest Bob & Diane,

I have received a nice bunch of mail again so I will try to answer some of it. It is tough to be without mail for a few days, but it is sure nice when it does come. I got fourteen letters, three papers and two packages. I got the nice package from Dot and Neil, and also the other one from Mom and Dad. Tell Dot and Neil thanks a lot. The candy was very good. I still haven't received the one from Auntie Maude, but I probably will soon. The mail is sure treated rough. It's no wonder things get broken. Dot's package was torn open, but everything was okay in it.

We went ashore on liberty last night and had a very nice time. We got to see a little of the towns that I had never seen before. I want to see Node and Zella again one of these days if I can. I would also like to see Aunt Monie and Uncle Bill [Thaxton, Ezra's brother].

So you and Louise had a nice visit. Jack got a letter from her today and she also mentioned what a nice visit you had. She is very easy to get acquainted with, isn't she? How are Herbs' and Rays' doing up there by now? I suppose Lees' are anxious to get up there too.

I got the letter from Diane and also the picture of her. The curls sure make a difference, don't they. That was a very nice letter and drawings.

It sounded good to hear you talk of going hunting. I have some shells there. Any time any of you can go, use them. I wish I was using a few myself.

I haven't got started on my typing yet. It seems everything is in such a mess, we never have any time to study. I don't know yet where I am going to have access to a typewriter either. I don't know how it will come out. I filled out my ballot and got it in the mail yesterday. Now I have to get my Christmas cards mailed too. Neil is sure having tough luck finding a man. What has gone wrong with Larry's other job? I wouldn't think a filling station would be too good a business right now.

(Two days later)

I was slightly delayed in my letter writing. we have really been busy the last few days. We have three large books now that we are supposed to study to make our rate. They have decided now we have to make seaman first class before we can get our petty officers rating. We have been studying every minute we weren't on watch or something else. After we get our seaman first class, then we are eligible for the rate. I don't know how they expect us to get it all done besides standing watches and everything else, but it isn't their worry. We are supposed to take our examination by the eighteenth, so we will soon know how we come out. They started to give us a lot more, but we all got together and put up a kick. They did cut out a little of it.

I went over to see Node and Zella yesterday, and we sure had a nice time. I got there about 4:30 and didn't get back to the ship until after 2 a.m. It is about a 2 1/2 hour ride over there. They had planned to go out to Yana and Everett's to get eggs, so I got to see them too. They have a pretty nice little place and lots of chickens. He sure has a nice

bunch of equipment. Zella had fixed chicken for me and then Yana had fresh apple pie and ice cream. It sure is nice to get a home cooked meal once in a while.

Tomorrow we get liberty starting at 11:30 a.m., so I may try to see Aunt Montie and Uncle Bill. The trouble is I don't know how far out they live and how hard it is to catch a bus or street car out there. I imagine I can find some way to get there. Everett said Elwin was where Dunk was. I would like to see him too if I get a chance. They think Harley is going to get a furlough before Christmas.

I got a letter from you, Mom and Frank McVay today. He said he enjoyed his leave at home very much. I would like to have one very much myself, but no such luck right now.

I am glad you enjoyed your trip to Canon so much. I know Pearl [Overman, a friend of Barbara's who lived in Canon City] and all of them were glad to see you. I have gone in two different times to get my eyes examined, but still haven't done any good. Today they just had me read one of those large charts, and that is all the exam they gave me. When I told them I wanted them tested, they said they didn't have any equipment to do it. I will have to wait until I get someplace else. I couldn't see any sense in getting another pair and not have them fit. I have to stand a watch for awhile tonight, so I guess I had better close for now.

Lots of Love, Erva

November 10, 1944

Dearest Bob & Diane,

We have put in another long day of studying, and now I will try to write a letter before show time. We have been having some pretty good ones aboard lately. The last one was "Cover Girl", and it was very good. We went ashore last night and saw "Since You Went Away". It was really good. It sure hit the spot with a lot of families. Tomorrow night we are going in to the canteen and also try to go to a broadcast. I hope we can be lucky enough to see and hear some stars. The last time we went we didn't see very many. We didn't dance any. They had a floor show from eight to ten and then we left. They do have some swell orchestras out there, though but I don't seem to care to dance. I wish you were here to go to a good one with me. I would enjoy it then. Several of the fellows went over the other night while I was out to Uncle Bill's, and they were lucky enough to see several good broadcasts over the radio.

I got the picture of Harold Thaxton. It looks like he is really going up in a hurry. I don't know how we are going to come out. We have sure been putting in plenty of time studying. Most of the fellows that are getting their rates don't even have to take an exam. Not us, we have three long books to study and take an exam over. The officer said he didn't want to just give us one. I don't know how they think they are giving us anything. We have had nine weeks of school, and I should think that would be earning something. I guess we still have an exam.

Well, the election's all over again, and it turned out just about like I thought it would. At least it was a little closer this year. I didn't mean that I didn't like Diane's curls, but they just change her looks a little. I think she looks nice in them. So Ted is attached to the air corp. I don't know much about that kind of equipment.

I wish I could think of something to get Diane for her birthday. It sure is hard to find anything. So, you are going to help Tiny on Sat. It looks like you would have enough to do without that. You shouldn't overdo it, you know. I suppose she is having trouble getting help just like everyone else. Have they decided anything more about going to Canon? When do they look for Don to come home? It is swell that at least he can get a furlough.

I am out of anything to write, so I guess I will quit and work a few problems before show time. Here is a goodnight kiss for you both.

Lots of Love, Erva

November 11, 1944

Dearest Bob & Diane,

I sure had a swell time yesterday. I got off at noon and went out to Aunt Montie and Uncle Bill's. They were sure surprised to see me. I got to see Virla, Florence, Earl and all of their families. It is hard to believe how much they have grown since we saw them seven years ago. We sure had a swell visit, and you know how Aunt Montie cooks. We had lots to eat and then went over to Virla's and had ice cream and cake. All of the kids are taking music, and they play real well together to be so small. Virla and Florence's place is right in the same block as Uncle Bill's, and Earl's isn't very far. Earl has a swell new house, and I guess is really making the money. He has two places now. He did have three but he closed one. They are an eating place and malt shop combined, and he carries a few groceries. He wants me to come over again when he isn't working and he said he would show me the town.

I just took time out to go see the show aboard ship. It was "Cover Girls" and very good. I also just got three letters. One of the fellas had gotten them for me today. One from you, Mom and Archie. Archie was telling me all about the farm. I guess he is already in the sheep business. He is also going to buy some milk cows as soon as he can. He is sure all pepped up about it.

When I was out to Node and Zella's, I found out that Elwin Elkin is where Dunk was. There is a possibility that I may get to see him sometime.

Tomorrow is election day and I suppose the bets are flying in all directions. We don't hear much about it here. I got mine filled out and sent in whether it does any good or not. You asked if I got the check from my income tax. Yes I did. I still haven't got the package from Auntie Maude.

So our child does alright as an actress. I would like to have seen her. That is good practice and experience for her. I will be glad when we can get settled, get her a piano, and let her start taking lessons on it. She will soon be old enough for that.

How is school coming along by now. I suppose you will start working on programs before long. It doesn't seem possible that it is that late already. They have some of the decorations up in town already. I have about decided to keep my watch. I don't think it will be hurt much and I really feel lost without it. It does need cleaning but keeps pretty good time, so I will just keep wearing it.

Jack has been going in to see his folks every night he has liberty and has had a swell time. It is nice they can be so close to him. How is Mom C. getting along with her medicine? I went over to get my eyes examined the other day, but they didn't have any equipment to do it, so I still don't have any. The evenings are beginning to get pretty cool here lately. I suppose you will soon be having winter time. Did Mr. Sherk go deer hunting this year and did he get anything? I have had three papers here for about a week and haven't had time to read any of them yet. It is bed time, so I had better close for now. Goodnight.

Lots of Love, Erva

November 12, 1944

Dearest Bob & Diane,

Last night we went ashore and really looked the place over. We sure had a swell time. We went to the NBC studio to see the Maxwell House Coffee Hour with Frank Morgan, Robert Young and several other stars. Then we went to see Abbott and Costello on the Camel program. They sure keep things going all the time. We tried to see Bing Crosby but the tickets were all gone, so we missed that. After that we went over to the canteen, and they had a swell program there, too. There were several stars there too. About the only ones I knew were Charlie Chan and his son. They had quite a long program there. They gave us tickets there to go to the Florentine Gardens, which is a night club with a floor show. Sophie Tucker was the hostess last night, and she is really good too. They also had a lot of girls singing and dancing. Here is the best part though. These girls come around through the audience picking out service men to go up on the stage with them. What do you think? They asked me, but I didn't crave the idea so much. I figured they would make us sing or something, and sure enough that is what they had to do. After they sang, then they put hula skirts on and had to hula dance with the girls. Imagine me hula dancing out on a stage. No, thanks! The most important part was when they finished singing, the girls gave them a kiss. How do you like that!! Now see what I missed. ha! We really did enjoy the whole evening. We didn't get back to the ship until about 3 a.m., but it was worth it. I sure wish you could be here to see some of those things with me. That is really about all we have seen around here, however.

I got two letters from you today, one from Mom, and one from Dot & Neil. I sure enjoyed their letter. It is too bad he can't get some help. I am glad you found Diane a nice doll for Christmas. Most of the rest of her things are just as good as new. I don't know what I will find her for her birthday. So, people think Diane has some talent, huh? They couldn't expect anything else considering who her parents are, ha! I hope we can give her

piano lessons before she gets much older. She is a little young yet, but it won't be long. Virla's smallest girl plays pretty well. I don't know how old she is, but I imagine she is 6 or 7. She should learn fast this way. She likes to play around with it. I will sure be glad when things get settled, so maybe we can get her a piano to practice on. I sure want her to learn to play one.

The war news sure stays good. They still seem to be going strong at the Japs and Germans both. I sure wish we would get it over with. I sure get tired of this loafing around all the time.

I am glad to hear Dad is feeling better again. It is too bad Mr. Shenk didn't get a deer. I don't suppose he got to be gone very long from the store. I sure would have liked to have gone, but maybe our day is coming. I am about run down. I will quit now, go to the show, then to bed. I am a little tired tonight since I didn't have much sleep last night. How is your cold coming along? You better take care of it and not let it get you down. Sweet dreams.

Lots of Love, Erva

November 17, 1944

Dearest Bob & Diane,

Another Armistice Day has passed, and still the war goes on. I wish this could have been a double armistice, so we could all be on our way home soon. I see by the paper where Swede Nelson has been home again. I don't know how these guys do it, but I would sure like to find out. You asked me if I was getting the paper. Yes, I am getting it pretty regularly now. I haven't had any mail for about three days, but today I got three and I should have some more soon. You asked if I had received your package. I haven't yet, but I imagine there is some more mail that they don't have sorted yet. When we don't get mail for a few days, it accumulates so much that it takes a couple days to sort it out.

I am behind on my writing again as you know doubt have noticed. We have really been cramming for our exams lately. In fact we have put in every minute both day and night that we could find time for. We took the main one today, and we all made a good grade on it. We are to take the other one Saturday. I don't think there is much doubt now about our rate since we did alright on this test. That will be swell if we do get it as we can always use the extra money. Besides, it is just nice to have one.

When we are out for a few days there isn't much to write about. I know they won't be mailed anyway, so I just don't write as often as I did. You are really doing swell with as much as you have to do. I sure like to get them. I enjoyed the letter from Dorothy and Neil too.

I would like to have been home for the party at Shenks. I know you had a good time. Mom said the Penney bunch had a venison dinner there the other night, too. I was glad he got to go back and get his deer.

You tell Diane to just keep watching those trains, and someday I will be on one of them. I know she must be growing terribly fast. Mom said she was reading to her the other day, and she really does alright.

I know you are all anxious to see Don when he gets home, and I know he is plenty glad to be home. You said I had been putting October on all my letters. I am not surprised because everyday is just alike. It doesn't make any difference what day it is, we still have to do the same thing every day.

We were supposed to have liberty last night but we had so much studying to do and it was raining anyway, so we didn't go. I should get it again tomorrow if nothing happens. I may call Sara if I can catch them home. Did I tell you I had a long letter from Frank McVay? He is still the same old Frank.

The other day I ran into a fellow that I went through school with. That is the first one I have run into.

Do you remember the last time we were together what a good time we had? I wish we were there together again, don't you? It seems like it has been a long six months since we were together. It will soon be Christmas. I suppose it will be just another day for us. It doesn't seem possible that it is the middle of November already. It was just real nice and warm today. It has been raining and cool lately most of the time. It still hasn't been cool enough to dig out my sweaters or coat, but of course I am not outside very much. It seems funny being so late and still so warm. I suppose it is beginning to get pretty cool at home.

I will have to quit for tonight, so goodnight.

Lots of Love, Erva

November 20, 1944

Dearest Bob & Diane,

This is Sunday afternoon and the first one since we have been aboard ship that we can lay around in our bunks and feel that our time is our own. In time, they may get it all straightened out so we will know what's what. I hope so, anyway.

We went to town last night, messed around awhile, and went to a show. It was Saturday night, and you know what a bunch of service men there are in town then. They were so thick, you could hardly get down the street.

I received three more letters in the mail this morning and also a notice of a package in the P. O., but I will have to wait until tomorrow to get it. Mom said she was sending another package. I don't know why. She has sent two already. I haven't gotten your package, but I imagine that is the one at the P.O. now.

I am glad you are going to have a little vacation at Thanksgiving. It will be nice if the folks can go to Larry's. It is a long trip, and I don't blame you for wanting to stay home.

You asked about buying that place across the street. I don't remember much about it, but as I remember it, it isn't such a bad place. It would depend on what condition it is in. I wouldn't want to buy it if it is going to need a lot of work done on it soon. Labor and

material are so high that it would make it too expensive. It is in a good location, and with a little work it could probably be made into a nice little place. You might have the Dads look at it. If they think it can be bought right, I would just as soon buy it. It should be a piece of property that would be easy to keep rented and would soon pay itself out. I wouldn't want to make much of a payment down on it, so it would run us short. There might be a lot of other things we would want money for. That Price place we wouldn't have to put more than \$300 or \$400 down. If you do decide on it, I think you should put as little down as possible, don't you? I think it would be a good idea to pick up some property like that. If we can buy it right, it will rent for enough to keep up everything. We learned from experience on our own place that it does pay to own property of our own. That size place is usually easy to sell, too.

You said Leslie Roundtree was being discharged from the Army from shell shock. He is a captain, I think. I imagine he has been in the thick of it. He went to school with me at Cornelia and then in high school too. He is older than Leonard.

I was glad to hear Mrs. Sunday and Mrs. Fox got to come by and see you. I suppose they had lots to tell you. How is everything in Lamar?

I see in the Democrat where Mr. Davidson has their place for sale. What is Mrs. Davidson going to do? I don't blame her for wanting to get rid of that. It is too much house for just her.

I don't blame you for wanting to ride with Mrs. Richmond to school. It will save you a couple of hours' time everyday. I suppose school is running along smoothly now?

We took our final exam this morning for our rate, and it was really a very simple one. I think they gave it to us more just as a matter of form than anything else. Everything in the Navy is graded on a basis of 4.0. Our first exam my grade was around 3.8, and the second was 3.81. We also had some problems, and I only missed one of them. The exam this morning, I think we will all make practically a perfect score. I am sure there isn't any doubt that we will get our rates. We just have to have the captain sign them, I think. They should take effect the first of the month. It will be pretty nice to get them.

I would like to be home and go pheasant hunting with you. That sure sounds good to me. I hope you have some luck. You asked if the canteen was a very elaborate place. No, it is very common. In fact, I was very much surprised. It is nice but not very large. I was glad to get Bernard's address. I have never answered his letter because I wasn't sure of his address. I will have to do it right away. It sounds like Madge [Gall, Aunt Fern's daughter] is doing alright by herself, doesn't it? He must make good money.

I am about run down now so will close for now.

Lots of Love, Erva

November 22, 1944

Uncensored Letter

Dearest Bob & Diane,

Well, we are having another liberty in San Diego. We all came to town and decided to write a letter then go to Tijuana, Mexico. We had to get passes signed by our commanding officer to go. Some of the fellows have been going over there the last few nights, and I guess it is quite a sight. It only takes about thirty minutes to get there by bus.

I got your letter today and also the package from Mom. I haven't received yours yet, but they had some more aboard that weren't sorted. It may be there. You mentioned sending some pictures. I am sure anxious to get them. Nearly every day when I go to my locker, I get my pictures of you out and look at them. Even that helps a little. I would sure like to see you in the flesh though instead of just a picture.

I bet Pooch [Don Colvin - November 22, 1944 - Don Colvin arrived home from Alaska] is sure glad to be home, and I imagine he has seen a lot of nice country. You mentioned coming out. I would sure like for you to, but the plan for the day yesterday said for the officers and men to get things shipshape. We didn't have many days to get ready for combat duty, so it sounds like we might be on our way before too many days. I really don't mind since we have to be here. I would just as soon make a trip over as to fool around here. I think most all the fellows feel the same way. This fooling around here gets mighty tiresome. It only takes about six days to go over, so that won't be bad. I don't know for sure where we will go, but I imagine it will be where Dunk was. I imagine we will be on maneuvers there for awhile too. I don't know how the mail situation will be, so don't worry if you don't get a letter very often.

It would sure have been swell if you could have come out, but we were just in and out of here. I wouldn't have been able to see you but very little anyway. We probably won't be over too long. When we do get back, maybe there will be a chance for a leave. I will call you as soon as we get back in the U. S. When you here the phone ring, don't be too surprised.

I think it is a good idea to have the overstuffed set covered before it gets too badly worn. It will make it wear a lot better. I hear they are going strong both fronts yet. I don't see how Germany can hold out much longer.

I sent Bernard a Christmas card and also wrote him a letter. I have owed him one for a long time but wasn't sure of his address. I also sent Ted a card, but didn't have time to write just now. I wanted to be sure and get the cards in the mail before we pull out. I haven't got anything for Diane's birthday yet. I sent her a card and will try to find something for her when I can. It doesn't seem possible she will be five years old, does it? I wish I was home so we could practice for another one, huh! It is going to take a lot of practice to get caught up again.

It is about time to meet the fellows, so I will have to go now. Remember now, don't worry about me and keep listening for that phone because I really don't think we will be gone long. Goodnight Honey. I love you gobs and gobs.

Erva

November 23, 1944

Dearest Bob & Diane,

I am a little weary tonight but I will try to get a letter written anyway. Today is Thanksgiving but a lot different one than any I ever spent before. If I remember right last year I went hunting in the morning and then we had a big family dinner. This morning I scraped paint all morning, and this afternoon I loaded supplies. We did have a very good dinner - turkey and all the trimmings, pumpkin pie, fruit cake, candy and nuts, etc. We have had two dinners like that since I have been in the Navy. One was the fourth of July and the other today. It would have tasted a lot better if I could have eaten it at home.

I was glad Dad got to go hunting. It has been years since he hunted with the shot gun. I hope they can keep making some good deals, so they can get a little ahead and be able to enjoy life a little more. When they get their place finished, that will be one thing they won't have to worry about - a place to live. It will be all paid for and very comfortable for them. It will also be very economical.

Have you seen any more about that place across the street? I am anxious to find out what kind of a place it is and what shape it is in.

Pooch was lucky to get four new tires for his car. I suppose he can get quite a bit of gas while he is home too. He will enjoy having it a lot. I imagine you will be having lots of big dinners while he is home. I would like to see his pictures of Alaska. I imagine he has some nice ones. I would like to be able to have my camera with me and take pictures, but we can't so that's that.

I still haven't gotten your package, and I am getting anxious to see the pictures you are sending. I don't know why it takes so long for them to come, but I suppose they are pretty busy now.

I know you enjoyed your vacation while it lasted. It won't be long now until you get another one at Christmas. It won't be long until your year will be half gone.

We haven't had any more word on our rates yet, but I suppose it takes time for them to be approved. I hope they take affect the first of December.

Has Irene found out any more where Dunk is now and anything about his ship? I would sure like to see him if I ever get a chance.

I just happened to think I have been in the Navy eight months today. We have done a lot of things and been a lot of places in that time. I hope I am not in another eight months. It is time to quit now, so goodnight and sweet dreams.

Lots of Love, Erva

November 27, 1944

Uncensored Letter

Dearest Bob & Diane,

As you can see, we have been on the move again. We arrived here in San Francisco late this evening. Our section had liberty, so naturally we had to come to town. I had intended to try and get hold of Claude [Settle] but it was so late I didn't. I don't know how long we will be here, but if I get a chance I sure will do it. I did have a surprise tonight. I was walking down the street and ran into one of the Fong boys from out at the Fort and also Dr. Jackson's son. They are still going to school. Jackson was inducted the same time I was. I never knew him very well, but it was sure nice to see anyone from home. They are the first ones I have run into that were from home.

We went to a late show and are back at the YMCA now to write letters. They have a swell one here. We were also in another USO sponsored by Pepsi-Cola which was very nice.

We went to Tijuana, Mexico while we were in San Diego. Talk about a hole, that is really it. I couldn't tell it to you on paper. That will have to be one of the chapters I will have to tell you about later. I bought Diane a pair of huraches down there. I haven't sent them home yet, but as soon as I get a chance I will. I know it is a little out of season at home, but I think she can wear them next summer.

I got your nice long letter a couple of days ago and I really enjoyed getting it. I have the notice that your package is here, but the P.O. was closed today. I couldn't get it, but I will tomorrow. I am anxious to get the billfold and also the pictures.

Quite a bunch of us got a taste of sea sickness again yesterday and today. It is the first time we have been out that far since we came from Portland to San Francisco. It was really rocking. I lost my dinner yesterday, also supper yesterday and breakfast this morning. I wasn't on watch this afternoon. Since it was Sunday, they let us put our bunks down. As soon as I ate dinner, I crawled in and slept most of the afternoon and was able to keep my dinner down. That is sure a tough feeling. I suppose I will have to go through it every time we go out a ways.

