

June 19, '45

Dear Grandma,

An undutiful grand-
son repents and finally puts pen to
paper for a bit of greeting and news
from Latitude CENSORED, Longitude
CENSORED.

So you've deserted the Gardies and
moved up to Squam. It must have
been nice to see so much of them,
my "next-to-my-favorite" family.
I'm sure a quiet winter with
them must have done a world of
good to you, and vice versa.
They must have been very pleased
to have you.

Well, it must be nice to be
up at Squam just the same.
Pa says Mr. West told him the
ice went out earlier than ever
before, very early in April. March
indeed must have been a very
remarkable month. The last
time I saw Squam was late
in April of last year, and it

was still pretty solid. The next time it should be nearly at its warmest, if all goes well, for I expect to enjoy summer weather there for the first time in four years. Too bad Spring has been ^{so} wretched.

Now that our worthy brethren have finished with the more obvious business in their theatre, perhaps you at home are hearing more of events in these even more distant parts. We don't claim to be doing things on a scale reached in Europe, not yet at least, except geographically, but in this particular category we excel, and this is what makes taking part in movements out here so very interesting. Actually I don't suppose it is so interesting to those on shipboard who often don't see land for weeks, ^{a month} or end or those at the other end

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who see nothing but their own little island or whatever for ever longer periods. We are lucky, then, in getting the advantages of life aboard ship (better food and quarters, healthier atmosphere, and environment, travel, etc.) without experiencing the monotony thereof. The views which, what you might call our third dimension, provides, especially of enemy territory, make this quite impossible!

Before describing some of the more interesting Japanese scenery I'd better go back to Hawaii and Guam, having not given them deserved coverage before. That is, as far as you have been concerned.

Hawaii is fully as beautiful as advertised. Though I refer to the Territory as a whole, which consists of eight sizable

islands, rather than the tourist
center of the Honolulu - Waikiki region.
We were fortunate enough to be
located practically all the time on
Hawaii, the island that gave the
territory its name and which is by
far the largest of the group and
perhaps the most interesting. Two
massive volcanoes, one dead, the
other ~~still active~~ the only
one of the many throughout the
territory still alive, form the
bulk of the island. Sugar cane
is grown extensively on the lower
slopes, but above them and away
from the recent lava flows are
stands of pine forest. There are
such stands almost surrounding
Kilauea, the tremendous active
crater that is the main feature of
the more accessible portion of
Hawaii Nat'l Park, which we
sometimes visited on off days.
Here also are found several kinds
of native birds, which have been
pretty well exterminated, largely
through changes in habitat and

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competition with introduced birds, from most of the lower, cultivated areas. Most of these native birds, by the way, belong to one family peculiar to the Hawaiian chain and many species of which have in the last several decades become extinct or nearly so. This is especially sad, as the family is unique in the extremeness of bill development attained in the process of evolution through extreme specialization in feeding habits. There are, for instance, honey suckers, flycatchers, nutcrackers and others all with the appropriate shaped bills, but all in the same family!

The scenery of the volcano and crater is of course very grand, but that of the tremendous gorges, cliffs and their waterfalls on Hawaii and on the other islands as well is fully as impressive.

From Hawaii we journeyed to Guam and spent an almost equal amount of time there. It is the largest island in all Micronesia, but still only about a twentieth the

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size of Hawaii, itself less than half the size of N.H. Guam is a pretty island with rolling to hilly topography and rather more vegetation in forest than in field and other open areas. There are some fine beaches, and the swimming is excellent. Shell collecting is enjoyed by many too. The number of different kind of birds is not startling. One surprising species is the native crow, much like ours.

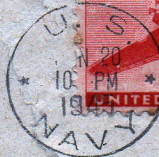
Well, next came Japan. It was the Navy's first visit to Honshu, or any of the home islands for that matter, but it was a mighty short one. Our areas were nearer Nagoya than Tokyo, but we got fine views of Fuji-yama, a beautiful cone, then covered with snow. We saw other lesser snow-capped peaks further south, ranges of them in fact. Every available

are of the small amount of low-land or lower less-steep slopes was utilized for agriculture. Later on we got even better views of Kyushu, which has practically no lowland at all and perhaps more terracing than Honshu. We passed over a small, live volcano on one of our trips. Yes, Japan is very picturesque, even if it is poor in resources (except for forests, water power, minerals and fish). It would be wicked to have to fight through, and I hope that won't be necessary. If they don't know it yet, the Japs will soon know just how badly they are beaten and may try and salvage something.

We saw a bit of grim little Iwo and rather more of Okinawa and other islands of the Ryukus or Nansei Shoto. I just wish it had been a sightseeing tour!

Hope to see you before very long
Love Tada.

LT. T. RICHARDS, U.S.N.R.
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