

FROM LT.COMDR. F.EDW.WALKER
USNR00 NAVY SSA, % POSTMASTER SAN FRANCISCO,CALIF.

OCTOBER 6TH, 1942.

DEAR MOTHER:

I WILL WRITE YOU A LETTER TO LET YOU KNOW THAT I AM WELL AND ENJOYING MY NEW EXPERRENCE VERY MUCH. I AM LIVING ASHORE OUT SIDE OF THE UNITED STATES. I LIVE IN A TENT AND EAT REGULAR ARMY CHOW. I HAVE BEEN HERE FOR FIVE WEEKS AND AM BEGINNING TO GET ACCLIMATED. I AM NOT PERMITTED TO TELL YOU WHERE I AM BUT THE PREVAILING LANGUAGE HERE IS FRENCH AND I HAVE FOUND THAT THE EARLY TEACHING OF FRENCH WHICH YOU GAVE ME IS VERY HELPFUL AND I FIND THAT BY USING IT EVERY OPPORTUNITY I GET IT IS COMING BACK TO ME. EVERYONE IS INTERESTED TO LEARN THAT MY MOTHER IS FRENCH AND THEY COMPLIMENT ME ON MY ACCENT. INCIDENTALLY THERE LANGUAGE HERE IS PRETTY NEAR CORRECT FRENCH VERY LITTLE PATOIS.

I HAVE ONLY HAD MAIL ONCE FROM THE U.S. SO FAR AND THAT WAS ABOUT TWO WEEKS AGO AND I WILL BE REAL HAPPY WHEN I CAN GET SOME MORE. I BELIEVE AFTER WE ARE HERE A WHILE THAT THE MAIL WILL COME MORE REGULARLY. I HAVE NOT BEEN WRITING ANY LETTERS MUCH TO ANYONE EXCEPT RUTH, AS THERE IS SO LITTLE I CAN WRITE ABOUT UNDER CENSORSHIP REGULATIONS AND IT IS PRETTY HARD TO CARRY ON MUCH OF A CORRESPONDENCE WHEN IT IS ALL ONE WAY, NO REPLIES.

I AM SURE THAT RUTH IS WRITING YOU REGULARLY AND I DO HOPE THAT MARY IS ALSO. MARY SHOULD BE IN COLLEGE AGAIN BY NOW. SHE PLANNED TO LIVE AT THE SORORITY HOUSE AT LOGAN THIS YEAR, WHICH WILL BE ANOTHER NEW EXPERIENCE FOR HER. AUNT ETHEL IS WORKING AT HILL FIELD UP BETWEEN SALT LAKE CITY AND OGDEN. RUTH WRITES THAT SHE IS VERY HAPPY THAT SHE IS WORKING AND PARTICULARLY SINCE IT IS FOR THE ARMY AIR CORPS, SHE FEELS THAT SHE IS DOING SOMETHING TO HELP TAKE THE PLACE OF NEWTON'S WORK.

THERE IS SOME POSSIBILITY THAT ETHEL WILL BE GIVEN SOME TRAINING BY THE ARMY AIR CORPS WHICH MAY BE GIVEN IN SALT LAKE CITY OR LOGAN. IF SHE GOES TO LOGAN IT WILL LEAVE RUTH ALL ALONE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MANY YEARS. WHEN I LEFT RUTH TOLD ME THAT SHE WOULD DO HER BEST TO TAKE MY PLACE IN HELPING TAKE CARE OF YOU AND THAT IF YOU NEEDED HER SHE WOULD GO TO YOU. I KNOW THAT THIS IS A WONDERFUL FEELING AND I DO HOPE THAT YOU WILL KEEP IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH RUTH AND LETHER KNOW OF YOUR NEEDS AND SHE WILL DO HER BEST TO FILL THEM.

NEVER HAVING LIVED AROUND FRENCH PEOPLE IT IS QUITE A NEW EXPERIENCE FOR ME. THERE IS A RATHER LARGE CATHOCCC CATHEDRAL HERE, ALSO A DAILY PAPER IN FRENCH, WHICH I TRY TO READ TO BRUSH UP MY VOCABULARY. I DO NOT HAVE OPPORTUNITY TO MIX WITH THE FRENCH PEOPLE VERY MUCH, BUT WHEN I DO I TALK FRENCH WHEN EVER I CAN, AND I HAVE ACTED AS INTERPRETER FOR SEVERAL OF THE OFFICERS HERE

THERE ARE ONE OR TWO MEN IN OUR UNIT FROM SALT LAKE CITY, AND SEVERAL OF THE OFFICERS WHOM I HAVE KNOWN FOR SOME TIME.