It is getting late so I guess I had better quit for tonight and go to bed. Goodnight, Honey. Have I reminded you lately that I love you? I just don't want you to forget. If you were here, I would show you just how much.

Erv

November 29, 1944

Dearest Bob & Diane,

I received your nice long letter a couple days ago, and I enjoyed it very much. We should get mail again tomorrow, and I will probably have several this time. I went down today and got the package you sent and was really thrilled with it. They sure did a good

job on it. The pictures were good too of you and Diane. It looks like you have lost quite a bit of weight. You will have to take it a little easier and not work so hard. You looked very nice in your new coat and hat. I would like to see them. Another month is about gone and it won't be long until this year is gone. Somehow this time gets away and we don't know where it goes.

We found out today that our rates have been signed and approved, so I guess we are RDM 3/C. I don't know for sure whether it will take affect the first of November or whether we will have to wait until the first of December. When I find out for sure when they take affect, I am going to have part of my allotment made to you. You may get a couple checks instead of one. I won't need all of it, and I would rather send it home than carry it with me. I t won't be very much, but it will all count up on our good times when this is all over and we are home together again.

One third of your school term is about over, isn't it? It won't be too long until you will have your Christmas vacation now. I wish I was going to be home to spend it with you, but I am afraid that is out of the question.

The way things are going I don't know how I am going to find any time to study typing. I would sure like to take it if I can find time.

I had a letter from the folks a couple days ago, and I guess Dad did alright pheasant hunting. It looks like he does alright for no more hunting than he does. He said he was going to have you down for a feed. Some good fried pheasant would sure taste good.

I am about out of anything to write, so I guess I will quit and go to the show. Goodnight.

Lots of Love, Erva

December 2, 1944

Dearest Bob & Diane,

The mail man came yesterday and brought me four letters, so I guess I had better get busy. I also got one from Leona today. I guess it is pretty cold up there now. She likes her job swell, I guess. We went to town on liberty last night and went to a show. It was "Broadway Rhythm" and was pretty good. The place we went last night isn't much of a town. About all you see is Negroes. If we get liberty tomorrow night, we are going someplace else and see if we can find a better place.

I would like to have been in on those Thanksgiving dinners. I know you had a swell time and lots to eat. You said you took some pictures. Are you still having trouble getting film? I am sure enjoying the pictures you sent the other day.

So you finally have some winter out there? It has held off quite awhile, hasn't it? You said you and the folks discussed me, pro and con. Now how do I know if you were discussing the good points, if any, or the bad points. I don't know whether I should allow it or not. I just had to take a little time out. The mail man was nice and just brought me

another letter from my wife. I knew I should get one today, but I knew if it didn't come today, it was just delayed and I would get it tomorrow.

Neil really did swell on his cattle. He really has quite a job trying to do all the work himself. Since Bill is 4F [4F means there is a medical reason why the government won't take you into the military], what is he planning on doing? I suppose he will still try to get a defense job.

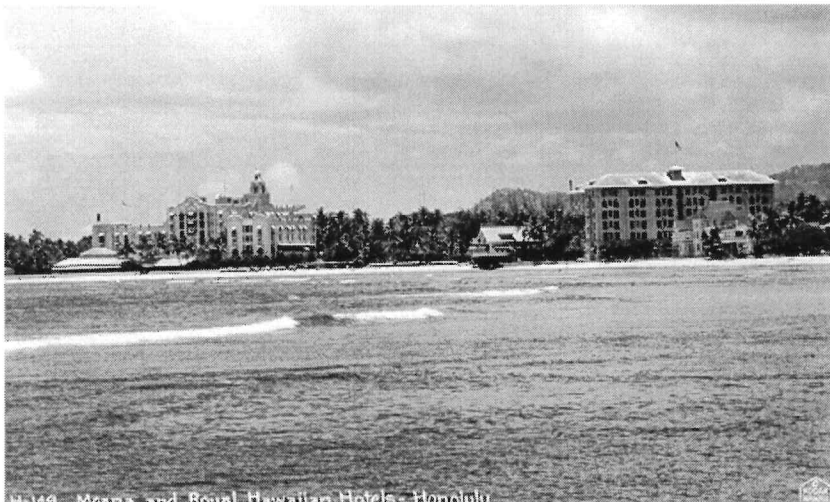
I got quite a kick out of Jack over the football game between Las Animas and Canon. We had a little bet up. Of course, when I got that schedule I had to kid him a little. I guess Las Animas must have a good team this year. There has been some big games out here, but I haven't seen any of them.

It is official now that we got our rates, but we still don't know when they will take affect. The first time we get a chance, we are going to have them sewn on our sleeves. I am afraid I wouldn't do too good a job.

It has been misting rain here nearly all day, and it gets pretty chilly of an evening. I can't think of much to write so will close for now.

I love you, Erva

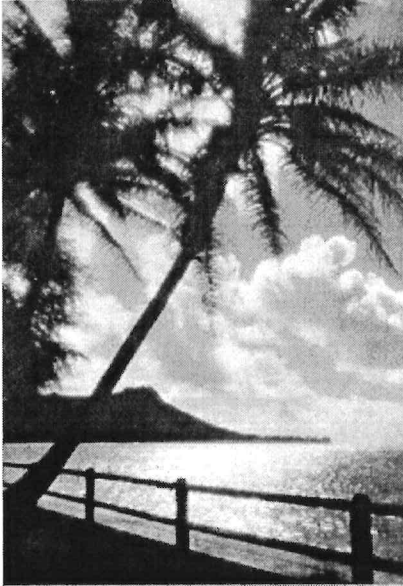
DECEMBER 3, 1944 - WE LEFT SAN FRANCISCO FOR PEARL HARBOR. THE WATER WAS VERY ROUGH FOR ABOUT 500 MILES OUT. WE MADE THE TRIP ALONE EXCEPT FOR ONE ESCORT. ABOUT HALF WAY TO PEARL, WE HAD A MESSAGE OF AN ENEMY SUBMARINE IN THE VICINITY NEAR US. IT GAVE US A FUNNY FEELING BECAUSE JUST A WEEK BEFORE ONE OF OUR SHIPS HAD BEEN TORPEDOED IN ABOUT THE SAME AREA. WE HAD NO TROUBLE ALL THE WAY.



THE MORNING OF DECEMBER 9, WE PICKED UP PEARL HARBOR ON THE RADAR AT ABOUT 700 MILES AWAY. ON OUR WAY IN, WE SAW DIAMOND HEAD MOUNTAIN, THE MOANA AND ROYAL HAWAIIAN HOTELS.

H-149 Moana and Royal Hawaiian Hotels, Honolulu

Waikiki Beach, Diamond Head in Distance



Statue of King Kamehameha

December 3, 1944

Dearest Bob & Diane,

The mail man was nice today and brought four nice letters so now I have a job. I had two from you, one from Mom and one from Aunt Montie. I had one from Leona yesterday. Aunt Montie can sure write nice letters, and they seemed to enjoy having me come. I know I enjoyed being there, too.

We went to town last night and went to the show. It was "A Wave a Wac and a Marine". I didn't care too much for it. They also had the coast guard orchestra and Chief Boatswain's Mate Victor Mature in person. The orchestra was good too. We also went over to the USO. They were making records of your voice so we had one made. When I got up to read mine, I was a little nervous. I sort of stuttered a little in spots, but I guess that won't make too much difference. It doesn't sound at all natural, but it was fun anyway. I hope you will enjoy it. I think Mom has a phonograph. Most all of us had a little trouble getting out what we wanted to say. I guess we aren't very good dramatists. [Barbara had kept the record, which Diane has now. It's very difficult to understand, but audible after 50 years.]

I wrote Bernard a long letter the other day, so maybe we will get in touch with each other again soon. I suppose he is moving around as much as we are. We are about as far apart as we could be. It will be nice when we all get home and can hash out all the old times. How come Roberta quit at the court house? It is too bad about Iola and Roger, but those things do happen.

It sounds like Dunk is right in the middle of it all, doesn't it? I would sure like to run into him sometime. I wish I knew what ship he was on. It sounds like they are doing a good job over there. I am glad to here he at least got S 1/C [Seaman First Class]. It is

funny how different ships are. I don't know how much schooling they had, but it looks like he should have gotten his rate. Did you tell Irene I finally got one? Dunk owes me a letter now, and I am anxious to get one to see how he is doing. Irene splurged a little on Dunk, didn't she? That is foolish to go so strong, especially now. I would rather wait and enjoy that later. I would like to have been there for Dad's birthday supper. I know you all had a good time. Seventy years is quite a while, isn't it?

I suppose you are still having lots of winter there. It still rains most of the time here and gets a little cool of an evening, but not too bad. We did get pretty wet when we were coming back from town last night. I am run down for tonight, so will quit for now.

Lots of Love, Erva

December 7, 1944

Dearest Bob & Diane,

As usual, I am a little slow in getting a letter started. It seems the last few days I haven't been much in the mood for writing. When I have had time to write, I have been too sea sick. When I feel alright, I haven't had time. I have been on the 12:00 a.m. to 4 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. to 4 p.m. watch all this week. By the time we stand those and all the other things we have to do we keep pretty busy. I don't know how long it is going to take me to get used to this ocean, but I hope it doesn't take much longer. It really isn't a very pleasant feeling. There is quite a lot of others that are having the same trouble.

Just think, three years ago today, all this trouble started. It seems like that has been a long time ago. I sure hope it is all settled by this time next year, and we are all home.

Have you seen Irene Dunkin lately? I would like to know what ship Dunk is on if possible. I would sure like to see him. Sometimes we run across ships here and there and it might be possible to run across his. Dunk owes me a letter, but I suppose he is pretty busy, too. I owe Frank and a bunch of others, but I don't know when I will get around to writing them.

It has been pretty nice weather out here lately. Most of the nights have been nice and moonlit. We did have rain a couple of days. There is something fascinating about just watching the water, but usually I can't do much of it. It makes me sick.

Jack said you had written his wife the other day. I know she was glad to hear from you. It will be nice when we can all be together again.

I haven't had any mail for a few days. I don't know how long it will be until we do get some, but I hope it isn't too long. I sure miss getting them. We have a personnel inspection tomorrow in our "whites". I haven't had mine unrolled since I was in boots, so I don't imagine they will look so hot. I imagine everyone else will be the same way. It is sure hard to keep clean aboard ship. I would hate to think of wearing whites all the time. You would think things would stay clean out where you can't see anything but water, but they are far from it. The decks are swabbed about five or six times a day and still they are dirty.

Well, it will soon be Christmas. I suppose it will be just another day for us. If it will speed this thing up any, I will be glad to forget it this time. I hope you can all be together and have a nice one. I am sure enjoying the pictures and things you sent. I would like to see Diane on Christmas morning. Do you remember how excited she got last year? I haven't had a chance to send the huraches home to Diane yet, but there is lots of time before she will be needing them. I imagine they will be pretty wide for her, but she will like them anyway. I guess she takes that after her mother.

We are having a movie tonight, so I suppose I will go. We are supposed to anyway. With the mid watch, it doesn't give us but about three or four hours sleep. They seem to think that is enough. I guess we will just take it, but not like it. It is about chow time, so I had better quit for now. I am looking forward to getting your next letters. There should be quite a few.

Lots of Love, Erva

December 13, 1944

Dearest Bob & Diane,

I received three more nice letters yesterday and intended to answer them but didn't get around to it. I have really done swell since we have been here. I have had seven letters already. The mail connections are a lot better than I expected. I hope you are doing as well. I should get several written tonight because I have a frig [It's some kind of boat] watch to stand from eight until twelve and eight until twelve in the morning. We aren't supposed to stand any watches according to ships' regulations, but we have to stand them anyway when we are in port. It is a slow watch because there isn't a thing to do and nobody to see only a couple guys that are in the frig.

Jack and I have been working all day cleaning some of the equipment. We have cleaned it the last two times. We really enjoy it because we have a chance to learn a little about what makes it work.

We had liberty yesterday, went to town, and took in some of the sights. What we have seen of the place, they can keep it. We saw a couple pretty places, but the rest was a mess. We are supposed to have liberty again Friday. They are getting a bus to take us on a tour of the country which should be very interesting. It is an all day trip, and I think it is supposed to be about 120 miles. I hope at least it is better than what we saw yesterday. I bought a few little souvenirs to remember the place by. Naturally, I can't send them home yet so will keep them until I do get a chance. Better yet, I would like to bring them home.

I heard today in sort of an indirect way that I just missed seeing Dunk by about two weeks. I don't know for sure if that is true. I would sure like to see him.

The war news stays pretty good. I see by today's paper where they are evacuating Tokyo now. I don't know if that makes much difference, but it sounds good anyway.

I am glad Diane is getting so she enjoys the movies now. It will be a lot more pleasant for you to take her. She is getting old enough now to begin to understand a little more what is going on. I bet she is really growing and changing too.

Honey, I know you are busy with school and all. If you don't have time to write so often, it is perfectly alright. As much as I like to get them, I probably won't be getting mail very regular anyway. Don't feel bad if you miss a day or two.

It sure is warm here. Our ventilating system doesn't seem to be working very well, and it is so warm we can hardly sleep. We wake up in the mornings sweating and with no blankets on at all. They have been doing a little checking on it, and I sure hope they find the trouble.

It seems the sleep doesn't do much good when it is so warm. I wake up about as tired as I go to bed. You know we were always used to sleeping with the windows open even in the winter and this sure doesn't agree with me.

I haven't gotten around to having my allotment made out to you, but I intend to as soon as I can. I think I will send about thirty dollars a month home. That isn't very much but every little bit helps towards those good times we will have when I do get home.

What did you ever decide about the place across the street? You never mentioned it any more, so I was just wondering. I am about out of anything to write, so I had better close for now. Goodnight.

I love you, Erva

December 14, 1944

Dearest Bob & Diane,

It is another swell day here, and we are really enjoying it. Since we are in port and don't have so many watches to stand, we have a little more chance to be outside and get a little fresh air and sunshine. We have been going without our shirts part of the time and really soaking up the sunshine. I suppose that sounds a little funny to you, going without shirts this time of year. I imagine you are wearing about all the clothes you can find to keep warm.

We were supposed to go on a tour of the country tomorrow, but something happened. All liberty has been canceled for the rest of the training period, so I don't suppose we will get to see much of it. I suppose some of the ships didn't do something just right or did something they shouldn't, so they restricted all of them.

I had another letter from you yesterday and also one from Mr. Halverson and a "Pay Day." I guess things are going fairly well there. He said he didn't know what they were selling, but they were making gains pretty regular. He also said Mr. Jenkins was down, didn't have much to say, but seemed to be satisfied. I guess merchandise is still terribly hard to get. He said they hadn't had any sheets and that sort of thing in some time. Maybe things will straighten out again someday, so we can run things like we want to. The Pay Day was fairly small this time. I haven't had time to read it yet, but I did glance through it. I imagine that picture they wanted was for the December issue. They usually put out a big issue then. Have you heard any more about the Dannenbergs? Mr. Halverson didn't mention it at all.

So you have been painting the church again. What has come over Dick Hudnall lately? I can't imagine him taking such an active part in anything like that.

Has Reba been thinking of taking the job at Rixey? That would sure be swell if she did. She would be swell to work with. Do you see much of them anymore? I suppose Earl is busy on the farm.

I am anxious to find out what they decide about Dan when he goes through the hospital. It would sure be swell if he could get a discharge. I would like to see his pictures. I bet they are swell. I am glad the ones you took are good too. Do you get many films around there now? If you don't, I might be able to pick some up for you sometime. I would sure like to have been able to take pictures of all the places we have been, but I guess we can't.

Have you heard anymore about Dunk? I would like to see him. I have to get a letter off to Frank as soon as I can. I suppose he is out somewhere by now. I am about out of anything to write, so will close for now.

I love you, Erva

December 16, 1944

Dearest Bob & Diane,

This is another nice warm day with plenty of sunshine. We have been outside cleaning and painting all morning without our shirts, so we are beginning to get a nice suntan. It sure feels swell since we have been inside most of the time lately. We don't have enough paint brushes to go around, so between paintings, I am trying to write this letter. I don't know whether it will make sense when I get through or not, but maybe you can make it out.

Only nine more days until Christmas, so I know you are plenty busy with your program. I know it will be a relief to get it all over with. This is a bad time to have one of the teachers quit, but those things just can't be helped. I imagine Reba will be good at the job and swell to get along with.

I suppose Diane got quite a kick out of decorating the tree. I got a nice card from Leona yesterday with three dollars in it. I am afraid my Christmas to everyone is going to be a little short this year, but maybe I can make it up to everyone when I get home.

I wrote her a letter yesterday and also Frank McVay. Little by little I am gradually getting caught up. Have you heard anymore about where Frank is? It has been nearly two months since I got his last letter, so he has probably done a lot of moving since then. They have changed their minds about liberty again, so we should rate tomorrow. We only get it from about eleven until 6:30 p.m., so we won't have much time. I would like to have taken that bus trip, but we won't have time for that. Some of the fellows got to go the other day, and they said it was swell.

The mail service has been very good here in port. The card from Leona came in three days. That is doing alright.

We just had another mail call, and I was lucky enough to get three nice ones. One from Mom and Dad Thaxton, one from Mom and Dad Crays and yours. If it wasn't for

the mail, I don't know how we would get along. I sure enjoyed the letter from Dad Crays. I really appreciate all they are doing for you and Diane. I don't know how we are ever going to repay them for everything. I would sure like to hear Diane say her piece in Sunday School. She will probably strut around like a little peacock. I know she will do alright. It is too bad both your programs are on the same night.

Say, that nearly floored me about Mrs. Rogers getting married. I wouldn't have guessed that in a hundred years. I was glad to hear that Archie had finally sold his house. That should start him out at farming in pretty good shape. It is about time for him to move too. It sounds like he got a pretty good price out of it. It is nice that the people that bought it don't have a lot of kids. They will probably be pretty good neighbors. It will be pretty lonesome for Mom for awhile with Archie gone.

How is Larry doing by now? Is he still in the implement business or did he take the filling station job? It is too bad they can't come down form Christmas, but I suppose they are busy too.

I have to go wash out a suit of whites, so I will have to close. We have been having movies every night aboard, so I have been going. That is about all the entertainment we have. Most of the shows I have already seen, but it is nice to see them again. Goodnight.

I love you, Erva

DECEMBER 18, 1944 - LEFT PEARL HARBOR FOR TEN DAYS PRACTICE AT MAUI ISLAND. ARRIVED DECEMBER 19. LEFT MAUI DECEMBER 25 AND ARRIVED BACK IN PEARL HARBOR. [Diane's fifth Christmas and birthday, Erv was in Hawaii. Barbara and Diane were at 650 Ash, Las Animas. Barbara was teaching at Rixey.]

December 21, 1944

Letter with Christmas card from Mrs. Nelson (Jack) Moorhead (Louise, Butch, Mary Lou)

Dear Barbara,

Please forgive me for not answering your letter sooner, but I am simply the world's worst correspondent. I've thought of you so often and wondered if you put in as many miserable days as I do when no letters arrive from those husbands of ours. I guess I'm just a sissy, but my spirits really droop when the mailman passes me by. Have you been able to concentrate on Santa Claus yet, or is your mind too full of a certain good-looking blond sailor on the Cecil a long, long ways off? I don't think you need to answer that, cause I'm quite sure of what the answer would be !!!

I imagine you've been terribly busy at school these last few weeks - There's always such a lot of work just before Christmas. As usual I've left too much to be done at the last minute, and now I'm rushing around like mad trying to get everything finished up in time. This year has been especially bad because I've been playing for a lot of programs

and they take such an awful lot of time. I've been making a great many gifts - a rag doll, aprons, etc. It keeps me pretty busy.

Is Diane quite excited about Christmas? Butch and Mary Lou certainly are. They can hardly wait. So far, I still haven't been able to develop much of the ole Christmas spirit, but maybe by next year we can all have a real Christmas and have our husbands home again. So, Barbara, here's wishing you as happy a Christmas as possible under the circumstances.

I'd love to hear from you if you have time to write. I promise faithfully to answer promptly!

Louise

[In the box of letters we were given, there was a gap from the December 16, 1944 letter to the July 2, 1945 letter. This time is somewhat covered with Erva's ship diary, but no personal letters have been found. The July letter picks up as if the lines of communication were never severed, so we think that perhaps the letters were lost or deliberately destroyed.]

DECEMBER 25, 1944 - LEFT MAUI AND ARRIVED BACK IN PEARL HARBOR.

DECEMBER 26, 1944 - HAD LIBERTY AND WENT INTO HONOLULU. SAW SEVERAL BATTLEWAGONS AND CARRIERS IN THE BAY. THE BATTLESHIP *MARYLAND* WAS BEING REPAIRED WHERE SHE HAD A BOMB HIT. WE ALSO SAW A LOT OF DAMAGE DONE AT PEARL HARBOR. WE WENT TO SUB BASE AND WENT THROUGH A SUBMARINE.

DECEMBER 31, 1944 - LEFT PEARL HARBOR FOR HILO, HAWAII. ARRIVED HILO JANUARY 1, 1945. THIS IS A VERY PRETTY ISLAND, MUCH MORE SO THAN OAHU. STARTED LOADING FOURTH AND FIFTH MARINES JANUARY 2.

JANUARY 3, 1945 - CALLED TO GENERAL QUARTERS AND FOUND OUT ONE OF THE SHIPS NEXT TO OURS HAD A FIRE. IT WAS DISCOVERED THAT SOMEONE HAD WRAPPED BUNDLES OF MATCHES, HID THEM IN THE HOLDS AND ONE OF THEM HAD CAUGHT FIRE. ALL THE SHIPS MADE AN INVESTIGATION, AND WE ALSO FOUND SOME IN OURS.

