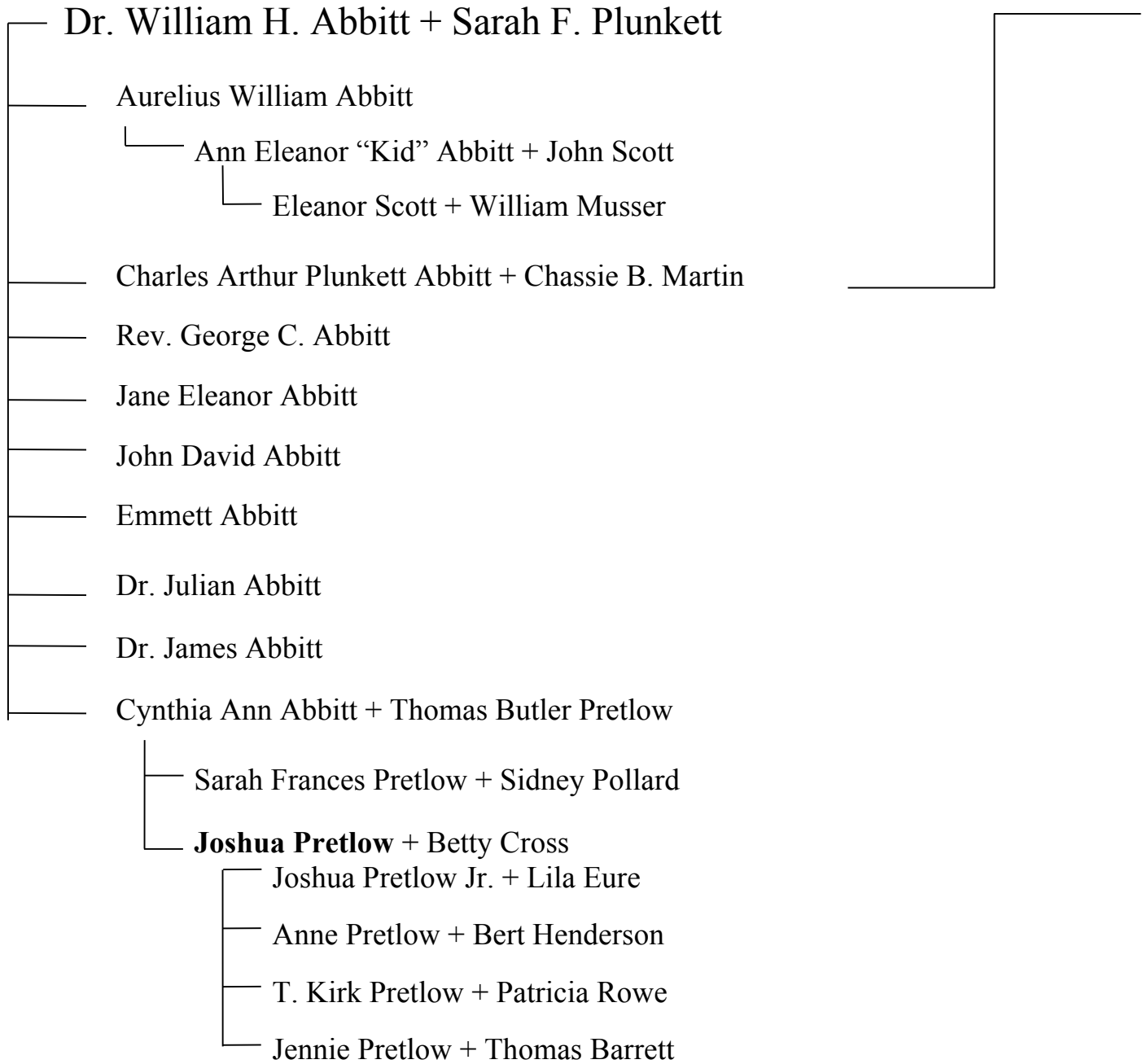




# Abbitt Family Tree



# Chassie B. Martin Family Tree

Charles Arthur Plunkett Abbitt + Chassie B. Martin

Chassie Eleanor Abbitt + Judge John Lewis Thomas

John Lewis Jr.

Sallie Eleanor "Nell" + Michael Kirk

— Martin L. Kirk + C. Manckia, Sharon Sheffield

— Robert Willis Kirk + L. Whittaker, Andrea Majawski

— Eleanor Randolph Kirk + Richard Fuller

**John Lewis Thomas** + Catherine "Kitty" W. Harrell

— Catherine Eleanor Thomas + James Titus

— John Lewis Thomas III + Marsha Cavedo

— William Harrell Thomas + Cynthia Roach

Frances Elizabeth + Charles Rives Sledge

— Charles Rives "Skippy" Sledge Jr + H. Marie Cohn

— Jessie E. "Betsy" Sledge + Daniel Ziomek

Robert Arthur (twin of John "Jack" C. Thomas)

**John "Jack" Cornelius Thomas** + Levato V. Jacobs

— Levato V. + George Fisher III, James Chrismer

— John Cornelius Jr. + Mary E. Pelt, Susan Teasley

Dr. John Willis Abbitt + Hattie Douglas

Hattie Willis + Dean D. McKinney

— John Whitney McKinney + Trecia Long

— Douglass McKinney + Jane Adams, Sandra Stemwedel

Chassie Merle

Arthur Merle Abbitt + John Russell Kirk

**John Stokes Kirk** + Margaret A. Gill

— John Stokes Kirk Jr.

— Margaret Lynn Kirk

— Bruce Robert Kirk

**Arthur Abbitt Kirk** + Marie Linge

— Arthur Russell Kirk + Elizabeth Tew, Pamela Cross

— Mary Kirk

— Ann Marie Kirk + José Mendes

— William Abbitt Kirk + Helen H. Yoest

Chassie B. Martin Abbitt + Cornelius Thomas

John Lemuel Thomas

This book is dedicated to the men within its pages,  
who fought valiantly for their country and their families.

All letters, memoirs, and diaries quoted in this book have been edited  
for grammar to ease readability and have been formatted to fit the pages.

All content is true to historical record, unless otherwise noted,  
through footnote or parenthetical addition.

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**Post Print Corrections:**

**Front cover photo:** *1st Lt. J. Stokes Kirk*, center  
1941 Company "C" 95<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion  
Fort Belvoir, VA

**Right side front family tree:** *Lewis Thomas*, husband  
of *Catherine Harrell*, **not** *John Lewis Thomas*

# *Oh Lord... Save My Boys*

*Merle Abbitt Kirk*

**THE WAR YEARS**  
**1938-1945**

A family's story of WWII told through letters, diaries, and memoirs.

John Stokes Kirk	Arthur Abbitt Kirk
Joshua Pretlow	Paul Kirk Brady
John Lewis Thomas	John Cornelius Thomas
Robert Morgan Gill	Richard Goodson Gill



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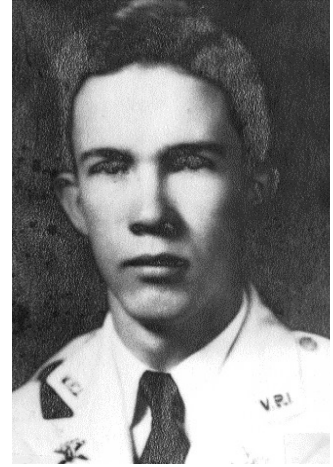
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Paul K. Brady U.S.A.



Arthur A. Kirk U.S.A.



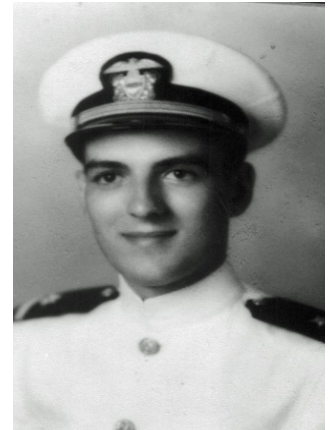
Joshua Pretlow VPI cadet



Claiborne M. Ball U.S.A.



J. Stokes Kirk U.S.A.



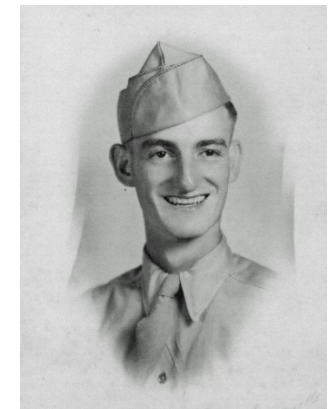
J. Lewis Thomas U.S.N.



Robert M. Gill U.S.A.



Richard G. Gill U.S.M.C.  
*Bud*



J. C. Thomas U.S.A.  
*Jack*



# Introduction

This collection of letters begins well before the United States entered WWII and ends with John Stokes Kirk and his brother Arthur Abbitt Kirk returning home. The letters are from a larger collection spanning 190 years and written by several branches of the Kirk families. The eight men included in this book were well known to each other, with J. Stokes Kirk as a relative and friend. J. Stokes Kirk was the first male of his generation and we have the most information about him. Several hundred of his letters survive as well as photos of him in all seven decades of his life. Files full of his military career were found in his office, while in his home attic rests the uniform he returned in. On the train crossing America to his first deployment out of the country, to build the Alcan Highway in Canada, he started a short diary that continued for several years. A humble man, Stokes seldom talked of his time during the war and his brother Arthur was the same way.

All of the letters Stokes sent home to Everets, VA were boxed and saved, first by his mother Merle Abbitt Kirk, then by his wife Margaret Gill Kirk, and later by Lynn Kirk Rose, his daughter. Those written to Stokes were not easily transported and a year of correspondence to him was burned before he left his base at British Columbia. A man of few words, his brother Arthur wrote short letters while stationed at Camp Carlisle, PA and in West Virginia as well as postcards when he was deployed throughout Europe.

The few letters in the collection from the Thomas brothers, J. Lewis and J. "Jack" C., were those sent to their Aunt Merle and Uncle Russell Kirk in Everets. With sharp wit and a knack for inserting humor into his letters, "Just me" Jack signed his letters as plainly as he spoke. Not many of Lewis' letters home survived, and with the sinking of the USS Northampton in 1942, all other letters went down with the ship.

In 1945, a war update highlighting Paul Kirk Brady was written in the *Virginian Pilot* newspaper. While we have not included any letters from Paul, he is mentioned in letters Arthur wrote home to his mother Merle. Mothers, aunts, wives, and Grandma Thomas kept the men abreast of their loved one's locations and the men attempted to find each other as circumstances allowed. Claiborne Meriwether Ball, another cousin on the Kirk side, was drafted in March of 1945. As an only child, his parents appealed to the Nansemond County draft board, which included his uncle Russell Kirk, but were denied. With his first year at VPI and cadet living finished, Claiborne was well aware he did not take well to the military way of life. When inducted and sent to Ft. Meade, MD, he asked to be sent to armor school at Ft. Knox, KY instead of infantry school. He was in the pipeline for the invasion of Japan, but the war ended just after he had completed the mandatory seventeen weeks of basic training.

The letters of the Gill brothers, Robert and Bud, were saved by their families; Bud brought his letters home in his Marine footlocker. Those letters lay unopened and forgotten until recently when Bud generously offered them for our use. One of the regular letter writers to Bud was a woman named Jackie, a mutual friend from Smithfield, who shared the latest news of family and school friends deployed. On Victory in Europe Day, Jackie wrote about the celebrations in Richmond and in her excitement how she joined the crowds walking down Broad Street enroute to downtown. Jackie relates that she watched two men, one in Navy uniform and the other in Army, meet in the middle of the road, remove their clothing and don the others' uniform. She candidly admits asking a policeman why he helped the larger man into the smaller uniform instead of taking the undressed men to the police station.

Joshua Pretlow did not go to war due to a heart ailment, but is included in this history because of his position within the family. Taken into the Kirk family when orphaned in the 1930s, he became the younger brother to Stokes and Arthur. His cousin Merle raised him as she did her own, sent him to the same schools and included him in all extended family functions. Josh helped Merle and Russell at home and at the mill while Stokes and Arthur were deployed. His youth and temperament alleviated the difficulties during the years of rationing and loss of manpower on the farm as well as at the mill.

It is a testament to this family that close-knit ties forged in earlier generations have survived. Not only do many of these branching families live near one another in Tidewater, VA, they still maintain friendships. As Lynn and I reached out to these families they readily responded, offering to share the pictures and stories that shaped their lives. The letters of the war record the stories these men sent from all over the globe, from the bitter northern reaches of Canada, far into the South Pacific and from the German prisoner-of-war camps to liberate fellow soldiers. All of them came home whole and sane, which is amazing considering the many American men who fought bravely and weren't so lucky.

