Dear ones—

We left "somewhere on the West Coast" for "somewhere on the West Coast" this morning and arrived here in time to get a look at the ship. This will probably be a pretty jumbled report and impression of a very important day in my young life. Here goes:

We marched to the boat which was to take us to the point of embarkation. It was a sunny day, bright with the sun. Everything looked very sharply defined, my sun glasses. The gulls were soaring and banking, but flapping in vain if they tried to fly right into the wind. The water was as rough as Casco Bay in a rough day; the boat was a little larger than an Island Steamer. It reminded me somewhat of home—the army atmosphere naturally denied full impression of Portland by the sea.

Onship a recency of "somewhere" is maintained to some degree in practice. Despite this we marched to the dock in full view of neighboring townspeople—it was quite a walk that we assumed we would go by train to this point from we caught sight of a boat and we had
moved to the waterfront and the embarking area. The band was there playing "the devil\'s\nbaby," "the hebrides polka," and I came over Towards "Nail, Nail\" (just before we came in\nview of the pier we could see a flag - someone\ncommented, "There\'s a flag\" - the答复 was, "What\nflag, the Japanese? I\'ve walked far enough!\"
Here we were, the band moving around trying\nto get shifty from the wind, still playing songs like\n"Tiger Rag\" and "string of beads\" we walked up the\nfirst gangplank - we knew that this was the\nfirst time - at the port we would walk up the\nreal gangplank. This was just the preliminary\nwe walked under the signs telling us that the\n3 branches of teams equipped trained and\nprotected us - now it\'s up to you\" most of\nus were aware of this before we started this boat\ntrip. In fact, the whole atmosphere of my mood\nis marked by a lack of tension, an excellent\ngood humor, a touch interest in the crucial\nthing going on around us. Typically routine:\n"are you excited?\" "only a little, I haven\'t been\nat sea for a long time\" "Well, you\'ve been at sea \nall your life!\" came into E. K. (a good sign.\nUp on the top deck we could see the embar-
Ration of the troops. The Negroes who sang the
cadence so cheerfully as they marched to the boat
but then complained, as they were led to the lowest
deck, "we always stick in the bottom." We could
see both out and see the civilians watching every
move. I wonder how many had adding machines
for accuracy in their reports to the destroyers. I almost
broke the secrecy which covered my end of
the activity yet its openness to any civilian
prejudice. Oh well, we need practice in secrecy.
These can never be too much of that, no real com-
plaint, just an army gossip. We still had not
received mail for over 6 days.

4 cute Negroes in their coveralls (filled not
much better than by the ordinary G-I, naturally)
came along and I thought the boat would tip me
as everyone wished to the side. One soldier got
himself a good knee break. They were cut all
right, any girl could look at them when we think of
what sort of women we may be meeting in my
travels.

While we admired the excellent symmetry
in embarkation, the band moved up for a final
salute. We spotted a Major who had grabbed a ray and
was merely tooting away. Everyone cried for a solo; he refused that and commented that we might be satisfied "since you have to be glad to have my play for you." Before we knew it, there were 3 sharp blasts and my first U-boat trip was underway.

The trip began marked by no big event. I got a letter from home! The officer had picked it up just before signing out. It was very lucky; it was your letter of April 30. Needless to say, all the stuff about my stay in California and my visits to friends are definitely peace. I haven't seen the bulletin with my name to date yet--I don't even recall writing to him, maybe I did?

The only other thing on the trip was the comment by me of the B-30 as we watched the airplanes overhead that there of these days we might be a little more careful to check identifying features of the planes around us. Now true.

And here we are on another boat—of prewar vintage, one of a commercial line. Cozy in a room, relatively comfortable. A step-off on the pier for hot dogs and refreshments was the only break between my first boat and this, the real thing. And now you are up to date and I need a good night's sleep. That's typical