JANUARY 6, 1945 - LEFT HILO, HAWAII. ARRIVED IN PEARL HARBOR ON JANUARY 7.

JANUARY 13, 1945 - LEFT PEARL HARBOR ALONG WITH 38 OTHER SHIPS. TWENTY-TWO WERE APA AND AKA, AND THE BALANCE WERE DD AND DE. ADMIRAL WHITE WAS IN CHARGE OF THE SQUADRON. COMMODORE MCGOVERN WAS IN CHARGE OF OUR DIVISION. GENERAL ROCKE WAS IN CHARGE OF THE MARINES WE TOOK ABOARD.

JANUARY 14, 1945 - WE HAD PRACTICE LANDINGS ON LANAI AND MOLOKAI. WE HAD THE MARINE BAND ABOARD OUR SHIP. BOB CROSBY WAS IN CHARGE OF THEM BEFORE THEY CAME ABOARD SHIP. HE LEFT THEM AT PEARL HARBOR.

JANUARY 17, 1945 - LEFT LANAI FOR PEARL HARBOR. ARRIVED JANUARY 18.

JANUARY 27, 1945 - LEFT PEARL HARBOR ENROUTE TO ENIWETOK. [One of the Caroline Islands in the South Pacific, just west of Philippine Islands.]

JANUARY 30, 1945 - WE WILL CROSS THE INTERNATIONAL DATE LINE TONIGHT. WE HAVE GENERAL QUARTERS EVERY MORNING AND EVENING FOR ONE HOUR, AND WE ALSO HAVE PRACTICE DRILLS DURING THE DAY.



Erva carried this photo of Barbara and Diane overseas with him and throughout the remainder of the war.

FEBRUARY 5, 1945 - ARRIVED AT ENIWETOK. HAD NO TROUBLE ENROUTE UNTIL WE WERE ABOUT 60 MILES OUT. ONE OF THE ESCORTS MADE CONTACT WITH A SUBMARINE AND KEPT IT COVERED UNTIL THE CONVOY WAS PASSED AND THEN DROPPED DEPTH CHARGES ON IT. THEY SENT A MESSAGE OVER TBS THAT THERE WAS SUCH AN EXPLOSION THAT IT KNOCKED OUT THEIR SONAR GEAR. THEY WAITED UNTIL MORNING AND FOUND DEBRIS ALL OVER THE WATER, SO WERE CERTAIN THEY GOT IT. WE ESTIMATE ABOUT 1000 SHIPS ARE ANCHORED IN THE HARBOR.

FEBRUARY 9, 1945 - LEFT ENIWETOK FOR SAIPAN. ARRIVED SAIPAN THE MORNING OF FEBRUARY 11. WILL STAY HERE UNTIL TIME FOR INVASION OF IWO JIMA. THERE ARE MANY JAP SHIPS SUNK IN THE HARBOR HERE. HEARD A LOUD EXPLOSION ON THE BEACH AND FOUND OUT THE SOLDIERS WERE BLASTING JAPS OUT OF CAVES. WE SEE LARGE BUNCHES OF B29'S LEAVING EVERY DAY TO BOMB JAPAN.

FEBRUARY 17, 1945 - LEFT SAIPAN TODAY FOR IWO JIMA.

IWO JIMA (Feb. 16–Mar. 17, 1945). The capture of Iwo Jima in World War II by three U.S. Marine divisions supported by over 800 warships and landing craft has been described as the classic amphibious assault of recorded history. One of the Volcano Islands, 750 miles south of Tokyo, Iwo gave Japan two hours' warning of U.S. B-29 raids from the Mariana Islands and provided a fighter base for the harassment of U.S. bombers. To reverse this situation and afford a haven for crippled American aircraft, the Joint Chiefs of Staff directed that Iwo Jima be seized.

Iwo is a barren volcanic island eight square miles in area, dominated at one end by Mount Suribachi (556 feet). It has two marginally feasible landing beaches. Its defenses—the most elaborate, dense, and best integrated in the Pacific—included three airfields; over 730 major installations with 120 guns larger than 75mm; 220 large mortars, howitzers, and rocket launchers; and ten miles of underground tunnels linking hundreds of bunkers and blockhouses. One of Japan's ablest generals, Lt. Gen. Tadamichi Kuribayashi, with 21,000 troops, defended Iwo. The marines' overall commander was Lt. Gen. H. M. Smith, supported by Adm. R. K. Turner. The 82,000-man landing force (Third, Fourth, and Fifth marine

divisions) was under the command of Lt. Gen. H. Schmidt.

Following three days' bombardment (over 14,000 rounds of 16-inch, 14-inch, and 8-inch shells) from six battleships and five cruisers, the marines landed on Feb. 19 under cover of the heaviest prelanding bombardment of the war—over 6,000 tons of shells and bombs delivered before noon. Because of the massive preparation, beach casualties were moderate, but capture of the remainder of the island required the most bitter battle of the Pacific, in which, amid black volcanic sands, grotesque crags, and steaming sulfur pits, gains were counted in yards and heavy casualties inflicted and unflinchingly accepted by both sides. Seizure of Mount Suribachi (Feb. 23) by the Twenty-eighth Marines gave attackers the dominant terrain, from which was carried on a ten-day struggle to overrun the fireswept airfields and capture the ridges, buttes, and deep caves in which Kuribayashi made his last desperate stand. Although Iwo Jima was officially declared secured on Mar. 17, resistance was not extinguished until nine days later.

The battle cost the United States 4,590 dead and 24,096 wounded; more than 20,000 Japanese were killed and 1,083 captured. Epitomizing this fierce contest, Adm. C. W. Nimitz declared, "Uncommon valor was a common virtue." By the end of the war 2,251 B-29 aircraft carrying 24,761 airmen had made safe emergency landings on Iwo Jima.

[W. S. Bartley, *Iwo Jima: Amphibious Epic*; R. D. Heinl, Jr., *Soldiers of the Sea*, and *Target: Iwo*; J. Isely and P. A. Crowl, *U.S. Marines and Amphibious War*; Richard Newcomb, *Iwo Jima*.]

ROBERT DEBS HEINL, JR.

FEBRUARY 18, 1945 - NO TROUBLE SO FAR. IN THE NEWS WE HEARD THE SHIPS AND PLANES HAD BOMBED THE ISLAND FOR 67 DAYS. ADMIRAL HALSEY'S 3RD FLEET AND TASK FORCE 58 ARE BETWEEN HERE AND JAPAN TO KEEP OFF AIR ATTACKS.

FEBRUARY 19, 1945 - D-DAY [This was the starting date for Operation Detachment. The 8 square mile volcanic island of Iwo Jima, approximately 660 miles south of Tokyo, was to be captured for use as a forward airfield to support the bomber offensive against Japan.] 2 A.M. AND I AM ON WATCH. WE ARE 30 MILES FROM THE ISLAND. I WENT OUT ON DECK AND COULD SEE THE FLASH OF THE GUNS AND BOMBS ON THE ISLAND. WEATHER IS BAD AND WATER IS ROUGH. WE ARRIVED AT THE TRANSPORT AREA AT 6 A.M., SIX MILES FROM THE BEACH. 7 A.M. WE ARE MOVING IN TO 3000 YARDS. WE ARE STARTING TO LOAD MARINES IN BOATS. "H" HOUR IS AT 9 A.M. BATTLESHIPS, CARRIERS AND DESTROYERS ARE FIRING CONTINUOUSLY AT THE BEACH. WE HAVE AROUND 1200 CARRIER BASED PLANES AROUND HERE MOST OF THE TIME. 11 A.M. THE MARINES HAVE BEEN ON THE BEACH AN HOUR AND A HALF AND ARE HAVING TROUBLE GETTING SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT ON THE BEACH. THE JAPS ARE THROWING LOTS OF MORTARS AT THE MARINES, AND THEY ARE TAKING A PRETTY HEAVY LOSS. THE PLANES ARE CONTINUOUSLY STRAFING AND BOMBING THE BEACH NOW. WE CAN SEE A FEW OF OUR FLAME THROWING TANKS IN OPERATION NOW ON THE BEACH. 2 P.M. A RADIO MESSAGE FROM THE BEACH SAYS 2600 MARINES ARE WOUNDED AND NEED MEDICAL CARE. WE HAD TO MOVE OUT A LITTLE BECAUSE THE JAPS WERE FIRING AT US. WE HAVE TAKEN IN SEVERAL BOAT LOADS OF CASUALTIES. MOST OF THEM ARE EYE AND MENTAL CASES. SOME PITIFUL CASES.

FEBRUARY 20, 1945 - BATTLE IS STILL GOING STRONG. HAVE 75 WOUNDED ABOARD NOW. TWO DEAD AND WERE BURIED AT SEA. FLARES KEPT THE ISLAND LIT UP ALL NIGHT TO PREVENT THE JAPS FROM COUNTER ATTACKING. MOST OF THE JAP FIRE IS COMING FROM THE VOLCANO.

FEBRUARY 21, 1945 - MARINES HAVE ORDERS TO TAKE THE VOLCANO AT ANY COST.

FEBRUARY 23, 1945 - MARINES RAISED THE FLAG ON MT. SURIBACHI AT 10:30 THIS MORNING. WE HAVE MOVED IN TO 1000 YARDS NOW. WE CAN HEAR SHELLS GOING OVER SOMETIMES AND SEE THEM LAND IN THE WATER NEAR BY. WE HAVE HAD SEVERAL AIR RAIDS, AND TWO DAYS AGO SOME JAP SUICIDES GOT THROUGH AND TWO OF THEM DIVED ON THE CARRIER *BISMARCK SEA* AND SUNK IT IN A FEW MINUTES. [There was a loss of 218 of the 943 officers and men.] A LARGE PERCENT OF THE CARRIERS LOST AND ALSO MANY OF THE PLANES THAT HAD NO PLACE TO LAND. A TRANSPORT ALSO TOOK A SUICIDE PLANE BUT DIDN'T SINK. THE PLANE

LANDED IN SICK BAY AND KILLED ALL OF THE DOCTORS, CORPSMEN, AND ALL OF THE PATIENTS.

FEBRUARY 24, 1945 - ANOTHER AIR RAID TONIGHT, BUT NOT SO LARGE AND DIDN'T LAST SO LONG. ONE PLANE DIVED INTO A REPAIR SHIP AND KILLED ABOUT 60 MEN. IT IS ANCHORED A SHORT DISTANCE FROM US NOW.

FEBRUARY 27, 1945 - THE MARINES HAVE ABOUT HALF THE ISLAND NOW. PLANES AND SHIPS ARE SHELLING AND BOMBING THE ISLAND 24 HOURS A DAY. WE ARE STILL DRAWING SOME MORTAR FIRE, BUT SO FAR NO DAMAGE.

FEBRUARY 28, 1945 - CAN SEE THE FIGHTING WITH BINOCULARS. LOTS OF OUR MEN ARE BEING CARRIED BACK FROM THE FRONT LINES. MOST OF THE 4TH DIVISION MARINES ARE WIPED OUT. HAVE THREE JAP PRISONERS ABOARD. TWO AREN'T WOUNDED SERIOUSLY, BUT THIRD WAS BURNED BY A FLAME THROWER. LEFT IWO TODAY ON OUR WAY BACK TO SAIPAN.

MARCH 3, 1945 - ARRIVED AT SAIPAN THIS MORNING.

MARCH 4, 1945 - WE HAVE REFUELED AND ARE NOW ON OUR WAY TO GUAM.

MARCH 5, 1945 - ARRIVED GUAM THIS MORNING AND ARE LEAVING THIS EVENING.

MARCH 6, 1945 - CROSSED THE EQUATOR TODAY AND HAD A GOOD INITIATION FROM THE SHELLBACKS.

MARCH 12, 1945 - ARRIVED IN TULAGI THIS MORNING IN THE SOLOMON ISLANDS.

MARCH 13, 1945 - LEFT TULAGI THIS MORNING.

MARCH 15, 1945 - ARRIVED ESPINITU SANTE IN THE NEW HEBRIDES ISLANDS.

MARCH 20, 1945 - HAVE HAD THREE LIBERTIES HERE ON ONE OF THE ISLANDS. NOTHING HERE BUT COCONUTS.

MARCH 25, 1945 - LEFT THIS MORNING WITH THE 27TH DIVISION OF THE ARMY ABOARD.

APRIL 3, 1945 - ARRIVED ULITHI {southwest of Guam} THIS MORNING.

APRIL 4, 1945 - LEFT THIS MORNING AT 0900 FOR OKINAWA.

APRIL 8, 1945 - WE ARE 200 MILES FROM OKINAWA AND HAVE HAD NO TROUBLE. ONE ESCORT SIGHTED A FLOATING MINE AND SUNK IT.

APRIL 9, 1945 - PULLED INTO NAGUSHI BAY ON THE WEST SIDE OF OKINAWA THIS MORNING. THERE ARE AROUND 1400 SHIPS IN THIS OPERATION. WE HAD AN AIR RAID THIS MORNING CONSISTING OF ABOUT 60 PLANES. OUR PLANES REPORTED THEM ABOUT 30 MILES FROM US. SIX OF THEM ATTACKED AN ESCORT AND KNOCKED OUT HER STEERING GEARS. FOUR OF THE SIX PLANES WERE SHOT DOWN.

APRIL 10, 1945 - ANOTHER RAID THIS MORNING, BUT THE PLANES DIDN'T GET TO US.

APRIL 11, 1945 - ANOTHER NUISANCE RAID THIS MORNING. OUR PLANES KEPT THEM OUT TO 23 MILES.

APRIL 12, 1945 - AIR RAIDS KEPT US UP MOST OF THE NIGHT. GOT OFF WATCH AT 4 A.M., JUST FINISHED EATING, AND GENERAL QUARTERS WERE SOUNDED AGAIN. WE JUST GOT A SECOND AT 3 P.M. 87 JAP PLANES WERE SHOT DOWN, WE LOST 10 PLANES AND ONE DD BADLY DAMAGED. [On April 12, 1945, Franklin Delano Roosevelt died of a Cerebral Hemorrhage. Harry S. Truman became President of the United States.]

APRIL 15, 1945 - FINISHED UNLOADING TODAY. WE HAD 31 GENERAL QUARTERS SINCE WE CAME. 365 JAP PLANES HAVE BEEN SHOT DOWN. WE ARE BADLY IN NEED OF SOME SLEEP. WE HAD ONE BOMB LAND BETWEEN US AND THE AOC 10.

APRIL 16, 1945 - WE ARE LEAVING THIS MORNING. ANOTHER AIR RAID LAST NIGHT AND LASTED 4 1/2 HOURS. MORE NUISANCE RAIDS KEPT US UP MOST OF THE REST OF THE NIGHT.

APRIL 18, 1945 - WE ARE 600 MILES FROM OKINAWA. HAD A REPORT OF ANOTHER AIR RAID WITH 66 MORE JAP PLANES DOWN.

APRIL 19, 1945 - HEARD TONIGHT ERNIE PYLE WAS KILLED ON OKINAWA. [War correspondent, Ernie Pyle, was killed in a fox hole by a Japanese bullet during the battle of Iwo Jima.]

APRIL 20, 1945 - ARRIVED SAIPAN.

APRIL 21, 1945 - LEFT SAIPAN.

APRIL 22, 1945 - ARRIVED AT GUAM. LEFT GUAM.

TEACHER'S APPOINTMENT AND CONTRACT

Mrs Barbara Thornton
Las Animas Colo
Las Animas, Colorado, May 10, 1945

At a regularly called meeting of the Board of Directors of School District No. 6 in Bent County, Colorado, held this 10th day of May, 1945, you were employed to teach in the public school of said district for the period beginning Monday, Sept 3, 1945, and ending May 10, 1946, at a salary of One hundred thirty five ^{no}/₁₀₀ Dollars per month, payable monthly or in twelve monthly installments in school warrants as provided by law.

The conditions of your employment are that you will faithfully observe the rules and regulations adopted by the Board for the government of said school; that you will prove your professional spirit by belonging to your County and State Education Associations; that you will exercise reasonable diligence in looking after the preservation of all the school property under your jurisdiction; that you will make promptly and correctly all reports of the school required by the County Superintendent; that you will keep a correct register of the school, and file the same with the President or Secretary of the Board or the Principal of the school at the close of the school year as required by law; and that you hold a legal Certificate under the laws of the State of Colorado.

A further condition of your employment is that you will not at any time after Aug 1 apply for or take active means to secure employment other than as a teacher in the Riley public school if the period of such employment covers any portion of the term the school is in session; unless you first secure the consent of the Board and Superintendent to do so; and it is hereby provided that in case you violate the foregoing clause the Board may terminate your employment under this contract by giving you a written notice to that effect. Last warrant will be held until conditions of contract are fulfilled.

Your resignation after Aug 1 will not receive favorable consideration.

No teachers shall be dismissed without good cause shown, which includes a hearing.

Other requirements: Teach third and fourth grades and cooperate with the principal and other teachers. The Board of Dist 6 agrees to release you from above contract due only to the return of your husband. From was duties & a 30 day notice preceding release of said contract.

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS, SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. _____

Attest:

George Jacobs, Secretary

Floyd Marcum, President
Clarence M. Rethloff, Treasurer

I hereby accept the above employment upon the conditions stated.

APRIL 23, 1945 - ARRIVED ULITHI. LOTS OF SHIPS HERE. WE HAVE HAD SEVERAL LIBERTIES ON ISLAND OF MOG MOG.

MAY 24, 1945 - LEFT ULITHI THIS MORNING.

MAY 28, 1945 - ARRIVED SAN PEDRO BAY ON LEYTE GULF.

MAY 29, 1945 - LEFT SAN PEDRO BAY.

MAY 31, 1945 - ARRIVE SUBIC BAY TODAY. ON OUR WAY UP, WE PASSED THE ISLANDS OF BOHOL, CEBU, NEGROS, PANAY AND MINDORO. WE PASSED CORREGIDOR AND BATAAN AND ALSO THE ENTRANCE TO MANILA BAY.

JUNE 3, 1945 - WENT OVER TO THE TOWN OF OLONGAPO AFTER MAIL TODAY. WE HAD HAD SOME LIBERTY ON GRANDE ISLAND, BUT NOTHING MUCH TO DO THERE.

[June 13, 1945 - Don Colvin returned home from the Aleutian Islands.]

JUNE 26, 1945 - LEFT SUBIC BAY TODAY AND ARRIVED IN MANILA.

JUNE 27, 1945 - HAD LIBERTY IN MANILA. EVERYTHING IS REALLY WRECKED THERE, AND THE PEOPLE LOOK LIKE THEY ARE ABOUT STARVED. SAW BETIFIED PRISON AND WENT IN AND LOOKED AROUND.

JUNE 30, 1945 - LEFT MANILA BAY.

JULY 2, 1945 - ARRIVED HINUNANYAN BAY. THEN ONTO SAN PEDRO BAY.

July 2, 1945

Barbara hand-wrote "Phillippines" on the envelope of the following letter.

Dearest Bob & Diane,

I received two letters from you yesterday, so will try to get them answered. I am short about three, but we will probably get them soon.

We finally got our liberty in town, and it was quite a sight to see. You can't imagine all the destruction that has been done in these places until you see them. In the downtown section, I didn't see a single building that wasn't wrecked. Some of them were several story buildings, and they were completely demolished. This has been a very beautiful city before the war. Most of the buildings are expensively constructed and have lots of fancy designs on the outside. They have most of the street cleared, but lots of places the sidewalks are still covered. You have to walk in the streets. There are so many

homeless people that they have taken old scrap tin and made shelters in these wrecked buildings wherever they could find a corner still standing. They have set up some temporary business houses in the same way. We went out in the poorer district, and they were even worse out there. The sanitary condition is terrible. We even had to take our own lunch and water with us because the food and water weren't safe. They nearly mobbed us as soon as we hit the beach, wanted to buy our lunch or trade it for souvenirs. We were offered as high as \$2.50 for our box of K rations. They will give most anything for cigarettes. We also got to see one of the prison camps. These people seem to be terribly short of clothes, too. We saw men with pants made of gunny sacks and women with just most any kind of cloth wrapped around them.

There are lots of ships around here that have been sunk. You can just see the tops of them sticking out of the water. I got quite a little Jap money and a few other souvenirs. These people sure know how to charge. We had a glass of lime juice for 50 cents. We saw a lady's jacket similar to a bed jacket, and they wanted \$60 for it. Everything else runs about the same.

How does Diane like Bible school by now? I imagine she is having a big time. That will help to give her a good start in school this fall.

We are on the move again, but I don't think very far. We were at the last place about a month. There is some very beautiful country around here. If it were back in the states, I would enjoy roaming around through the hills. Have you heard from Spud Murphy lately? It is about time to go on watch, so I will close for now.

Lots of Love, Erva

JULY 5, 1945 - LEFT SAN PEDRO BAY AND ANCHORED AT GUINAN BAY.

JULY 7, 1945 - LEFT GUINAN BAY AND ANCHORED AT TULAG BAY.

JULY 8, 1945 - LEFT TULAG BAY AND ARRIVED AT SAN PEDRO BAY. WE ARE HAVING TROUBLE WITH ONE OF THE TURBINES AND ARE MAKING TEST RUNS.

JULY 12, 1945 - LEFT SAN PEDRO AND ARRIVED AT GUINAN BAY.

JULY 13, 1945 - LEFT GUINAN BAY. ARRIVED SAN PEDRO BAY.

JULY 15, 1945 - LEFT SAN PEDRO BAY. ARRIVED TULAG BAY. LEFT TULAG BAY.

JULY 16, 1945 - ARRIVED AT DAVAO BAY. LEFT DAVAO BAY. [The United States exploded a text bomb at Alamogordo, New Mexico.]

JULY 19, 1945 - ARRIVED IN CEBU. HAD LIBERTY AT CEBU CEBU, WHICH IS THE CAPITAL. IT IS ALSO VERY BADLY WRECKED.

