

Portland Fire's Lost Letters of World War II

Preserved by Tim Kasch

Presented by Don Porth

This document is a tribute to Portland Firefighters who were deployed to World War II. While the number of Portland Firefighters deployed to WWII is difficult to know, these letters would indicate approximately 239 Portland Firefighters participated in the war, somewhere in the world. In 1945, Portland Firefighters numbered approximately 552. It is incredible to think that staffing could be cut by 43% and Portland Fire could continue to provide quality service to the community.

The United States would be prompted to enter WWII on December 7, 1941 after the attack on Pearl Harbor. On May 8, 1945, Germany would surrender, putting the European theater of war to rest. On August 15, 1945, nine days after the United States detonated an atomic bomb over Hiroshima, Japan, the Japanese emperor would surrender, with the formal declaration of surrender being signed by both countries on September 2, 1945. These newsletters were written during these surrender periods.

This document is made up of excerpts from all seven newsletters that survived for all of these years. Much of the information shared was simply about addresses or minor activities. For this document, some of the most detailed and interesting accounts are shared. Note the various locations around the world that Portland Firefighters were sent. The entirety of the newsletters are posted on www.PortlandFireHistory.com.

The rank denoted next to the firefighter's name is their military rank. In some cases, their affiliation with various fire companies is mentioned.

It is also important to acknowledge all military veteran Portland Firefighters who have served in wartime and in peace, from the Civil War to modern day conflict. It would be nearly impossible to assemble a complete listing of all veterans. This particular segment was only made possible by Portland Firefighter Henry Rich, the Fire College secretary Mrs. Odgers, and the blessing of Chief Edward Grenfell, and fire college Captains' Lee Weidner and Guy Stabler.

Enjoy these important stories and continue to honor all military veterans.

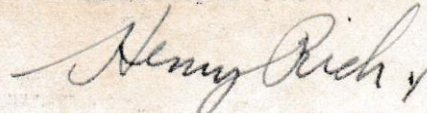
Sadly, ten Portland Firefighters were known to have not survived World War II. Their names are listed below. Please take a moment to acknowledge their service in the military and the fire service.

- Ralph Amato
- Ralph Atkinson Jr.
- Victor Brown Jr.
- Edwin Fisher
- Robert Fleck
- Alfred Garretson
- David Kingsley
- Wallis Marriage
- John Rooney
- Clayton Thompson

Rest in peace.

These letters are written on my own time, and I have licked a lot of envelopes and stamps, (and there is only one thing to take that taste out of my mouth.) I have callouses on my fingers from typing (I sit down a lot too.) However the pay has been in good letters from the Gang, and if "Thanks" were money, I'd be a Millionaire. Some of the Gang are Homesick to see someone from home, and I hope those letters help to locate someone close. Mrs. Odgers, who works in the Fire College has cut all the stencils, and has ran off the last two letters, aside from addressing the envelopes. (She is just a little faster than I am) Mrs. Odgers quote, "Don't let him kid you he is pretty good himself", so thanks to the Fire College, run by Captains Leo Weidner and Guy Stabler, they haven't licked any stamps-though.

Henry B. Rich
905 S. W. 4th Ave. (Eng. #1, P.F.D.)
Portland 4 Oregon



Firefighter Henry Rich
Hired May 26, 1933, Retired October 26, 1957

April 3, 1945

LT. COL. "RIP" RIOPELLE, was home about Christmas time, after serving three years in the Central Pacific Area. "Rip" was at Pearl Harbor at the time of the attack, and his Company got credit for shooting down a Jap plane.



JAMES H. RIOPELLE

PVT. HAROLD SEELY, (Eng. 8) was in on the Normandy Invasion, and ran into some tough luck. He is now at Bushnell General Hospital, Brigham City, Utah. We hope it won't be too long until you can be coming home, Harold.

LT. TERRY SCHRUNK, has seen a lot of action on one of our large Aircraft Carriers in the Pacific, in the firefighting end of it. Terry saw plenty of action, but when they hit a hurricane that the old timers claimed was the "worst storm in fifty years", Terry thinks they didn't go back far enough. Terry is now home on a short leave. By the way- Terry's cousin, Mrs. Odgers, who works in the Fire College, cut the stencils for this letter.

ASHLEY STATHOS, is a radio man on a landing craft. In a letter to Mel Wilkenin, he said he had taken part in the Luzon landings. He might have been in on some others too.

CPL. EARL A. ROBERTS; of the Marines, ran into some tough luck on Saipan, being wounded in the leg and foot by a mortar shell fragment. He is now in the Navy Hospital at Oakland Cal., and says in a letter to Louis Hicks of Eng. 1, that he hopes to be furloughed home soon.



EARL ROBERTS

HARRY LANDRU, Chief Shipfitter in the C.B.'s, has been in the South Pacific for a couple of years. Last known whereabouts were the Phillipines, but where the Marines have gone Harry's outfit has followed up. His main job is to install the plumbing, and Harry said a lot of the plumbing would not pass the City of Portland inspection. They use what they find, and make the rest.