Through the years, the small hamlet outside of Chuckatuck, Everets was also called Everetts and Everetts Bridge. It was named for the original landowner, Willie Everitt, and in *Travels in the Confederation [1783-1784]*, Johann D. Schoepf writes:

*We were willing to try our fortune, rode 12 long miles through sand, marsh and forest to an arm of Nansemond Creek, and asked politely for a night's lodging at the house recommended. It was dark, a dismal, cheerless Christmas Eve. After repeated inquiries as to where we had come from, who had sent us; after as many reminders that this was no public house, but travelers (who withstood repulse) were taken in gratis: and after prolonged counsel between man and wife, we were at last received, with an ill grace. The next morning we took leave early and expeditiously. Not far from the house we passed Everit's Bridge, named for our host, who had built it by authority from the Assembly so as to bring the road, which lay in a different direction, before his house and store.*

In the 1960s, Merle A. Kirk appealed to the county to formalize a simple and consistent spelling of the area. She was successful, but it took another decade before it was in common use.

Having spent these past thirty-five years in Everets and welcomed into this branching Kirk family I feel a closeness to the community and to these kind and generous men who went to war. I miss the early years in my marriage when Jack Thomas knocked upon our door, calling out, it's "Just me, Jack." Yearly he and his family drove south from New Jersey to visit everyone in Port Norfolk and Everets. He came to our house out of habit, he said. Every Sunday, Aunt Merle would have a spread of food set out and everybody was welcome to come visit. His pronunciations still intact even after years spent living above the Mason-Dixon line: "Ant Merle and Uncle Russell invited mamma, Elner, and all of the Thomas's for Sunday supper." Jack would sweep me in his arms and hug tightly as he sang, "Hey good-looking, whatcha got cookin? Where's that good-for-nothin husband of yours?" And then with an exaggerated sniff in the air, he would ask, "Nothin cooking?" His affectionate greetings were notorious within the family and definitely enjoyed. It is my hope that you will enjoy the letters as you see the world through their eyes.

Kitty Kirk

# Preface

As attested by the huge quantity of local and family information I have accumulated over the years, much of my life has been involved with preserving family memories. I attribute this passion to my grandmother, Merle Abbitt Kirk, and my father, Stokes Kirk, who both made me aware of my lineage and the stories that went with it. They related facts about my great-great grandmother, the Widow Robertson, protecting her family as a Civil War battle raged around her Appomattox home and my great-grandfather, John J. Kirk, meeting his future bride, Margaretta Godwin, when he drove his buckboard from Everets to services at St. John's Episcopal Church in Chuckatuck.

While trying to organize the tangible memories saved by family members, my sister-in-law, Kitty Kirk, and I found many items that were too special not to share with family members. We decided to focus first on the World War II correspondence and pictures my parents and grandparents had saved. I discovered a young mother and father, Margaret and Stokes, whose love story stretched across the seas. Their devotion to each other and their family was clear then and continued throughout their lives. As we read the letters we were awed at how Stokes' family ties with six male cousins, his brother, and two brothers-in-law, all involved in some way with the War, were woven throughout. Therefore we have included research on each of these soldiers.

While looking specifically for a wartime picture of my dad and me there were only two from my birth on January 15, 1941, until he was discharged from the Army in August 1945. I was often reminded of occasions that occurred during my early years: crying on one of his few leaves because I did not know him and strolling on the street in Smithfield and calling every soldier "Daddy," most often receiving an ice cream cone or limeade from Little's Drug Store. A bureau drawer was usually my bed due to not having a true home. In addition, I remember how my older brother, John, and I were fascinated by the lengthy Army convoys passing my Grandmother Gill's home on Church Street in Smithfield.

My early years could have been deeply affected by the upheaval in my family from the War. However, I was surrounded by loving and supportive grandparents and other family members who at the same time were experiencing the trials and tribulations of World War II. I am extremely grateful to all involved in this project, especially Kitty, for giving future generations of our family an opportunity to know some of their family members by more than a name and a picture.

Lynn Kirk Rose

# Connections

**Father's side: Kirk**

**Mother's side: Abbitt**

Paul Kirk Brady

Joshua Pretlow

Claiborne M. Ball

J. Lewis Thomas

J. *Jack* C. Thomas

Arthur A. Kirk

Margaret Gill ——— J. Stokes Kirk

Robert M. Gill

Richard *Bud* G. Gill



1900

New home of Chassie Martin Abbitt Thomas and Cornelius Thomas. 2901 Bayview Blvd, Port Norfolk, Portsmouth, VA.

*L:* John W. Abbitt, J. Lemuel Thomas (infant held by Miss Laura); Eleanor Abbitt; Joe (servant); Cornelius Thomas; Mrs. Booker (housekeeper); Chassie Thomas (seated); Mrs. E. Bruce Robertson Martin Davidson (mother of Chassie); Merle Abbitt Kirk (seated); Mabel Standart (friend).

1921

2901 Bay View Blvd, Port Norfolk, Portsmouth, VA.

*L:* Hattie Douglas Abbitt, John W. Abbitt holding Hattie Willis Abbitt; J. Russell Kirk; Chassie Thomas; Lemuel Thomas; J. Lewis Thomas Sr. holding Frances Thomas; Eleanor Abbitt Thomas holding J. C. Jack Thomas; (middle) Merle Abbitt Kirk; J. Lewis Thomas; Eleanor Nell Thomas; *Front:* J. Stokes Kirk, Arthur A. Kirk.



Portsmouth Star

MONDAY, JUNE 28, 1937.

## s, Meetings And Entert

# Margaret Gill Weds John Stokes Kirk In Smithfield

Christ Episcopal church, Smithfield, was the scene Saturday afternoon at 5 o'clock of an unusually beautiful wedding when Miss Margaret Gill, daughter of Mrs. Madge Goodson Gill, of Smithfield, became the bride of John Stokes Kirk, of Chuckatuck, son of Mr. and Mrs. J. Russell Kirk, of Chuckatuck, formerly of this city.

The church was decorated with Regal lilies, white gladioluses, Queen Anne's lace, fern, palms and cathedral candles.

The service was read by the rector, the Rev. William Brayshaw. The wedding music was played by Mrs. Maynard Berryman, of Surry, who used the Lohengrin and Mendelssohn wedding marches and played MacDowell's "To a Wild Rose" during the ceremony.

The bride, who was given by marriage by Walker Pegram, of Smithfield, wore a gown of ivory duchess satin, embroidered in pearls, with a long court train. Her only ornament was a brooch of platinum set with diamonds, the gift of the bridegroom. She carried a shower of bride's roses and lilies of the valley.

Her maid of honor, Evelyn Savedge, of Surry, was attired in a gown of pink lace, worn with a picture hat, and carried a shower of mixed garden flowers.

The bridegroom entered with his best man, Arthur Kirk, Groomsmen were W. A. Baker, of Smithfield, and Lewis Thomas, of Portsmouth.

Immediately after the ceremony, Mr. and Mrs. Kirk left for an extended motor trip through the northeast and Canada.

The bride wore as a going-away costume, a tea rose sheer crepe with matching accessories.

Among the out-of-town guests were Mrs. Cornelius Thomas, Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Thomas and family, of Portsmouth; Dr. and Mrs. J. W. Abbitt, of Portsmouth; Mr. and Mrs. Claiborne Ball and Mr. Ball, of Norfolk; Mr. and Mrs. Granville Starke, of Richmond; Mrs. Fannie Goodson and Mr. and Mrs. L. T. Gatling, of Hopewell; Lemuel Thomas, of Washington; Mr. and Mrs. James Chamlers, Mrs. Eleanor Scott and Fred Joyner, of Suffolk.



1937 Smithfield, VA J. Stokes Kirk and Margaret Gill wedding

# Beginnings

1912-1937

In 1912, John 'Stokes' Kirk was born in his Grandmother Chassie Thomas' home in a new community called Port Norfolk in Portsmouth, VA. Three and a half years later, his brother Arthur Abbitt was delivered in the same home by their uncle Dr. John 'Jack' Abbitt. Chassie's home was a large, sprawling place facing the Elizabeth River and built with extra rooms she rented to boarders. Within a few blocks lived her three oldest children, Eleanor Abbitt Thomas, John W. Abbitt, and the boys' mother, Merle A. Kirk. Chassie's youngest child, John Lemuel Thomas, was born in 1899 not long after the rooming house was finished. By 1924, Merle's in-laws, J. J. and Elizabeth 'Bessie' G. Kirk, as well as Russell's sisters, Elizabeth 'Bessie' K. Brady and Emma Paul K. Ball, had built homes within walking distance. Margaretta's sister, Betty G. Corbell, and her two children, were in the neighborhood also.

Stokes and Arthur grew up with cousins as playmates: Eleanor's four children, John's two daughters, Bessie's three children, and Emma Paul's son.

## J. Stokes Kirk

1917-1918: *Severe winter - Western Branch, of Elizabeth River frozen over between end of Bayview Blvd. and Cotton Farm to West - Sleigh Riding. We lived in apartment between Florida and Broad at corner of 2nd block. In 1918 - Arthur walks up to stranger and says, "Want to fight." He was two years old and would say "I am afraid of nobody except 'Bro Neely' and the 'Kaiser.'" Bro Neely was Grandma Thomas' 2nd husband and the father of Uncle Lemuel Thomas.*

*November 11, 1918 was Armistice Day. All of the Boat Whistles and Factory Whistles in the Norfolk and Portsmouth area started blowing and you never heard such a din. There was a false blowing of the whistles several days before the armistice. We moved to the Sherritt house next to Grandma's home about this time. Dad was doing lots of surveying - brought home a rattlesnake from the swamp and put him in a box with a hardware metal mesh top. The snake would rattle and strike at anyone's hand or object that came close to the top of the cage. After a few days some of the neighbors objected and he had to get rid of him. Also when I was about five years old, a mad dog was running loose and everyone joined in the shouting "Mad Dog" which was a signal for all people to move indoors. Grandma herded all of the children in her house and everyone went to the windows to see the dog. The men in the area were after the dog with shotguns and soon eliminated the animal. During this time Aunt Bessie Kirk Brady and Jack Brady, Elizabeth, Margaretta and Paul, lived on Florida Avenue next to Grandma Thomas, later on Broad St. next to Aunt Eleanor Abbitt Thomas and Judge Lewis Thomas the parents of Lewis, Nell, Frances and Jack Thomas. And then during the 1923 to 1925 period back to Florida Avenue. Granddaddy J. J. Kirk and Grandmother "Margie" Margaretta Godwin Kirk would come by boat or by train to Port Norfolk from Everets to visit - 1915 to his death in December 1922. Grandmother Kirk bought a Model T Ford about 1918 and she would get someone to carry her back and forth but Granddaddy Kirk would not ride it.*

After his father John Jacob Kirk's death, J. Russell moved his family to Everets. His inheritance included the Kirk house, the home he and his sisters grew up in, farmland, the sawmill and all of its outbuildings. Because the original sawmill was small and the equipment old Russell replaced the machinery he could afford. He continued to work in Portsmouth until the mill was up and running.

J. J. Kirk built the two-story Kirk house in 1873 from lumber sawed on the property. As the oldest son of Elias Kirk, J. J. was sent and directed to build a sawmill on 800+ acres in Everets purchased in 1870 and ship the lumber to Philadelphia for sale. The wood-frame Kirk house was home to J. J. and his wife, Margaretta Godwin, her widowed mother, Sarah Lawrence Godwin, Sarah's spinster sister, Mary, and the Kirk's three children. J. Russell and his sisters, Margaretta and E. Paul, were born in the house. At times the home also housed the children's teachers who lived with local families throughout the school years. The kitchen was originally in the basement, modeled after the house J. J. grew up in Pennsylvania. By the 1890s, a two-story addition was built, extending from the back of the house to give the house a T shape. With a large kitchen and a dining area, replacing the original, on the first floor, the wood stove no longer added to the hot and humid Tidewater summers. Two bedrooms and a bath completed the upstairs. Sarah Godwin slept downstairs, in the current dining room, her sister Mary in the room across the hall, now a living room, with J. J. and the children upstairs. In the yard chickens roosted and the scuppernong vines produced enough grapes to satisfy the family. A large vegetable garden was fenced near the outhouse and wood shed.

