Yesterday we cursed the equator - we entered the domain of Neptunus Rex, his mermaids and his court. All those who had previously cursed the equator were cursed. Those who haven't "loudness, stinking, slimy, hard, lubbing, loathsome polywogs," they are the uninitiated. The day before "Denny Jones" came aboard for an inspection and several polywogs were called up for offense, like taking eggs from the crow next and had their behinds paddled. All this is accompanied by great pomp and ceremony. All the characters arequadily dressed and there is an air of false austerity. Yesterday was the big day - all the polywogs, officers, Navy personnel, and army enlisted men went through the initiation. First down on your knees and a stinging stream of salt water is played upon you as you run the gauntlet of some 15 shellbacks who paddle you wet from head to heels with pieces of canvas. Then you proceed a laod and pay homage to Neptune and his court; from there you stick your face into the mustard covered posterior of some shellback. Next you sit in
Get real—about 100 volts and you wet

clothes assure your getting a shock. Then

the "royal" barbers clip odd sections of your

hair out, leaving you looking like a patchwork

quilt. Then you were smeared with French

mussing and sprayed with "blueing." And

that was it. It was my fault—it was fun
to watch the others, especially in the hottest

hours we are allHonorable shellbacks.

[Signature]

Ray
Today is my second day at sea. It has been a fine trip so far. We are on a Navy transport which has been chartered for this trip by the army. That means we get Navy chow—and the food is good. 3 regular meals a day. The enlisted men only get 2 meals. We have a noon meal of sandwiches and fruit. (Another reason I am glad I endured those 13 weeks at O. C. S.) It's tough on the O. I.'s. There has been little sickness as far as I have seen; the sea has been smooth. Sleeping is excellent; it is like being rocked to sleep. Time does tend to hang heavy. The chaplain runs a very adequate library; I am borrowing through several anthologies when I am not playing cards—bridge, poker, hearts what have you. The sea air gives you an appetite despite the fact that life is inactive. I spend a lot of time on the upper decks; it is the best place to read.

I got the mail distribution today—a card
from Florida and the bulletin with it. Some picture. There may be a second distribution when they dig up 30% each of mail. I hope so. We, of course, can read no mail until it reaches. I will have the letters ready for mail (and censorship) as soon as we get somewhere when we can post them. I will also write a V-mail letter and post it at the same time. You can then judge which seems so best, as yet we have not been informed as to what we can write and what we cannot. In that regard, I am writing only to you and at that price to skip the specific details of my ship etc. I know damned little, anyway. I am only saying that so many days have gone by without you receiving any word from me. Perhaps later in it will be permissible to tell you some decisions etc. Needless to say injections and runns are running rampant around here.

Sumner T. Bemster
Another note - and nothing special, still on route. We are getting looking pamphlets pointing us on the Southwest Pacific. Yesterday wasn't yesterday, it was the day before yesterday because we lost Thursday when we crossed the dateline. I must be almost 1/2 the way around the globe from Britain. Bridge playing is still the rule, doing lots of reading as well. Map pass very well quickly although we gain time as we move west daily.

Incidentally, I now play cards and even chess long I still fight everyone in sight - I'm incurable. I used to be half the daily jokes I hear. My gang of near six a
cheerful lunch. We all made our own humor and with our ribbing of a violently Horton warrant officer.

I have not missed Friday night devils in my 3 weeks on this boat. They are what are not very satisfactory but it rather of them fail to attack. On the whole I like their bored life. It is steady, steady enough - better enjoy it while I can.

Strangely enough I feel very unhappy, especially about this whole liquid of gang and being over the reeds. Perhaps when I get that, get assigned, and have something to judge by, I can write something intelligent. Right now I guess I am lazy enough to just keep thinking to myself.
The Pacific remains as blue as ever. Sunset is really beautiful as the ocean: yellow, red, mirrored by the clouds against the very blue sky. You really get to know what "why this peak" is, for that is really the color of that last glow of sunshine. I guess I should have been a poet.

Summer T. Sidwell
I don’t remember when I first met him or even saw him. In the end, you come in contact with so many people that first meetings are usually vague since they are busy affairs. I do remember his being called out to take charge of some troops when we arrived at somewhere; I remember my surprise when on the train to somewhere he explained that the blue ship was worth a dollar. And I shall never forget his disdain, his sarcastic remarks, his air of superiority when he found we were playing my usual nickel and dime poker. We played “baseball” — a wild game, yet compared to “Wildcat” and some of the others relatively mild — his comment, always with a self-satisfied grin, was “Well, that’s not poker.” The story of a friendly game, and of the fact that we were playing to pass the time not in blood, affected him not the least. He was quick to organize the 25th games and make up.