LT. KENNETH PUTTKAMER, (Eng. 26), has been in Africa, Italy, France and Corsica Island. He has completed 53 missions, and on one of them, had the windshield shot away, a three inch shell hole, but none of the crew were injured.



KENNETH PUTTKAMER

RALPH A. AMATO, CAPTAIN, (Eng. 8), was appointed at Eng. 8 while he was in the Army. He was in the Army at Bataan when the war started, and is believed to be a prisoner of the Japs, but no word has ever come through about him. His name was not among those released so far.

CAPTAIN WILLIAM J. FAGUE, (Eng. 24), left in 1941 with the 41st Division, and has been in a lot of campaigns, all the way from New Guinea to the Phillipines, where he is now according to a letter to Richard Kent of Eng. 11, Bill is now acting Major.



RALPH AMATO



WILLIAM FAGUE

LT. COL. WILLIAM B. MCKINLEY, (Eng. 1), spent about seventeen months over seas. He has been in all the Mediteranean countries in charge of Firefighting Units. Bill was home on furlough about October, and since then has been to Princeton University for a three month course on Allied Military Government, and is now awaiting assignment. Al Nehl still has your wheel-barrow, Bill.

S/SGT. CARL GREGG, (Eng. 3), in a letter to the Gang, says he is still at an Air Field in England, working at his old trade of fighting fires.



WILLIAM McKINNEY

CHIEF WAYNE H. HARVEY, (Eng. 2) was in the Navy before Dec. 7, 1941, and was at Pearl Harbor when we were attacked. Since then, he came to the Mainland for a few days, and sailed again without a leave, and has been in the South Pacific since. Hopes to have a leave soon, and from Johnnie Davis, we hear that he has seen plenty of action.

LT. JIM TIMMONS, (Eng. 7), has been flying transport planes in the European Area. He took some of the Paratroopers over during the Normandy Invasion. The last letter to the gang at Eng. 7, said he was flying supplies in, and the wounded out.

PVT. BRETT PHELPS, (Eng. 7), is in the Marine Corps. He had been in Australia and in the last letter, said not to look for a letter soon, as he was leaving for parts unknown.

PL. SGT. OLIVER W. BAKER, (Eng. 9), was in the South Pacific for twenty-three months. Saw action at Bougainville, the Marshall Islands and Guam, that we know about. After a leave home last December, he reported to Astoria, where he is in charge of Marine Guard at the Navy Air Base.



JAMES TIMMINS

SGT. ARCHIE CATO, (Eng. 21), put nineteen months with an Army Engineers Amphibian Outfit in the South West Pacific, and says as most Firemen do, he wound up in charge of a Fire Fighting Unit. He got out on the over-age deal, and is now back at Engine 21. Of course most of you know that they built an addition North of Eng. 21, and moved the Disaster Unit and the first Aid Car down there.



ARCHIE CATO

CHIEF B.M. TOMMY NUGENT, is now at the Manchester Fire School. Tommy enlisted when his son Tom Jr. was reported missing in the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Luckily, the report was false, but the Navy had another good fighter. Tom has seen his boy but twice since then. Both of them have been in the South Pacific, the boy on a ship, and Tom an an Island for 21 months.

LT. KENNETH O. GITHENS, is a prisoner in Germany. (Is a member of the Caterpillar Club, and was making his 50th mission when shot down). He writes that where he is, is a good place to sober up, and wishes Shipley of Eng. 7 was there. By the way, Shipley broke his wrist a while back "Carrying some apples down stairs". We dont doubt your word, Ship, but were the apples in a box?



KENNETH GITHENS

CAPT. JOHN ROONEY, (Eng. 1), is missing in the Burma India Area. John was in the Alaska Area, took part in the bombing of Attu and Kiska Islands, where he was credited with sinking two ships. He then went to Florida as an Instructor. His next assignment was to the Burma-India Area.

LT. REINO A. HOCKERT, is another member of the Caterpillar club. He was shot down in a raid over Germany Oct. 8, 1943, which was about his 22nd or 23rd mission. The plane exploded, and he was the only member of the crew that lived. He was a Bomber Pilot, and has been a Prisoner of War in Germany since parachuting to safety.

MAJOR JACK LOWE, (Eng. 1), is in Chemical Warfare, and has been in Italy, and now in France. In a letter to Charlie Ferris, we hear the the "Major" part is recent.



REINO HOCKERT



JACK LOWE

CHIEF C.M. TED W. MCARTHUR, (Eng. 21), is back at Chemical 1, after two years, four months in the C.B.'s. loaned out to the Navy. Fifteen months of that was in charge of a Fire Dept. on an island in the Central Pacific. Among the fellows he saw in his travels were, Bill Mitchell, Don Sloan, Elder of Eng. 3, Jack Jones, Larry Duhrkoop, John Nodley, Dave Joos and Johnny Walker (Patty Bird's son-in-law), who is a civilian war worker in Honolulu, and was there when we were attacked Dec. 7, 1941. He lives near Marine Fire Station No. 2, and was always glad to see any of the fellows from the Portland Fire Dept. Ted said he enjoyed the stories that Johnny told about the bombing of Pearl Harbor, and that Johnny really made him feel at home.