JULY 20, 1945 - ARRIVED AT ILOILO ON PANAY ISLAND.

JULY 21, 1945 - ARRIVED BACK AT SUBIC BAY.

JULY 28, 1945 - ARRIVED AT LINGAYEN GULF.

AUGUST 6, 1945 - LEFT LINGAYEN GULF AND ARRIVED AT SAN FERNANDO BAY. [An A-bomb was dropped on Hiroshima on this date, killing 100,000 Japanese people]

AUGUST 8, 1945 - LEFT SAN FERNANDO BAY. ARRIVED LINGAYEN GULF.

AUGUST 9, 1945 - LEFT LINGAYEN GULF. ARRIVED SAN FERNANDO. LEFT SAN FERNANDO. [A second A-bomb was dropped on Nagasaki, killing 60,000 Japanese. Tens of thousands more died of radiation poisoning.]

AUGUST 10, 1945 - ARRIVED SUBIC BAY.

AUGUST 11, 1945 - LEFT SUBIC BAY AND ARRIVED AT MANILA.

AUGUST 13, 1945 - WAS ON LIBERTY TODAY IN MANILA WHEN NEWS CAME THAT THE JAPS HAD SURRENDERED. [Japan officially surrendered on September 2, 1945. The date became known as VJ Day - Victory Over Japan.]

AUGUST 14, 1945 - LEFT MANILA FOR BATANGAS BAY.

August 17, 1945

Letter to Erva from R.A. Dunkin [Dunk]

Dear Erv,

Thanks for the letter. I'm glad to know my note got to you. When I saw your ship, I couldn't believe my eyes.

Now that the war is over, I don't know what we will do. It doesn't look like we're going home for a while, does it? The point system is odd to say the least, but I'm sure it will be changed in the next 60 days. In the meantime, I'll keep a sharp eye out for you again. We didn't stay long at the last port. I think we are right behind you, but it would be a miracle to find you here.

I'm going to write Frank a note tonight and see if I can locate him. I haven't heard from him for almost a year. One of the fellows in our division has a friend at an address very similar and plans to see him. We'll see if he can give me a lead on Frank.

Have you been collecting any souvenirs? Most of them are too rich for my blood, but I've got enough for the immediate family.

That's it for now, Son. Keep up the good work on the mail and keep your eyes peeled.

Sincerely, Dunk

AUGUST 18, 1945 - ARRIVED AT BATANGAS. WE ARE LOADING ON THE FIRST CAVALRY AND THEIR EQUIPMENT HERE.

August 19, 1945

Dearest Bob & Diane,

We got under way again this morning and just now pulled into port. I don't know what we are down here for, but we probably will find out soon. I am glad we have started doing something. Everything we do now should put us a little nearer time to start for the states. I sure hope it won't be too long now anyway. It is quite a relief to know that it is over anyway.

I suppose you have heard about the point system for Navy discharges. The way it is now, there will be very few aboard ship that are eligible to get out. I need ten more points, which would take about nineteen months. I am not worried about being in nearly that long. I am sure as soon as they get rid of this top bunch, they will lower the points required. It at least makes me feel a lot better to know they are going to start discharging the men so soon. I suppose the big shots are busy getting the final papers signed, etc.

I just found out today that Dunk has been in the last two ports that I have been in. I saw his ship in the first one, but we left before I could get over to see him. I didn't know he was in the last one. We are having a hard time getting together.

We were in port six days this last time, and our mail still didn't catch us. It is hard to tell when we will get it now.

If we have to stay out here, I hope we get to make a trip to Japan. That is where we have been headed for the last few years, so I would like to say that I at least got there. We passed a Japanese hospital ship this morning with one of our ships for an escort. It is the first Jap ship we have seen except some that have been partly sunk in some of the harbors.

Our new captain has taken over his duties now, and I think he is going to be better than the last one we had. We were issued large certificates the other day that showed we had crossed the 180th meridian. The old captain signed them before he left.

We had a good show aboard last night. It was "Incendiary Blonde" with Betty Hutton and George Raft. The one tonight should be good too, but I forgot the name of it.

Your vacation is just about over, isn't it? It doesn't seem very long since it just started.

I heard over the news that they had quit rationing gas in the states now. They will drop it on quite a few things before long.

How are you and the little gal getting along by now? I suppose she is getting anxious for school to start. I had better quit and get cleaned up before chow.

Lots of Love, Erva

AUGUST 25, 1945 - LEFT BATANGAS THIS MORNING WITH 41 OTHER SHIPS AND ESCORTS BOUND FOR JAPAN.

AUGUST 26, 1945 - HAD STEAMED ONE DAY WHEN WE RECEIVED ORDERS TO TURN BACK TO SUBIC BAY BECAUSE OF A TYPHOON IN THAT AREA.

AUGUST 27, 1945 - LEFT SUBIC BAY AGAIN FOR JAPAN.

AUGUST 29, 1945 - WE ARE NOW EAST OF FORMOSA. WEATHER FINE. ONE MAN FROM ANOTHER SHIP FELL OVERBOARD AND WAS PICKED UP LATER BY ONE OF THE ESCORTS.

Erva Thaxton RDM 3/c Writes
From Tokyo Bay, Sept. 1

Letters from Japan are beginning to arrive here now and one of the first is from Erva Thaxton RDM 3/c to his wife. He writes a personal letter and also encloses a form letter which has evidently been given to all the men to mail from Tokyo Bay, Sept. 2. "Greeting: You From the Land Of The Rising Sun!" as follows:

"The war is officially over for us today with the signing of the peace treaty. Now we are looking forward to the day when we will be home for good!

"Today we are making history and are very proud of the distinction of transporting the first waterborne occupational troops to the homeland of the Japanese. On this occasion we have on board correspondents assigned by the Navy to get pictures and stories for the local newspapers and magazines of personnel on board. Keep a weather eye open for my picture in the paper.

"What do you think of the cancellation of the air mail stamp on the envelope? We think that it would make a good souvenir. Maybe you would like to keep it in remembrance of the signing of the peace treaty. Let me hear from you soon."

Ten Miles of Ships

Following are excerpts from Erva's personally written letter of Sept. 1: "We are right in Tojo's back yard at the present, about 135 miles from Yokohama and will be there early in the morning. It is going to be quite a sight and also quite an experience. We are going to be the first transport squadron in. There have been some airborne troops go in ahead of us.

"We have 31 transports filled with troops in our group and 12 escorts and one aircraft carrier. We have been sailing in five columns and now we are lining up single file. When we get lined up there will be a line nearly 10 miles long. That will be quite a sight itself. I would sure like to go ashore up there, but I know that will be impossible for a while.

"Be sure and save the envelopes from Japan. Those starups dated September second from Tokyo will make history. . . .

"We have had a very quiet trip so far. The second day out we got a report of a storm and had to go back to Manila for two days. . . It is raining pretty hard this evening, but the sea has been fairly calm.

"They have loosened up a little on censorship regulations. We can tell where we are and where we have been, but not where we are going, but we never know that anyway.

Covered the Philippines

"We have really covered the Philippines since we hit here. We first landed on Leyte, were there for about a day and since then have been at nearly every island and most every one of the larger cities. We were at Cebu on the Island of Cebu and had a liberty there. We passed Negros, Mindanao, Mindoro, stopped at Illo Illo on the Island of Panay, but didn't get liberty there. We were in Manila Bay two different times and had several liberties. We were in Subic Bay three times. That is the first place I saw Dunk's ship and then I found out he followed us down to Manila. . . Carl Gates is getting to make the trip with us.

"It has been getting a little cooler the last couple of days. It will be nice sleeping tonight, but we have early reveille in the morning."

SEPTEMBER 2, 1945 - PULLED INTO THE ENTRANCE OF TOKYO BAY AT 0730. YOKOHAMA IS ABOUT 30 MILES UP THE BAY. WE PASSED THE BATTLESHIP *MISSOURI* ON OUR WAY IN. THE AIR WAS FULL OF OUR OWN PLANES. WE SAW ONE JAP BATTLESHIP IN THE BAY. A JAP PILOT CAME ABOARD AND TOOK US INTO THE DOCK. WE TIED UP AT PIER 4, AND THE AIR CORPS BAND WAS THERE PLAYING FOR US.

September 2, 1945

Dearest Bob & Diane,

We are right in Tojo's back yard at the present. We are now about one hundred thirty five miles from Yokohama and will be there early in the morning. It is going to be quite a sight and also quite an experience. I am glad we are going to be one of the bunch going in. We are going to be the first transport squadron in. There have been some airborne troops go in ahead of us. We have thirty one transports filled with troops in our group, twelve escorts, and one aircraft carrier. We have been sailing in five columns, but now we are lining up single file. When we get lined up, there will be a line nearly ten miles long. That will be quite a sight itself. I can't imagine how many ships there will be up there when they all get there. I would sure like to go ashore up there, but I know that will be impossible for awhile.

Be sure and save the envelopes from Japan. They have a special stamp they are going to stamp on all the envelopes mailed from Tokyo. Those stamps dated September 2nd from Tokyo will make history. That is the day the official surrender is supposed to be signed. [This very letter was mailed with that special stamp on September 2, 1945]

We have had a very quiet trip so far. The second day out, we got a report of a storm and had to go back to Manila for two days. This time everything has been swell. It is raining pretty hard this evening, but the sea has been fairly calm.

They have loosened up a little on censorship regulations. We can tell where we are and where we have been, but not where we are going. We never know that anyway.

We have really covered the Philippines since we hit here. We first landed on Leyte and were there for about a day. Since then we have been at nearly every island and most every one of the larger cities. We were at Cebu on the Island of Cebu and had a liberty there. We passed Negros, Mindoro. Stopped at Iloilo on the Island of Panay but didn't get liberty there. We were in Manila Bay two different times and had several liberties. We were in Subic Bay three times. That is the first place I saw Dunk's ship, and then I found out he followed us on down to Manila.

I don't know what our chances will be of getting together now, but there is always a chance. I don't think they are coming up here now anyway. Carl Gates is getting to make the trip with us.

I would sure like to get some mail while we are there, but I don't imagine we will. I sure miss it when it doesn't come regular. If we don't get any here, it will be quite awhile before we get any. It has been getting a little cooler the last couple of days. It will sure be nice sleeping tonight, but we have early reveille in the morning. It is getting late, so I will close for now and write again tomorrow. Maybe I will have something a little more interesting to write.

Lots of Love, Erva



Envelope postmarked on September 2, 1945, including the special stamps

September 2, 1945

Typewritten letter from Tokyo Bay, Japan

GREETING YOU FROM THE LAND OF THE RISING SUN!!

The war is officially over for us today with the signing of the peace treaty. Now we are looking forward to the day when we will be home for good!

Today we are making history and are very proud of the distinction of transporting the first water-borne occupational troops to the homeland of the Japanese. On this occasion, we have on board correspondents assigned by the Navy to get pictures and stories of personnel on board for the local newspaper and magazines. Keep a weather eye open for my picture in the paper.

What do you think of the cancellation of the air mail stamp on the envelope? We think that it would make a good souvenir. Maybe you would like to keep it in remembrance of the signing of the peace treaty.

Let me hear from you soon.

Sincerely yours, Erva

INSTRUMENT OF SURRENDER



We, acting by command of and in behalf of the Emperor of Japan, the Japanese Government and the Japanese Imperial General Headquarters, hereby accept the provisions set forth in the declaration issued by the heads of the Governments of the United States, China and Great Britain on 26 July 1945, at Potsdam, and subsequently adhered to by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, which four powers are hereafter referred to as the Allied Powers.

We hereby proclaim the unconditional surrender to the Allied Powers of the Japanese Imperial General Headquarters and of all Japanese armed forces and all armed forces under Japanese control wherever situated.

We hereby command all Japanese forces wherever situated and the Japanese people to cease hostilities forthwith, to preserve and save from damage all ships, aircraft, and military and civil property and to comply with all requirements which may be imposed by the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers or by agencies of the Japanese Government at his direction.

We hereby command the Japanese Imperial General Headquarters to issue at once orders to the Commanders of all Japanese forces and all forces under Japanese control wherever situated to surrender unconditionally themselves and all forces under their control.

We hereby command all civil, military and naval officials to obey and enforce all proclamations, orders and directives deemed by the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers to be proper to effectuate this surrender and issued by him or under his authority and we direct all such officials to remain at their posts and to continue to perform their non-combatant duties unless specifically relieved by him or under his authority.

We hereby undertake for the Emperor, the Japanese Government and their successors to carry out the provisions of the Potsdam Declaration in good faith, and to issue whatever orders and take whatever action may be required by the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers or by any other designated representative of the Allied Powers for the purpose of giving effect to that Declaration.

We hereby command the Japanese Imperial Government and the Japanese Imperial General Headquarters at once to liberate all allied prisoners of war and civilian internees now under Japanese control and to provide for their protection, care, maintenance and immediate transportation to places as directed.

The authority of the Emperor and the Japanese Government to rule the state shall be subject to the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers who will take such steps as he deems proper to effectuate these terms of surrender.

Submitted by J. H. C. [unclear]

Submitted by John Arthur

Signed at TOKYO BAY, JAPAN at 0904 I
on the SECOND day of SEPTEMBER, 1945.

重光葵

By Command and in behalf of the Emperor of Japan
and the Japanese Government.

梅津美治郎

By Command and in behalf of the Japanese
Imperial General Headquarters.

Accepted at TOKYO BAY, JAPAN at 0908 I
on the SECOND day of SEPTEMBER, 1945,
for the United States, Republic of China, United Kingdom and the
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and in the interests of the other
United Nations at war with Japan.

Douglas MacArthur
Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers.

C. W. Nimitz
United States Representative

徐永昌
Republic of China Representative

Bruce Fraser
United Kingdom Representative

Leonid Brezhnev
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
Representative

Ed Blaney
Commonwealth of Australia Representative

Charles G. Duggan
Dominion of Canada Representative

Leclerc
Provisional Government of the French
Republic Representative

M. M. M.
Kingdom of the Netherlands Representative

S. L. B. I.

SEPTEMBER 4, 1945 - LEFT TOKYO BAY AND IT WAS CLEAR ENOUGH ON OUR WAY OUT TO SEE MT. FUJIYAMA.

SEPTEMBER 6, 1945 - WE WERE HEADED FOR GUAM, BUT RECEIVED ORDERS TODAY TO PROCEED TO SAN PEDRO BAY, LEYTE ISLAND.

SEPTEMBER 11, 1945 - ARRIVED SAN PEDRO.

September 11, 1945

Letter sent to Erva from Bernard Hendin in Altotting, Bavaria, Germany

Greetings Ol' Pal:

It has probably been so long since my last letter to you that you are hesitant about recognizing the name and address upon this letter and envelope...And I am never able to explain my letter silences adequately...Only that when I think back to these last gigantic weeks and months, the days dissolve themselves into a fluid oneness, and I am not capable of realizing the strong distance between our last correspondence. My conscience has been tailing after me for a very long while, for I have known full well that I should write to you.

And time does go quickly. When I think back to these past months of living within the alien borders of the German Third Reich, I am not able to find adequate descriptions for everything and all. But the experiences contained within such a strange collection of days and nights and celebrations and official duties would fill a quite professional book of notes. That is, if I were to carefully note each instance of new adventure and each new device of experience. My dreamy ambitions exceed my capabilities on that score, however. I do not deny that these days have been the greatest, the most ponderous of this generation. At least they have been that to me. Worlds have been changed under our very thumbs while we hold the history books and make ready to turn to the next pages. The personal aspects have given their weights to the strong surge of many things done and many things seen. And now we settle down to await our turn...wondering where we shall go now and when. Always things to be explained. And yet, I should know that Military Government has a vast accomplishment to fulfill before the journey home will be realized. Even at the close of the European war our duties went on as usual for we had no time then for a real celebration. But I do remember that first day and the intensity of the relief that came over everyone...And that first night...we turned the lights on everywhere and anywhere with a sudden and strange realization that there were no more black-out shutters to remember every night precisely at darkness. There, within that realization...more than any other single thing...was the one important contribution that made us worldly conscious that the wars upon the Continent had ceased to be wars and battles. It had been such a long while since we had seen the strong and unashamed night lights. Do you remember? But the miles have been long and many since those days in Zweibrucken. We have traveled over a goodly portion of Germany, crossing the river Rhine and the Danube, spending a week in Munich and finally to settle ourselves

in this community in the shadows of the Bavarian Alps. All cities that I have seen are exact replicas of the devastation that we had become so familiar with in Zweibrücken. For that city was our first stopping place in Germany, and we stayed there for several months. There was utter destruction there...complete and thorough...so devastating that it was beyond comprehension. The total destruction of Germany's major cities was not a fancy dream doled out by our own propaganda experts. Each city has lost any sense of individuality, has lost any right to now be called a city. In Munich, there is every evidence that it was once a handsome city, but it has paid a price for its contribution to Nazism. We saw Hitler's beer cellar there...it is a Red Cross Club now, and American soldiers drink coffee and eat their doughnuts. We visited the concentration camp at Dachau and saw some of the remnants of Nazi terrorism. And it was while we were in Munich that I first saw the Alps. They are truly wonderful, and we spent a day driving through them. It was just like being home again in the Colorado Rockies... everything was the same...the smooth, winding roads, sparkling streams, turquoise lakes, waterfalls, pine trees and snowcapped peaks.

Here in this community of Altötting we have taken up luxury quarters in a small and comfortable hotel. Real linen sheets and hot baths. Our mess and offices are also in this same building. The setting is under a magnificent warm sun...great, green hills and long shadows of valleys...the early beginnings of autumn, harvested fields and apple orchards. It is a seemingly peaceful community, yet not so long ago a huge pit was discovered that contained the bodies of 2500 human beings...men and women who had been brought from many countries in Europe to be used as slave workers and who had died at the hands of the New Order. It was not a pleasant spectacle to see those piles of rotting, decomposed forms of humanity. The people should never forget, for they were all forced to see them and to bury them. This particular area is probably the most religious in all Germany, yet these acts were committed under their very noses and still their contentions are that they never knew.

This particular area of Germany amazes me...it reeks with antiquity. The countryside is studded with ancient fortifications, medieval walls, towers and castles. Not far from here is an ancient fortress city that was once stormed and captured by Napoleon shortly before his fatal attempt at Russia. The village streets are so narrow and they have no symmetrical pattern whatsoever. They go everywhere.

And now the wars of the world have ceased. Does it seem possible to you that there has been a war somewhere on this earth for more than half of our life time? It will be a very long while before many people realize that no wars exist. The news of the cessation of hostilities in the Pacific came to us as an anti-climax, as it must have also come to you...after a week or so of uncertainty, expectancy...wild, uncontrolled rumors. But with its coming we celebrated just the same...for three wildly days while we ignored ticking clocks and the labels of official duties. We drove through the Alps, into Austria and to Salzburg...we saw Berchtesgaden and Hitler's retreat, we visited ancient castles and browsed through museums, we took pictures and visited small churches. We went fishing and swimming, deer hunting and boar hunting. There were no signs then that we would ever go back to official duties...but we eventually did after three days of wanderlust. We finally lost our initial enthusiasm and settled back to this business of banking again.

Germany is truly a place of beauty where magnificence is an ordinary word. It is also a sportsman's paradise. That is, for the time being it is, for we are the only ones permitted to fish the streams and hunt the forests. My fishing luck has been superb...I have caught as many as 25 in one afternoon and they are wonderful trout...speckled and rainbow. I have always caught them with the "old faithful" grasshopper. The woods are full of deer, and it is not difficult to go out in the evening and get one. It is strange that this land is so lovely...the smooth beauty of sky and hills and water... and yet the people were not satisfied with these important possessions. The mind of Germany is not to be understood.

Now that the wars have ended, our minds are filled with thoughts of when we shall be home. The philosophy I have now, what there is of it, is imbued with long waiting and the impatient years. And sometimes I get so darned impatient. But we do know that the road we travel now is the road that leads to home...there is great consolation in that thought. If the point system holds any water, there might be a possibility that I will touch the shores of America sometime around the first of the year. But then, I do not like to make any speculations, for the Army is so darned uncertain. But there will come the day when we shall be home again and we shall seek our favorite haunts and we shall go fishing and driving, have picnics and parties. We shall be a little older perhaps, but our experiences will always contain an unlimited supply of storytelling material.

Take care of yourself and write when you can.

Your pal, Bernard

SEPTEMBER 14, 1945 - LEFT SAN PEDRO BAY AND WILL STOP AT BUGO TO PICK UP SOME BOATS.

SEPTEMBER 15, 1945 - ARRIVED BUGO (MINDANAO) AND THEN DEPARTED FOR ZAMBOANGA.

SEPTEMBER 16, 1945 - ARRIVED ZAMBOANGA. WILL PICK UP 41ST DIVISION AND TAKE THEM TO HIROSHIMA.

SEPTEMBER 18, 1945 - HAD LIBERTY AT ZAMBOANGA. OF ALL THE PLACES WE HAVE BEEN THIS IS THE WORST. THESE ARE REAL NATIVES HERE. THEY ARE CALLED MOROS OR HEADHUNTERS. I CAN'T IMAGINE PEOPLE LIVING IN SUCH FILTH.

SEPTEMBER 19, 1945 - LEFT ZAMBOANGA FOR LEYTE TO PICK UP SOME MAIL THAT IS SUPPOSED TO BE THERE FOR US.

SEPTEMBER 21, 1945 - ARRIVED DULOG (LEYTE) AND APO WENT TO SEE ABOUT OUR MAIL, BUT IT WAS SENT DOWN TO ZAMBOANGA LAST NIGHT.

SEPTEMBER 25, 1945 - ARRIVED OKINAWA AT "BUCKNER BAY".

September 25, 1945

Letter from R.A. Dunkin on a postcard with a map of the U.S.S. Appalachian's route.

Dear Barb & Erv,

I'm sending this to you, Barb, as I have more confidence in it reaching you. I know Erv is on the move.

