

May 28, 1945

Dear Folks,

As usual the last two mail calls (starting with a special bugle call like most announcements aboard ship) have, ^{each} produced one letter from each of you and, as is so often the case, none from anyone else, which of course means yours are, ^{if possible,} all the more appreciated.

So April turned out to be nasty. How surprising! I suppose it must have been tough on many crops, but don't people usually overdue the wailing and complaining? Not being a farmer I hardly have a right, however, to bring up the subject.

It's heartening to hear that Marilyn is so well just the same it must have been a tough three years out there. If only she had taken an interest in and so been able to report on the birds! New Guinea is renowned for its birds of paradise, pigeons, parrots, etc., etc., but I guess also for its diseases, heat, etc.

Your activities positively amaze me, by the way, but I'm glad a good share are social. I don't blame you, Ma, for being mad at finding yourself giving so much attention to unappreciative women, already well entertained, who turned out to be the not so sick wives of their soldier entertainers. I was glad to hear that the Boston version of the G.S. Alumni Dinner turned out so well. Is it the first the "Rector" was not present?

We didn't pay too much attention to the VE rumor, having been assured that we would
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describes a typical mission except for the detail of an actual attack, target, etc. Much discussion about us ending going home, etc.

get the truth all in good time, though I can-
hardly blame you for getting all hot and bothered
about such at home with the radio themselves
so jittery. Radio programs were available and
good at both Hilo and Guam, each having a
station, but aboard ship only the communication
outfit gets much dope, though there is a radio
in the wardroom that can get Tokyo Rose most
anytime and Australia occasionally. Our
"scuttlebut" out here is small time - mostly
about when we're going home. The thing of
most immediate concern to us when our
minds are not otherwise occupied, but which
will of course remain in doubt until we're
actually headed east, whether on this ship or
another.

It seemed to me and therefore made me a
little mad that some people seemed to almost
assume that we would get to Berlin first, to go
a little further back in history. (see Times map
a week or two before the city was breached), but
it's almost impossible to have any serious
feelings about anyone besides those of utter dis-
gust at the Germans upon the revelation of
the real horror of their all too recent atrocities.
The whole population should have been made
to at least pass through some of those chambers.

I'm so glad Ham and family had time
not only to see you, but to play around with
cousins, etc. It's hard to believe that the war
may very likely be over and I'll be a civilian
when they come back, if it isn't to be for three

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year. My nephews will have changed the most, however, and already I find it hard to keep track of their ages.

Too bad there's no room for Archie at G.S. He would certainly be an addition to the community. If the Gardies go to N.Y., at least it won't be as bad as if it were Chicago, as I understood was once expected. How did J.W. Keller get out of uniform so apparently easily? I'm just curious.

So Jack went on a bird walk. Those large-scale over leave must to be desired, but perhaps he got something out of it. It would be nice if he got at least mildly interested. Though looking back at my experiences, I'd not give whole-hearted approval to his getting as interested as I became a little further along and stayed, which was almost to the exclusion of anything else!

I don't wonder that you're curious about Helen Coolidge's remarks concerning your darling daughter. Could she be head of deistic training? Perhaps she will join us kids overseas after all and become the furthest of all from home! It wouldn't do her any harm, seem to me.

So I told Sabine more about Hawaiian volcanoes than I did you. Well, that was unintentional, but perhaps it ^{because} ~~was~~ I was unnecessarily discreet at first and then forgot later just how much had been omitted. There'll be all the more to tell in person. It shouldn't be any later than August, by the way, and could be earlier. We just don't know - couldn't say any more.

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Having saved space by cramping words and just remembering that I planned to describe a typical "hop", I'll proceed with the latter. Though discreetly!

Those going on the flight (never the whole squadron) having manned the ready room well before the flight are then given all the necessary intelligence, navigation and rescue data, etc. before (or after) getting into flight gear and are then all set when: "Pilots, man your planes", comes over the speaking system. The situation is seldom as dramatic as usually publicized, things having usually been so well arranged and organized that there is, for instance, usually no need to run for the planes. Engines are started by the pilots, those in the front row first and all at given signals. Sometimes we are sent off by catapult from up near the bow, but usually we just run down the deck from the take-off position, roughly a third of the way from the stern. All but the leading plane have to taxi up to this position, unfolding the wings and putting down the flaps at the same time. When in the right place we get a "rev" up signal, for approximately full power, and then a "go" signal. Only ~~until~~ ^{after} that does the pilot have ^{complete} change of the situation, which requires putting on any power that may be left after ^{his} releasing the brakes and then steering to keep in the middle of the deck until airborne. Once airborne one turns to the right to clear the deck of prop. wash (slipstream) and at the same time raises the wheels and the flaps immediately afterwards, all the time cutting back on the power as desirable. The leading plane goes way ahead parallel with

the ship's course (into the wind of course, at least until the last plane is launched) and then make a gradual ^{180°} turn so that the other planes can join up by turning ^{more} sharply. Before heading on course our outfit of bombers has to join up with torpedo planes and escorting fighters and often too with fighters from other ships. After that we usually start climbing right away. We stay in formation all the way to the target only opening up a little just before diving, and joining up again as soon after pulling out as possible, though this may involve a tail chase at low altitude and maximum speed to the rendezvous spot, which must be clear of AA fire. Needless to say, ^{we} waste no more time going in than getting out, and since this leaves scarcely enough time to pick out and concentrate on the target, we don't see much else until after the dive, when the ground ^{is seen} is whipping past at a great rate. The diving flaps are used in a steep dive and then only in the dive itself. As you probably know, these flaps are the same as the landing (and take-off) flaps except that there is an equal portion projecting above the trailing edge of the wings, like this:



Well, the next thing of course is to return to base and, as soon as it is safe, at a slowish, cruising speed, to save gas. There's never any trouble finding the ship

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even if it has moved considerably. The course was given us before, and if it's been changed, there are various navigational aids to guide us. If out of the wind, the ship may not turn into it until ready to receive us aboard, and we may have to do considerable circling. Hooks, however, are put down right away so no one will forget later, the drag of a hook being practically negligible. When the time for landing does come, the traffic pattern must be just so for a minimum of lost time, the landing circle itself being fed into from the other. Wheels are put down at the start of the final circle, actually more or less of a rectangle with rounded corners, and flaps are put down on the last down-wind leg before turning into the "groove", which is where one starts to follow the signals of the L.S.O. (to be followed religiously until the cut). For a brief moment one is complete master of the plane, but as soon as the hook catches a wire and the plane stops one has to start following signals again - for relaxing the brakes so the plane will roll back ~~and~~ away from the tension of the wire, for putting the hook up as soon as the crew unhitches it from the wire, for taxiing forward beyond the barrier as quickly as possible and then very gingerly into a parking area that has inches to spare. That's it from a routine and unglamorous point of view, and though there may be excitement at any of several places, one particularly, along the line. There's no space left for mentioning these now.

Don't think that I don't realize most of what you are about a CV and flying from it. This is a horrible gap. I don't know if you are pretty familiar with it.