I STICK PRETTY CLOSE TO OUR CAMP WHICH IS NOT FAR OUT FROM A TOWN, HOWEVER WE GET A CHANCE TO VISIT OTHER OFFICERS FROM SHIPS THAT VISIT THIS PORT AND MEN FROM OTHER MILITARY UNITS WHICH BREAKS THE MONOTONY.

AS THIS IS WRITTEN THE LAST NEWS FROM THE U.S. I HAVE HAD IS A LETTER FROM RUTH DATED AUG. 27TH. I HAVE NOT EVEN HEARD HOW MY BUSINESS WAS FOR THE MONTH OF AUGUST. INCIDENTALLY BUSINESS AT THE OFFICE HAS BEEN GOOD ESPECIALLY DURING THE TIME I WAS LIVING IN SAN FRANCISCO. ALSO I DID ENJOY MY SIX WEEKS STAY IN SAN FRANCISCO PRETTY WELL. THERE IS A LOT TO DO AND SEE THERE AND SINCE I HAD REALLY NEVER BEEN THERE BEFORE EXCEPT TO PASS THROUGH IT WAS A FINE EXPERIENCE. I WAS ESPECIALLY HAPPY THAT RUTH COULD BE WITH ME FOR THREE WEEKS AND MARY FOR ONE WEEK. MARY ENJOYED IT VERY MUCH AS IT WAS THE FIRST TIME SHE HAS BEEN TO A LARGE CITY IN MANY YEARS.

SAN FRANCISCO IS ABOUT 600,000 AND THERE ARE NEARLY THAT MANY MORE PEOPLE ACROSS THE BAY IN OAKLAND, BERKELEY, ALAMEDA, ETC. I WAS JUST BEGINNING TO GET ACQUAINTED THERE SOME WHEN I LEFT. I WAS STATIONED IN PALO ALTO FOR TWO WEEKS AND IT WAS A LOVELY CITY. THE CAMPUS OF STANFORD UNIVERSITY IS RATED ONE OF THE BEST IN THE COUNTRY. IF I HAD BEEN STATIONED THERE BY THE NAVY I WOULD HAVE WANTED MARY TO GO TO STANFORD TO SCHOOL THIS YEAR. WE ENJOYED VISITING WITH MRS. HEMSTREET ONE OF OUR OLD FRIENDS FROM SALT LAKE CITY.

DID RUTH WRITE YOU THAT HARRY BALDWIN OF OKLAHOMA CITY DIED. YOU REMEMBER HIM I AM SURE HE SOLD INSURANCE AT ONE TIME WITH MR. MCMULLEN AND THEY WERE THE PEOPLE WE WORKED WITH AROUND BROKEN BOW AND SOUTHEASTERN OKLAHOMA THE TIME MARY FRANCES WAS DOWN VISITING YOU.

I HAVE HEARD NOTHING FURTHER FROM LEWIS B. WALKER JR. EXCEPT THAT HE WAS PICKED TO ATTEND A NAVY TRAINING SCHOOL AT SAN DIEGO FOLLOWING HIS REGULAR RECRUIT TRAINING. I PUT IN A REQUEST TO HAVE HIM ASSIGNED TO MY UNIT, HOWEVER IT IS RATHER DOUBTFUL THAT HE WOULD BE SENT HERE, AT LEAST UNTIL HE FINISHES HIS SCHOOLING. I PRESUME THAT BEULAH BETH AND EDWARD ARE IN SCHOOL AGAIN, ALSO MARY'S CHILDREN.

I HOPE THIS LETTER REACHES YOU AT NOT TOO DISTANT DATE AND THAT IT WILL FIND YOU WELL AND CHEERFUL AND PLEASED AT SOME OF THE MORE RECENT WAR NEWS AND I KNOW THAT YOU WILL HAVE A THRILL TO KNOW THAT I AM LOCATED IN AN AREA WHERE FRENCH IS THE PREDOMINANT LANGUAGE. BUSHELS OF LOVE AND I HOPE TO HEAR FROM YOU SOON. LOVE,

Edward Walker

Navy SSA, White Poppy Base,
% Postmaster San Francisco, Calif.
October 22, 1942.