We have two forces to take in here, one on Honshu in the morning and the other on Hokkaido on October 5th. We are supposed to be released about October 15th, but I'm not sure where we are going. To the States, I hope, and expect to see you there.

Sincerely, Dunk

SEPTEMBER 26, 1945 - HAD LIBERTY ON TSUKIN ISLAND. THERE WERE LOTS OF TUNNELS AND CAVES ON THIS ISLAND.

September 26, 1945

Dearest Bob & Diane,

We are once more in Okinawa but under a little different condition than we were the last time. We had to stop over here for three or four days on our way to Hiroshima until they get the harbor cleaned up there. They have sure built this place up since we were here. The whole bay is covered with lights at night, and there are lots of ships here. It seems good to be able to leave the lights on in the ship at night and not be afraid of some submarine sending a torpedo through the ship. After we felt our way around decks so long in complete darkness, it is some relief to be able to see where you are going.

We are supposed to get liberty here and I think it starts today. I don't know just which section rates yet, but I hope I get ashore sometime while we are here to see what the place looks like. We are on the opposite side of the island from when we made the landing. I don't know the name of the town. We are in Buckner Bay, which was renamed after General Buckner who was killed in Okinawa.

We are supposed to have mail here today. The commander sent a message down to Zamboango after we missed our mail there and had it sent up here. They said they would have it here waiting for us. I sure hope they do. We have a lot of it someplace.

It still looks like we have a good chance of going home after this trip. If we do, we should be in the States between the first and fifteenth of November. They are taking inventory of everything on the ship, so that looks like going home, too.

We received a request to send two yeomen and three storekeepers back to the States to work on the demobilization of servicemen, but I don't think the commondere is going to release them for some reason. I hope they get lots of help there, and get this thing moving. The Navy is way behind the Army in letting men out.

It was nice your folks got to go up to visit Larry and Evelyn. It has been quite a while since they have been up there. I imagine they have their place pretty well fixed up by now.

How is Earl Myers getting along now? It was nice Mr. Sherk could take him fishing. I wish someone would take me fishing.

How is school going by now? I suppose everyone has settled down to the regular old routine by now. I was glad to hear Diane liked it so well. I was sure she would. From that picture you sent, it looks like she has really grown and changed a lot. Naturally she would in fifteen months. I can hardly realize we have been apart so long. I hope we never have to be again.

You mentioned about these guys being at home coining all this money. Even if we haven't made as much, I imagine we will have about as much when it is all over as most of them will. We will have some things that money can't buy. I was figuring the other day, with what we have in the company, what we have in the bank, what we have in the cafe [Wide Awake Cafe managed by Lou and Nelle Crays], what our furniture is worth, and what we will save by the end of the year, we could scrape up around \$4000 if we had to. I will get \$300 mustering out pay too, which will help. That isn't so bad for seven year's work, starting out with nothing, and in depression times, too. If everything goes alright, we should accumulate a little faster from now on.

I hope we can pick up another piece of property one of these days that will pay off as well as the cafe is. That \$37.50 a month will count up pretty fast when we get it paid for. That figures about 20% interest on our money invested after expenses are taken out. I don't know where we could do any better, do you?

It is plenty tough being away from each other now, but maybe we will have just that much more to enjoy when we are together again. I am about run down, so I will close until we get some mail.

Lots of Love, Erv

SEPTEMBER 27, 1945 - HAD TO LEAVE THE BAY BECAUSE OF HIGH WINDS.

SEPTEMBER 28, 1945 - WE ARE SAILING IN THE EAST CHINA SEA. SWELLS FROM 15 TO 20 FEET HIGH AND WIND IS BLOWING AT 57 KNOTS. THIS SHIP IS DOING QUITE A BIT OF ROLLING. WE CAN'T GO IN TO JAPAN BECAUSE THE AREAS WE ARE GOING TO AREN'T CLEARED OF MINES YET.

September 29, 1945

Dearest Bob & Diane,

We just got underway again but I don't think we are on our way to Japan yet. They think there are too many ships in the harbor. If they should have a storm, some of them might pile up, so we are just going out and cruise around awhile. I hope they get that harbor cleaned out up there soon, so we can get started. I am anxious to see what we

are going to do next. Everyone still seems to think we will go home. We have been disappointed so many times that I won't believe it until we actually get started.

We really worked this morning. We were supposed to have captain's inspection this afternoon on part of the ship, so we really cleaned C.I.C. After dinner they announced there would be none since we were getting underway. That is the way most inspections turn out. After everything is cleaned, I guess there is no need to inspect anyway. We haven't had one for quite awhile now. We have been expecting a personnel inspection too, but we have missed for quite awhile.

This is the third day we have been here and still no mail. We thought sure we would have some here by now, but I guess it takes time to change the locations in all these places. Several of us took the outgoing mail over a couple days ago, so we could see what the place was like. I have never seen so much mud in my life. They are doing lots of work over there, but they don't have very good roads yet and no sidewalks. We were over our shoe tops in mud most of the time. I guess we can be glad we are in the Navy where we have a shelter over our head and don't have to live in places like that. There was sure a lot of wreckage over there. Some time ago they had a typhoon there. Two large ships have been carried clear up on the beach and any number of smaller ones. I guess those things can get pretty rough sometimes. This is a pretty good-sized island. I can see why it took so long to take it.

I talked to a fellow from another ship that was here during the invasion. He was here 72 days and during that time they had 195 air raids and were called to general quarters. We were here about 5 1/2 days, and we had 33. You can see why we didn't get any sleep. It seemed every time we sat down to eat or try to get a little sleep, the alarm would sound. One of the first days we were in here, we had one raid that lasted from about 3:30 p.m. until about 10:30 p.m. without a letup. That really gets old after a few days.

One section went over to a small island on liberty yesterday. I guess there wasn't much over there, but they said it was interesting. They found a bunch of old tombs where Japs had been buried. They could see the bones down in there. During the war they said it looked like they had been used for pill boxes. There were bullet holes all over them. I would liked to have gone over, but I don't imagine we will be around that long. I may possibly get liberty in Japan, and that would be better.

We had a good show aboard last night. It was "Patrick the Great". It was the best we have had for sometime. It will sure be nice to get back where you can go to a movie, sit in a nice soft chair, and relax. We have to stand up most of the time here.

We have another Army band aboard now. Since our ship is the head of the squadron, we are always the one that gets them aboard. This is a pretty good-sized one, and they are pretty good. Some nights they play band music and other nights they play dance music. It helps to relieve the monotony out here.

One of the fellows got a bunch of hunting and fishing magazines in the mail. I have sure been enjoying them. It sure gives me the urge to be home, so we can do a little of it.

It really stays hot here. It is a lot different than it was when we were here before. I hope it will be cooler up at Japan. I am still broken out with heat rash and fungus. It is sure hard to get rid of it. It will clear up for a day or two and then break out all over again.

I had better quit and get ready to go on watch pretty soon.

I love you, Erv

OCTOBER 1, 1945 - RETURNED TO OKINAWA TODAY. WEATHER HAS CALMED DOWN QUITE A BIT.

October 2, 1945

Dearest Bob & Diane,

I suppose you will be surprised to hear that the Navy has changed their minds again. We were on our way to Japan and were about 135 miles from Okinawa. About midnight last night, they got a message telling us to return to Okinawa. I don't know what the score is, but I wish they would make up their minds pretty soon. We all left the harbor at Okinawa about three days ago and have been cruising around trying to keep out of the path of a typhoon. We had one reported coming toward Okinawa. They got every ship out of the harbor, so they wouldn't pile up. There was sure a bunch of them. Some went east and some west. They were assigned to certain areas to stay in. We have had some pretty high seas the last couple of days, and I imagine it is the effects of the typhoon. The ship recorded a 20% roll, and that is a pretty good slant. Some of the fellows even rolled out of bed. I thought for awhile I was going to have to put a saddle on mine. If you have ever ridden a rolly coaster, you can get an idea what it is like. Only out here it rolls from side to side as well as up and down. The big difference on a rolly coaster, you can get off. Out here you can't, regardless of how sick you get. It hasn't bothered me for quite awhile, but it wouldn't have taken much more this morning to make me a little woozy.

The good part about coming back here is that we should get our mail. It surely will be here by now. I was just counting up, and I should have around twenty five letters from you alone on the way. I could sure use a few. It seems I haven't had any connection with home for a long time. We just anchored a few minutes ago, and they have already sent the boat over to see about it. They should be back in an hour or two.

This is the beginning of another new month. It won't be long until another year is gone, and you might say wasted as far as I am concerned. I can't see a thing I have accomplished since I have been in. No doubt I have had some experiences that I would never have had, but I have had enough.

It doesn't seem like a month since school started to me, but I suppose it seems longer to you. It won't be long until you will be off for Christmas vacation. I sure hope I am spending it with you.

We just heard that another transport squadron has left for the States loaded with men for discharges. I hope ours doesn't fall through again. I think they have put out an order now that all men who have three children can automatically get out, but our commander won't release anyone. I don't know what is the matter with him. I hear he doesn't get along with his family. I guess he doesn't have anything to go home for, and he is going to keep everyone else out here. The Navy is sure slow in lowering the point

system. Some of the troops that we took to Japan are already on their way home, and some of them that we have aboard now have enough points to get out. It doesn't make sense to take up all the room to haul them around and then take them right out. That is the reason the transportation is so short. They make so many unnecessary trips.

How is our little daughter doing in school? I can hardly wait to see you both. I think we are supposed to be in Japan the sixth now, so we will probably be here about three days. It only takes three days to get up there from here.

I can't think of anything to write, so I will close until we see if there is any mail.

Lots of Love, Erva

OCTOBER 3, 1945 - LEFT OKINAWA FOR HIROSHIMA.

OCTOBER 4, 1945 - WE ONLY HAVE ABOUT 100 MILES TO GO, BUT WE HAVE TO GO VERY SLOW BECAUSE OF FLOATING MINES.

OCTOBER 5, 1945 - PASSED SEVERAL FLOATING MINES ON THE WAY IN. PICKED UP TEN JAP OFFICERS FOR A CONFERENCE WITH THE COMMODORE AND ADMIRAL ROGERS. THEY WILL GIVE US THE COURSE TO OUR ANCHORAGE. WE ARE TO ANCHOR AT NAGAHAMA ABOUT 3 MILES FROM KURE [Honshu, Japan].

OCTOBER 6, 1945 - WE ARRIVED AT OUR ANCHORAGE AND HAVE STARTED UNLOADING.

OCTOBER 7, 1945 - FINISHED UNLOADING TODAY ABOUT NOON.

October 7, 1945

Dearest Bob & Diane,

We are in Japan again, and this time we are anchored near Kure Naval base. It is just a short way from Hiroshima. We anchored out about eight miles last night because the channel was so narrow and treacherous they didn't want to tackle it at night. We just got anchored a little before noon. They are already opening the hatches and getting ready to take the trucks and equipment off. If we could have gone up to a dock, we could have unloaded in about eight hours. Since there are no docks and we had to anchor out about a thousand yards, we will have to load everything in small boats and haul it ashore. It will probably take at least two days and nights this way. They will keep going day and night until they get it done. I hope we can get out of here as soon as possible.

This is some different from the Philippines. The houses are more permanent, but they need better ones. It is pretty cool up here. We have slept under a blanket the last two nights, and they really felt good. We can't see very much damage that has been done from here. There isn't a very large town here, so I imagine that is the reason. We can see

a bunch of wrecked Jap planes on the beach. There is a pretty good sized cemetery over on one of the hills. It seems funny to see how they utilize the land around here. They have their rice fields all over the hills. They have the hills cut down in steps, so they can make use of all the water. Every little crevice has a patch of rice in it. We can see caves in the hills where I imagine have been gun emplacements. We also saw three large tunnels in the side of one hill near some factories, so I imagine they had part of the factories underground. We also saw one Jap battle ship on our way in. We had fourteen Jap pilots aboard for awhile this morning with charts of this area. All of them were in uniform, and they looked a lot cleaner than the last ones we had aboard.

We heard some more good news last night. We definitely got a message last night telling us to report someplace for duty on what they call the Magic Carpet Operation. That is a bunch of ships designated to haul high point men to the States. I don't know yet where we will have to go to get them, but I am sure it won't be very far away, probably the Philippines, China, Japan or Okinawa. The only catch is that I hope we don't have to make another trip back out here. I hardly think anyone with as many points as I have will have to come back out. It will probably be the middle of November before we get home. I am sure we will get some time for availability even if we did have to come back out with this ship. By then it would be at least January. I am sure the points will be low enough by then that we won't have to come back out if we are married. When we get back, they will probably let half of the ship's crew on leave at a time. That should make our bunch home for Thanksgiving and the other at Christmas. Wouldn't that be swell to spend Christmas together.

I guess we are getting a little optimistic lately. Some of us have had all of our blues washed and pressed just to have them ready. When we do start back, there will be a grand rush to get them done, so we will have the jump on them.

We had a good show aboard last night. It was "Till We Meet Again". It was the best we have had for some time. I don't suppose we will have any tonight since they have the hatches open. We don't have many watches to stand while we are in port here. Six of us are standing the quartermaster watches. We will get about eight hours watch every two days. The rest of the fellows will stand a security watch in C.I.C., and they will have four hours every day. I think we can stand that alright.

I am hoping that whenever we go after our next bunch of men, that we get some mail. We have just lost all communication with the rest of the world. We only had one little bunch of mail in September, and I am short quite a bunch from August. We should have a lot of it when we do get it. If we miss it this time, it probably won't catch us at all. I am getting anxious to know how you and Diane are, and how school is going with you. It will soon be time to make out your first grade cards.

I can't think of anything to write, so I guess I will go get a little sunshine. I hope to be seeing you before very long.

Lots of Love, Erv

OCTOBER 8, 1945 - WE ARE UNLOADING ALL OF OUR EXTRA SUPPLIES AND GIVING THEM TO SOME OF OUR OTHER SHIPS. WE ARE ALSO TAKING ON MAIL FROM THE OTHER SHIPS THAT IS GOING TO THE U. S. WE ARE TAKING ON A FEW PASSENGERS, ALSO.

OCTOBER 9, 1945 - ANCHORED AT HIRO WAU BAY. RAINED ALL DAY AND WIND BLEW PRETTY HARD.

OCTOBER 10, 1945 - MOVED TO NEW ANCHORAGE. WIND STILL BLOWING.

OCTOBER 11, 1945 - LEFT HIRO WAU WITH FOUR MORE APA'S HEADED FOR GUAM.

From:

FLEET HOME TOWN NEWS CENTER
UNITED STATES NAVY
844 NORTH RUSH STREET
CHICAGO 11, ILLINOIS

a-49

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ABOARD THE USS CECIL----- Erva E. Thaxton, radarman, third class, 30, USNR,
102 5th st., Las Animas, Colo.,

aided in the disembarkation of troops of the 1st Cavalry Division from this attack transport in Tokyo Bay in the initial stages of the occupation.

The CECIL participated in operations at Kwajalein, Hollandia, Tarawa, Aitape, Guam, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa.

The Star-Journal & Chieftain have received this material about your relative in service. We know that this sort of information is cherished in its original form by next of kin for scrapbooks and family records.

--The Star-Journal & Chieftain

MONDAY, OCTOBER 15, 1945

**WITH OUT
IN THE S**

**FOUR COLORADOANS
AT DESEMBARKATION**

Daniel W. Beal, 23, USNR, 310 E. Abriendo, radioman 2/c, and Lloyd M. Cloer, 39, USNR, 914 Van Buren, seaman 2/c; Omar T. Cox, 37, radarman 3/c, USNR, Ordway, and Erva E. Thaxton, radarman, 3/c, 30, USNR of Las Animas, aided in the disembarkation of troops of the First Cavalry Division from the attack transport, U. S. S. Cecil in Tokyo Bay in the initial stages of the occupation. The Cecil participated in operations at Kwajalein, Hollandia, Tarawa, Aitape, Guam, Iwo Jima and Okinawa.

OCTOBER 16, 1945 - ARRIVED AT GUAM THIS MORNING. WE HAVE TAKEN ON 1500 ENLISTED MEN AND 126 OFFICERS AND ARE SUPPOSED TO GET UNDERWAY YET TODAY. AT 2015 WE GOT UNDERWAY.

OCTOBER 18, 1945 - WE ARE ABOUT 600 MILES FROM GUAM.

OCTOBER 21, 1945 - AT NOON TODAY WE WERE 3496 MILES FROM FRISCO. INSTEAD, RECEIVED ORDERS TO REPORT TO SAN PEDRO INSTEAD OF FRISCO.

OCTOBER 22, 1945 - STORM REPORTED AHEAD AND SEA IS GETTING ROUGH.

OCTOBER 23, 1945 - WIND IS UP TO 38 KNOTS, AND WE REGISTERED A 31 DEGREE ROLL AT ONE TIME. SWELLS ARE PRETTY BIG. SEVERAL OF THE FELLOWS ARE SEA SICK. WE HAD TO SLOW DOWN TO TEN KNOTS, AND WE WERE ONLY MAKING GOOD ABOUT 7 KNOTS.

OCTOBER 26, 1945 - WEATHER HAS CLEARED UP, AND WE ARE NOW MAKING 16 KNOTS AGAIN. WE HAD TO GO ABOUT 60 MILES OUT OF THE WAY TO MISS A STORM.

OCTOBER 27, 1945 - WEATHER IS A LITTLE COOL, BUT THE SEA IS CALM. STILL MAKING 16 KNOTS. NOW ABOUT 2100 MILES FROM SAN PEDRO.

OCTOBER 29 - WEATHER GOOD. SEA CALM.

NOVEMBER 2, 1945 - ARRIVED IN SAN PEDRO BAY AT 10 A.M. UNLOADED MARINES AND SOLDIERS TODAY. ALSO 44 POINT MEN IN SHIPS COMPANY, CB'S, AND NAVY PASSENGERS WILL LEAVE TOMORROW. WE WERE SUPPOSED TO GET LIBERTY AT 1400, BUT AS WE WERE READY TO LEAVE, THEY ANNOUNCED THAT ALL MEN WITH 36 1/2 POINTS COULD NOT GO ON LIBERTY.

NOVEMBER 8, 1945 - STARTED ON A FIVE DAY LEAVE.

NOVEMBER 20, 1945 - WERE SUPPOSED TO BE DETACHED FROM SHIP BUT DIDN'T GET ANY RELIEF. WENT ON TRIAL RUN TODAY.

NOVEMBER 21, 1945 - LEFT LONG BEACH FOR OKINAWA. AT 4:30 P.M. THE SHIPS BOILERS WENT BAD, AND THE SHIP HAD TO TURN AROUND. WE WERE OUT 57 MILES.

[Some time between November 22, 1945 and Christmas, Erva was discharged. He spent the holidays in Las Animas at 102 5th Street with his family.]

Appendix - U.S.S. Cecil (APA 96) “The Flash” Newsletters

VOYAGE OF THE CECIL

PLACE	ARRIVAL	DEPARTURE
Portland, Oregon (Commissioned)	9-15-44	9-25-44
Portland, Oregon (USN Deperming Sta)	9-25-44	9-26-44
San Francisco, California	9-28-44	9-29-44
San Pedro, California	10-1-44	10-5-44
San Pedro, California	10-7-44	10-10-44
San Diego, California	10-11-44	10-11-44
Oceanside, California	10-12-44	10-18-44
San Diego, California	10-18-44	10-22-44
San Clemente, California	10-28-44	10-28-44
San Pedro, California	10-29-44	11-13-44
San Diego, California	11-13-44	11-25-44
San Francisco, California	11-26-44	11-27-44
Oakland, California	11-27-44	12-3-44
Pearl Harbor, T.H.	12-9-44	12-18-44
Lahima Rhodes, T.H.	12-19-44	12-24-44
Maui, T.H.	12-25-44	12-25-44
Pearl Harbor, T.H.	12-26-44	12-31-44
Hilo, T.H.	1-1-45	1-5-45
Pearl Harbor, T.H.	1-6-45	1-12-45
Lahima Rhodes, T.H.	1-13-45	1-17-45
Pearl Harbor, T.H.	1-18-45	1-27-45
Eniwetok, Marshall Islands, Pacific	2-5-45	2-7-45
Saipan, Marianas Group, Pacific	2-11-45	2-16-45
Iwo Jima, Volcano Islands	2-19-45	3-1-45
Saipan, Marianas Group	3-3-45	3-5-45
Tulagi, Solomon Islands	3-12-45	3-13-45
Espiritu Santo, New Hebrides Is.	3-15-45	3-25-45
Ulithi, Caroline Islands	4-3-45	4-4-45
Okinawa, Ryukyu Islands	4-9-45	4-16-45
Saipan, Marianas Group	4-20-45	4-21-45
Ulithi, Caroline Islands	4-23-45	5-22-45
Guam, Marianas Group	5-23-45	5-24-45
San Pedro Bay, Leyte, P.I.	5-28-45	5-29-45
Subic Bay, Luzon, P.I.	5-31-45	6-26-45
Manila, P.I.	6-26-45	6-30-45
Hinunanyan Bay, Leyte, P.I.	7-2-45	7-2-45

San Pedro Bay, Leyte, P.I.	7-2-45	7-5-45
Guinan, Samar, P.I.	7-5-45	7-7-45
Tulag Bay, Leyte, P.I.	7-8-45	7-8-45
San Pedro Bay, Leyte, P.I.	7-8-45	7-12-45
Off East Coast of Leyte, P.I.	7-13-45	7-15-45
Cebu Bay, Cebu, P.I.	7-17-45	7-19-45
Liluan River, Cebu, P.I.	7-19-45	7-19-45
Iloilo, Panay Island, P.I.	7-20-45	7-20-45
Subic Bay, Luzon, P.I.	7-21-45	7-28-45
Lingayen Gulf, Luzon, P.I.	7-28-45	8-7-45
Lingayen Gulf, Luzon, P.I.	8-7-45	8-9-45
Subic Bay, Luzon, P.I.	8-10-45	8-11-45
Manila, P.I.	8-11-45	8-17-45
Batangas Bay, P.I.	8-17-45	8-25-45
Subic Bay, Luzon, P.I.	8-26-45	8-27-45
Tokyo Bay, Honshu, Japan	9-2-45	9-4-45
San Pedro Bay, P.I.	9-10-45	9-14-45
Macajalar Bay, P.I.	9-15-45	9-15-45
Zamoango, Mindanao Island, P.I.	9-16-45	9-19-45
Macajaler Bay, P.I.	9-20-45	9-21-45
Dulog, Leyte, P.I.	9-22-45	9-23-45
Okinawa, Ryukyu Islands	9-25-45	9-28-45
Okinawa, Ryukyu Islands	10-1-45	10-3-45
Matsuyama, Honshu, Japan	10-5-45	10-6-45
Kure (Hiro Wan), Honshu, Japan	10-6-45	10-11-45
Guam, Marianas Islands	10-16-45	10-16-45
San Francisco, California	10-30-45	

18 February 1945

UNDATED PACIFIC:

In Manila, the Japanese are still fighting furiously. They were being herded into the walled city on the water front as MacArthur announced that the Jap garrison in Manila had comprised over 20,000 well-equipped troops who were hopeful of making the battle for the city the turning point in the Luzon campaign.