May 3, 1945

Lt. Henry Burns was in the Fourth Marine Division at Iwo Jima, and ran into some tough luck on the seventh day. From his father we learn that he is in a Navy Hospital, in the Central Pacific, and is coming along O.K.

Albert M. Oliverio, C.M. 1/c is with the 81st C.B.Div., somewhere in the South Pacific. Home on leave last winter, we had a nice visit with him. He was in on the Normandy invasion, and said he had some long minutes when their motor quit on them just off the Beach.

Oswald W. Forbes, C.M.M., was recently home on leave, and is on a P.C., somewhere in the Pacific Coast Area. Oswald left here in June 1942, and spent two years in the South Atlantic and Caribbean on Anti-Submarine Warfare.

T/5 Bruce E. Cullen, is now home on Convalescent Leave from the Newton D. Baker General Hospital at Martinsburg, West Virginia. Bruce left in July 1942, and spent two years in Africa, with an Engineer Outfit. He was in the same town that Larry Koch was, and looked him up one day too late. That was the closest he came to seeing any one from home. Was on Mayer Earl Riley Street in that area. Bruce was telling about visiting the A.P.O., in New York, and said it was a busy place. He leaves next week, and expects a new assignment soon.

Cpl. James R. Aiken, is in the Sixth Marine Division, somewhere in the Pacific.



BRUCE CULLEN



JAMES R. AIKEN

Carl Mulder, is at U.S.N.T.C., San Diego, in Boot Camp.
Lt. Walter Nickels, put in a lot of time in the Mediterranean Area, in Fire Fighting with the Navy. He is now believed to be in Washington D.C.
Chief B. M. Bill Garrett, went to school in Florida, and put in five months chasing Subs in the Caribbean Sea. From there he went to Boston Fire School, New Orleans F.F. School, and finished up at the San Diego F.F. School. Bill is now back at Engine #28 after 28 months in the Service.



CARL MULDER



WILLIAM GARRETT

1st. Lt. John J. Dooney, is now at the Roswell Air Field, Roswell New Mexico. John left from Engine #8 in 1942, but after a year in the Field Artillery, he made the Air Corps. Left for overseas in the Spring of 1944, and completed his fifty missions, and came home for a furlough. John had many interesting experiences. He was in the first Shuttle-Bombing Flight to Russia, but is very lucky, the Original Crew are now all back in the States, all having completed at least fifty missions.



JOHN J. DOONEY

S/Sgt. Melvin L. Campbell, son of Jimmie Campbell of Boat No. 1, writes from Yugo-Slavia where he is with Al Wismer and Emmett Delancy in a Fire Fighter Plat., Melvin is quartered with a Yugo-Slavic family, and tells his mother that sometimes he eats with the family. Sometimes they have a Chicken, and other times they have an egg. Melvin has an eight month-old son he has never seen, "Little Mike".

June 8, 1945

LT. VICTOR D. BROWN, JR., was killed in Germany April 28th. He had been overseas since February. The tragic news came to his folks on May 8th (V.E.Day) about an hour after two letters, one written on the 27th of April. His father, Captain "Vic" Brown had returned from Europe last fall, and is now at Engine 9. Our sincerest condolences to the father and mother.



VICTOR D. BROWN

REINO HOCKERT, is also free from a prison camp in Germany, and will also be home soon. Hal Simpson reported that the brother of his son-in-law, who was in the same place, had arrived in New York, and no doubt Reino is with him.



REINO HOCKERT

CAPT. "BOB" LILLIS, is now home on an Emergency Leave, on account of the death of his wife, who was buried in Portland May 26th. Bob was stationed at Menlo Park, so that he could be near her, after taking a course at Stanford University in preparation for an assignment overseas. Bob has many friends in the Department, who feel as I do, and we extend our sincerest sympathies.

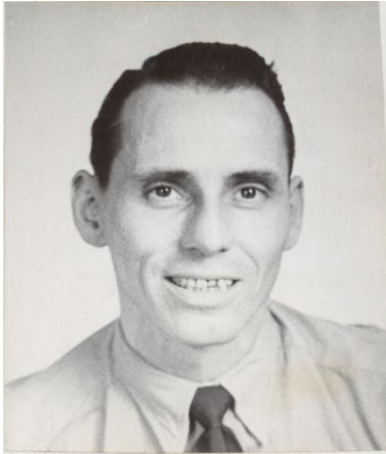


ROBERT E. LILLIS

VERN RAYLEY, No. M.M. 1/c, writes from the "Crossroads of the Pacific", that he made a couple of Liberties with Terry Schrunk and Ossie Forbes, in the last few months. Vern was on a P.C. for about a year before he was transferred into the Fire Fighting program and has been stationed there for a year and a half. Living conditions are good, but it is not home, and he can't get relieved so he can have a rotation Leave. Hopes to get sea-duty again, on a Salvage Tug. Vern said, quote, "When you see Ernie Grenfell, tell him I hope his arms are better, because he must have broken them, and if he is not too busy catching all the Salmon and Trout in Oregon, I would like to hear from him."