### J. Stokes Kirk

*In 1923, when Dad decided to move to Everets, he bought a used sawmill in West Norfolk and moved it to Everets to use in cutting lumber to construct his Cotton Gin. By 1924, he was well on the way with the construction of the gin building and began ginning cotton by the fall crop. Dad always said that he cut everything on the Kirk Farm, which would make a 2x6 for the cotton gin building. He engineered the sawmill and Cotton Gin. The Gullett Gin Co. tried to hire him to go around and supervise the construction of gins. However, there were so many gins around (Smithfield, Windsor, Chuckatuck, Corbell Cotten's, Driver and several in Suffolk) that he had to run the sawmill to make a living. Bro Neely loaned Dad the money to buy the equipment, which he eventually paid back. In 1924 we moved to Everets. I was 12 years old and I insisted I could ride my bicycle to Everets. I really had it loaded with my things and I lasted until I got to the Hargraves Farm just outside of Driver. They caught up to me with the Model T, loaded the bicycle on the car and we proceeded to Everets, thru Suffolk and Reids Ferry. The Kings Highway was not built until 1927. Mamma did not want to leave Port Norfolk with all of its conveniences, lights, water, streetcar transportation, ice and vegetables sold at the door. Dad worked part time across the river at the West Norfolk Smelter. We left and went to Everets, lamps, no water except what we got at the artesian well, transportation by Model T and no bathroom. Dad fixed up a shower at the corner of the store<sup>1</sup> and later at the N.E. corner of the house, both using rainwater. Soon a water pump was installed in the cotton gin, a pipe ran up the hill and a pressure tank put in the basement. This gave*

---

<sup>1</sup> Russell Kirk once owned a two-story store, which had been owned by Rufus Martin. It was located on the east side of the bridge.



*us water and soon a bathroom was installed. From 1924, until 1937, we used lamps for light, and then R.E.A.<sup>2</sup> came in.*

In 1927, Russell built a two-story house on the north side of Kirk lumber mill for his widowed mother Margaretta. His sister, Bessie, moved in as well with her husband, Jack Brady, and son, Paul, until 1935 when they moved closer to the old city of Suffolk. After school Paul worked at the mill until he went to college in Chicago to study electricity and its applications.

#### Merle A. Kirk diary 1924-1955

*December 14, 1927: Russell's mill output has been increased. He ships oak ties by the barge load, oak and cypress lumber by carloads, ships piling, wood and sells lumber locally. He has bought more machinery and other equipment; keeps seven mules and about twenty men busy. With all this he is slowly but steadily decreasing his indebtedness. We have added to the house equipment running water, kitchen sink, kitchen oil stove, heaters and a radio. What we want now is a bathroom, paint for the house, electricity and I want a piano. I am to sing a solo at the Wesley Chapel Christmas entertainment Christmas night, and Mrs. Kirk is having the family to eat Christmas dinner with her at Bessie's, 106 Florida Avenue, P.N. How can I feast and sing the same day! Sad! Russell has taken a great interest in the Sunday School work here. He and I are both teachers and he is the president of the Fifth Sunday Institute. The boys have joined St. John's Church. Margaretta and Paul were confirmed at the same time. The boys have done their first hunting this fall. They do pretty well, yet I hate to see them with guns. Stokes brought home two squirrels last night. He is so anxious to kill a turkey. Arthur is the better shot, but Stokes is more persistent.*

In Everets, the boys kept the firebox full, trapped small game, picked and shelled walnuts and helped their mother with chickens and turkeys she raised for food and cash.

#### J. Stokes Kirk

*1924: The cotton gin was run at night and the steam engine also powered a D.C. generator for lights in the gin and the sawmill where the boiler was. Alec Salmon, Hozier Whitfield, Mason Newby were the principle ones who ran the Cotton Gin. Mr. 'Simonds' (Salmon) was in general charge.*

#### Arthur A. Kirk

*I first knew Mason when I was about ten, he was strong with arms as big as truck tires, his shoulders were big and broad and his waist was thin. Handling logs and turning them to be sawed was his game, and when the circular mill wasn't running, he was loading trucks with railroad ties. I would help in the middle with Mason and Milton on the ends. They wanted a little help on the top layers. He never laughed out loud much, but mostly chuckled. He was sort of a quiet man. Late one night Daddy got a call from the sheriff. Mason was in jail and wanted Daddy to get his bail, which he did. Daddy was a tee-totler and said the next day "I wouldn't have gotten him out if I had known he was drunk." My brother and I laughed and agreed between ourselves that it was the reason Daddy didn't ask. "Mason's laying on the ground with his ear cut off, he looks like he's dead up at*

---

<sup>2</sup> On May 11, 1935, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt issued Executive Order 7037, which created the Rural Electrification Administration.

*Kirktown. Son, you go and see what it is,” Daddy said. I wondered why he wanted me to go. I thought he should do it, but I went. Mason was lying on the ground looking half alive with his left ear almost gone. “Where is that axe? Where is that axe?” his woman cried in extreme agitation and excitement. “If I don’t kill him, he’s going to kill me when he gets up from there. Where is that axe?” Well I took him in the car down to Dr. Eley’s, and he sewed the ear back on. Mason had drunk his own anesthetic and didn’t complain much. He and his woman moved back together for quite a spell. Daddy built a new mill. There was Mason riding the carriage and setting the ratchets while Daddy handled the steam and the shot gun feed, sawing up the logs. I went by occasionally when winter was coming on and took him a suit of clothes, some shoes, and a few other things. He was getting weak and older, but he was still big and had a warm smile and a “thank you.”*

In 1929, at the onset of the Great Depression, Stokes traveled by train to Virginia Polytechnic Institute, VPI, now Virginia Tech, in Blacksburg, VA. The all-male school required students to join the corps, and in 1933 he graduated with a degree in mechanical engineering along with the rank 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant in the Army Artillery Reserve. At the beginning of his senior year, Stokes remembers,

*Dad gave me a postdated check for October 1 for the tuition. He was not able to provide for it by then and after a telephone call from Blacksburg to him, he told me to ask the registrar to redeposit the check, which was then good. In 1929, I had \$500.00 in the bank and Arthur had the same. Cotton prices had dropped to a very low price and Dad asked Arthur and me if we wanted to buy cotton futures on margin, which we agreed on. In just a few days, we needed more margin, which Dad managed to scrape together. In another few days, more margin was needed and Dad was forced to lose the futures. To make this up, Dad built two houses at Kirk town, one for Arthur and one for me. He rented the houses to some of his workmen at \$1.00 per week. From then on Dad wrote me a letter to Blacksburg each Sunday night and enclosed a \$1.00 bill. I continued to receive this \$1.00 after school as an addition to my wages, i.e. 1933 - \$15.00 per week plus \$1.00 for a total of \$16.00 per week. I received this \$1.00 for well over ten years.”*

In 1933, fourteen-year-old Joshua Pretlow, an Abbitt cousin of Merle’s, was welcomed into the Kirk home. His parents, Ann Abbitt and Thomas Butler Pretlow, had died, leaving Joshua and his older sister, Sarah Frances, in the care of elderly aunts who lived in the Hague section of Norfolk in the spring of 1933.

After the summer in Norfolk, Josh’s cousin, Congressman Colgate W. Darden, Jr., later Governor of Virginia, suggested it might be more beneficial for Josh if he lived in a rural environment where he would have male companionship and some work responsibilities. Despite the earlier loss of his father, and more recently his mother, Josh was easy going and fit into the family. He followed Arthur and Stokes in attending Chuckatuck High School, working at the lumber mill, and then attending VPI.

#### Merle A. Kirk diary 1924-1955

*September 19, 1933: This spring Russell and I were talking about the probable changes, which would come into our lives in the next ten years. To begin with Stokes has graduated from college and is working at the mill. Last week he had his hand cut by a planer blade, which severed the tendon of his left hand third finger. It was sewn together and he is still wearing his hand in splints. Yesterday Stokes took Arthur to V.P.I. where*

*he will begin his college work. Aunt Annie's little boy Joshua has been living with us since August 27, so he went with the boys as far as Appomattox where he visited Ethel Abbitt Burke's family. Aunt Annie died in April and Joshua is to make his home with us. He is a nice boy of 14 yrs. and all of us like him. The boys were back tonight in time for a late supper. Wednesday we had the highest water here this section has ever known. Water was 18 inches in Mr. Wagner's store, drowned chickens under Martins store. Arthur used a little boat to ferry the men across and made 85¢. All of Russell's dry lumber was soaked and the mill was under water.*

These were the depression years, a decade in which the sawmill received few orders. It was a difficult time for Russell to get ahead, struggling with limited resources and the increasing needs of family and business. In 1934 the Bank Holiday closed all banks indefinitely, until the Federal Government restructured the monetary system. Without cash Russell resolved to find a way to compensate his workers. The two store owners in Everets, Rufus Martin and W. K. Wagner, agreed to give credit to his employees with groceries equaling a weeks' pay. When the bank holiday ended, Russell paid small amounts each month toward the large bill owed at the stores.

The mill workers walked to work daily from the surrounding countryside, but attendance was spotty. Many, unable to pay rent, moved in with family who lived far from Everets. To retain them and keep them working, Russell began building a row of houses on the north side of the mill. They were small dwellings made of unsold lumber, with a community well for water and outhouses in the back yards. Electricity had not arrived in Everets. Stokes found the work agreeable, but Arthur decided the long days building houses was not for him. He resolved to do something other than work in the lumber business. For his truck drivers with families he built two larger homes on Kirk Road. As unsold lumber accumulated he built another row of houses around the corner, on Quaker Road. Adding to the difficulties, a fire in 1935 burned down the sawmill. Fortunately, a new mill was nearing completion and did not delay orders for long. J. J. Kirk's sawmill [1870-1905] was located on low ground, below and just north of the current Everets Bridge and across the street from the Kirk house on Kirk Road. J. Russell built his [1924-1935] directly across from the Kirk house, between the island and Everets Road. The 1935 mill was built directly behind the Kirk house, on the same side of Kirk Road.

#### Merle A. Kirk diary 1924-1955

*January 20, 1936: It has been over two years since I have written here. Joshua is now as tall as I, a senior in High School and wearing his first long trousers last fall. Arthur is a Junior at V.P.I. working on a pre-med. course. Stokes is still working at the mill and very much in love. He is engaged to Miss Margaret Gill of Smithfield. Elizabeth Brady is now a mother; the new one was born January 2. They live in Baton Rouge. Margaretta is married to Norfleet Smith and expects to live in S.C. Mrs. Kirk has been in miserable health for over a year, having had the flu and possible pneumonia last February. She keeps a girl to look after her night and day. Bessie has a hard time, as Jack is unable to get around also.*

*Russell had an operation performed on him Dec. 31 and is just recovering. Today is his first day of work for over a month. Two months ago our house caught afire while I was in Norfolk. Sparks from the chimney lodged in the dry shingles. Someone saw this fire in time; all worked together and put it out before more than the shingles were burned.*

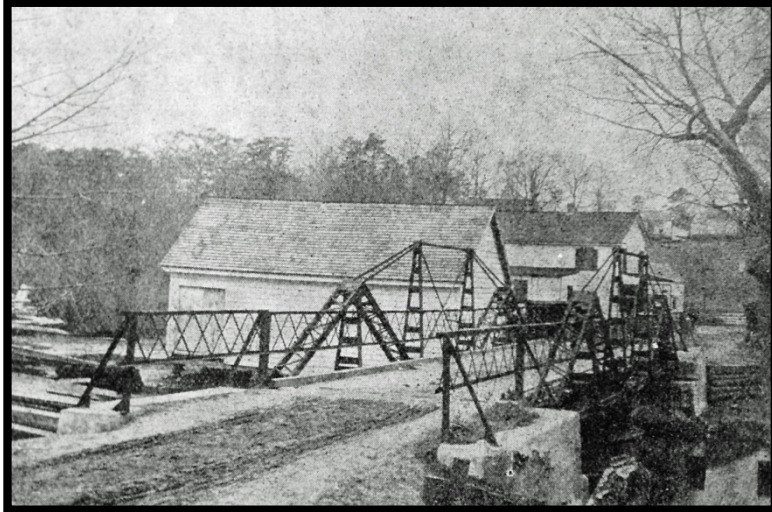
*We are so happy we have been able to keep our boys in college. I often think of the time I despaired of getting them there. Sister has had to discontinue Lewis' college work, after having had two years, and is sending Frances to Fredericksburg. Someone went into her house last week and stole her pocketbook containing twenty dollars. Mamma is much better now and seems happy. I expect to go to see her tomorrow.*

While an undergraduate at VPI, Josh continued his studies in Agriculture Education. Arthur graduated with a Biology degree and, like Stokes, joined the Army Reserve. The small amount of money the Reserve paid was necessary during the lean years. After college Stokes returned home to help Russell manage the mill. His task, to modernize the log cutting and lumber production, was difficult with the limited budget. Friends introduced Stokes to a Smithfield girl, Margaret Gill. They married in 1937, renting rooms in Smithfield to allow Margaret to walk to work at Joyner's in Smithfield. Extra money for gas was limited, so several days a week Stokes stayed in his old room at home in Everets and on weekends Margaret joined him there. Reduced family finances forced Lewis Thomas home early from college and in January 1937, he enlisted in the U.S. Naval Reserve.



