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Saigon - Sept 2, 1945

Dear June,

Well censorship has lifted, so I'm going to give you the story you've been asking for. The highlights of my activities of the past year or so.

It started in Salina, Kans. before my last furlough. We started processing, straightening our records, and getting our new issue of clothes, plus our helmets, gasmasks and guns. My 15 day furlough was coming up at the end of June, but instead of 15 days I only got 10. Remember? Well by the time I came back we were alerted for shipment. We didn't leave til about July 20th though. We arrived at Camp Anza in 2 or 3 days. That's at Arlington, Calif. about 60 miles from Los Angeles. There we recieved more training, lectures and orientation movies. We slept through most of that though because we always were out on pass every night. Anyway we had about 2 weeks of that and on Sunday, Aug 13th we packed and

taken to Port of Embarkation at Wilmington. There we were met on the dock by a bunch of red cross girls who gave us coffee and doughnuts, and the army band from Anza. Just like in the movies you know? We were really loaded down though with a field pack on our backs weighing about 40 lbs and the duffle bag full of clothes which weighed easily 40 or 70 lbs. Then with the rifle slung over our shoulder and the steel helmet on our heads and the gas mask slung around our waist you can imagine what a job we had going from the train up the gang plank of the ship. Incidentally the boat which took us over, the *Norman* was later sunk in the Philippines. Anyway, we got on board, with a few complications, and at about 2 P.M. pulled away from the dock with the band blaring away on the air corp song. We all lined the rails and watched the good old U.S. slowly fade away over the horizon. We were assigned to lower hatch 3 and I mean that was really a crowded place! And even with the crowded hatch I went to sleep that night feeling very lonely and wondering what the future held

in store for us. ^{III}

The next morning I awake about 7 and when I opened my eyes the hold was really rocking. I got up in a hurry and ran up topside to spend the rest of that day and the next leaning over the rail. Boy, I was really seasick!

I was actually willing to die to relieve my misery. The third day I felt better though and was able to eat my meals without having it come up again. On the following Sunday, just 7 days after we left the States, we pulled into Pearl Harbor. There we could still see wreckage and other signs to remind us of Dec. 7, 1941. We lay in the harbor for about 2 days and on the third day we pulled out with a convoy of 11 other ships and 4 or 5 escort vessels. It took us about 9 days to reach the Marshall Islands and every day we could feel it getting hotter and hotter. Soon it got to hot to sleep below and we took to sleeping on the deck. That was hard sleeping with just a blanket between us and the steel plates of the deck. We passed the time of day by playing Pinochle (6 handed) every day, all day long.

We lay in Eniwetok Harbor in the

marshalls for more than 2 weeks and only got off the boat once to look over a nearby island. The island was about the size of 3 city blocks, so after spending about 10 minutes on it we went back aboard ship. We never did find out why we stayed there so long. While we were there they told us we were coming here and they told us some thing about the place. They told us there was an average rainfall of 89 inches a year. (and we found out they were right.) The island is 15 miles long and 7 miles wide, shaped almost like Manhattan. And they said there was still plenty of Japs left ~~out~~ on the island. (We found out they were right about that too. over 8,000 were killed in the first 8 months we were here.)

Anyway, on about the 17th day we left Eniwetok. and headed for Saipan. On about the second night out we started to get a taste of the 89 inches of rainfall. From that night until ~~we~~ we pulled into the harbor here it rained almost continually. We tried sleeping on deck but always got rained out. So we slept or rather spent our time down in the holds. Then on the morning of Sept 20th we saw on the horizon the outline of an island. It was driz-

zing and very ⁱⁿmisty that morning,
and so we looked at it. It reminded
me of a foreboding place with an air
of mystery. It reminded me of the picture
"King Kong" when they first saw the island
where they went to capture him. As we
pulled into the harbor though the sun
came out and the island actually looked
beautiful. It reminded me very much
of the California country side. We lay
in the harbor for 2 days and during that
time we heard many rumors about the
japs on the island and what they were doing,
and what part of the island we're going
to live on. Anyway on the 22nd of Sept we
were ready to disembark.

Well, I'm getting writer's cramp now.
So I'll take it up from there in my
next letter to you. o.k.?

Incidentally, don't forget, don't send
me any Christmas packages. and
tell everyone else who is likely to send
one, not to send ~~it~~ any.

I'll close now with love & kisses
to you, Mom, Pop and Millie and hope
I'll be seeing you all soon.

Yours loving brother
Paul
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Saipan - Sept 12, 1945

