

I got your note from Boston, Mother; hope you had a pleasant visit.
24 November 1945

Dear Ones,

Today has dealt me one sledge hammer blow after another - ordinarily I would be glad to receive the news that ~~came~~ in today, but all of its coming at once means nothing but misery. If there is any planning or coordination in this command I will eat my hat. I have written to you that we are waiting for ships and for disposition of our ammunition. So this morning radios came in telling us to dump our aircraft ammunition and telling us of two ships that will come in for cargo - one to the States and one to Noumea - they all came in at once! Great! It beats me - they know what limited help we have - why the shipping and other orders couldn't be staggered I do not know. Fortunately there are still only 24 hours in every day and there is a limit to how much one man or two can do. I don't give much of a damn anyway - it is just the nuisance of the whole handling of these things. When I hear the Army blame others for the shipping tie-up I really laugh ...

Last night I was planning to write to you when a bunch of naval officers came scooting up in a jeep. A full commander got out - he was a red-head, and must have been all of 35 years old! - came up and asked if he could beg, borrow, or steal a jeep trailer. Bob Rauth brought him to me and I took him to Trosper and he in turn went through ten times as much red tape as necessary but we got an OK to give the three striper a trailer. The commander was the Exec of the escort carrier USS Kwajalein which is in port on the Magic Carpet program of bringing men home on Navy vessels. He was obviously Annapolis; I thought he was a junior officer until I noted his silver leaf. Anyway we rode down to the Navy supply building to clear the deal and Bob gave the trailer to a bunch of Navy ensigns and jg's who were trailing around with the Commander. When we were through and came back to the jeeps one of the Navy officers out of a clear blue sky asked me "What class were you in at Harvard." (It turned out that in moving the trailer Bob had noticed this officer's Yale ring and that is how the thing started.) Anyhow, because I had secured the trailer for them and because they had a number of Harvard men in their complement of some 40 officers I was invited to come up to the officers' club where the boys from the Kwaj were holding forth - no liquor is allowed on board. So I came back and showered and went over there - it turned out that the Harvard men were on duty and not ashore, but the Commander took me in tow and within five minutes I had been introduced to some 30 officers with the result that I remember the names of not a one - not even the commander! I spent about an hour with them, shared their buffet supper, and came home. I could have gone out to the ship but it would have been much too late and since they were scheduled to leave at 6 this morning they couldn't promise transportation back! I had no desire to turn up in Noumea on the carrier and slightly AWOL from Santo. The Commander was sort of the major domo of the shore party; he met me at the door and when I left he walked out to the jeep with me. He is the son of Chief of Staff of the 1st Naval District. I guess he used a belying pin for a teething ring. I spent most of my time talking with some of the junior officers; they had little real use for the Commander or for their skipper whom they labeled a "zoomie" - meaning a flyer - they thought that they were pretty poor seamen. In general these fleet reserve officers didn't seem to have much use for the Naval flyers. The Kwaj is a CVE - an escort carrier - which is no more than a cargo ship with a flat-top superstructure; I was surprised when they told me that in 18 months commissioned service it had never seen battle. It served mostly to carry planes within flying range of the forward areas; in the 18 months they had been back to the states 6 times!! Mighty rough! The US has some 50 odd ships of this sort and all but 6 or 7 did see action. I did not know it but on her trial runs the Kwaj came here and it was one of the fleet of carriers that was here about a month after I got here and about which I could not tell you at the time, of course. I enjoyed my short visit and the change in routine, even if I never did get to meet any fellow Harvardians.

I just heard the vicious rumor that old man Moore plans on working tomorrow - the old bastard. I guess our getting Thanksgiving off was too much for him. We never accomplish enough on Sunday to merit working that day. No mail in today - so we ~~have~~ hear -

Regards to Doris

All my love,

Sumner