Everets: J. Russell Kirk house, Kirk Lumber truck fleet, 1926

# Everets



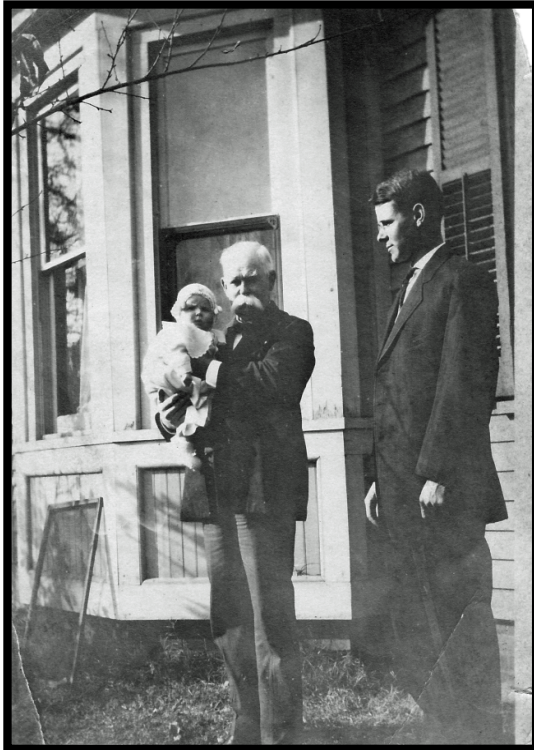
1890  
Everets Bridge looking southwest

1890s  
John Jacob Kirk's Kirk Company



1930s  
John Jacob Kirk house looking west

# The Kirks



1912 *infant* J. Stokes Kirk, John Jacob Kirk, J. Russell Kirk



1914 L: Margaretta Brady, Elizabeth Brady J. Stokes Kirk



1918 Margaretta L. Godwin Kirk, *Infant* Arthur A. Kirk, Paul Kirk Brady, J. Stokes Kirk



1921 L: Margaretta Brady, J. Stokes Kirk Paul Kirk Brady, Arthur A. Kirk



1925  
Port Norfolk,  
Portsmouth VA.

From left: Arthur  
A. Kirk, Stokes  
Kirk, Paul Kirk  
Brady



Above: 1927 Everets: from left: Arthur Kirk  
and J. Stokes Kirk hunting



Right: 1927 from left: Emma Paul Kirk Ball,  
J. Stokes Kirk, Arthur Kirk, *seated* Claiborne White Ball;  
holding infant Claiborne M. Ball



Merle A. Kirk



Above: 1920s Kirk farm sheep and turkeys

Right: 1930s VPI cadet J. Stokes Kirk







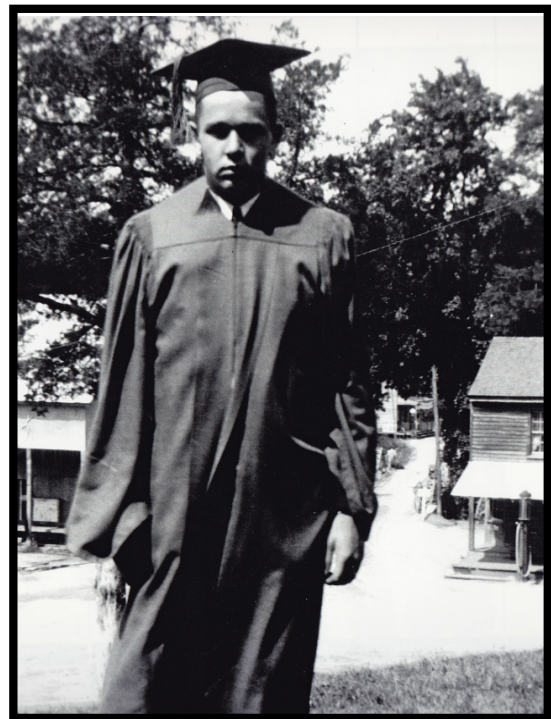
Joshua and Sarah Frances Pretlow



1933 Everets: Joshua Pretlow



1936 Chuckatuck High School basketball team  
 L: coach Wilbur Bailey, manager Joshua Pretlow,  
 and Russell Beamon;  
 Front: L Dickie Woodward, C.P. Darden Jr.



1933 Arthur Kirk, graduate of Chuckatuck  
 High School, taken in front of Kirk house  
 overlooking Martin/Kirk store on right,  
 Wagner store across bridge, Kirk cotton gin on left



J. Russell Kirk's Lumber Co.

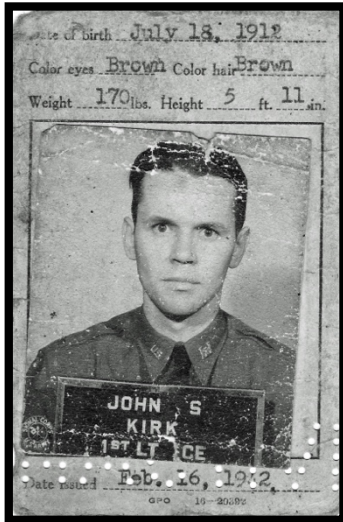


1930s from left: Mason Newby, Milton Graves  
Brooks Edwards

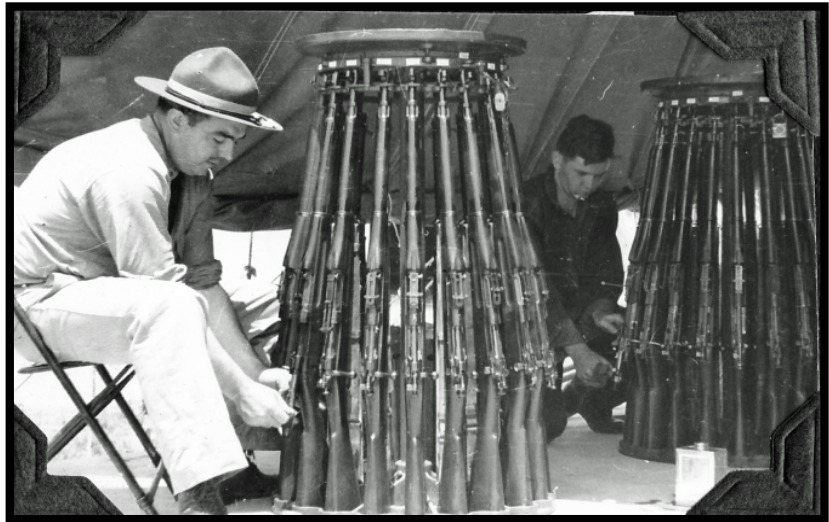


1930s Smithfield from left: Robert M. Gill  
Margaret Gill, R. Bud Gill

# In the Army



1942 U.S. Army I.D J. Stokes Kirk



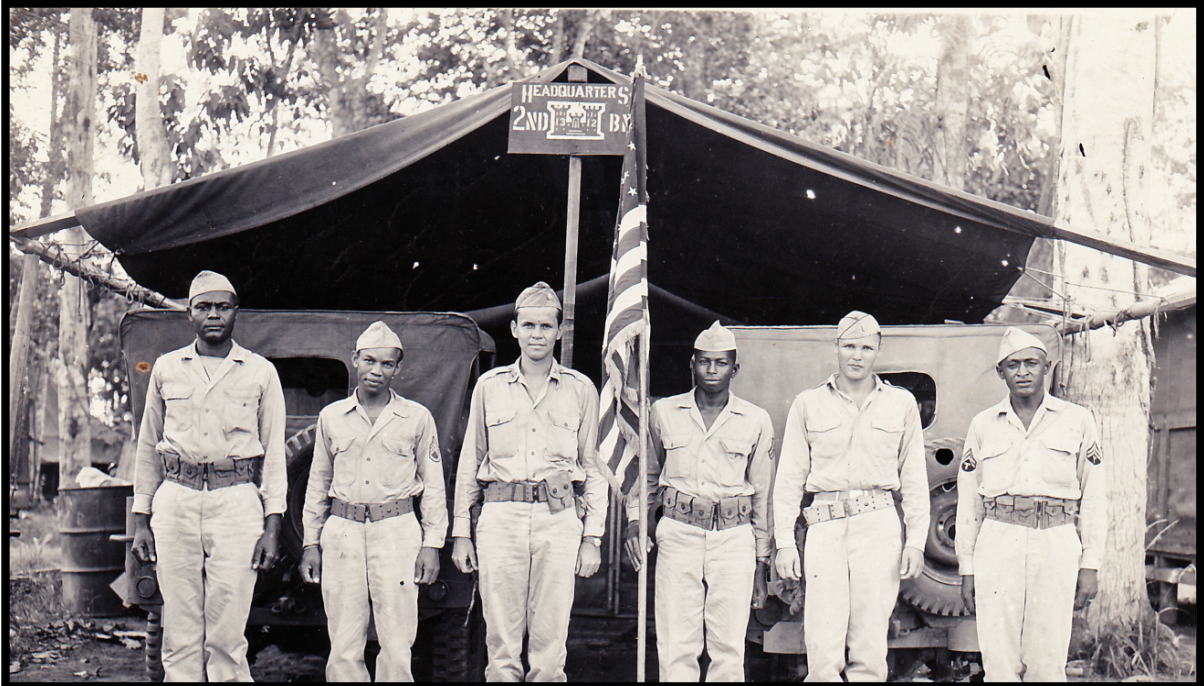
1943 U.S. Army, Arthur Kirk R



1944 U.S. Army 751th Field Artillery Bn. L: back row, third from left Paul Kirk Brady



1943 New Guinea 1312<sup>th</sup> Army Corps Engineers



1943 1312<sup>th</sup> Army Corps Engineers, New Guinea third from left: J. Stokes Kirk



1943 Memphis TN, U. S. Marine Night Fighters, Squad 534 Aircraft group 21 *Back: R. Bud Gill*



Front row from left, third in: Arthur Kirk

# Overview

## 1938-1945

In Everets, the hardships of the depression continued at Kirk Lumber Mill, and the lack of ready cash to pay his employees continued to burden Russell. Nansemond County as well as the surrounding counties had many mills, all vying for the same customers. Cutting lumber for intermittent orders left Russell few options; he struggled to keep the men working through the lean times in order to have the labor force when the orders did materialize.

To curb expenses, Russell cut his own pay to zero (as well as Stokes'). The higher paid sawyer was let go and Russell would work the saw. The pay cuts were not enough and Russell considered closing the mill. Margaret worked at V.W. Joyner & Co. in Smithfield figuring the weekly payroll, preparing statements and doing some bookkeeping. The deskwork suited her, as her first baby was due in September 1938.

On cleared land adjacent to his parent's home Stokes began building his house. In August he went to Fort Belvoir, VA for Reserve Officer training. Yearly participation in camp training was mandatory (as well as continued education). At the close of camp he returned home to discover Margaret in labor. The next day in Parrish Memorial Hospital in Portsmouth, she delivered a healthy boy they named John S. Jr. Dr. John Abbitt, Uncle Jack, delivered John, but Margaret's recurring fever was unresolved and she was sent to bed for six months. In early 1939 as the crocus bloomed, Margaret's health had recovered allowing her return to work. Her young brothers also found work. Robert played ball for Smithfield HS and joined the town baseball league. He had a talent for baseball and excelled at it. Bud worked before school, opening Weaver Printing for his employer John Weaver as well as making print copy in the afternoon for another shop.

In January 1941, Margaret gave birth to a daughter, Margaret Lynn, and again delivery complications arose which kept her in the hospital several weeks. When Stokes brought them both back to Everets, all four resided in one bedroom in his parent's house. Euphania Crocker was hired to care for the baby and Margaret, and moved into the room across the hall. On a house call to see Merle, who was sick, Dr. Eley discovered the baby was feverish and sent her to the hospital. She had pneumonia. In the midst of this turmoil, Stokes received orders to report within the week for one year of active duty at Ft. Belvoir. He delayed his departure for several weeks as he, Margaret and the baby were all sick.