Meanwhile, Admiral Nimitz revealed that Vice Admiral Marc A. Mitscher's Pacific Fleet was attacking airdromes and other important installations "in and around Tokyo." It was also revealed that Tinian-based Superfortresses joined Saipan-based planes in the Nagoya attack.

In the Philippines, U.S. 11th Army Corps Troops broke through the main Jap defense line on Bataan and swept into the southern half of the historic peninsula. Balonga and Pila were captured.

Liberators dropped another 112 tons of bombs on Corregidor with the Japanese again failing to fire a single shot in defense.

Southeast Asia command headquarters has announced that Chinese First Army Troops, pressing steadily forward down the Burma Road, occupied Kutkai which is 39 airline miles from Lashio and advanced southward where they “successfully engaged” a Jap armored force midway between Kutkai and Hsenwi, 11 miles farther south.

The Chinese Army in that sector are operating in conjunction with the British 37th Division which is moving down the Shweli River Valley.

In Central Burma, the 19th Indian Division has made further gains in the Singu bridgeheads on the east bank of the Irrawaddy despite several small counter attacks launched by the Japanese. In Arakan valley, enemy counterattacks against Kangaw ceased but Japanese troops continue to offer bitter resistance.

ADMIRAL NIMITZ HEADQUARTERS, GUAM:

Excerpts from United Press Correspondent William F. Tyree’s Report:

“It was 7:50 a.m. here at advance headquarters when listening to a Japanese Broadcast:”

“Tokyo blared concert music over the radio in the press room. Outside, the American Flag was waving in the sunlight to the accompaniment of a marine bugle whose note echoed over the mountains.”

“The clock ticked on. It reached 7:55 a.m.”

“Admiral Chester W. Nimitz sat quietly in his headquarters. Perhaps he was thinking of that day three years ago when he came to the still smoldering Pearl Harbor to assume command of the battered Pacific Fleet. Possibly he was recalling the pledge he made that day as he stood on the deck of a submarine. ‘I have just assumed great responsibility and obligation which I shall do my utmost to discharge.’”

“The clocks ticked on. Its hands reached toward 8 a.m.”

“Suddenly the concert music on Radio Tokyo stopped.”

“Sirens sounded; then the radio went silent.”

“The attack had begun.”

“It was 7 a.m. in Tokyo, the hour for which Nimitz had waited ever since that day he took command of the Pacific Fleet had arrived. His carrier planes at that moment were attacking Tokyo in great strength. They were repaying the enemy’s visit to Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.”

“Nimitz could not hide his satisfaction when only minutes later he formally announced the raid.”

“‘This operation,’ he said in the communiqué, ‘has long been planned and the opportunity to accomplish it fulfills a deeply cherished desire of every officer and man in the Pacific Fleet.’”

“Neither could he hide his satisfaction a few hours later when, in comfortable shorts, he left his headquarters for lunch.”

“He grinned broadly as he passed war correspondents.”

“Perhaps the only man who felt a tinge of regret was Admiral William ‘Bulldog’ Halsey. For many months Admiral Nimitz had to hold Halsey under a figurative leash to prevent him from taking his third fleet to Japan.”

“But even Halsey rejoiced that ‘Deeply cherished desire’ of the Navy was at least a reality. He knew that his running mate, Admiral Raymond A. Spruance, would do a good job.”

PACIFIC FLEET HEADQUARTERS, GUAM:

Eyewitnesses reported here today that smoke rose seven thousand feet in the air from Tokyo to Yokohama as Navy Carrier Planes raided the Japanese capital area yesterday.

Lt. David C. McMillin of San Francisco who was a Navy observer in a superfortress over the target for reconnaissance while a raid was under way said scores of enemy planes were caught on the ground.

McMillin and Lt. John G. Garvin, of Nevada, pilot of a B-29, observed the raid through breaks in clouds and by listening in on radio conversations between carrier planes.

McMillin said the attack on grounded Japanese planes and ground installations lasted at least six hours and was “no hit and run affair.” He said the attack was “one continuous pounding” of the enemy.

WASHINGTON:

A United States Naval spokesman said today “now is the time” for the Japanese fleet to meet the challenge of Admiral Spruance’s mighty force hurling its airpower against the enemy’s homeland.

The spokesman said Spruance’s forces are more than a match for anything the Japanese are capable of bringing out and told reporters that the Navy has a “pretty good idea” where the entire Japanese fleet is.

He said “presumably it was being held for the defense of the homeland and now is the time. It is going to be interesting to see if the Japanese fleet will come out now or not.”

The spokesman said full details of the operations have not been received because Spruance “will not break radio silence so long as he thinks there is a good chance he has not been discovered.”

He said another example of the United States Navy’s overwhelming power is emphasized by the fact that simultaneous operations were going on in the Tokyo Area, in bombardment of Iwo Jima by surface units and in operations against Corregidor. The type of operations against Corregidor whether by surface or air was not disclosed.

The spokesman said “we have two good teams available and there’s no question that Spruance would welcome everything the Japanese could assemble.”

He added that carrier-based bombers are capable of doing tremendous damage because of their low flying tactics as compared with high altitude pattern bombing by heavy four engine craft.

ADVANCED HEADQUARTERS, GUAM:

New York Times correspondent Warren Moscow says that American carrier planes are “taking the war home to 8,000,000 inhabitants of the Tokyo area in a way they have never seen it before.”

Moscow’s excerpts follow:

In the place of high-flying B-29s that have been bombing the city since last November there are swarms of planes striking the tree top levels against aircraft and other military targets around the city in strafing attacks. Over 1,200 planes of various types are taking part in the attack.

This is a full scale, long-planned offensive. U.W. warships simultaneously 700 miles to the south are bombarding Iwo Jima Island in the Volcanos. Iwo also was under attack from the air with the Bonin Islands.

The Tokyo area contains several dozen operational airfields, air depots and storage bases as well as several aviation training centers. Military airfields are scattered all over Honshu, the main Japanese Island, but the principal fields are in the vicinity of large centers of war industry and commerce, like Tokyo. In addition there are Yoksuana Navy Yard headquarters of the Japanese Navy, with Army headquarters elsewhere in the city.

the task force is estimated to include 15 to 20 of the largest and fastest carriers, protected on this extremely hazardous mission by the fastest battleships with a complete screen of destroyers, cruisers, submarines and mine sweepers.

The U.S. warships standing off Honshu would form a line 200 miles long up and down the coast.

CHUNGKING:

Newspapers here featured the American Carrier attack on Tokyo as “an almost unparalleled epic of American might and daring”, the Associated Press reported. Great rejoicing prevailed in the Chinese capital which still bears the scars of Japanese bombing attacks in 1941.

UNDATED:

A Domei broadcast today to its bureaus in occupied Asia suggested that the American raid has interfered with the publication of newspapers in Tokyo.

It said a regularly scheduled review of the Tokyo press would not be forthcoming today, but “in its place a rebroadcast of an item from yesterday will be made.”

CINCPOA COMMUNIQUÉ:

Carrier aircraft of the Fifth Fleet are continuing to attack the Tokyo Area. Preliminary reports indicate that severe damage was inflicted on enemy installations on Iwo Jima in the Volcano Islands, in spite of adverse weather conditions during the bombardment by battleships and cruisers of the Pacific Fleet on February 16. Our carrier aircraft set two luggers ablaze and three bombers were probably destroyed on the ground.

21 February 1945

U.S. PACIFIC FLEET HEADQUARTERS, GUAM:

With strong air and fleet gun fire support American Marines captured southern airfield on Iwo Jima today after smashing through Japanese defenses as “fanatically defended as any encountered in war in Pacific”, Admiral Chester W. Nimitz announced today. Veteran Marines mowed path clear across island extending in irregular wedge shape from two and half miles long on east coast to one thousand yards on west. Newly captured territory reached from northern slope of Suribachi. Volcano fortress on southern tip of island is now cut off from northern beaches to northern edge of Moyoyama airfield number one. American forces continue to unload supplies on beaches during night despite sporadic artillery and mortar fire. Nimitz said no estimate of casualties thus far are available. Casualties in south were light, but on open slope east of airfield American forces were bitterly resisted and casualties were numerous. NBC correspondent Bud Founer said in broadcast from scene today “Japanese are being driven toward northern end of island but they still occupy about three quarters of Iwo.” He added, “Iwo is one of the most hotly contested islands to fall on our path to Tokyo.” U.S. invasion fleet encircled island maintaining incessant bombardment of Japanese points. Shore based artillery and bombing, strafing and rocket firing planes furnished direct support for advancing Marines.

MACARTHUR’S COMMUNIQUÉ FROM PHILIPPINES:

On Corregidor our troops continued the destruction of remaining enemy strong points around fringe of the island. In south manila the bitter fighting continues as our troops sharply compressed the enemy lines. To the southeast of Laguna De Bay the Eleventh Airborne Division in conjunction with our guerrillas has surrounded an enemy unit at Mabato Point. Our light bombers and fighters supported all ground operations. Light Naval craft continued patrolling of Manila Bay and minesweeping of the bay entrance. Enemy casualties for the six weeks of the campaign exceeds ninety two thousand. Our casualties are 2676 killed, 245 missing and 10,008 wounded, a total of 12,929.

PARIS:

Canadian First Army troop blasted all but stubborn handful of Nazis from Siegfried Line strong hold of Goch where eight military highways meet and pushed on beyond town at center of five mile offensive front closing slowly on Germanruhr. Germans minus their commander, who was captured in bed, were fighting in bomb wrecked freight cars and locomotives at southern fringe of Goch. One thousand surrendered Monday boosting prisoner total for twelve days drive for Canadian First Army to over nine thousand. Heavy fighting continues along Goch Calcar highway northeast of Goch where First Army forces beat back five enemy counter-attacks. Icy flood waters of Rhine have spread over flatlands almost to edge of town. Tank led German counter attacks were beaten back with heavy losses to enemy. To the south, American Seventh Army widened its front inside industrial Saaland and captured five towns in advance to within three and half miles of Saarbruecken. In center of western

front, American Third Army hacked out new gains crossing into Germany at new point and captured Wincheringen across the Our River from Luxembourg. Third Army troops met moderate to stiff resistance in expanding their fifty five mile front on German soil. Other Third Army forces advanced through Siegfried Line fortifications to capture Stoken, north of Echternach.

ROME:

American troops of Fifth Army improved west flank positions in mountainous country west of Pitoia-Balogna highway while patrols continued activity elsewhere. Doughboys encountered strong defensive fire near Monte Cappelbuso but overcame mortar and machine gun opposition to strengthen their hold on a ridge unit southeast of central sector. Enemy patrols were repulsed near Monte Bilmonte and Pizzano.

A DOMEI NEWS BROADCAST ** IWO JIMA ---

Against enemy forces which landed on island, Japanese garrison units are putting up a most gallant and fierce fight to throw the enemy back into the sea. Our garrison units were fully prepared for this enemy operation and it is testified to by the fact that the enemy in attacking this island twenty five kilometers in circumference pumped tens of thousands of tons of steel into island for past three days. Furthermore, the enemy suffered loss of three cruisers, three warcraft of unknown category, two patrol boats, four transports, and substantially damaged another cruiser, five transports, while enemy casualties totaled two thousand from time they started landings morning up to noon of same day. Huge enemy losses are result of preparedness by our units who learned tactics of intercepting enemy in various war theaters on Pacific front.

WASHINGTON:

Admiral William F. Halsey, Jr., paying surprise visit here under orders of Admiral King, anticipate Iwo Jima fighting would be very tough but doubted Japanese Fleet would come out to interfere. He added that we are going to have to go in and dig them out. They have got very little to fight with and what they have left is not in too good shape. The taking of Iwo will be usual thing, we will go in and root them out. It won't be like Tarawa. We have learned a lot since then. Admiral Halsey said Iwo, which has two air fields and a third under construction, can serve as medium bomber base with room fighters which will act as cover in short run bombings of Japanese home islands. When newsmen referred to limited space available on Iwo, Halsey said "if necessary the Sea Bees will build another island."

23 February 1945

COMMUNIQUÉ NR. 271

During the night of 21, 22 February the northern lines of the Marines on Iwo Island successfully resisted the pressure of several heavy counter attacks accompanied by continuous enemy attempts to penetrate into our positions.

The Marines launched an attack northward on the central Iwo airfield encountering heavy fire from small arms mortars and automatic weapons. At noon the troops were advancing through rain and had knocked out numerous gun positions and had generally weakened the airdrome defenses.

Coordinating their attack with that of the northern sector our forces facing Mount Suribacki resumed the offensive. By noon they were beginning an assault on the face of the cliff under most difficult combat conditions.

Heavy Naval gunfire continues on enemy held positions throughout the northern area of the island. In spite of the rain and adverse weather conditions fleet aircraft are supporting ground forces with heavy bombing strafing and rocket attacks.

At sunset on 21 February a force of enemy bombers and fighters attacked our surface units in the area of Iwo Island causing some damage to fleet units. Seven planes were shot down by air patrols and anti-aircraft fire.

Total casualties on shore by 1745 on 21 February were estimated at 385 killed and 4168 wounded.

Unloading of supplies is continuing on the beaches under difficulties caused by the loose compositions of the volcanic ash shore line.

IWO JIMA:

Bud Thatcher, broadcasting from Admiral Turner's flagship off the island, said Iwo Jima could well be named "Hell Island" where battle beyond comparison with anything else is raging. The situation is terrific from first one side and then the other, but the Marines are going ahead, and they are driving the Japanese back. "I saw the bravest guys in the world, hide in foxholes, then come running forward in a crouch, leaping into Japanese emplacements and finishing off the enemy at close quarters". "You know it takes guts to fight that way". Replacements are moving forward. Jap bodies lying around make you feel a little better. Thatcher said the Japanese artillery and American warship's bombardment throughout the night marks a "Hell if there ever was one - that is Iwo Jima."

"We said the invasion would be tough, but I think it is tougher. Japanese mortar and artillery fire is everywhere. When reinforcements arrive there is a hail of shells from the mountain side, but we have to have the ammunition. The beach itself is lettered with scores of landing craft."

"There is nothing anywhere to compare with the battle of this island - the battle of Iwo Jima."

ROME:

Allied headquarters reported today that American troops of the Fifth Army seized additional hill facilities to strengthen their position of the newly won Mount Belvedere and Mount Gogolesco, West of the Pistoia - Bologna Highway. At the same time, other Fifth Army Units gained up to one thousand yards against stiff opposition in local attacks east of Mount Belvedere in the direction of nearby Abetiaia.

WASHINGTON:

Lieutenant Karl Petritz today paid high tribute to Filipino Guerrillas who rescued him on the west coast of Luzon after he escaped from a prisoner ship bombed and sunk by American planes last December as it was taking him to Japan.

After swimming ashore from the sinking vessel, Petritz lived with the Guerrillas for six weeks. He was picked up by Admiral Kincaid's flagships on January twenty-seventh and recently returned to the United States.

Disclosing two day American bombings of the prison ship carrying sixteen hundred American prisoners from the Philippines he said, "I made my escape from the ship and was fortunate in falling into the hands of friendly guerrillas. They took splendid care of me for six weeks. I feel that their care and protection saved my life.

I owe my life to the fact that the United States' dealing with the Filipinos for forty years has given them a square deal. There is a strong feeling of good will between Filipinos and Americans because we have not exploited them.

UNDATED PACIFIC WAR:

U.S. Fourteenth Airforce Headquarters in Chungking reported United States fighters sweeping over China in fine weather without Japanese Air opposition, sank five ships on the Yangtze River and smashed at enemy communications and storage dumps. Twelve locomotives were destroyed and seven damaged in the North China foray and forty two trucks destroyed and forty one damaged in the Tunking area. The report also said that heavy ground fighting continued.

A press dispatch from Calcutta said allied troops were beating off unceasing Japanese counter threats and continued to expand their bridgehead on the south bank of Irrawaddy River opposite Myinmu and pushed south to take the town of Gaungbaw four miles south of Myinmu.

A DOMEI BROADCAST:

A headquarters communiqué said two allied aircraft carriers were sunk off Iwo Jima while two others were heavily damaged. Our aircraft bombed Allied positions on the Island the night of 20th inflicting enemy casualties and damage. The Japanese commander on Iwo Jima gave the following orders to his men: "First, one must defend Iwo Jima to the bitter end. Second, one must blast enemy weapons and men. Third, one must kill every single enemy soldier with rifle and sword attacks. Fourth, one must discharge each bullet to his mark. Sixth, one must, even if he be the last man, continue to harass the enemy by using Guerrilla tactics."

The broadcast described Vice Admiral Turner as being responsible for the killing of countless numbers of our younger brothers on various islands throughout the Central Pacific. "This man Turner must not return home alive, he must not and won't. This is one of the many things we can do to rest at ease the many souls of those who have paid the supreme sacrifice.

EDITORIAL ROUNDUP:

Nashville, Tennessee: Marine landing on Iwo Jima took Americans half way to Tokyo from the Marshalls. The capture of Iwo will be a blow to Japanese moral which no

amount of explaining can ease. Marshalls, Carolines, Mariannas and even the Philippines constitute our wall of Nipponese defenses and their capture is bringing out the impending doom. In taking Iwo Jima we are hitting though Japanese inner guard.

From Australia to Iwo there has been no wasted motion. American attack has been waged with daring and brilliance. We are at last joined with the enemy in his home lair.

New York Herald Tribune: The Marines on Iwo, as they did on Tarawa, already have given another memorable and bloody name to the history of their corps and of their country.

Fleet headquarters show no disposition to minimize the price being paid to take the Island, eight square miles of "Hell on Earth", but we understand that sometimes there is no help for it. We have come to Iwo after much more experiences in this Island warfare with bitter knowledge of its problems and full realizations of its heavy costs. They cannot halt progress just as death and agony and "Hell on Earth" has not stopped the Marines on Iwo. But they add to our humble gratitude toward young Americans who face blazing beaches and thundering hillsides in order to blast savagery off the earth.

Columbus dispatch: To the United States Marines, another hard nut has been given to crack and cracked it they have. Iwo Jima, Japan's lookout island south of the homeland from where fighter interceptors were able to harass our B29s, from where bombers leave to raid our bases on Saipan and from where Tokyo and other strategically important cities in Japan get first word of our impending raids, is to fall soon to our U.S. Marines, who have courageously stormed intensely fortified positions to establish bridgeheads and cut into its most important air strip. Iwo has been softened by over seventy air raids on its fortifications, and it has undergone one of the greatest Naval bombardments of the war. But its volcano fortress has permitted the enemy in face of all this to retain it as the most deadly and important defense of the island.

Iwo is in the Japanese inner defense. It provided gateways to Japan proper and once in our hands will enable our bombers to have fighter cover on their numerically increasing and dangerous raids on Japan's industrial and military centers. We remember with grimness, Guadal Canal, Tarawa, Saipan, and apparently we will have every reason to remember Iwo also. Battles have been bloody, and the way has been hard, but our fighting men are getting there and every stage they take counts more and more against the day when all this costly struggle will be over and ended.

February 25, 1945

IWO JIMA:

United Press Correspondent Lisle Shoemaker with the fifth Marine Division Assault Forces said, "Life is cheap on Iwo." "Since D-Day, every moment has seen a torrent of mortar, artillery, machine gun and sniper fire. There is little cover on this volcanic-graveled island, but the courageous Marines go on.

Big guns, mortars go on incessantly and machine gun battles go on without a let up, but the Marines don't flinch. They are determined to take the island even though the

battle has been the most costly yet in the Pacific War. It's a tough and bloody fight. I found that out when we landed on the beach under Suribachi's ugly nose.

We moved ten feet up the sloped beach and dropped into coarse black volcanic gravel. From there it was run and fall from shellhole to shellhole. It took three hours to get inshore.

The first night enemy fire was light but in the morning all hell broke loose. Japanese light machine guns infiltrated into our area in the night. The first Marines to stick their heads out of the trenches in the morning were casualties.

Japanese on Mount Suribachi had our range and they couldn't miss. Only twenty five feet from our hole, mortar landed squarely into a trench. One Marine Combat Correspondent was killed and seven others wounded. I write about this personal experience only to show what the Marines go through.

WASHINGTON:

Vice Admiral R. S. Edwards, Deputy Chief of Naval Operations, said today that the major part of the Pacific Fleet is involved in operations around Iwo Jima.

Edwards expressed the opinion that the Japanese would not attempt to reinforce Iwo asserting "that is something we cannot hope for. If they would send in transports and let us sink them that would be a cheap way of getting rid of Japanese."

