

A LETTER FROM PEARL HARBOR

DEAR Maw and Paw:

I answered your cable as soon as I got it but the telegraph company had some trouble finding me being as I wasn't in barracks like I used to be. I'm okay though and being treated fine.

You said you wanted to know all about what happened. Some things are a little hazy in my mind but I'll tell you all I can remember.

Of course you know it was a Sunday morning, and Slim Clark and I (he was my pal out here) we'd got us each a new pair of shoes and being Sunday and off duty, we were going to break them in, see. So we said "so long" to the gang in the barracks and we started hoofing it across the parade ground. About halfway across Slim, I remember, kneels down to tie up a shoe lace, and I stand there looking around and sort of wondering how you folks are getting along at home and what you're doing and so forth and so on.

Well, it was about eight o'clock, I remember, the sun was shining, church bells ringing, everything was peaceful and comfortable. Except my shoes, they felt sort of tight. Then I thought I heard something.

The sound was like when you hear bees humming, soft and drowsy, like we used to hear the bees among the hollyhocks when we crossed the meadow back of the barn.

Slim took a squint up into the sky and then he says, "Hey, get a load of that," and I do. Well, folks, they looked just like they sounded. Bees. High up, away off, about five miles. Slim stood up and says, "Where'd *they* come from?" So I pull a rib on him (you know I'm always kidding), and I says, "Japs," I says, and Slim makes a pass at me and says, "Wise guy, eh?" And I laugh and say, "I guess it's some of our bunch on maneuvers."

Well, I remember, they'd got bigger by now and were coming pretty fast, like they really was going places, you know what I mean? Then they peeled off into a dive and it looked like they were heading right for Slim and me. I remember it felt kind of funny, watching them.

Just then Slim jabs me in the ribs and says, "Hey, what's the deal? Look!" And five or six black stubby little pencils, that's just what they looked like, were dropping toward us.

Well, folks, that's how it started. All hell bust wide open. The noise was like ten thousand factories gone nuts.

For a second, Slim and I were stunned. After all, you can't believe that what seemed like a lot of nice

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little guys would—but they did.

Quicker than I can tell you, a bomb blows up the barracks with the gang in it, a ship explodes in front of me, a hangar goes up in flames, and so on and so forth.

Slim shouted to me and we started running to our gun post. I remember those shoes sure pinched. We duck and we dodge and fall flat on our faces when they came over low to machine-gun us but finally I get to the gun. Slim didn't. He was such a good guy.

Well, I just kept plugging away, loading and firing. I remember I got one guy; his plane just spread out in front of me, squish, like a bug on our car's windshield.

I don't remember any more, but folks, I'll remember these nurses, they're such swell kids. Yes, that bug I got, he got me too. Bug? Hey, not a bad idea; you know what you do to bugs.

I guess that's all I remember about Pearl Harbor, but I'm lucky. A lot of the boys can't remember that much; you see, they didn't even know what hit them. You know why.

I'll close now with lots of love to you, Maw, and you, Paw, and my little Sis. Tell the neighbors I send them my best, and so on and so forth.

Your loving son,

JACK

P. S.: I guess Maw, being what she is, will want to know about those new shoes. I never knew what happened to them, they just blew away, but I got two or three pairs in the attic that I want you to give to the Red Cross.



DINNER

DANCES

THURSDAYS

&

SUNDAYS

—

BEVERLY

HILLS HOTEL