### Merle A. Kirk diary:

March 18, 1941: *The most uncertain, or may we call it assured, times are ahead of us now; one of horror and grief for the future? Just as my son has begun to feel that he has been endowed with much to make him happy - a wife, a son, and a daughter of two months, and a home one-half completed - a notice comes from the government that he is to go to camp for one year (?) What can this one year mean? It looks like war for our country! It seems we are assured of war. But why war - why all this killing? The majority of people in this world only want to live peaceably. Why can't we do just that? Why can't the men in authority live and let live?*



J. Russell Kirk operating the saw



1938 Thomas house: **Back row from left:** Hattie Douglas Abbitt, Hattie Willis Abbitt, Dr. John Abbitt, Russell Kirk, Chassie Thomas, J. Lemuel Thomas, Judge J. Lewis Thomas, Eleanor Abbitt Thomas **Middle row from left:** Merle Abbitt Kirk, J. Lewis Thomas Jr, Frances Thomas **Front row from left:** Margaret Gill Kirk, Stokes Kirk, Arthur Kirk; Eleanor *Nell* Thomas, J. *Jack* Thomas



In between his summer classes at the Medical College of Virginia in Richmond, **Arthur** trained with the Army Reserve at Carlisle Barracks, PA. By 1941 he interned at Walter Reed Hospital in Bethesda, MD, assisting surgeries. Inducted into the Regular Army early in 1943, he was sent to the 32<sup>nd</sup> Medical Battalion as an assistant instructor. He taught young soldiers at Carlisle Barracks to become officers in the Medical Administrative Corps. This was different from the Medical Corps, which was comprised only of doctors. The new school was called an “Officers’ Candidate School” and made up primarily of college graduates and other soldiers who were not officers, but who showed that they have officer potential. At the Medical Field Service School, Captain Kirk was Assistant Surgeon of the Camp Dispensary.

A graduate of VPI, **Josh** returned to Everets with a teaching degree in 1940. He then filled the secretarial job vacated by Jack Brady in the mill office, taking orders and paying bills. Jack’s son Paul returned from Chicago where he studied electronics and resumed his position on the mill yard until opening his own radio shop in downtown Suffolk. Josh, too, was in the Army reserve, the Coast Artillery. In his spare time he continued his studies by correspondence, in pursuit of a law degree. His cousin, Congressman Colgate Darden, Jr., financially supported both his college education at VPI and his law courses.

In December of 1941, the newly commissioned Signals Officer stationed onboard the U.S.S. Northampton, **Lewis** Thomas deployed to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

Younger brother John C. ‘**Jack’s**’ knack for mechanics qualified him for essential work at the shipyard as a machinist. Just out of high school, his work for the Navy shipyard was technical, innovative and essential. The Navy Yard, sometimes called Norfolk Naval Shipyard, employed tens of thousands in the huge effort to deliver the necessary war ships. Although just entering his 20s, Jack was considered to have expertise in the mechanical work at the shipyard. Several times he attempted to join the Navy, but each time the shipyard requested his release to continue his essential work in the shipyard. Frustrated with the Navy, he signed up with the Army in one last attempt to fight in the war.

By late summer 1943 Margaret’s brother, **Robert** Gill, enlisted in the Army, and deployed with Company B, 802 Replacement Battalion. While home on leave he married Shirley Wiggins January 5<sup>th</sup>, 1944 and shipped to North Africa twenty-five days later. When operations in Africa were completed his unit was redeployed to Italy. Division Commanders in Italy learned of his skills and reputation on the baseball diamond and recruited him for their games against other units.

Robert M. Gill, Jr.:

*There is a story about the portrait picture Dad told over and over. The Italian photographer was famous and soldiers of all ranks made a long line waiting for their turn. Dad and the company cook were back towards the end of the long line when they informed one of the photographer’s helpers that they were going to pay for the portraits with a pound of coffee and a pound of sugar, respectively. In war ravaged Italy, these items had been scarce for a very long time. Moments later, Robert and the cook were walking to the front of the line receiving looks from those they were passing, many of whom were of higher rank.*

Margaret’s younger brother, ‘**Bud**’, joined the Marines in 1943 and was sent first to Paris Island, S.C. for basic and then Memphis, TN. for training. Attached to the First Provisional Marine Brigade Aviation ordinance and ground defense, he also played tenor drums with the Marching Band. On November 30<sup>th</sup> Bud received word of his father’s death. Broke and unable to

go home to the funeral in Virginia, he reached out to the Red Cross. When the bandleader heard the Red Cross's inability to help, he passed a hat around collecting quarters and dimes from the band. They collected enough for Bud to take the next bus home that very day. In 1944 the First Provisional unit sailed from San Diego on a transport carrier, for the Hebrides Islands. The trip took six weeks aboard the ship *Young America*.

In September 1943, at age twenty-nine, **Paul** Kirk Brady was drafted into the army. After completing his training at Camp Lee near Petersburg, VA, he bivouacked with 50,000 troops in Camp Shanks, N.Y. His new wife, Elizabeth, took over running the business *Radio Service* during the war. From New York T-5 radio technician (Corporal) Paul was sent into Swansea, Wales.



1939 Atlee Martin overlooking Everets Creek between Reids Ferry and Everets

# 1938

Into his third year at VPI, **Josh** returned home regularly to help his cousin Russell in the mill office. Most lumber orders were from local farmers, buying the infrequent board for barn and fence repairs, or from the heavy barges moving goods along the rivers requesting pallets and barrels. Josh's occasional work would free Russell from the office to survey acres of timber and plan which tracts to cut. Each winter a new strategy was required to decide the rotation of crops, moving the herd of cattle into greener fields and deciding when to fill the smoke house. Several pigs and cows were slaughtered then generously seasoned and salted before a small, smoky fire was kindled below the hanging meat to safely cure it all.

On August 2<sup>nd</sup>, **Lt. Stokes Kirk** attended a scheduled tour of duty at Ft. Belvoir, Virginia. The camp was the training ground for reserve engineers, where they were tested and trained to set up individual camps and building sites. In order to maintain his reserve status he fulfilled the required fifteen hours of credit in extension courses yearly, attended ten hours of conferences, and arrived for mandatory weeks of camp. Assigned to Company C, the Surveying section, he completed the training and anxiously returned home.

After graduation in May from VPI, **Arthur** immediately began his studies in medicine at Medical College of Virginia (MCV) in Richmond. With his uncle, Dr. John "Jack" Abbitt as his mentor, his goal of becoming a doctor was within reach. Great-grandfather, Dr. William Abbitt, served as a doctor in the Confederate Army with the Appomattox Regulars. William's sons, Julian and James, studied medicine at MCV and became doctors as well.

America watched as Germany and Italy formed an alliance and aggressively invaded several countries. Hitler seized Czechoslovakia and Poland and began his genocide of the Jews within these borders. Anticipating Hitler's move west, Britain mobilized its navy and began evacuating its civilians from London. In September, Britain, France, Australia and New Zealand declared war on Germany.



J. Stokes Kirk

**Margaret G. Kirk to J. Stokes Kirk** Aug. 15, 1938  
Smithfield, VA to Officer's Reserve Training Camp,  
Fort Belvoir, VA

Dearest Stokes,

I can hardly realize that you just left yesterday morning for it seems as though the two weeks should be up already. I never missed anyone so much and I have thought of you most of the time.

I am feeling very well this morning and "little Stokes" seems to be resting quietly for a change. He was very frisky last night, however so I am quite sore in spots. You must have a good time though and not worry about us. Just forget you have a wife at home, because you really deserve a vacation if anyone does.

It is just quarter of ten but I suppose you have been up such a long while now that it seems the day should be at least half over. I got up about eight o'clock myself. I probably would have stayed in bed longer but some men are at last fixing the roof and they started sawing and nailing quite early. I helped Mother with the beds and then washed two pair of hose and a pair of your brown socks

you wore Friday and Saturday. I didn't want to put them in wash because they were good ones so I brought them over with me. I was a little warm by then so decided I would talk to my darling on paper so I could get it on the morning mail. You didn't leave me any address but I am taking a shot at it anyway.

Mrs. Kirk called to see how I was this morning about eight-thirty. She said she was feeling better and the rest of the family were O.K. She said they had a lot of excitement down there yesterday afternoon. Mason's wife came and for some reason decided to knock him in the head with an ax. I asked her if he was in the hospital and she said "no" that he was walking around down there, but she didn't see how he could because he had a great hole in his head behind his ear. He must really be the "strong man."

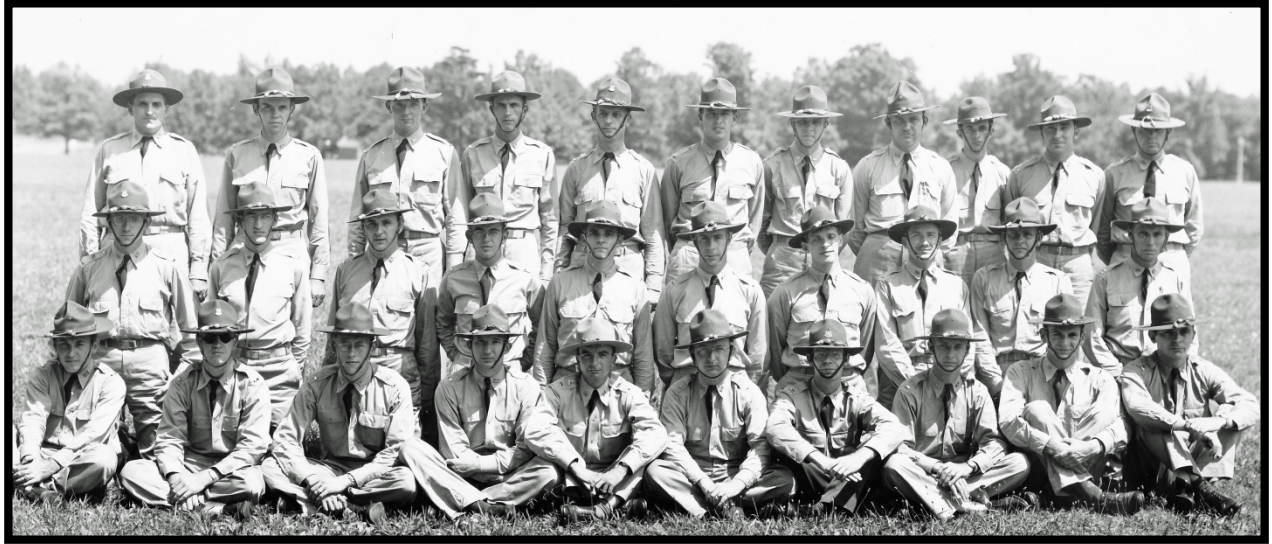
Mrs. Kirk also said David, Earnest and Hayden were in an automobile wreck close to the church, and Earnest was hurt right much and both cars torn all to pieces. I guess she'll write you all about it though. The black duck, or brown I believe he is, came to be fed this morning and she said he seemed to be feeling better. I think that is about all the news from Everets Bridge.

I am having the car greased this morning as per your instructions. I haven't used it since I drove over yesterday morning, but it makes me feel lots safer knowing it is out in the driveway. Though I felt real mean yesterday when I thought about you having to ride on an old bus. I do hope you had a pleasant trip though, and arrived on time.

Do you realize this is the first letter I have ever written you? Am anxiously awaiting my first from you also.

All my love,

Margaret & "Little Stokes"



John Stokes Kirk, back row second from left

**Margaret G. Kirk to J. Stokes Kirk**

Aug. 16

Dearest Stokes,

Oh! I was such a happy little girl when you called me last night. Even though it was just Monday it already seemed as though you had been gone two weeks, as I told you in my letter yesterday morning. And I was so glad to hear your voice and to know you were all right. I hated to say "good bye" because it seemed like you were going away again. I must admit I had a hard fight with the tears Sunday morning when I saw that bus pull out with all I had in this world on it. But I just hope I'll be able to see it pull in again soon and bring my treasure home, for I have certainly missed you.

Mrs. Kirk called me about eight o'clock and she said everything was all right down there, and everybody was well. She seemed so glad to hear from you; I told her I tried to get her last night after I talked to you but couldn't and she said they went out to the movies to try and cool off. She said Mr. Kirk had quite a time yesterday morning trying to get things started with so many men out, but he said he had things adjusted and managed to do fairly well yesterday afternoon. She said she saw Mason this morning and he had about a six inch bandage around his head. She said Olivia was there to-day and Pete brought the corn, so she was going to cut corn this morning. Dr. Fred Barrow's father died yesterday and they are going down this afternoon to the funeral.