He said such tasks have been so costly to the Japanese that "Unfortunately they don't try them any more". He added that the strike at Tokyo may have something to do with preventing the Japanese Navy from coming out to meet our American Forces, and if it did, I am sorry.

He said today's reports do not indicate much change in the Iwo situation and explained it apparently had settled down to a "frontal battle and without details being available, it is assumed that action is going slow awaiting the landing of adequate power to prevent the necessity of any suicidal actions."

U.S. PACIFIC FLEET HEADQUARTERS, GUAM:

Backed by terrific bombardment from heavy artillery, aircraft and naval guns of the Fleet standing off Iwo, Marines of Iwo Jima opened their most concentrated attack of the six day battle today but were only inching forward against stiff enemy opposition.

A tank supported attack was launched from the southwest tip of the airdrome in the morning and by noon was making slow progress, Admiral Chester W. Nimitz reported. Terrific resistance from Japanese artillery, small arms and automatic weapons made every inch of ground a bitter costly affair.

Correspondent Elmont Waite reported Marines appeared to have reached the turning point in the conquest of the island, having taken Mount Suribachi at the southern end of the Island, and are now being engaged in mopping up operations against remnants of the garrison at that one time enemy strong point.

Admiral Nimitz reported conditions on beaches have generally improved and unloading of cargo material was proceeding.

CINCINNATI INQUIRER:

It doesn't quite seem to make sense, this awesome outlaying of equipment and men to take a tiny dot on the Pacific map - not until you reflect Tokyo is barely 750 miles to the north. Then, somehow, the battle for Iwo Jima settles firmly into a proper perspective as one of the climactic battles of the Pacific War.

Each of the islands our Amphibious Forces have captured has meant, in final effect, another stride in seven league boots toward Tokyo. Japanese warlords realize this and that's why Iwo Jima is being defended with such utter fanaticism. When Iwo Jima is taken - and it will be taken - sharp spearhead of American medium bombers will be just 750 miles from Tokyo.

NEW YORK TIMES:

It was assumed that the Japanese would destroy as much of Manila as they could before they died in its ruins. This is total warfare as our enemy practices it, but mounting atrocities committed on the helpless population seem utterly senseless. They have been reported in too much detail to leave room for doubt, and now General MacArthur himself confirms the enemy's savagery.

The Japanese are not merely giving vent to their hatred for Americans. They are now slaying any person they can lay their hands on. They are robbing, stabbing, and shooting unhappy Filipinos who remain within their lines.

Are they under compulsion of madmen or is their emotional instinct deformed? In a moment of stress they seem obsessed with the impulse to massacre. It is a persistent pattern that runs throughout both their victories and defeats.

We can restore what the Japanese have burned, but we cannot reveal victims of the fury. However, we can remember and when the day of reckoning comes, we can sift out the guilty parties and deliver them to their just end.

WASHINGTON:

Headquarters of the Twentieth Air Force announced that a large force of India-based B29s struck at Singapore in daylight Saturday.

The planes hit extensive and well established dock and harbor facilities of Singapore, the crossroads of war traffic between Japan and occupied territory, the communiqué said.

The attack was the first by B29s on Singapore since February First when B29s destroyed huge floating dry-docks capable of handling largest warships.

The Twentieth bomber Command made its first strike at Singapore last November Sixth and bombed the port again January eleventh.

PARIS:

Front dispatches reported today that American troops smashed over four miles beyond the Roer River. There was still no sign of any German stand against the huge offensive now within nineteen miles of Cologne and twelve miles north of Muenchen Gladbach.

General Dwight Eisenhower declared the purpose of his new offensive was the destruction of the German Army on the northern front west of the Rhine and that he expected to be able to do it.

Said Eisenhower, "The Russians have always furnished me all the information I needed to have, and they have done it willingly and cheerfully."

Eisenhower declared progress of the New American First and Ninth Armies' offensive was "Certainly satisfactory", and he did not expect U.S. casualties to be as high as in the late fall and winter battles of the same front.

Eisenhower had Lt. Gen. William Simpson's U.S. Ninth Army under command of Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery for the present for reasons unknown.

U.S. Infantrymen overran seventeen towns, and the prisoner toll soared above fourteen hundred as they fought across the Cologne Plains.

Associated Press Correspondent Wes Gallagher reported that all objectives are being taken ahead of schedule. The Yanks are within twenty four miles of Dueseldorf.

Bridgeheads have been pushed more than four miles beyond the flooded river and troops crossed between fallen Juelich and besieged Duren, and captured Niederzeir, nineteen miles short of Cologne. Farther north, the U.S. Ninth Army's deepest surge was toward Baal, twelve miles from Muenchen Gladbach.

LONDON:

A Moscow communiqué said today that Marshal Konev's First Ukraine Army southeast of Breslau rolled the Germans back in the direction of Hirschberg in the Katzbach mountains on the road to Prague. In Breslau itself the Russians captured a radio station and a big factory and moved into a residential district from the south under heavy artillery.

WASHINGTON:

A new type Japanese fighter plane with greater speed than any other Japanese aircraft of its type was recently shot down by United States Navy Airmen over the west coast of Formosa, the Navy said.

The new fighter is described as a streamlined, midwing, single seater plane. Commander Frederick Bakutis, aboard an Essex Class carrier, credited with the "kill" of the Japanese plane encountered the enemy plane north of the Pescadores Islands west of Formosa and pursued it for fifty miles before bringing the plane down with machine guns at long range.

A Navy announcement agrees with Admiral William F. Halsey Junior's statement that the new type Japanese planes "burn just as nice" as older ones.

March 3, 1945

COMMUNIQUÉ NUMBER 347, 2 MARCH:

U.S. Marines on Iwo Island advanced Northward on 1 March (East longitude date) occupying the western end of the island's Northern Airstrip moving our lines in the

western and central sectors forward and making smaller gains on the eastern side of the island. The enemy continues to offer stiff opposition.

The attack was made after intense shelling by Marine artillery and Naval guns. Carrier aircraft supported the ground troops during the day.

Seventeen prisoners of war were taken by Marines in the third division zone of action. Occasional artillery fire fell on parts of the beaches but unloading proceeds.

During early morning hours of 1 March a small group of enemy aircraft approached the Iwo area and dropped bombs which caused no damage. One bomber was shot down by ship's anti-aircraft fire.

Harassing attacks were carried out by carrier aircraft on enemy installations on Chichi Jima in the Bonins on the night of 28 February and 1 March.

During the week of 18 February to 24 February mopping up operations continued in the Marianas and Palaus. Thirty seven of the enemy were killed and 52 captured on Saipan. On Guam 34 were killed and 11 taken prisoner. Seven of the enemy were killed and two taken prisoner on Tinian. Two prisoners were taken on Peleliu.

Fighters and torpedo planes of the Fourth Marine Aircraft wing started fires and destroyed a bridge in the Palaus on 1 March.

Corsairs of the Fourth Marine Aircraft Wing bombed and strafed building, small craft and airfields at Ponape in the Carolines on 28 February.

Marine aircraft continued neutralizing raids on enemy held bases in the Marshalls on the same date.

LUZON:

In the Fourteenth Corps sector, troops of the First Cavalry Division captured the hills dominating Antipolo from the south after sharp fighting and seized Cardonaon the North shore of Laguna De Bay seven miles southeast of Angono.

The sixth Division, continuing strong pressure on enemy positions east of Montalban, repulsed three strong counterattacks supported by intense artillery and rocket fire. The fighting along the entire Wawa-Antipolo line is increasing in intensity.

In the First Corps sector, units of the Twenty Fifth Division attacking west from Carraglan, captured Maringalu and are pushing ahead on the Balete Pass Road.

The Thirty Second and the Thirty Third Divisions continued long range patrolling of the Caraballo and Benguet ranges with little enemy contact.

Our attack bombers destroyed enemy installations at Salomague, a town off the northwest coast and covered communication routes south of Bague. Fighters at Mindanao also swept throughout Tugererao in the Cayagan valley wrecking supply dumps and road installations. Our light bombers and fighters supported ground troops attacking the Wawa-Antipolo line.

MANILA:

American troops fought for control of Manila's water supply today which officers said would be a tougher task than the capture of the city itself. Marine and Army based bomber supported ground troops in the advance against twenty five miles of the Japanese "Shimbu" front from Ipo Dam on the Onangat River to Antipolo. MacArthur announced the capture of Corregidor is practically completed.

For the first time in three years allied cargo ships loaded with supplies entered Manila port although wrecked shore facilities will prevent full use of the port until reconstruction.

April 15, 1945

THE DEATH OF A GREAT AMERICAN

Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt notified her four sons in the Service that their father had done his job up to the end. Then she left by plane for Warm Springs.

Three of the Roosevelt sons are in the Naval Service on duty in the Pacific. Lt. Comdr. Franklin, Jr., is commanding officer of a destroyer escort and participated in the Okinawa operations. Navy Lieut. John is supply officer in the Pacific on an aircraft carrier. Marine Colonel James is on the staff of an Amphibious Group Commander in the Pacific. The other son, Brig. Gen. Elliott W., was last reported on duty with the 8th Air Force. Daughter Anna Roosevelt Boettiger was at the White House when word of her father's death came.

It was announced tonight that a special funeral train carrying President Roosevelt's body will leave Warm Springs, Georgia, tomorrow for Washington where it would arrive Saturday morning. Soldiers and Marines will be present on the arrival of the train.

Funeral services will be conducted in the historic East Room of the White House Saturday at a time to be announced later. According to White House Secretary, Jonathan Daniels, the President's plans were that his body will not lie in state.

After services are conducted at the White House, the body will entrain for Hyde Park where services will be conducted Sunday. Internment will be at Hyde Park.

Tonight the President lay in simple dignity in a plain maple bed in his unpretentious bedroom overlooking a broad pine-filled Georgia valley to which he had first come twenty years ago to recuperate from the after effect of infantile paralysis.

It is the same room where the President did much of his work when in Warm Springs. In addition, the single bedroom contained a mahogany leather-topped maple chest of drawers, a table and reading chair, and scatter hook rugs on the floor. The walls were adorned with ship prints and a ship's barometer, reminiscent of the sea lure the President loved.

Outside the white pine cottage, the Marine guards and Secret Service detail that protected the President in life, maintained a silent vigil tonight.

OUR NEW PRESIDENT: HIS VIEWS, BIOGRAPHY, MANNER

Our new President, Harry S. Truman, has consistently endorsed Roosevelt's foreign policies politically and as they pertained to the organization of a world league to preserve peace.

During a recent Presidential campaign, a reporter asked Truman whether, if death should come to Mr. Roosevelt, the 60-year old Missourian thought himself capable of stepping into his shoes. Truman answered that newsmen of the U. S. Senate press gallery voted him the civilian, who next to the President, "knows the most about the war."

Born at Lamar, Missouri, May 8, 1884, Truman served as Judge of Jackson County Court, Missouri (Administrative post), from 1926 to 1934. He appeared on the Federal Political scene as a Senator from Missouri in 1935 and was in his second term when he was nominated and elected as Vice President of the United States.

In the Senate, one of his principal interests was transportation. As Chairman of the Subcommittee of Interstate Commerce Committee, he conducted extensive hearing on railroad financing, was author of the bill for licensing operators of motor vehicles in interstate traffic, and was Chairman of the Subcommittee which drafted the Civil Aeronautics Act.

He was a member of the Appropriations Committee, the Military Affairs Committee and the Committee on Public Buildings, but he began to build broad national reputation when he became Chairman in 1941 of a special committee to investigate the National Defense Program. He had introduced a resolution which created this committee because billions were being spent for national defense - as it was then called - and he felt someone should keep watch on how money was spent.

Once the Truman Committee - as it quickly became known - began its work, it dipped into the country's processes of the war program and is credited with having saved many billions of dollars.

In his teens, Harry Truman failed West Point's physical exams because of poor eye sight. Instead he studied two years at Kansas City School of Law. With his father and brother, he then took over management of his grandmother's 600-acre farm. For ten years - 1907 to 1917 - he did every sort of farm chore. Bad eyes notwithstanding, Truman went about during the last war in command of a National Guard Artillery Battery. He came home as a major and today is a reserve colonel.

As an Army veteran and as an agriculturist, he has a deep personal interest in both current and post-war affairs. In July, 1943, commenting on the anniversary of the Japanese attack on the Chinese at Marco Polo Bridge, he said:

"The United States is proud of the unsurpassed courage and fierce resistance of her Chinese ally. An eternal desire for liberty is today and will continue to be the common bond between the people of our two nations. When the Axis has unconditionally surrendered, July 7th will be honored in China - as July 4th is honored in America - as the day forever dedicated to the national freedom and perpetual dignity of mankind."

Speaking July 30th, 1943, at Des Moines, Iowa, under the sponsorship of the United Nations Association, Truman said:

"As we march forward toward certain victory, we must make plans for a lasting and just peace. To win a military victory alone would be futile. We lay a foundation in our post-war world that will secure for all men everywhere basic human rights. Our President has proclaimed our war objectives as outlined in four freedoms. We are fighting now that four freedoms shall be not only freedoms for the United Nations, but a heritage for all peoples of the world."

Truman is mild in manner, exceedingly modest, and has receding gray hair and a thin-lipped mouth. He is soft-spoken, makes few speeches, and then exhibits no flow of eloquence or pompousness.

He still regards himself as a Missouri farmer. During his service in the Senate, he voted regularly for administrations-sponsored measures. His Senate term expired automatically upon taking office of Vice President.

Truman is expected to carry out fully the pledges that President Roosevelt made at the Yalta Conference. These included an agreement with Prime Minister Churchill and Premier Stalin on voting procedure of the proposed World Security Council.

Truman has supported, without reservation, the President's plans for the international organization.

Truman was married in 1919 to his childhood sweetheart, Bess Wallace. They have one daughter, Mary Margaret Truman, who is 19 years old.

U. S. 45 MILES FROM BERLIN!

The American Ninth Army pressed to within 45 miles of Berlin today in a 60-mile armored drive to a point over-running the city of Denmark. The Ninth was last reported at Tangermuende, where their swift advance (that of the 5th Armored Division) had carried them to a point within 92 miles of Russian forces facing Berlin from the East. Meanwhile, the 3rd Army in the center of the Western Front beat down the last 18 miles to the great Saxony city of Leipzig to bisect Germany and bar access from the north to the national redoubt in the south. Tonight, nearly 100 miles of the Elbe banks were passed by the Ninth.

Europe's greatest inland port of Duisburg - also Germany's 14th largest city - fell to the Ninth Army in the shrinking and by-passed Ruhr pocket. Meanwhile, the First Army tanks drove into the "golden meadows" and made a 35-mile run across then to within 17 miles of Leipzig. The "hell on wheels" 2nd Armored Division, which crossed the Elbe at Magdeburg, met still further opposition on the eastern bank of that last barrier before Berlin. The final push was on, however, as supplies and reinforcements poured across the river. At Leipzig, a German Lt. Gen. declared from his hospital bed after being captured that there are no more German defenses in Leipzig. And as the German Army continued to disintegrate, 30,000 Nazi captives were put into the Allied prisoner of war camps, awaiting the day of peace. Late reports placed the First Army tanks and infantry - after a crossing of the Saal River - directly in the center of a ring of anti-aircraft batteries guarding the bomb-shattered city of Leipzig and where the entire population is living in cellars and shelters.

VIENNA FALL EXPECTED HOURLY

The fall of the long-tottering Vienna is expected hourly; and inside the city, there is the most bitter house-to-house fighting ever experienced. The only tiny escape gap now open to the Germans is a small railroad running northwest from the city, but Moscow already has this under heavy artillery fire. On the fields in the north, Soviet tank men won a huge battle and cut the Austrian capital's last lifelines to the north leaving only seven miles of the railroad open to escape by the Nazis, and meanwhile other forces encircled Moravia. Russian river gunboats landed Soviet Marines in the rear of the German remnants holding out in the blazing city while Tommy-gunners fought house to house. Northeast of Vienna, the Moravian frontier already had been hurdled.

Russian troops moving in on the Czechoslovakian city of Bruenn, 68 miles north of Vienna, cut the remaining Nazi forces in the historic Austrian capital from their access to the highway between the two cities. Spearheads are within 33 miles of Bruenn, and reinforcements are pouring through the hurdle over the Moravian border.

PREVENTION OF DISEASE IN SUBIC BAY:

Personnel who go ashore in this area must follow these instruction in order to avoid severe and dangerous diseases.

- a. Wear shoes at all times. Hookworm gains entrance into the body thru the feet.
- b. Swimming in fresh water is absolutely forbidden, due to the presence of Amobic Dysentery and Schistosomious, a fatal disease.
- c. Fruits and vegetables are not safe to eat, as they may cause severe intestinal diseases.
- d. Do not eat in native restaurants. They are not sanitary. The water used by natives comes from shallow, polluted wells. Drink water on Navy or Army bases only.
- e. Malaria. Brain (Cerebral) Malaria is prevalent. Personnel should return to the ship by dusk. Keep shirts on and sleeves rolled down after 1700.
- f. Alcoholic beverages. Most so called whiskey sold in this area is a mixture of raw alcohol, wood alcohol and even at times gasoline. Some of these beverages have already caused paralysis and blindness. Don't drink it.
- g. Venereal disease. The incidence is high. All types are present: gonorrhea, chancroid and syphilis. These are Jap souvenirs that can ruin you for life. The only sure prevention is - don't do it.

Press Release (No actual date)

Local man aboard U.S.S. CECIL, helps land First Cavalry in Tokyo Bay.

When this important ship of the U.S. Navy's Third Amphibious Force under the command of Vice Admiral Theodore S. Wilkinsson, USN, landed units of the First Cavalry Division --- Spearhead of the U.S. Army of occupation --- in Tokyo Bay, it marked the end of a war well won and a job well done for the officers and crew.

Commissioned on September 15, 1944, and placed under the initial command of Captain Peter G. Gale, USN, of Butte, Montana, the ship was given its final inspection by the Ship Inspection Board of Commanders, Amphibious Training Command, U.S. Pacific Fleet and passed with flying colors as being ready for combat amphibious operations.

Assigned as Flagship of Transport Squadron Sixteen of the Amphibious Forces of the Pacific, the Cecil arrived at Pearl Harbor on December 9, 1944, and the same day the Squadron Commander, Commodore John B. McGovern, a veteran of amphibious warfare who rose from the enlisted ranks, landed assault troops at Kwajalein, Hollandia, Tarawa, Aitape, and Guam, as Commander of a transport division.

A new ship's Captain was received aboard on December 28. When Captain Hale was relieved by Captain George D. Lyon, USN, of San Francisco. Captain Lyon

remained in command and until replaced by Captain Thomas J. Casey, USN, of Boston, Massachusetts, who reported aboard in the Philippines on August 15 of this year.

On D-Day at Iwo Jima, February 19, 1945, the Cecil landed units of the Fifth Marine Division on the beach for the initial assault. From February 20 to 27 she stood off shore working day and night under air attack most of the time and under sporadic fire from shore batteries all the time until she finally stood high in the water --- completely unloaded. On the 23rd of February the ship was close enough in shore so that many of the men aboard could witness the now famous flag raising on Mt. Suribachi. The same day the first wounded Japanese prisoners were brought aboard. On the 27th, shell fragments from enemy fire struck on the port side but did no actual damage and there were no casualties.

Back in Saipan on March 4 the prisoners were transferred to the charge of Naval Authorities there and then the Cecil was off to the wars once more. This time it was Okinawa and on March 9 the ship held initiation ceremonies for all "Pollywogs" as she sailed over the equator headed for the staging area.

On April fourth the Cecil was underway enroute to Okinawa, loaded down with troops of the U.S. Army's 27th Division. A floating mine and a thirty three section pontoon were sighted and sunk by escorting ships during the trip north and on April ninth the Cecil dropped anchor off Hagushi Beach, Okinawa, during the height of an enemy air raid. At the moment it was as safe a place as any. Between April ninth and sixteenth the ship unloaded all of its troops and cargo. Everyday during the ten day operation there were red alerts --- sometimes as many as four of them --- and Kamikaze planes were operating in the area, but the Cecil came through unscathed and on April sixteenth she was once more underway bound for Saipan.

After the Okinawa campaign, many of the transports which participated were ordered back to the states. But much to the disappointment of the officers and men concerned, the Cecil and other ships of Transport Squadron Sixteen were ordered to the Philippines Area to train troops in amphibious warfare for the assault on Nippon.

In the time she spent in Philippine waters, the Cecil visited most of the larger islands in the group. The officers and men earned the right to wear, in addition to other honors accumulated during the war, the Philippines Liberation ribbon, an award authorized by the Government of the Philippines for men of the American Armed Forces who participated in the liberation of the islands.

When the Japs gave up, the Cecil and other ships of Squadron Sixteen were immediately made available to move the U.S. occupation forces to Japan. On August 21 they started loading the First Cavalry Division for the last lap of the long hard road to the Jap homeland.

October 18, 1945 - FRISCO BOUND!

NAVY ANNOUNCES NEW POINT SCORE

The Navy has announced that its point score for discharge will be lowered 3 points November first for virtually all personnel. Further reductions are slated for December and January. The Navy said the point cut means the release of one million men

and 100,000 officers by the first of the year. The discharge score on November first will be cut from 44 points to 41 for enlisted men. Male officer's points will be reduced from 49 to 46 points. Wave officers will need only 32 points for a discharge, and Wave enlisted personnel only 26. The cuts do not apply for Naval fliers or personnel frozen in their assignments. The critical scores for Naval fliers still are 36 points for Ensigns and 44 points for those of higher rank. It is predicted that on December 1st two additional points will be lopped from critical scores and one more will be dropped on January 1st. The present point reduction does not apply to Yeomen and Storekeepers. Specialists of the classifications and Mail Men who have been eligible for discharge under the point system will become eligible on November 1st with scores of 44 points for men and 29 for women.