HARRY LANDRU, writes from Okinawa, that he hasn't "Felt so good for a long time. Since I have been overseas, we have been pretty close to the Equator, and here we wear a heavy wool shirt and a sweat shirt. Two other fellows and myself have a fox-hole, nine feet by nine feet, three feet deep, with sand bags piled around the edges, and a rigged up tarp over the top. We sleep in the Fox-hole so we don't have to get up when they raid us at night. The food is fair, if you can call C.K.J. and 10 in 1 rations good, but so much better than we had on Bougainville. We have lots of fresh bread and coffee. We don't eat any of the home grown vegetables as the way they fertilize things are not the best." Harry also sent me some "Invasion money," saying that they have trouble getting to town to spend it. He said, "Buy a beer on me". Also

T/4 EVERETT BILYEU, writes from Fort Lewis, where he is a member of a Construction Battalion of Engineers, made up of fellows with different trades in Civilian life. His job is the Demolition work. (You are not the fellow in a story I heard that blew Grandpa up, are you?) He says: "Where we are headed, the Engineers spend about thirty percent of the time in the Front Lines." Heard that Everett pitched a No-hitter last week in a softball game, fanning 18 out of 21. The softball players and fans sure hope nothing happens to that pitching arm.



EVERETT BILYEU

SGT. ROY H. TRASK, (Son of Harry Trask) is stationed in the Panama Canal Zone. Roy enlisted in March, 1942, took his Basic in Missouri, then to Pennsylvania, and to New Orleans, from where he was shipped to his present station? He was home on furlough last February, the first time he had been home in twenty months.

DON GREEN, writes from Warendorf, Germany, that he didn't do much until he got in Patton's Army in October, and from then on, they were busy. They took sixteen of the Forts, and two-thirds of the City. Then across Loraine into Saarland. Then they joined the ninth Army for the Roer River crossing, and their last Combat assignment was the capture of Dortmund. Since then they have been handling P.W.s and refugees. Hoping for a furlough in the States before they take off for the Jap War. He hopes to run across someone from the P.F.D.



DONALD GREEN

PFC BRUCE FRENCH, writes from the Lido Road in Burma, that they are darned (?) near lost in the jungles. Says Bruce: "Drove a bull dozer on the Road, which is now finished, but can't tell more about my work. After seeing some of the Mountains over here, out little old mountains at homewill look like Mole Hills. Words cannot describe the Road, and I still don't think it is possible. It is one of the Seven Wonders of the World." Bruce also said if anyone at home wanted to trade places with him, he was willing. Norman Howard was over there when Bruce was here, and said he had already traded places with Bruce, and he was satisfied. As you know, Norman is back, working as Fire Investigator.



July 6, 1945

LT. REINO HOCKERT is now on sixty-day furlough, after which he will go to Santa Ana, for reassignment or discharge. He hopes he gets assigned to a B-29 school. When Reino's plane caught fire, they had to bail out, only four fellows got out, and he has never heard anything about the others. He was badly burned, and was in the Hospital for a couple months. The Prison Camp they were taken to, was run by Gorman Air Personnel and it was not too tough, although the only thing that kept them alive was the Red Cross food packages. They played soft ball, and had a regular league. They got the news over the German broadcasts, and also had a Secret Radio, some of the fellows had made, and got the B.B.C., so knew just what was happening. They were freed by Americans, and heard the fighting in the town near camp. When they saw the Stars and Stripes go up over the town, many of the prisoners cried openly from joy. When the first American tank got to the prison camp, so many of the prisoners got aboard that the tank couldn't be seen. He came by truck to the French Coast, by boat to New Jersey, where they received their first real meal, steak and all the trimmings. Arriving home, he planned on a trip with his brother, but hadn't had any news from home for eight months, and was surprised to learn his brother, Elmer, was in the Army. He has found many changes around home too. Most of his boy friends are in the Service, and a lot of the girls he knew are married. He is trying to catch up with things here in Portland, and when someone asked if the back-pay came in handy, he said, quote: "Yes, the back-pay helps, but I wouldn't go through that again for any amount of money."

SGT. SODUS ADAMS, writes from Italy that he was not in on the Invasion of France, but went direct to Italy with a Firefighting Unit, and has been there every since. The letter was written in April and he was wishing he was home fishing. (I think he would be satisfied to be home, period). Says every one he wrote to owed him a letter except Dave Gallaher, and he had lost his address. (Well so do you owe Brick and myself one.) He says that they work twenty-four shifts there, but that is twenty-four hours awake, and it was then four-thirty A.M.... Sends his regards to everyone, and hopes to be home soon.