Mrs. Anna E. Walker,
3900 Avenue C,
Austin, Texas.

Dear Mother:

I was pleasantly surprised this morning to receive one of the V-Mail letters from your church, signed by your minister and his wife and several of the old friends, including Mr. Caldwell and Mr. and Mrs. D.D. Smyth, Mr. and Mrs. Whitley and Mr. and Mrs. J.E. Harris. I thought the latter was Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Harris, but guess it is the wrong initial. One of the last things I did before I left the United States was to ask Ruth to send you a donation. I do not even know the amount of it but am glad that it helped in a worthy cause, and I did appreciate the thoughtfulness back of sending the letter to me. The letter was dated Sept. 7th, and it is the first mail I have received in a month so it was doubly appreciated.

Well I will be happy when I can receive a letter from you. I am sure that when I get some mail from Ruth she will enclose some of your letters to me. I broke into the newspaper here, it is a small daily of one sheet, printed mostly in French and some English. Thought you would appreciate the article describing the boxing matches held last week, since it mentions my name in the second paragraph.

I have had excellent health here. The weather gets real hot in the daytime and cool at night. There are quite a lot of mosquitoes but no malaria at all on the island for which I am thankful. I now sleep under mosquito nets, but did not do so until the last few days, as they did not seem to bother me much.

I have really surprised myself in getting a certain amount of fluency back in my French. I find it is extremely difficult to understand the people here, they speak too fast, and some of it is patois of course, however they seem to understand me and I can make myself understood pretty well. I try and read the paper every day and when I am in contact with those who speak French I usually try a little French out. I am told that many of their customs here are same as France and New Orleans. The houses are all shuttered, some have patios. Business houses all close for about two hours around noon. They get up and around early in the morning. I am sure that you would enjoy it very much. There has been quite a lot of intermarriage with natives. The population is mostly French, native kanaka or Tonkinese or Javanese. All four groups speak French. It is a part of the DeGaulle government, and they fly the French flag and the cross of Lorraine for the Fighting Free French. The place has been a French colony for many years so that there are many generations here and most of the people are native born. Some have been to Australia and New Zealand

From Lt. Commander F. E. Walker
USNR

but very few have been to France. There is quite an admixture of English and Norwegian, so that the names of some would hardly be called French names.

The religion is predominantly Catholic, with a fine Cathedral here and a Bishop headquarters. The younger boys all wear berrets on their head and most of the people, grown men wear shorts, khaki colored or white. Surprising enough most of the ~~men~~ women I have noticed are blonds.

The stores have depleted stocks. There are several large stores, one Maison Ballande employed about 125 clerks and occupied several blocks of one storied buildings. All of the residences have tin roofs painted red. There are a number of quite modern new homes built and some under construction.

I have had little opportunity to get around or study the people or country, because I have been extremely busy with my work.

You would be surprised to learn that I supervised the unloading operations of two ships working shifts around the clock and handling considerable amount of merchandise.

I have had a lot of new experiences and feel that this has been a wonderful experience for me. I find that I can adjust myself to most any situation and if I do my best I am satisfied. I miss the normal activities of life at home, particularly my home life, and especially the mail. I have only had mail at one time here, and received several letters then which were greatly appreciated, the last one from Ruth being dated August 27th, which is nearly 60 days ago now, however apparently the mail service is to be speeded up soon through use of mail planes quite regularly.

We do get the current war news in brief from all of the fronts, but that is about all we get from the U.S.A. How did the senatorial race come out? in Texas.

This is all about my work and myself, now how about yourself. How do you feel? I hope that your winter weather will be mild. Here is coming into summer being in the antipodes and I believe they never do have any winter or snow so it hardly seems like it can be approaching winter time in the states.

We have ample food and some variety, many complain about it but I am satisfied as you know you taught me to eat whatever was placed before me, clean up my plate and not complain about any good wholesome food.

I am sure Mary is in school, and I will be happy to know that she can graduate this June. Last I heard our business was good and I feel that we have no serious financial worries at home. Ruth has done a splendid job with our business and I certainly am thankful that she has had the training and experience to permit her to carry on so well. Will close with bushels of love to the dearest mother in the world.

F. Edward Walker