I don't feel so well this morning but I think it is only because I didn't sleep any last night. The paper said this morning that yesterday was the hottest day we have had this summer and I think last night must have had all the nights beat also. I didn't mind the day so much because I stayed on the couch in the living room and Mother fed me crushed ice most of the time, but last night was dreadful. I stayed up until after eleven and it seemed to get hotter instead of cooling off any, so at six o'clock I was still awake. I did catch a little nap between three and seven, but I feel like I haven't been to bed. I did have one sleeping pill left, but I didn't take it because I remember the one I took that other real hot night didn't have any effect at all, so I thought I might as well save it until I needed it more. Because I wasn't nervous or in any pain, just hot. I told Mrs. Kirk yesterday. I thought I would drive down this morning but I changed my mind

after not resting last night. I guess it is best anyway because they are going to Portsmouth right after lunch.

How about the food up there? Are you getting plenty and is it good? Mother had fried chicken, chicken salad, and frozen fruit salad Sunday night and I could hardly eat a thing. I was thinking of you and wondering what you were having.

I sent the Liberty puzzle in yesterday afternoon after spending about three hours trying to write a hundred words about Myrna Loy that sounded right. Mrs. Halprin had some movie magazines and I found her life story in one, and in another an article entitled "Why men like Myna Loy," so I used some thoughts from those. I sent it in in your name but if you win the five hundred dollars, I'll expect a fur coat or at least a new watch. How about it?

Miss Mollie Parker died yesterday at noon, and it was her request that the boys sing, so they are going to practice at ten o'clock this morning. Robert is better but still hoarse so I don't think he'll add much to the music, but he is going just the same. He is standing here now waiting to mail this letter for me. He says I have already written more than you want to read. Please let me know if that is the case and I'll make them shorter. I guess it is a strain on your eyes to read this handwriting of mine, especially when my hand is as shaky as it is this morning.

Billy came in yesterday morning and says you can stay a month that he will be glad to look after me. I didn't get much attention from him yesterday though, for he went out right after supper and hadn't come in when I went to bed.

Mr. Ellison came up this morning on the way to Surry. He had his little boy with him and they stopped by to get "Bud" [*Richard Gill*] to go along. He asked Mother if she didn't want to go also, said he would be back before noon so I told her to go ahead. She had been wanting to see Jennie Hayden anyway so I am keeping house, but so far I haven't done anything but eat breakfast and write to you. Guess I'll read the paper afterwards, so I don't think my housekeeping will hurt me.

I would love to have a hug and a kiss right now. You will have a lot to make up when you come home.

All my love,  
Margaret

**Merle A. Kirk to J. Stokes Kirk**

Aug. 17

Kirk Lumber Co., R.R. No. 4 Box 98 Suffolk, VA to Fort Belvoir, VA



Kirk Lumber

Dear Son:

I'll bet you did not think you were going to hear from your Ma! It really has been an age since you received a letter from me.

We keep in touch with Margaret all the time; just five minutes ago I was talking to her over the phone and she says she is feeling fine and will be over to see us this morning. She is going to bring Mrs. Gill's brass kettle for me to make the cucumber pickle in; also ten lbs. of sugar without kerosene.

Margaret tells me when she hears from you and what you say and of course you know I am glad of each bit.

Yesterday we went to Portsmouth to Mr. Barrow's funeral, Fred Barrow's father. From there we went on to Norfolk to a show, taking Bessie [*Elizabeth G. Kirk Brady*] with us. We tried to get Mamma to go also but as she was expecting company she could not leave.

I asked Alton if he was getting along without you O.K. and he said, "Y-e-s, but I wish he were here." Daddy is going to let Mr. Holland go Saturday. He started up the dry kiln without reversing it and put the wrong kind of bolt on an engine, so Dad says, "If he has to be looked after he is no good to me." I don't think he has been worth his wages for some time.

Hope you are getting on fine. Mamma says she is not sure Lemuel will be here Saturday as he has to go to N.Y. on business.

Best of love to my big boy,  
Mamma

**Margaret G. Kirk to J. Stokes Kirk**

Aug. 18

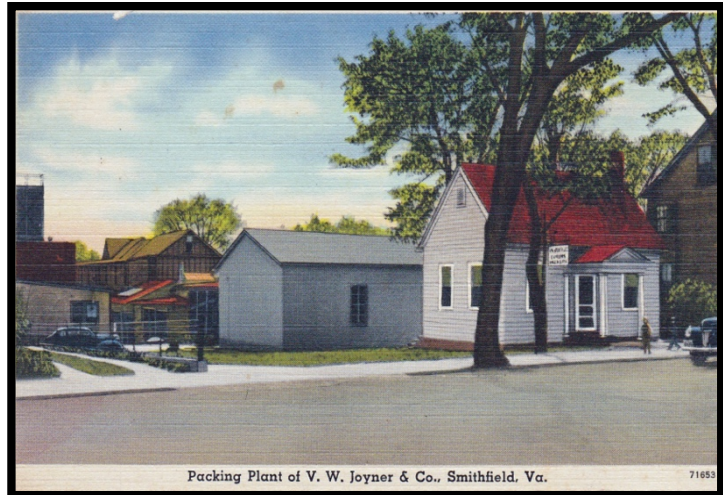
Dearest Stokes,

I was really very excited yesterday afternoon over receiving a letter from you; it was my first you know. I think that is rather unusual for a person to be "courted and wed" without receiving so much as a line from the gentleman in question. But am glad because I had much rather see you than have letters, and not receiving any letters shows you were with me most of the time. I am looking forward to receiving the long one you said you had in your pocket last night. I certainly hope you found a stamp so I won't be any later than Friday getting it. I didn't write yesterday morning because I didn't want to be so late going home and when I got there Mrs. Kirk said she had written to you so I thought I would wait until this morning rather than getting one off late yesterday afternoon. I don't suppose you care about getting them so often anyway.

I can hardly realize it is just Thursday, because it seems like you have been gone so long. I know one thing, I wouldn't want to live if I had to be separated from you. The last four days have been hard ones to go through; I have needed you so much.

I enjoyed being down home yesterday but it didn't seem just right for you not to come in at dinner time. Olivia had a grand dinner for me: fried chicken, soup, corn, snaps, tomatoes, and baked apples, and she just beamed when I praised it. They all seemed real glad to see me, even the dogs and ducks. Josh wasn't there at noon but he came before I left and he gave me a watermelon. He said he stole them but I don't know about that. He had three and the one he gave me was delicious. Mr. Kirk has a sore nose, a cute little pimple on the inside and his whole nose looks red and shiny. It hurt so bad yesterday morning, he went to Dr. Eley before starting to work to find out what it was. Of course it is nothing to do until it comes to a head, but I know it is painful. Mrs. Kirk called this morning to see how I was, and I asked about Mr. Kirk's nose and knee and she said his nose hurt so much he had forgotten about his knee. She said he hit it several times during the night and nearly had fits. Arthur filled the car up with gas for me though it was still a little over three-quarters full, so it didn't need much. I haven't used it except to come over here Sunday morning and down there yesterday and to the post office late yesterday.

Darling, I do hope little Stokes will wait until you come home, because I do want to get in your arms one more time. But I can't promise you, for he has been moving lots more than usual this week, jumping like you saw him do just before you left, when you said you could see why I was sore. He doesn't stop night or day now, so I have about given up the idea of going to sleep. I took my last pill last night about one o'clock and did get a little nap between thee and three-thirty. It is cooler to-day though and I feel fairly well this morning. I bragged too soon



worked here with Mr. Koontz about my feet and legs not swelling because yesterday and the day before my legs were the same size from my knees down, you couldn't even see my ankle bones, and my old bedroom slippers were tight. I do hope I can last until you are here though.

I am sorry, I didn't intend writing you that stuff. I was only going to write you good news about myself, but I guess I just had to "talk" to you a little about our "personal affair." I had my brown dress cleaned Tuesday afternoon and it looks real fresh and nice. I was afraid to have it out of the house one night so they sent it right back of course it smelled awful, but it is O.K. now after a good airing.

I have certainly enjoyed my candy. It has been delicious but I thought about you every piece I ate and wished I could pass you some.

Mr. Koontz came in early Tuesday night and we played cards a little while, but that is the only time we have played this week. I have been reading and doing some mending. I worked on my quilt a little while last night but I used all my black so I am at a standstill in that unless I can get some black down here.

I carried your little brown socks back home yesterday, and I told Mrs. Kirk I would come Saturday morning if I was still all right; so I'll try and keep your things straight up to the last. I asked her what she thought about my going down to Portsmouth if nothing happened this week and she said she didn't think it was necessary unless I felt worse than I do now.

It looks like it might rain here most anytime now, I wouldn't mind at all if it will make things stay a little cooler.

Don't work too hard and please keep well. Try and have as much fun as you can also.

All my love,

Margaret

**Margaret G. Kirk to J. Stokes Kirk**

Aug. 19

Dearest Stokes,

I received your nice long letter this morning and I did enjoy it so much. Indeed I could read it and I thought it was a very interesting one. It was real sweet in places also, you actually called me "darling" once or twice. Did you mean to do that or did you have someone else on your mind at the time? I believe I can claim that as my pet name now though, can't I?



I didn't write this morning because I had an appointment at eight-thirty to get my hair fixed, and I thought probably it would be the last time for several weeks anyway. I did think I would be through in time to get at least a note off to you on the morning mail, but there was a girl in there demonstrating a new line of creams and so forth, so she gave me a free facial after I got my hair fixed and you know I couldn't miss a chance to get beautiful for nothing. So I thought I would try a letter to you on the afternoon mail, though it will probably be Monday before you get it.

It is real nice and cool today and I feel fairly well. I slept about an hour after lunch so that should help some. Little Stokes is still quite frisky, so I think he is feeling fine; he feels like he weighs a ton though so I think he will be ready to start to work when he arrives.

Listen, Mr. Kirk I don't blame you for not going riding with that fellow anymore. Can't you find anyone else to ride with? I am sorry you don't have your own car for I know you miss it, but we couldn't tell little Stokes was going to wait this long, he might even come now before you get home. It is real nice that they have a theater, swimming pool and other amusements right there because you really don't have to go for your recreation.

I'll bet you are glad you carried your flashlight, if for nothing else but to kill the mosquitos with, or rather see how to kill them. They really must be huge, hungry and plentiful up there. Be sure you don't pack any up and bring them home with you. You should use some poison gas on them maybe that would clear the tent. It would clear you all out also though, wouldn't it? Please be careful and don't get hurt in anyway, because we need you well and strong don't we?

I wasn't here this morning when Mrs. Kirk called but I talked to Mr. Kirk at noon and he said everyone was all right except himself, and his nose was really hurting. He said it was about twice as large as it should be now, and was really very painful. They are due to go out with their gang to dinner and a show tomorrow night, so I know he hopes it will be better by then. I'll probably go down in the morning if I am still here and it stays cool.

Tillie and Mrs. Chapman carried me for a ride last night and I enjoyed it very much. Though I didn't feel as safe with Tillie driving as I do with you of course. I'll have to stop now if I expect to get this on the afternoon mail and as Josh says, "I don't know any news anyway."

I love you so much darling.

All my love,

Margaret

**Margaret G. Kirk to J. Stokes Kirk**

Aug. 22

Dearest Stokes,

Well I thought I would start the week out right by writing to my "hussy-be-ond" (I really don't know how to spell that) I haven't heard much news since you left last night, but as you are supposed to leave camp in the morning anyway I guess it would be stale news by the time you read it, so it is just as well that I don't know any.

Robert and "Bud" got off to camp this morning and will be gone until Wednesday. They surely were in a storm getting their things together, but it is calm and peaceful around here now. Mother went up the street to the Community Hall to see them off and she said everyone of the boys seemed quite happy and excited. "Bud" kissed me "goodbye" about six times before he finally got away. I don't know what it was all for. Maybe he wanted a treat but he didn't say anything about it and I didn't have any change so I didn't ask if that was the reason.

Mrs. Kirk called about eight-thirty, just as I finished breakfast and wanted to know how I was and how I made out going to Richmond. I told her you got a bus from here and she said you were a lucky boy to get one at that time without driving to Richmond. She said she thought it was too much trip for me and she had worried about it last night. Mr. Kirk's nose is better, though still quite sore. They waited all afternoon for Mrs. Ball and finally went to Hazelwood's for supper and she was there when they got back home; she had gotten in right after they left. Mrs. Kirk said Miss Bessie and Margaretta came out soon after we left yesterday, anxious for news. It seems the whole family is excited over the event-to-be. Mrs. Kirk said the kitchen looked like a storm had swept through it when they got back last night. Arthur had been in with two Gilliam girls, two of the Moore's or rather three because Billy was in the lunch, and an Eley boy, and he and Josh had fixed supper for the gang. Mrs. Kirk said there were at least twenty-five dirty glasses, as well as a like amount of everything else. Arthur served wine, milk and lemonade. It seems the whole bunch ate at Moore's last Sunday and they are taking turns. Arthur told Nancy Rae they would eat with her next week so she has the advantage over the rest, of at least knowing a week ahead of time so she can prepare a few things.