I don’t know when I finally associated the name Warner with him; Ray Warner. He was in his thirties I guess; average physique, small features, a somewhat flabby face and chin. His two classic expressions are his grin — which appears smirking and superior, and his grime — which is a dot
dispirited look, almost pleading for sympathy. His eyes are small and are rather expressionless. The game of poker was my first common game with him—usually he was a participant and I the pitifully. I quickly learned several things about him—shall I say that I gained several impressions? the first was that he was sure that Roy Learner is the best poker player in the world and that he is perhaps by poetic justice? the wast card holder. I will admit that he plays poker well; he knows when to stay and when not to, when to draw and when to drop out. In the long run he undoubtedly is ahead. But his manner, his superior line of chaff, is quite as Co is never beaten by skill, but only luck. As soon as some one (like Roy Learner) figures out how he plays, he can easily be beaten. It was Roy who talked me into playing; now I'm always has Roy's goat all the time since he plays the same type of game and has the advantage of Roy having given his game away while luring me into his clutches. When Roy wins, no matter who the opponent, or matter what the game, Roy always places the blame on credit or luck, with some comment like 'he went in like a drunk and came out smelling like roses.' Roy is not angry; he just seems sad, disillusioned; he doesn't hold it against anybody.
Dont begrudge his losses to the Burns, he takes it all somewhat philosophically - why does it put have to happen to me, the best card players around there get?

Bridge, rather than Poker, proved to be the medium in the true expression of my chum; for we went to meet the Narrow system - the perfect system. To replace Culbertson, Van Vleck and all the rest. It is based on print value, indicative bids, forcing bids and the rest. But just a word -

Part of Narrow's makeup, it seems, is the need of a stooge; someone to help his egos up, to second his ideas, to echo his words, to support his case. In this instance Dick Boag (pronounced Knave by Narrow) fills the bill. In Poker he plays against 'em but they are always whispering together, reading a chuckling like two old cronies, obviously trying to make the other feel the lack of the Narrow system and blessing of Narrow himself. In Bridge Dick was the dummy person to be let into the system to learn it, and then to go fighting with the master and his print count and his key bids to conquer the world.

As yet Narrow has conquered no one.

Peg is a good player, his system has its merits and its faults. The biggest fault is Boag - he has not
got the finer points of the system mastered despite his many protestations. "Next time" is his cry but sometimes Ray feels so bad that he has to say "maybe we ought to play cultivation?" Incidentally, Ray with his system never wins his bidding. He is right when he says that the system has never really been tried but he keeps on hoping that long will see the light and they will make it to new found success. The amusing part to the doubting Thomases who are playing against the system is to hear Ray mew with a look combining anguished disgust and resignation explain to his partner what has happened. It is all a negative correction of his brilliant system, a negative boost to his crinkly concept which is really amusing rather than perturbing since Ray never takes his bidding as a recognized fact. If only Ray could see this.

"It means 16 points and that one 10 points etc. and Ray's play, after the bidding - I think Ray wonders whether it is better that he is uniquely right or it might be better if he had no ambition. I don't think he wants to win money; he just wants a subtle sort of recognition, and of course, from his personal judge against bigness, which is rather secondary any way. Nanny so good natured in the most part he takes Ray's crosswell in stride because they are long.
cans; he just gets somewhat queer after a while.
It is a classic case for him to explain his attitude
which forces his partners to pass. Now I have
invented a bit which forces my partner to pass.
In his reply, explaining his old difficulty with
partners who refuse to pass, Bogy, of course,
ignores the invention, bides his monkey wrenches
the winks and Graves just curls up a little
more and looks pleasantly, if distinctly
amused in sympathy, all of Graves apprehensive.
His trial with Bogy; his sayings from "I have
invented a bit in dam, are ready lawyer press
all and, in fact, a satisfactory probation to try
since they afford him recognition. Graves is not
amused, but he is pleasantly amused and certain. I guess
my invitation this would tickle him. He is different, no
doubt about it. His girl is not ordinary. If you are
not admired by him is repulsed by him in your reaction
to him, he proves enjoyable company. In fact, at
the little budgie tables it is Bogy with his amused
smile, to Graves who proves somewhat disgusting.

A last word on Graves; he recognizes the judgment
of others, is in fact seeking the protection and the
dependence he has so long, so well excelled himself.
He does not hesitate to praise the good play of others under
the same; it may be blind luck - he feels himself
very unlucky, probably considers it the handicap
it compensates for his abilities. A last incident in the
present writing: on the boat deck this morning, I noticed that Names had not shaved his mustache in a well-defined area on his chin. I asked if he were trying to grow a beard. "Trying?" he regarded why he could I say trying — he is Names.

He argued as had his mepade qeedal — granted only a days growth right now.