Dear Jane,

Well here's the rest of that story for you. Lets see, I ended the last one as we pulled into the harbor right? Well, on the 2nd we got off the boat, loaded onto trucks and started for our camp site. All around us we could see the signs of the bitter struggle which took place just the previous month. Everything was bullet-riddled and there were all kinds of wrecked ~~that~~ vehicles lying around. There were even a few dead Jap bodies that had been missed in the cleanup. We passed through the pre-war capital, Garapan and that was just a shambles. Not a building left with 4 walls standing. I've seen some pictures of pre-war Garapan and it was a very pretty little town. Just like one of the thousands that dot the U.S. It sure was pitiful to see it wrecked like that. It was there that we got our first strong sickening sweet-nauseating odor of rotting dead bodies. Ugh, what a stench! You could

never know how th awful it is unless
you smell it yourself. It seems they
had buried a bunch of japs nearby by
scooping a hole with a bulldozer and
then covering them up. And the continuous
rains was washing all the dirt off them.
Well, we traveled about a half hour
and pretty soon we came to our airfield
which was formerly Balita airfield as the
japs had called it. We changed the name
to Daley field. The engineers were working
on it day and night. The one runway that
was there had to be lengthened and another
had to be built next to it. It was less than
half completed when we got there. We went
about a mile further on and from up on
a cliff we looked down on our area.
It was about a half mile wide from the
cliff to the ocean and completely
covered with sugar cane. The truck
took us down and dropped us bag and
baggage right in the middle of the cane-
field. Luckily it hadn't rained that
day yet so the ground was comparatively
dry. So we got to work and leveled ~~and~~
an area and set up our pup tents.
I told you how I spent most of my
nights in the pup tents, didn't I? Sitting
up on a c ration box. The next three

days were busy outside for us. We had to carry our supplies from the docks to our area with trucks. I had a pretty soft job those three days as far as manual labor goes but my job was hard on the nerves. I was a guard on the trucks carrying supplies from 4 to 12 midnight. Boy, what a scary job that was. The drivers didn't know where he was going half the time and we'd end up in the hills. Then I'd really be scared. I'd sit there on the top of the supplies and my imagination would start working and I'd put a shell in the chamber and get ready to shoot anything that moved. Nothing ever happened though. Although I did hear that one of the guards was found one night with a bullet in his head.

We finished carrying supplies and started building up the area. We had to build an orderly room, supply room and operations office. Then we had to put up quonset huts for the combat crew when they came over with the planes. We used to listen to "Tokyo Rose" every day and a week or so after we arrived we heard her welcome Gen. O'Donnell and his 73rd wing to the island of Saipan. After that she often made some kind of threat

but never made good on any of them until after some of our planes ~~came~~ came in. They started coming in at the end of October and we were just finishing putting up the last quonset huts. It was a great day when we saw the first B-29 buzz the field and come in for a landing. I never thought I'd be so happy to see an airplane. Then on about the 2nd of Nov. our first Sgt came into our tent and appointed us fire guards. He said they were expecting something, but didn't say what. We went to bed that night feeling pretty nervous and wondering what to expect. Nothing came that night and we relaxed. On the following night though the sirens blew ~~up~~ about 12:30 A.M. We got up, got our helmets, gas masks, and rifles and went to our posts. About an hour ~~passed~~ passed and I started to doze off. I figured it was just a practice alert, at least I tried to convince myself of that. I sure was scared though because not ever being in an air raid I didn't have the slightest idea of what to expect. Suddenly all hell seemed to break loose. Boy, I was wide awake then. The sky was filled with tracers and I was under the truck before you could wink. I wish I could describe to you how

it feels to be in an ^{air} raid but it's impossible. It was all over before we knew it and there was one B-29 and a jip betty burning on the other side of the field. They came in again the next night and the night after and we lost a good three hours sleep a night. They didn't bother us again until after we pulled our first raid on Tokyo. They came in the very next night and from then on all through Dec. and Jan. every night the moon was shining they raided us again. The two I remember most vividly were the sneak night attack while Warner and I were pulling guard on our plane and the next day when about 7 or 8 fighters sneaked in and kept strafing the field until they were all shot down. They destroyed 2 planes that day. All in all they did considerable damage with their raids not counting the loss of sleep for us. But we paid them back a thousand-fold. We kept stepping up our bombing raids and after Iwo Jima was taken the jip raids stopped and we carried more bombs per plane. Every once in a while we'd get a report from the navy to expect jip paratroopers. The last one we got was in July and we really expected them

then, because we thknew how desperate they were getting. Some of these men who had never cleaned their guns since we'd been over here, really went to work on them that night. Each man was supposed to have about 45 rounds of ammunition but most of us had about 150 rounds each, enough to fight off a small army. No paratroopers ever did land though.

Well, you know the rest of the story. You read the results in all the papers. And then on the 10th of Aug. at about 11 P.M. every one started running around the area like mad. They had heard about the peace rumors. Right away I started praying for it to be true and sure enough on the 14th, just a year and a day after we left the States, Pres. Truman announced that it was really over. That was three hard days of sweating though, from the 10th to the 14th. Well that's it. Now, if things go right I'll be home for Christmas.

I just received your letter of the 4th. I'm in the best of health and hope this letter finds you and the rest of the family as well.

Yes, I know just how you feel. I

guess it has been pretty dull for you
and the rest of the folks there at home.
But don't envy us, Jane because we've
been places and seen things. Ask any
G.I. and you'll find out that you're
the one that was envied. I don't mean just
you, I mean all civilians in general.
I still say though, that I don't blame you
a bit for griping.

So you wrote to Susan and she hasn't
answered? I can't imagine why. I haven't
heard from her in some time either.
I think you'll be hearing from her soon
though.

Well I'm getting writer's cramp again
so I'll close with love & kisses to you, home
Pop and Millie and best regards to all
there and in the shop. Hope to see you
all soon.

Brother,
Paul
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