SODUS ADAMS

RAY L. HALGA, Sea 1/c (F.C.) writes that he has made his last change of address (he hopes) for the duration. He says, quote: "Got quite a bang out of seeing where all the fellows were, and glad to know that most of them are O.K. I enjoy my work (It says here), hope it isn't too long before I can be back. Call up the Gang at Engine 24, and give them my address, as it will save me writing another letter. I am the lazy type." (Glad to know the reason some of the fellows don't write.)

P.F.C. CLAYTON L. "TOMMY" THOMPSON, writes from Germany that he is moving West, but not far enough, as they are back to the Rhine, having moved when he was on a "Pass" to Brussels. Tommy mentioned getting a physical Examination, and says that if you are breathing and slightly warm, you are O.K. He says, quote: "One of our guys got poisoned on some "Rhine Wine", and the Medics had to do a lot of work on him, but brought him out of it. The Heinies are trying to get quite friendly, but all they ever get out of me is a "Growl". Tommy is still an M.P., as far as I know, and is across the river from the Hotel where Chamberlain and Hitler had their last meeting, and saw quite a few Historic places in Brussels.

GALE R. BUCHANAN, Sp (F) 2/c is now stationed here in Portland on the Coast Guard Fire Boat. Gale spent twenty (20) months at Excursion Inlet, about eighty (80) miles from Juneau, where they spent their liberties, by taking a ten to twelve hour boat ride. They saved up their days, so they could make a three or four day stay. He received the Portland papers, and kept up on the local news. I asked him the first part of the paper he read, and he said, quote: "The Funny Papers, because I wanted to study for Junior Captain."

LT. FRANK J. HANSIK, writes from Victorville, Cal., giving the addresses of a couple of the fellows, who we didn't have. He says, quote: "I got back from the South Pacific four (4) months ago after flying a C-47 down around New Guinea and the Netherlands East Indies. Living conditions were pretty rough, and the food mostly on the dehydrated side. I am afraid these companies planning post-war business in the dehydrated lines of food are in for a sorry surprise ... if you are wondering why the pencil, I had a lovely Parker set, in my shirt pocket while flying over New Guinea, one hot day, I took off my shirt, but brought it too close to an open window, and the next thing I knew I had no shirt, and no pen and pencil." Frank was in pre-flight school with Glen Hendrickson, Paul Harding and Reino Hockert, and when Reino Hockert got home, those were the three fellows he asked about.



LT. TERRY SCHRUNK, writes that he has been standing Deck watches, aside from his regular duties of Fire drills and Damage control drill. They have some new men aboard, so that means a lot of work to get them trained. He writes, quote: "Yesterday I had the Deck and things were going smoothly, when suddenly we received a report that a Submarine had been sighted dead ahead of our ship, and inside the screen. For a while we were feally dancing and twisting around with emergency turns. It is quite a sight to see a fleet of large ships dashing around at high speed with Destroyers dashing in and out. Our D.D.s and Aircraft started giving the contact a bad time, and after awhile it was discovered that our submarine was just a big, friendly whale ... tell all the fellows Hello for me."

August 4, 1945

(many are reporting that their terms are complete and they are coming home)

P.F.C. Henry C. Hoffman, writes from Germany, and says, quote: "Dear Hank...it's swell knowing what the Gang are doing, and where they are doing it. Don't let the papers kid you that everyone in Germany is living in Hotels and houses. Our whole outfit is living in Pup Tents in a German Forest near Mayen, about thirty miles from Coblenz. We sleep, live and eat in mud about a foot deep. "Toughening up" so the General says. Keep the letters coming and keep me posted about what "Zeke" is doing. Tell him that I will write him just as soon as he gets an A.P.O. (signed) Hank." When all the Hanks get back, Hank Hoffman, Hank Surbaugh and myself, we will have to get three shifts to keep the "Hanks" straight.



HENRY HOFFMAN

P.F.C. BRET PHELPS, Marine Fighter Squadron 211, Fleet P.O., San Francisco, writes from the Phillipinos on July 5th. He says, quote: "I am in the 211th Marine Fighter Group, and the biggest danger I am in right now, is from falling coconuts. I've got three International Cats to take care of an operate, and also a Bulldozer. Tell Shipley and the gang at Engine 7 and Truck 4, that they had better watch out when I get back aboard that little "Red" wagon. My brother located me, and I just returned from a visit with him. I have seen a hell of a lot of country from the air, and will really be able to snow some of you under when I get back. Give my regards to all the boys, and tell that gang at S.E. 11th and Stark to write."

MAJ. JACK LOWE, writes from Frankfort am Main, Germany, dated June 27th, saying, quote: "I am at U.S. Headquarters here in Frankfort. If anyone from P.F.D. comes thru, have them stop in. I can supply food, refreshments and lodgings. Have eighty four (84) points, but can't convince my boss that I am unessential. Give my best regards to the gang, and tell them I hope to be home by Xmas. Thanks for your swell letters."