Mrs. Kirk asked me when I was coming down, said she wanted to see me because she really missed me. She is so sweet to me. She told me she thought we were going to wait until October, but I don't see how it could be that long.

I have already done most of my washing and I'll finish up a little later, thought I wouldn't stand up too long at one time. I washed a pair of hose, a suit of underwear and a nightgown for myself, and three shirts and two pair of shorts for my darling. I'll do the socks after I go down and mail this. I feel very well this morning. I think seeing you did me good and I enjoyed my good rest Saturday night too. Yesterday was really a short day for me, but they'll be long again now until next Sunday. I am going to count the days now and I'll begin counting the hours a little later in the week. Please keep well, have a good time and keep on loving me. I think maybe I'll go to see Uncle Jack one night this week to see if everything is all right, I'd feel better about things if I saw him I believe.

All my love, every little teeny bit,  
Margaret & Little Stokes

**Margaret G. Kirk to J. Stokes Kirk**

Aug. 23

Dearest Stokes,

I am late starting your letter this morning so I won't have time to tell you very much. I'll begin by telling you I love you anyway.

I was so glad to talk to you last night, it helped matters quite a bit. Mrs. Kirk called right after I finished talking to you to see if I had heard from you so I gave her the news from the "visiting loved one" right fresh. I am looking forward to receiving a nice letter from you probably to-morrow and I hope another the next day. I know I'll miss talking to you Wednesday night though and I wish I had asked you to call me again tonight to make up for it. Anyway I'll be waiting by the telephone Friday night, and I'll be looking for you Saturday.

I do hope it isn't as hot up there as it is here. I didn't even go upstairs until after twelve last night and it was real light this morning when I finally got a little nap, so you know how I feel this morning. I think I would feel and look just as well if I hadn't gone to bed at all. But I think I'll go down home as soon as I get this note mailed anyway. Mrs. Kirk called about nine o'clock and told me she was looking for me. She said they were going on another picnic tomorrow and wanted to know if I didn't want to ride on the truck to the beach. I told her I thought I would give

my place to her this time. Of course she was joking anyway. I am going to take your underwear and socks home, and leave the little book of yours with Arthur in case I don't get down again. I don't think I'll stay long because I want to try and get a little rest this afternoon so I can go to Portsmouth tonight.

Remember what I told you last night and don't get your socks so dirty, or tear any more tops off. I have a little blister on my hand from scrubbing them yesterday. I love you just the same.

All my love,  
Margaret

**Margaret G. Kirk to J. Stokes Kirk**

Aug. 24

Dear Stokes,

It is real pretty to-day, though I think it will be plenty hot before the day is over. I am enjoying a nice breeze now, but don't know how long that will last. I had my breakfast about quarter after eight. Talked to Mrs. Kirk, helped Mother with the beds, did my little washing and now at nine-thirty I am all settled down to write you a nice long letter. I have also gotten the "funnies" out of the papers for you, and I am enclosing a clipping from yesterday's Richmond paper that you and your "hay fever" might be interested in.

I went home yesterday and enjoyed it very much. I got there about eleven o'clock and left about three. I intended coming back sooner but Josh asked me if he couldn't use the car a few minutes, just about the time I was ready to come, and of course I couldn't refuse. He came back about quarter to three, and filled the car with gas and turned it around all ready for me.

Mrs. Kirk was trying to teach Mrs. Ball [*E. Paul Kirk Ball*] how to crochet; she wants to make a counterpane like Mrs. Kirk's. I couldn't help but laugh at her because she sat right straight up on that little stool in the living room and seemed to be so serious about it. The perspiration was rolling and she would stop and puff and blow every now and then like she was out doors digging. She never had crocheted before and it really was hard work for her. I only saw Claiborne [*Claiborne Ball*] at the dinner table so I don't know whether Arthur has reformed him any or not.

Mr. Kirk's nose had gone down to normal size and the skin was peeling off in spots. So Josh was the only cripple in the family; he was in bed when I got there but came down to dinner and stayed up there. He has a terrible boil back of his knee that seems to be giving him a lot of trouble. Mrs. Kirk had put a poultice on it for him but he said he didn't think it had done any good.

Mrs. Kirk said this morning she was getting ready to make sandwiches for the picnic, but she didn't think they would go down until five o'clock because Mr. Kirk wanted to work all day. She gave me four of the little muffin cakes with chocolate icing that she had made yesterday to carry down there for supper. I had one last night and it was delicious. I wish I could hand you in one, but since you told me about the good food you were having I haven't worried about you not getting enough to eat. She also gave me some apples and tomatoes to bring home and Mother was so pleased with them. It is right funny how they have traded tomatoes. Mr. Ellison brought Mother some last week, and I carried Mrs. Kirk a big bag full because hers were over; then yesterday Pete brought her some and she sent some of them to Mother.

They carried Clifford Morgan to the hospital Sunday afternoon and they had to open his foot from the top so Mrs. Kirk said yesterday. It sounds funny to me but I suppose they knew what they were doing. She hadn't heard from him yesterday, but I saw Joe Baker on the street

when I got back here and he said he saw him the night before Monday night, and he seemed better, though he was still mighty sick. Stepping on a nail is not such a little thing after all.

Well, darling, I have put off the bad news as long as I could. I went to see Uncle Jack [*Dr. John W. Abbitt*] last night, and he wanted me to stay down there and go on to the hospital. He said he thought we were right about the time and that the longer it waited now the larger the baby was getting and the harder time I would have. But I asked him if I couldn't wait until you came home and he said that he didn't think a day or two longer would make much difference, but he wants you to bring me down Sunday night. Maybe you think I am acting like a baby and a coward also, but I couldn't bear the idea of their having to take my baby when you weren't here. If it had happened naturally it would have been different.

Darling, please try to get here Saturday so I can have one more night in your arms. I need you so much. I hope you won't get this letter until time for you to come home because I don't want you to worry about it, but I feel like you should know and I just had to write you. I thought surely I would sleep last night after not sleeping Monday night and not resting yesterday, but sleep was out of the question after seeing him. He told me to get as much sleep and rest as possible though and gave me some sleeping pills. So when one o'clock came and I was still awake I took two of them, but I was so nervous it was after four before I finally went to sleep. So naturally I feel slightly stewed today. I thought I was all ready to go at a moments notice but knowing the days are limited it seems I have more things I want to do. I feel like a convict with three or four days between him and the electric chair.

All my love darling and take care of yourself,

Margaret

**Robert H. Gill to Margaret G. Kirk**

Sept. 2, Friday

13<sup>th</sup> Pine St. Philadelphia, PA

to c/o Parrish Memorial Hospital, Portsmouth, VA

Dearest Baby,

Well you certainly pulled a fast one on Daddy. Sister [*Cecile Gill*] writes me that you have a fine son - and Daddy knows you & Stokes are very proud of him. I can well remember about 26 yrs. ago when you came to us, and you were everything to Daddy and you have been ever since - those were my happiest days.

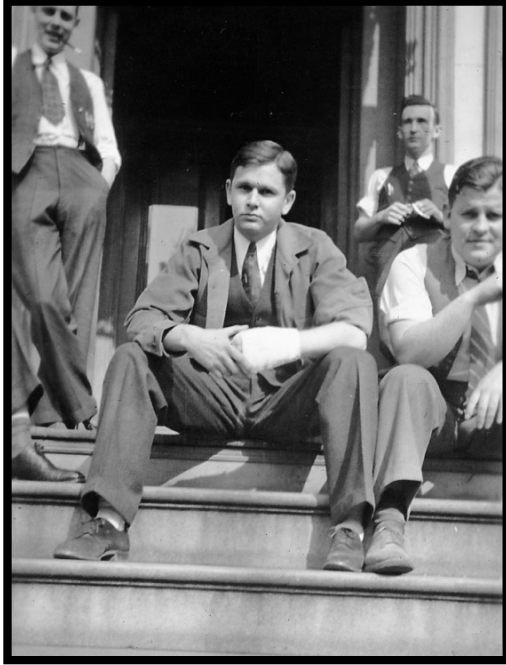
I have been in Reading & Allentown for a few weeks & just returned home a few days ago and found your nice letter was so glad to hear from you once more. I didn't know that you had left Smithfield. Daddy enjoys your letter so try to write as often as you can - although you will have your hands full now, but may be you can squeeze in a few spare minutes. What's the young man's name & etc., you will have to take things easy for a while, but write when you can. I do hope you both are doing fine & that Stokes will soon be able to take you home. I will write again soon & try to send something to the little fellow.

I am writing Mother and sending what I have to the boys, it will help with getting ready for school.

Take care of yourself and it's useless to say take care of the boy. I hope that I can see him sometime soon, maybe next summer. I imagine Stokes will soon be taking pictures of him, if he does, count me in.

All the love & best wishes for the whole family,

Daddy



1938 Richmond, VA: Arthur Kirk, center of the womb and Saturday this was treated. She told Stokes last night she feels much better and he is expecting to go after her to-morrow. I do believe she will get well now for that must have been causing her fever all along. Mrs. Gill can't see why this was not known before she left the hospital in Sept.

Josh is disgusted with the mumps for now he thinks he has passed it on to two of his friends. He says he thinks he will stay out in town now at least for a while. Mrs. Schram died this morning. So sorry you missed Lucy's dinner. She is a lovely hostess and I think you would have enjoyed it. Anyway go to see her sometime. The West Hampton girl I was telling you about meeting is named Dickenson from Front Royal - do not know her first name. May be the other girls know her. Hope I'll see my boy soon.

Mamma

**Merle A. Kirk to Arthur Kirk**

Oct. 4

Letterhead: *Ruritan National "Fellowship and Goodwill"*

Dear Son,

It is too bad about the check. Daddy says he will send a certified check this time. I certainly don't want you to have to do without needed books. Catherine Pinner came yesterday to get your address. She says she wants to go up sometime Saturday taking Polly Moore, get you and take you both to visit her friends in or near Ashland. I doubt that she does it, but that is what she says. I can't tell a thing about going up to the game Saturday. Daddy seems to think it will be uninteresting yet he may decide to go at the last minute. He says he would rather see the game with Richmond College.

We had a splendid Ruritan Ladies Night at the Planters club last night- a good supper and lots of laughs. John Henry took Miss McGlothlin. She says she is to go to Richmond with us Nov. 11<sup>th</sup>, but can't get off school, goes on regardless of Armistice.

Delaney H., Bud Godwin and Earnest Hazelwood are new Ruritan members.

We went to see Margaret and John Sunday two weeks ago. Stokes carried her down stairs for the first time. She still has a little fever but Dr. Parker says her lungs are not involved. The baby looks fine, Margaret says he gained one pound last week. We may see you Saturday and perhaps not.

Love,

Mamma

**Chassie Thomas to Arthur Kirk** Oct. 10  
West Norfolk, Portsmouth, VA to Richmond, VA

Dear Arthur,

You are very sweet to write to me I did appreciate your letter. Jack Hargroves expects to be married the 29 of this month. He has sent out 7 hundred invitations. The preacher & wife had dinner with me yesterday. Wish you would come to see me.

I expect to send you a box of candy as soon as I can get someone to fix it. Frances has a new diamond ring she is very proud of it. I wish I could get to see our little John. I will be glad when Lemuel brings the car. John is well now and hard down at work. Don't study too hard.

Love,

Grandma



Richmond; Medical College of VA



Chuckatuck: Joshua Pretlow & Matsie Moore

**Joshua Pretlow to Arthur Kirk**  
VPI Blacksburg, VA to Richmond, VA

Dear Arthur,

I suppose I am worse than a woman but I think that I shall come home this week-end. After finding out about being able to get a Thursday leave it isn't so bad.

You talk as if it is just a matter of asking for a car and nothing else. How about writing home and asking for it. I hope you understand but I just don't feel like asking him for so much, it's not like your asking.

Well I am going home anyhow if my leave is approved and will drive back if possible, maybe they will come. I am coming to the game someway so I will see you there.

Best of luck,

Josh

# 1939

Everets was a changing landscape as the Burnt Mills Dam<sup>3</sup> project was begun. This would slowly raise the water level and in time would submerge the wharf and all of its buildings. It was a year of sickness for Merle, as well as for Margaret, with pneumonia, pleurisy, and the common cold. The mill was in operation but orders slowed yet again. While water was still drawn from deep wells, electric lighting was slow to come to Everets. A cooperative was formed to light up the countryside that had been neglected by the city lines. In spite of these hardships, Stokes continued to work on his house.