WASHINGTON HEADLINES

President Truman today recommended to Congress that it find out from the people of Puerto Rico whether they desire full independence. He asked the lawmakers not to start anything that congress is not prepared to go through with. The President presented ideas of four options to be presented to Puerto Rico: one, election of its own governor with a wider measure of local government; two, statehood; three, complete independence; and four, a dominion form of government.

Soft coal operators went into a huddle in Washington today in an attempt to salvage the collapsed negotiations which sought to settle the strike of 200,000 miners. Government conciliators gave up last night, after ten days of conferences between operators and John L. Lewis failed to effect a settlement. They reported that operators have turned down 5 Lewis proposals which would have sent the miners back to work. There are now about 135 strike disputes in the states and some 385,000 workers off their jobs. That's the lowest figure this month.

Sec. of State James Byrnes conferred for 2 hours on the 15th with the Senate and House Foreign Affairs committee members. The State Department revealed afterward that the subject of the discussion was a proposed Inter-American Defense Treaty, but would not elaborate. The Associated Press said the conference was evidently called by Byrnes to give the Senators and Representatives a report on the Argentine situation and the cancellation of the proposed Inter-American Conference at Rio de Janeiro last week. The treaty was to have been written by that conference.

ADMIRAL HALSEY RECEIVED FORMAL WELCOME HOME

San Francisco gave Admiral Halsey, and men of the 3rd Fleet, a formal welcome home today. Detachments of Bluejackets and Marines aboard 14 vessels, which arrived at noon yesterday, were given an official greeting after they had paraded up Market Street from the Ferry Building to the City Hall. Other units of the fleet rode at anchor in a dozen West Coast harbors today, after arriving from Pearl Harbor and will remain berthed at the ports until after Navy Day festivities on October 27th.

Another Navy hero, Fleet Admiral Nimitz, is a California guest today. Visiting an old friend in San Jose, Nimitz said that he plans to make his home in the San Francisco Bay area. But first, he said, "I'm going back out to the Pacific and see if I can get myself enough points for a discharge."

NEW YORK

Associated Press reported that President Juan Antonio Rios of Chile told a press conference on the 16th he did not believe there would be any advantage in calling an Inter-American Conference now, to discuss the Argentine situation, or any other such matters. He added, "The present government in Argentina is a very sick man who each day grows weaker and weaker," and suggested we "leave him alone so he can die in peace."

Rios said his recent tour of Latin-American countries had given him, "a sense of opinion that has been definitely strengthened in Washington."

Rios declared that President Truman is, "following and bolstering the Good Neighbor Policy, to which the great President Roosevelt gave such high precedence."

FRANKFORT-ON-THE-MAIN

Across the world in Germany, General Eisenhower has denied reports that Jewish refugees in the American zone were not much better under the Americans that they were under the Nazis. Eisenhower said that President Truman asked for a report on the Jews and other displaced persons in answer to a report made by Earl G. Erickson, American representative on the Inter-Governmental Committee on refugees. The Erickson report said that the Jews were treated little differently now than they were by the Nazis. Eisenhower took a sharp difference with those statements. The 5 star general said that Jewish refugees had more housing space than American soldiers. He said that food allowance for displaced persons had been increased by 300 calories daily, and refugees have adequate clothing and uniformly excellent medical care. Erickson's report said the general took little account of the great problems faced by the Americans. He pointed out that thousands of Jewish lives have been saved by American care and that under American jurisdiction, the refugee's lot has been raised from one of physical degradation to the condition of health and comfort.

CALCUTTA

The leader of the All India Moslem League here declared that the Moslems of Bengal were ready to undergo any sacrifices to oppose Jewish expansion in Palestine. The Moslem leader said he is hoping for a peaceful solution of the situation, but, he added, "If the Zionists are bent on pressing their unacceptable claims by force of arms, the Moslems in Bengal will render every assistance to the Arabs."

NAVY REPORT ON OKINAWA DISASTER

Revised casualty figures showing 35 dead, 41 missing, 91 seriously injured and 332 with minor injuries were released by the Navy in connection with the typhoon which struck Okinawa last week. The Navy said the figures would probably be increased as a more complete list is compiled.

Seven vessels were lost and 19 were so badly damaged that they are considered total losses. 34 ships suffered structural damage and 4 others minor damage. Eighty percent of Naval shore installations were damaged or wiped out.

GENERAL MACARTHUR DECLARES JAP DEMOBILIZATION COMPLETED

Tokyo:

Last night Gen. MacArthur announced in his world-wide broadcast that Japan's Army and Navy have been completely demobilized and that some 7 million Nipponese soldiers and sailors have laid down their arms. He declared, "Nothing could exceed the abjectness, humiliation and finality of surrender. It is not only physically destructive, but equally destructive of Japanese spirit." MacArthur praised the conduct of American troops, calling them, "A model for all time of a conquering army."

Troops of the American division have discovered a cache of Japanese silver bars valued at \$1,100,000. Acting on a tip from intelligence officers, the Americans found the treasure buried in an underground room at Haratsuka, about 100 miles from Tokyo. The owner of the machine ship, under which the silver was buried, has been taken into custody.

A Japanese Navy Captain revealed today that the crews of the 6 Jap aircraft carriers which struck the blow at Pearl Harbor thought that they were on a training mission until the day before the treacherous attack. The Jap Captain, Huchida, who made the disclosure, was the supreme commander of the carrier flight groups that day. He said that all six carriers were later sunk.

Domie news agency reported today the appointment of Kanzo Shiosake, former Japanese ambassador to Chile, as Consul General to Gen. MacArthur of Japanese press and radio matters.

THE HAGUE

The Netherlands government on Tuesday accepted the resignation of the Governor General of the Netherland East Indies, the official news agency Aneta announced today.

HOLLYWOOD

Frank Sinatra sang at another Navy relief show here tonight before several thousands in the Hollywood Bowl, including film stars Bing Crosby and Bob Hope. Crosby commented, "Frankie looks as rough as ever." Lana Turner didn't swoon, but still thought that Frank was "mighty fine."

PEEPING, CHINA

The U.S. Marines returned to Peeping Tuesday with a hero's welcome. For two hours steel-helmeted Devil Dogs rode in Jap Army trucks thru cheering throngs of Chinese. An estimated 1,000,000 Chinese gave them their equivalent for "well done." Girls then threw flowers in the path of the Marines and boys ran beside the trucks to shake hands with the Americans.

SAIGON

French authorities Tuesday said the Annamese Nationalists had broadcast an appeal to President Truman and Generalissimo Stalin asking for representation on the United Nations Advisory Commission for Asiatics and denounced, "the abuses of power

by the British Administration on South Indo-China in support of French efforts to re-establish their imperialism.”

British authorities denied that Japanese Field Marshall Tierauchi was responsible for the native anti-imperialism rebellion in Indo-China. According to the British, the Japanese commander is playing ball with the British and the Jap forces as a whole are being very obedient to British army authorities. It is admitted that some Japanese deserters have been insubordinate and some Jap troops are know to have led some of the Annamese uprising in Indo-China.

SPORTS! LOOKING OVER THE GRIDIRON

Ohio State and Purdue appear to have the toughest battles to retain their rankings as “undefeated and untied” this week as the two teams tangle in Columbus with the loser almost certain to become a discard in the Big Ten title race. Army should not have too much trouble with the Melville, Rhode Island, Torpedo-boat aggregation at West Point, and the Navy meets Georgia Tech in a night game at Baltimore. Fifth place in the nation Minnesota gets its first big test against Northwestern.

The leading scorer in Collegiate football is Jim Boswell, a back for little Oberlin of Ohio. He was scored 66 points, but his place at the top may be insecure because he has played in 7 games, whereas most of the other high point men have played in only three or four. Besides Boswell the leaders are in the East - Walter Trojanowski, Connecticut, with 42; South - George Clark, Duke, with 42; Big Ten - Paul Sarringhaus of Ohio State with 36; Big Six - a tie between Gene Phelps of Iowa State, and Leroy Robinson of Kansas with 30; Southeast - Charles Smith of Ga., with 36; Pacific Coast Conference - Bobby Morris of USC, with 18; Far West - Charles Cordero of St. Mary’s with 30.

ATLANTA

Charlie Trippe is back at Georgia and will start playing football this week. In answer to a storm of protest to Senatorial intercession on his behalf so that he could be discharged from the Army with only 41 points, Trippe told the Atlanta Journal, “I was released with about 300 other guys as a routine surplus case. Some of them had less points than I.” Trippe also stated that he had requested overseas duty last winter, but the request was turned down. He said, “My commanding officer could not send me overseas because attached to my file was a card which said, ‘Hold for 1945 Football project.’” Trippe said that 15 of last year’s 3rd Airforce football were sent overseas and he asked to be sent along. “I wanted to get the whole thing over with and quit sitting around.”

NEW YORK

After Head Coach Fritz Crisler of Michigan saw the Army beat his boys last Saturday, he had great praise for Cadet Fullback Doc Blanchard. He cast him with Minnesota’s Great Bronco Nagurski.

CONN AND JOE LEWIS SIGN FOR JUNE BOUT!

Billy Conn will sign a contract tomorrow with Promoter Mike Jacobs for the Joe Louis fight next June, the 10th being the date set. Estimates indicate is will be the first 3,000,000 dollars gate in history. Uncle Mike is starting prices at \$100.00 a seat and

scaling down. Over 4,000,000 may be gained from television, radio and movie rights. Concerning television, Jacobs said, "The engineers tell me that they may have television perfected enough by that time to pipe the fight right in to movie house screens. If that is so, your guess on the gate is as good as mine."

The site of the battle is still a mystery. Chicago staged the biggest: \$2,650,000 for the second Tunney-Dempsey fight, and Philly drew \$1,895,723 in the rain for the first of their battles. Jacobs is partial to both cities. Joe likes Detroit, but New York is not out of the running.

MOVIE FOR TONIGHT: "Gentle Annie" with James Craig.

DISTANCE COVERED BY THE CECIL:

From 2028, 16 Oct. to 1800 17 Oct.- 301 Miles

Miles to go: 4,741

MAGIC CARPET NOTES

Homeward bound veterans aboard this transport flagship can now compete with Life Magazine's "Speaking of Pictures," weekly feature.

Ernest L. Jerman, Carpenter's Mate First Class of Bethune, South Carolina has over 300 pictures of the Pacific Ocean Area.

His pictures include scenes of Kitty's Beauty Salon on Midway, a crap game with sailors rolling dice with one hand and holding a carbine with the other, goonie birds, and traveling by scooter on Midway.

Jerman even has a picture of Agana Memorial Cemetery for Americans who fell in the battle of Guam. It shows a group of Jap war prisoners building a stone wall cut from coral around the burial ground.

Not to be outclassed by a sailor, PFC Arnie V. Hokans, USMCR, of Illinois has scenes of Okinawa showing an operating room in a cave, flame-throwers, Sugar Loaf Hill, and an Okinawan beauty. In addition, Hokans has a Jap flag, pistol, and a hundred years of silk two feet wide.

Marines of the Sixth Division had a choice of one out of four sets of Okinawa scenes. There are twelve pictures in a set. Platoon Sergeant James H. Schwan of Ohio also has a good collection of Pacific Ocean Area pictures.

THIS 'N THAT

Most of us remained topside, the other night, until the tiny lights of Guam faded away in the distance. For quite some time we had longed for that sight. Many of us wondered, not too little, just how long we would be at sea.

Well, the Chaplain gave us a little dope this morning. He expects the CECIL will be flying a little low under the Golden Gate on the afternoon or the evening of the 30th. We have computed our hours away from San Francisco in this manner. From 2100, 16th, to 2100 30th, is 336 hours, plus 18 more hours that we will lose on the way - total - 354. Now we subtract 36 for the time already at sea and we have 318 hours to San Francisco, city of the Golden Gate.

From now on we are on velvet. We will even stand on our heads the rest of the way. So - fly on good Cecil, of the Magic Carpet Squadron.

BUT TO TOP IT ALL OFF - -

Chief Pharmacist Funke was a pretty surprised person to find that his brother was among the passengers aboard. The brother, R.A. Funke, is on his way home for a discharge, and the last time he had seen his brother was during his boot training at Camp Peary while Chief Pharmacist Funke was stationed there.

The folks at home will be pleasantly surprised if both the boys return together and will feel more than grateful that God has answered their prayers.

36 Hours out of Guam at 0900 - - 315 Hours out of San Francisco

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE U.S.S. CECIL

The CECIL began her life as the SS Sea Angler in 1944. After the C-3 hull had been converted to an attack transport, she was commissioned as the U.S.S. CECIL in Portland, Oregon, under the Command of Captain P.G. Hale, USN.

After a brief shakedown cruise and preparation period in Southern California and the Hawaiian area, the CECIL, along with other transports and cargo ships of Transport Squadron 16, and commanded by Commodore J.B. McGovern, USN, embarked the 5th Marines at Hilo, Hawaii. These troops were then delivered to the transport area off Iwo Jima, early on D- Day, February 19, 1945. After the CECIL's pay load had been discharged, casualties and prisoners of war were evacuated and on February 28, the CECIL retired, accompanied by the other ships of the squadron. Captain G.D. Lyon, USN, was in Command during this operation, having relieved Captain Hale in December, 1944.

The CECIL discharged her prisoners of war and casualties at Saipan and Guam, and then proceeded to the Solomons and Espirito Santos to carry the 27th Division, U.S. Army. On April 9, the CECIL was again off a transport area, this time off Hagushi Beach, Okinawa, where she carried out the duties of an Attack Transport. Departing from Okinawa on the 16th of April, the CECIL again discharged her casualties and prisoners of war on Saipan and Guam.

Some days later the CECIL anchored off Ulithi, in the Caroline Islands, pulled out for Subic Bay in the Philippine Islands to carry out a schedule of training for the forthcoming landing in Japan.

The Philippine Liberation Medal was given to all members of the crew for participation in the liberation of the Islands. During her stay in this area the CECIL visited nearly all the Islands of the Philippines, frequenting such parts as Manila, Subic Bay, Tachloban, Leyte, Guiuan, San Fernando, Batangas, Cubu, and Zamboanga.

On the 15th of August, 1945, Captain Thomas J. Casey, USN, relieved Captain Lyon as Commanding Officer of the CECIL. Lt. E.G. Nicks, USNR, became Executive Officer at that time.

Headquarters Company of the 1st Cavalry Division and attached units of the US Army were transported by the CECIL to Tokyo Bay, arriving early in the morning of the

day the peace treaty was signed on board the MISSOURI. With victorious enthusiasm, the CECIL was unloaded at the Yokohama docks in about one-third the time required under previous-like conditions.

One more trip was made carrying the 41st (Sunset) Division, US Army, to Kure, Japan. On October 11, the CECIL left Hiro Wan, Japan, for Guam.

On October 16th, the CECIL joined the Magic Carpet fleet and steamed out of Guam for the United States. Up to the time of the departure from Guam at 2100, the 16th of October, she had rolled 38,165 engine miles across the blue waters of the Pacific.

84 Hours out of Guam at 0900 - - 267 Hours out of San Francisco

A WORD OF WARNING TO ALL PASSENGERS

We are all on our way home. Most of the passengers and a lot of the ship's crew are returning for discharge from the service, yet, we will not be in the States for nearly two weeks. During these two weeks we all want to eat regular, have some laundry done, buy things at the ship's store, and in general have a safe comfortable time during the remainder of the trip.

To have a safe comfortable trip, it is necessary that the passengers assume their share of the work. The ship's personnel, and a few of the passengers that have volunteered, have up to this time performed the necessary duties. To prevent a hardship on a few, it is necessary that all passengers chip in and help out with the load.

As you realize there is no organization among the troops, thus making it difficult to contact individuals to make up work details. Once you have been assigned to a detail, report when and where directed until you are relieved. All details will be rotated and changed periodically.

Unfortunately a lot of passengers have not been cooperating. They have been "ducking out" whenever possible and when they were not being watched. A word of warning to those slackers - the ship must be cleaned by the passengers and inspected by the ship's Executive Officer before any troops will be allowed to disembark from the ship in San Francisco. A list of all slackers is being kept, and they will be the first to be called upon for the performance of the latter duties.

Of course there is always the possibility of disciplinary action on the individual. The ship does not want to invoke this authority; however, the work must be done.

There isn't much to do, so let's all pitch in and help.

DISCHARGE DATA

Nine special consultants have been assigned to Personnel Separation Centers to assist discharges to readjust themselves to civilian life. Four Navy Officers - Chaplain, Educational Services Officer, Benefits and Insurance Officer, and Legal Assistance Officer - will perform services similar to those normally done at ships and stations. Five civilian or government experts will provide special information and assistance to those leaving the Navy and include:

Veterans Administration representatives who will specialize on benefits and claims and advise on the functions of their agency.

Red Cross representatives to assist separatees with advice and referrals on personal and family problems, and personal problems requiring immediate attention and furnish information.

U.S. Employment Service representative to assist veterans with job opportunities and job requirements.

U.S. Civil Service Commission representatives to instruct former civil service employees on their rights and to give advice to other veterans seeking federal jobs.

Selective Service representatives to provide veterans with information concerning their reemployment rights, and to clarify their status or classification under Selective Service laws.

\$64 QUESTION

What shall I do after my discharge? That's the challenge thousands of veterans are meeting every day. A sample poll taken of 400 men aboard this ship revealed the following figures -

GI college training	49
Return to old job	105
New job	155
Own business	67
Farming	5
Shipping over	3
Don't know	16

BROTHERS MEET

There is another set of brothers aboard besides the Funkes. They are the McDonalds, Irving and Robert, both Chiefs, of Meridian, Mississippi. Chief Carpenters Mate Irving W. McDonald served with the Seventh Seabees and helped build a fighter strip in American Samoa. He participated in the invasions of Guadalcanal and Espiritu Santo in the New Hebrides.

After thirty days leave in the States, Irving joined his brother, Chief Athletic Specialist Robert L. McDonald with the 23rd Seabees at Camp Parks, California. Robert had starred in football, baseball, and basketball at Mississippi Southern. They served together with the 23rd Seabees on Guam for one year until they became eligible for discharge.

GUAM MOVIE

The story of Guam as recorded by Navy photographers from landing July 21, 1944 until the island was transformed into a major base will soon be released by Warner Bros. as a two-reel Technicolor film "Salvaged Island."

FACTS AND FIGURES

This ship, the U.S.S. Cecil, APA No. 96, is a relatively fast single screw transport of about 10,000 tons displacement carrying a total of 384 Ship's Crew (officers and men), 139 Landing Boat Group (officers and men), 48 Beach Platoon Group (officers and men), 1105 troops and 101 troop officers.

The Cecil is built for attack. It carries an anti-aircraft battery of two 5/38 general purpose guns, two twin mount 40MM. guns, and eighteen 20 MM. guns.

For beach landings it carries two LCP (I) Landing Boats, one LCP (R) Landing Boat, twenty LCVP Landing Boats and four LCM (6) landing boats.

Overall length is 492 feet. The maximum speed is 18 knots and the cruising speed 15 knots. The Cecil is fitted out as a transport squadron flagship.

December 8, 1945

USN Receiving Station

Terminal Island, California

The Terminal Beacon

OPERATION CIVVY

Many people say being a civilian is no good, that after being one for a few weeks you'll wish to hell you were back in the Army. They're nuts.

The discharge simply means that you are free to begin living your own life. It's good to be free like that but it has some drawbacks.

I've found that people generally try to give you little breaks here and there because you were in service but they don't fall all over themselves. There are a couple of reasons:

One is that so many guys have come home with ribbons and war stories that they are no longer a novelty. The other reason is that once in a while they run into some punk who got his first pair of shoes in the Army and is anxious to see how many free beers his uniform will get. He pops off about what a raw deal he's getting and he asks every civilian between 16 and 60, "Why ain't you in uniform, Bud."

Since being home I've found that almost the loudest are those who have suffered the least. After a citizen runs into a few of these characters, he is going to be very cautious about the honest guys who have had their pants shot off, lost their girls while overseas, can't find jobs and are just trying to get along.

If you have to deal with some mug who got fat from the war and doesn't want to give you your due, get as tough as you like and throw the book at him. But until you're sure about him, don't approach him with a chip on your shoulders and an "I was in the Army where in the hell were you" attitude.

Maybe he isn't wearing a discharge button --- they look like hell and they break the second day you wear them --- chances are he dug holes all the way from Tunisia to Berlin, and even if he didn't he's probably been approached, that way before. And he's getting a little defensive.

CHAPLAIN'S TALK

An Army transport was forced down in the middle of a South American jungle. No one was injured but the wrecked plane was surrounded by an impenetrable forest. When the search pilots located the stranded party, they realized that no set of instructions dropped by parachute would suffice to lead them through the wilderness, past the swamps

to safety. The situation seemed hopeless. But no, a solution was found. A man who knew the country by heart volunteered to parachute into the midst of the group. Then when he had made himself one of the lost band, he led them to civilization. When they finally emerged through, the scout suffered more than the others --- had lost forty pounds and was weakened by malaria. But he expected trouble for himself when he joined that company.

On Christmas day we remember that the Son of God came down into the midst of our miserable, lost race, and put Himself in our situation. Then, through it cost Him the cross, He led to safety all who will follow.

Autographs of C. J. C. 10/25/45

Frank L. Moon
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Naval Housing
Honolulu-50 T. H.

Roy D. Bernallack
2500 - 77th Ave
Oakland 3,
California

Richard O. Merris
First Nat'l Bank,
Hays, Kansas

Thomas Eugene Smith
Paton Iowa

Erva C. Thaxton
Las Animas, Colo.

Conrad T. Cox
1071 Detroit St.
Denver, Colo.

Frederick L. Church
535 - 4th Ave. East
Twin Falls, Idaho

Alfred J. Dalbents
Orange City, Iowa

Marion A. Johnson
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Paul Williams
1939 River Ave.
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James J. Cahill?
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OKla City OKla

Donald L. McEntire
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Glenn Chittenden
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