JACK LOWE

1st. LT. ALFRED A. TRUMBULL, writes from Topeka, Kansas. He says, quote: "It is about time I answer your swell letters, as they are my only source of information about some of the fellows I used to work with, but I have just been "pretty busy" lately. From Lincoln, Neb., I was assigned as airplane commander to a B-29 crew. We took all out training at El Paso, Texas. That really isn't such a bad spot. One might get used to it in 25 or 30 years. Jaurez, Mexico was interesting, we went to a Bull Fight, once, and only once. We should be leaving for overseas before the end of the month. Say "Hello" to Kenny Githens for me. Have stopped in a lot of cities lately, but I've yet to see one I prefer over Good Old Portland. Hope I hear from you again soon, and Thanks a Million."



ALFRED TRUMBULL

LT-COL. JAMES H. RIOPELLE, writes from the Central Pacific on July 9, and says, quote; "Your little personal note on the bottom, pleased me more than anything, I've read in the last five years. (I had tried to "bawl" him out for not writing). The fall of Europe was less surprise than the "two" shifts off news. Someone said that Bob McFarland had broken his arm. Tell the *\$%#* Scotchman to answer my letters, even if he has to write left-handed. The news of Githens and others liberated from German prison camps was pleasing. I imagine Githens also included some remark about Shipley, which was not put out for general consumption. Give my best to all the fellows" (Githens read your letter, and his remark about you will not be published, either.)

LT.(j.g.) DAVID L. GALLAHER, Gropac #15, Port Hueneme, Cal. (a new address) writes that he might be "shoving off" any time. He says, quote, "This place is plenty big, and haven't much in the way of news. Keep up the good work, and give my regards to the gang."



JAMES H. RIOPELLE

CAPT. HARRY WHITE, writes from Camp Hood, Texas, and says, quote: "Right now I am sitting in the Hospital with my eighteenth attack of Malaria. I am Regimental Adjutant of an Infantry Replacement Training Regiment. We give them seventeen weeks of training, and over they go. In less than two months I will finish my fifth year of Active Duty, and am all for getting back to the P.F.D. the first chance they give me. Give my best regards to all my friends."



HARRY WHITE

LT-COL. JOSEPH K. CARSON, writes from Germany, and says, quote: "We have been terribly busy the last few months, or I would have written sooner to tell you how I appreciate the news of the Firemen. Yes, I wish I had a good work-out (He means a shower and a rub-down). Have just finished a very difficult job of getting 2,500,000 persons back home, the ones that Hitler forced into slavery. The concentration camps were hells of horror, and I hope I never have to see anything like that again. Give my best to all the gang."

WARD E. SVART, Sc.M. 1/c writes that he just received the May letter. He says, quote: "I spent several months at Radar School in Hawaii, and was on my way back to my ship (U.S.S. Smith, D.D. 378) when I bumped my knee, and this finds me at a Base Hospital, after an operation for water on the knee, "Not to be confused with water on the Brain". If things work out, I'll soon be a Destroyer Sailor again, and my ship is due back in the States sometime in 1946. My first session in the South Pacific was for twenty months, and I have been out thirteen months this time. Best regards to all the boys, where-ever they may be."



WARD E. SVART

JAMES P. YORK, T.M. 2/c, dropped in for a nice visit. He is now home on a thirty day leave, and reports to Washington D.C., where he goes to Living School. Phil left here in May 1942 with Don Sloan, Bill Mitchell, Jack Jones and Jack Grenfell, going to Pearl Harbor, and when he asked for Sea Duty, he was put aboard a Repair Ship, and sent to the Aleutians, for 18 months. He saw quite a few of the boys from home, but tied up along side some to work on, only to find out too late, there was someone from home aboard her. He didn't do much souvenir hunting at Kiska, as everything was Booby-trapped. Most of his work was under water, and he tells about the first time he saw a shark swimming toward him he thought it was a torpedo, and the "Longest" job he had was some under-water cutting on a ship next to an ammunition ship that was being loaded. Another time a depth-bomb was exploded about five miles away, and "pushed" him off the scaffold he was working on. 120 feet is the deepest dive he has made. He is trying to see as many of his friends as possible, and asked me to remember him to any he missed. Said he had received two of my letters, and read them over several times. Started about six letters, but something always seemed to interrupt, and none of them was finished.

August 31, 1945

Lst. Lt. James Timmons writes from Natal, Brazil. He says, quote, " I have been very slow about writing, but thanks for the "Scandal Sheet". The work here is easier than in the E.T.O. The work is just like some of the airlines, back in the States. We fly some of the veterans back to the States, that is, up the coast of Brazil, and then another crew takes over. The weather is pretty good, but we get rain at least once a day. Tell the boys at Engine 7 that I am playing handball again, on a one-wall court. Sort of messes up the "expert coaching" of Fred Gleisohman. Also "Pop" Shiploys' cork-pulling activities are noticeable by their absence. I think I could give Pfeifer a good game now. (I am not bragging, just complaining) I have been in the Troop Carrier Command for 19 months, flying C-47s all over. We were in Sicily, then moved to England. Had pretty good luck on the Normandy Invasion, and after the Engineers had built air-strips in France, we hauled Gasoline and Ammunition in and wounded out. We dropped British Para-troopers at Arnheim, Holland, on a three day affair, Sept. 17, 18 and 19th. The first day we dropped Para-troopers, the second day, Gliders, and the third day we dropped supplies. We lost a few ships on the operation, but I managed to get by with only some holes in my ship. On March 24th, we dropped English Paratroopers across the Rhine at Wesel. From then on we continued our supply hauling activities until we were moved down here. It is rumored that we have to have 24 months overseas before we can get a furlough, so I have four more months to sweat it out yet. Hope to be home in time for the handball tournament, and I'll see you then. P.S. Say "Hello" to everyone for me."



