

Base Personnel Office,
Navy # 131,
% Fleet Postoffice,
San Francisco, Calif.

Mr. Randall Canfield,
13 Pickford Drive,
Rochester, New York.

Dear Randy:

Thought I would write you today and tell you a little bit about the war down in the Southpacific area. Someone has said this is a global war and it is all around the globe it seems. The Southpacific area includes New Zealand, New Caledonia, New Hebrides, Solomon Islands, Samoa, Fiji Islands and in fact lots of other islands, there are literally thousands of them in the Pacific Ocean.

Most of them are inhabited by Polynesians, natives. These are not the same as negroes, but are more like the Hawaiians we are familiar with. They are docile people and usually respond pretty well to the teachings of white men.

New Caledonia is a good sized island about 250 miles long and 30 miles wide. It has belonged to the French for many years and was originally used as a penal colony. The prisoners sent out were two classes, political and regular criminal. There were over 10,000 prisoners here at one time. There is a large catholic cathedral and a large protestant temple, both of which were built 50 years ago by convict labor, also a good many miles of macadam road surfaced with bituminous surfacing material.

No new prisoners have been sent out here for the past 20 years but there are still a handful of these former prisoners who live here, the real forgotten men. They either had no folks to return to in France, or else their folks did not want them to return. The Catholic church maintains a home for them and any other old folks, known as the Hospital for the aged, here they are spending the twilight years of their lives.

There are two leper colonies here on the island, one for whites and one for colored with over 300 in the colonies. Leprosy is a disease of dirt and filth however unfortunately in the past people with it were not segregated and so it has spread quite a bit. Now the policy is segregation and treatment and cure may be possible in the real early stages of infection.

There are four classes of people in New Caledonia. French stock who also include an admixture of English and German. Some of these are descended from some of the former prisoners. Indo-Chinese who were brought in as laborers for the mines and nickel plant. The women wear peaked straw hats and black pantaloons. Javanese are small and wear colorful sarongs. The natives are large and muscular and happy-go-lucky in disposition. Under peacetime conditions there is a lot to see here but under wartime conditions we are too busy to travel or visit with the natives or others. Sincerely your Uncle,

Edw Walker