JAMES TIMMONS

P.F.C. Clayton L. Thompson, writes from Marburg Germany that he is still an M.P. working the night shift. He says, quote: "I still haven't seen anyone that I know. My work is about the same, patrolling at night and sleeping days, and should be losing a little weight. I only eat two meals a day, as I can't make it for breakfast, and have darned near missed dinner a couple of times. It looks like I am stuck in this vicinity for some time. We are getting beer made by an American Brewery in Belgium, which is better than we have had. Today is payday, and I am back in the money again after that trip to Brussels took all my ready cash. Feels good to have a dollar in your pocket to call your own. Thanks for your letters." (New address)

Lt. Carl R. Gregg, writes from a small French village near Dijon (I think). He says, "Found Larry Koch's address in your letter, and it is about 40 miles from here, so I hope to see him soon. Have been in E.T.O. twenty two months, and was a Fire Chief in England at an Air Base, until several months ago. Took eight rough weeks O.C.S. training at Fountain Bleau, and received a commission two days before the Nazis quit. Have toured most of France and spent a month near Mannheim, Germany(?) I saw St. Lo, and thought that was destroyed, but Mannheim is about the size of Portland, and if you can imagine Portland completely demolished with all the bridges destroyed, you have a good idea of how Mannheim looks. We have little training now, with ample athletic activities, and have nice quarters on the bank of a stream, where we swim, so it is not too bad, but I'll take Portland in preference to any other place I've seen. Here's a guy that will be mighty happy to return. Hello to all the Smoke eaters."

Major Jack Lowe, writes from Germany that he has a new assignment, the Fire Officer in U.S. occupied Germany. He says, quote, "This job looks interesting, and as long as I have to stay here, I am glad to have something to do that I Like. Munich has the longest aerial ladder in the world, 150 feet, with five flys, and a bed ladder. Works just like our Seagrave. Say Hello to all."



JACK LOWE

Alfred V. Delphy, writes from Zandrey Field, Suriname, Dutch Guiana (Where he is the Fire Chief). He says: "It is about thirty eight miles inland from Paramaribo, a long way from home and in South America, almost on the Equator. I don't mind the heat, as we take it easy from 11:30 A.M. to 2:30 P.M., and call it a day at 4:00 P.M. This place is pretty wild, right in the middle of a jungle, with monkeys, snakes, alligators, leopards and jaguars (?) About three months ago they killed a big cat on the air strip. You can see them quite often on a moonlight night. The former Fire Chief killed a snake just a little ways from camp, and it was swallowing an alligator when he shot it. It was about 18 feet long. They brought it to camp and skinned it, and cured the skin. This place is used as an auxiliary field for planes flying from Europe. (Wonder if Jim Timmons ever lands there). The Pan-American planes land right along, several a day. Devil's Island is not far from here, and I'll take a run over there the first chance I get. Bananas and pineapple grow wild here, and also grape fruit and mangoes. The natives positively live off of the trees. Thanks again, old timer for your letters and my regards to all the boys."

Cpl. James R. Aiken, writes (probably from Okinawa) thanking me for a letter he received from Gordon Clark. He says, "I am sorry I have not taken time to write you before, and tell you how much I enjoy your letters. I always look forward to them.

I also saw Bob Cofelt's name in the Aug. 4th letter, so know he is alright. Of course you have heard the good word, and it is nice to know we all will be home sooner or later. Chow call just went, and that is one call I seldom miss. Although it may not taste like the things Henry Bushman and I use d to build up at Engine 28, when I was the traveling man. If you have a little space, say hellow to Gordon Clark and Pat Kasch for me, and I'll see them all soon, I hope."



JAMES R. AIKEN

October 5, 1945

ROBERT L. WATTS, Rdm 3/c U.S.S. R.K. Huntington (D.D.781), writes from Tokyo Bay on Sept. 19. He says, quote: "I'll write my bit before you name me to the 'Broken Arm of the Month Club.' My family feel the same way about my writing to them. It was through your letter that I got Haaga's address, and his ship was operating in the same Task Force, and one day while transferring mail I saw him from a distance of about one hundred feet for a few minutes. Same old Haaga, and it was swell seeing someone from home, if it was for just a few minutes at a distance. All my sightseeing has been with the 'long glass', but if nothing happens, I'll be on the Liberty Party tomorrow. Since we have been in this area all we have done is ride out typhoons, and don't get much protection here in the harbor. I might add that there is a bit of breeze connected with them as the one we rode out last night was only 80 miles per hour. Tell Leo Seifer at Eng. 21 to keep his culinary arts in practice, and when I get back, I'll probably out-eat any one in the house. Unless the Navy alters its point system, I'll be out here a couple days yet--yeah.., just wanted you to know I have been receiving your letters and enjoying them, AND that my arm is O.K."

BRUCE FRENCH, writes from Burma on August 20. He says: "Rec'd the August 4th letter, today. If 'Tommy' is having Oregon weather, I am glad this isn't Oregon. It has rained every day for the last month up to five inches for a twenty-four hour period. Roads and Bridges vanish overnight. After the Lido Road, we worked on the longest pipe-line in the world, from Calcutta to China. Boy is it hot here, I've seen it up to 143 degrees, and all we wear is shorts, but have to cover up when working in the jungle. The leaches are big, and look at your dog-tag to type your blood before they take a quart or two. I wish they would send me home soon. Tell the old gang 'Hello' for me. We go back to work on the Road next week."



BRUCE R. FRENCH

MELVIN BALSIGER, in a letter to his father says he is on a very small Island about two miles off the mainland of New Guinea. Melvin says they have lots of lightning bugs there, but that there are only certain trees that they hang around, and at night it is really quite a sight to see certain trees have the lights going on and off, and is the closest he has ever seen a Xmas Tree provided by Mother Nature.

1st. LT. EDWIN L. WILLIAMS, dropped in recently for a visit, and has left for Santa Ana and will soon know if he gets a new assignment or a discharge. Edwin left here in February 1943, and had eleven months in New Guinea, Dutch East Indies and the Phillipines, flying an A-20. He asked about Jim Timmons, Gordon Clark, Billy Grenfell, James Aiken and Bruce Cullen. Said the only fellow from home he saw was Bill Fague, on Mindora. He was sure disgusted when they sent him home by "Boat", and after 35 days he landed on the East Coast. Of course he saw the Panama Canal, and was glad to see it, but he wanted to get "home".



CAPT. JOHN COLOMBO, writes from India. He says, quote " Your faithfulness in punching out those newsy and welcome letters calls for an answer from this dungeon of India. We of the Replacement Service are Adaptable, so instead of being a teacher of Hand Grenades and Map Reading without a job, and free to go home, we become the Evacuation Service, and will be the guys to pull up the Gang Plank when the last boat leaves for home. At present I am the Claims Officer and also Trial Judge Advocate of Special Court in addition to my other duties. Say Hello to my hand-ball pals who beat the ball around.. January of 1942 was the last I touched a ball.

Following are members who's photos were on file but who's stories were not included in this presentation, or were not recorded.



CHESTER ALLYN



JAMES BEEBE



WM. BRAUTLACHT



ALBERT CATLOW



GORDON CLARK



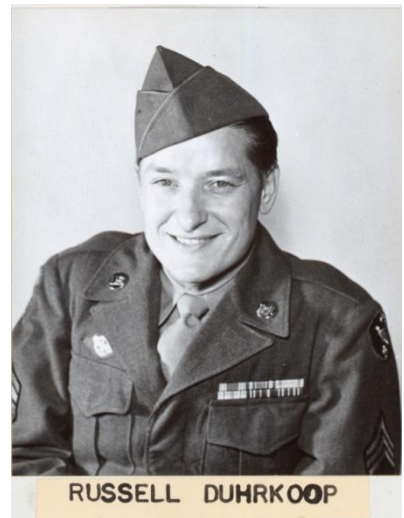
EMMETT DELANEY



CHAS. GUTHRIDGE



EDWIN O. FISHER



RUSSELL DUHRKOOP



JAMES HAMILTON



PAUL HARDING



GLEN HENDRICKSON



MELVIN JOHNSON



EDWARD LAWRENCE



CLARENCE LENNEVILLE



MARVIN LINDLOFF



WILLIAM LOTZ JR



DONALD MARTIN



BRUCE McCONNELL



MAL, McCULLOCH



MERRILL MEIGS



R. FRED MONSON



ROBERT MOORE



GUSTAV MUNDT



HAL PAINTER



WENDELL PALMER



JOSEPH PEGGIA



CHAS. PENN



JACK PETERS



CHARLES J. RAU



GLENN RICHARDS



WILLIAM M. ROBERTS



LAWRENCE ROSS



ALFRED J. RUSSELL



RALPH SARGENT



LORRAINE SMITH



WARREN SMITH



J. C. ST. CLAIR



BENJAMIN STEELE



HENRY SURBAUGH



TOM C. TURLAY



ELMER WARREN



LEONARD WEFEL



WALTER WHITE



ALFRED WISMER



Unnamed In Photo Collage

Photos taken from large photo collage found in Portland Fire Archives. They do not represent all members deployed.

Special thanks to Portland Firefighter Tim Kasch for finding these newsletters, preserving them, and passing them along so they can be shared.

#END#

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