As a gifted athlete **Robert Gill** enjoyed success in the sports he played during high school. In July he wrote to his father, *“This year I won two letters one in basketball and the other in baseball. I played in every basketball game and scored next to highest number of points, and in baseball I pitched six games and won six and I was awarded the trophy for the most valuable player on the team.”*

When New York hosts the World’s Fair and Robert excitedly wrote his father in December, *“I spent a week in New York this summer looking over the World’s Fair and the city. I saw the Giants and the Dodgers play in New York and had a chance to see the Yankees and Washington. Everything in New York was very interesting. I went up with Dr. Warren, Mr. Marton the Agriculture teacher and nine other boys.”*

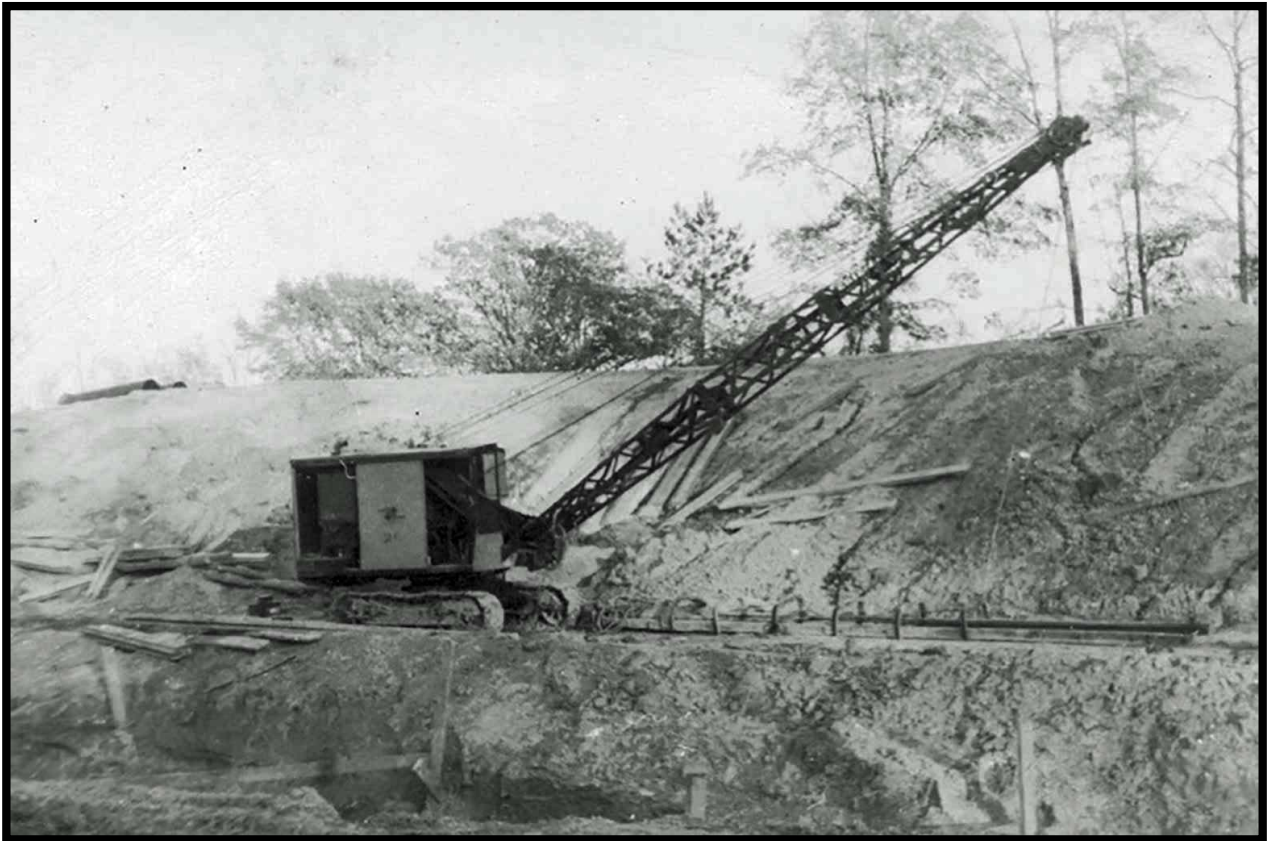
**Stokes** and Margaret visited the World’s Fair in June, traveling by boat and bus. Even with limited funds Stokes was pleased to attend. In 1933, he had applied to work on the fairgrounds of the World’s Fair held in Chicago that year, but the job never materialized. Merle wrote to Arthur on June 1: *Did you know Margaret and Stokes have gone to New York? They had not expected to go but Dad had an ad about mill supplies for sale this Tuesday and suggested they go up to look at a planer. They took his suggestion up as they expected an outing anyway to celebrate their wedding anniversary. Guess they will be back Thursday morning. They were as happy as two kids when they left. As I am taking care of John I don’t see how I’ll be able to go on the picnic.*

**Arthur** completed his second year of medical school in Richmond, VA. He assisted and observed surgeries in labor and delivery. The required lectures described in detail the newest techniques and medications available. The distance home from Richmond was less than a morning’s drive, which allowed him the opportunity to visit home occasionally.

With the eruption of war in Europe and Japanese expansion into Asia and the Pacific, the United States government began preparations for its involvement in the expanding world conflict. Trained Army engineers were needed to provide critical support to Allied forces, building roads and bridges, clearing obstacles, providing maps, and engineering demolitions. To prepare the men adequately for their wartime role, Fort Belvoir served as one of the Army’s primary engineer training sites, where J. Stokes was stationed.

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<sup>3</sup>Burnt Mill Dam: Lake Burnt Mills (711 acres)m purchased in 1918 when Lake prince was started, was once a stream at the headwaters of the Western Branch of the Nansemond River. It was dammed in two stages for Norfolk reservoirs in 1940 and 1962. Everets Creek (also known as the Western Branch), went in a northwestern direction beyond Everets. The Works Progress Administration (renamed in 1939 as the Work Projects Administration; WPA) employed millions of unemployed people (mostly unskilled men) to carry out public works projects, including the construction of public buildings and roads.



1939 Everets Burnt Mill Dam under construction





Arthur Kirk on right

**Merle A. Kirk to Arthur Kirk**

Jan. 1, 1939

Dear Son,

Something has done away with my blue pad - the reason for this of small dimensions. Your letter was real "newsy" and enjoyable. So glad you passed in your obstetrics. That seems to be Uncle Jack's [*Dr. John W. Abbitt*] biggest business; he delivered twin boys Sunday and was so busy he has not been up to see me yet. I believe I must be improving some now, for the old back does not give away quite as quickly and make me go back to bed.

Daddy took Josh to Zuni Monday morning. Guess he landed safely and hope to hear from him today. He carried Miss Gwaltney a large bowl of flowers the very first thing Monday morning. If those flowers had not been here I am sure he could not have gone back feeling just right in his mind.

There have been lots of people to see me. I believe you said once we did not have any company. And I have gotten cards from friends too. It makes me feel good to know my friends think enough of me to come or write.

It looks like Dad is really going to do something to Stokes' house - I saw the tank being hauled up yesterday. I know they will be happy to have a house of their own. I am glad of the C but hoping for a B next time.

Love,

Mamma

**Margaret Kirk to Arthur Kirk**  
Smithfield, VA to Richmond, VA

Jan. 17

Dearest Arthur,

I am so glad you think my son is getting better looking. Of course I think he is a handsome little fellow, but I wouldn't be expected to think otherwise. Though I must admit I thought he was far from being good looking at first. The thing that pleases me most though is the fact that he has been so well and he really seems to be developing as he should. The pictures you all took of him Christmas day and the ones Stokes took over here New Years day were nearly all real good. Stokes brought the movie projector over here and showed the ones you took of him also. I thought they were real cute, especially where he was laughing at the dogs when they jumped up and barked at him. I should think it would have frightened him but I don't believe he would be afraid of the devil.

I think the teddy bear you gave John for Christmas is precious, and he seems to enjoy it so much. Your Uncle Lemuel gave him a gingham dog and he has almost chewed his tail off and his ears look rather chewed also. He got two lovely blankets and quite a collection of sacques, caps, mittens, booties, dresses and so forth. His bank almost reached the ten dollar mark Sunday so I put in enough to open it and Stokes carried the ten dollars to Suffolk and opened a bank account for John. Ten dollars in three weeks is not bad, I only wish we could keep on putting that much in for him.

I received a lovely long letter from Miss Anna Rosenblatt yesterday. She was one of my nurses when I was in the hospital and your Uncle Jack said I couldn't have had a better one. She is at present one of the assistant directors of the Nursing school at the Medical College. She asked me if Stokes's brother was still in Richmond, if so to let her know and she would try to look you up. She is not a pretty young thing, but if you should run into her please be real sweet to her for my sake. She was lovely to me and seems to think so much of me and my little family. She wrote me a ten page letter and I thoroughly enjoyed every word of it.

I certainly did enjoy the lovely box of candy you and Josh sent me. Stokes should thank you also for he got his share as usual. He gave me a lovely watch for Christmas and I received lots of other Christmas presents and cards. I enjoyed my cards so much this year, more than usual I suppose because I couldn't get out. I was so disappointed when I couldn't come down with Stokes for dinner Christmas day, but when I got dressed that was about all I could do. I do hope I'll get well some day though, it has been one set-back after another so far though. Your Uncle Jack came up Sunday to see me and said I had an acute cold this time and not to get out of bed until it cleared up quite a bit. I was really right sick Sunday night, but I feel much better now and thought I would sit up in bed and write a few letters. Though I guess when people try to read them they will wish I had waited until I could get up and do it. I want to go down and stay a day or so with Stokes this week if I am able. We had six inches of snow night before last though and it is quite messy out. Write when you can.

Love,

Margaret

**Merle A. Kirk to Arthur Kirk**

Feb. 27

Dear Son,

Monday, and all are busy again. Here is your check. Now how much more do you need for books?

Elizabeth Norfleet has a daughter, born Saturday night. Now that she is all fixed up with a new home and new baby I guess she is quite happy. John came to see us yesterday and was sweet as usual. What is the name of those people who do Kodak films for 25c? I should like to send a roll. Grandma is still away. Write a card to her at once - Mare Grande Hotel, Miami Florida. We are trying to keep her posted on the family while she is away.

Love,

Mamma

**Merle A. Kirk to Arthur Kirk**

Mar. 6, Monday

Letterhead: *Ruritan National*

**Fellowship and Goodwill**

LT Hall Secretary Windsor VA	Marvin Gray, President Wakefield VA	Basil Coale, Treasurer Vinita VA
P Everett Chm Pub Relations Holland VA	WP McGuire VP Petersburg VA	CE Holland Cm Publicity Wakefield VA
<i>Directors</i>		<i>District Governors</i>
ML Craft Surry VA		A Bruce Eberwine Suffolk VA
JR Kirk Suffolk VA		B M Sebrell Courtland VA
MI Hargrove, Dinwiddie VA		C MI Hargrave Dinwiddie VA
M Kellogg, Sunbury NC		D RA Farmer Warsaw VA
H Zigler, Timberville VA		E P Blanford Beaumont VA
F RE Moore Mt Clinton VA		

Dear Son:

Of course you do not know where your mother is so I must tell you. After being in bed for so long Brother sent me to Dr. Gwathny for an examination and they decided I had better enter the hospital for treatment and a minor operation; then I had to wait for the old cough to clear up. Friday night I came down bucking against Daddy's oppositions. Now here I am feeling pretty good and the bad part all over. To-morrow I'll go home and to-day I'll sit up.

Grandma is back home. Came to see me the first thing yesterday. Most of the family was down, John came too, but told us plainly he did not like this place. I am expecting Sister and Hattie to-day. Sister was too busy to leave the place yesterday; Frances fiancé's family was down to spend the day so that each could look the other over. Russell says Sister was favorably impressed - didn't even find a thing to laugh at. The mother was quite nice but the father is quite a talker. Lewis was polite and let him do most all the talking.

Daddy has been eating most of his meals in Port Norfolk so that he could come down to see me again. Today I'll not expect him before night; he is so anxious to get some rush work done so that he can collect in time to pay a big bill. He is also planning on getting a Diamond T truck - I believe that is the name. He and Stokes are going to engage a plumber and paper hanger to get the other house in order by the first of next month.

Daddy says everyone was at S.S. & church yesterday. Your little girl friend included. He said he told her you wanted us to drive up. If she won't go had I better ask Leah to go or had I better take both? Fred Barrow's mother has been here ever since Christmas with a broken ankle. She walks up and down the hall on crutches visiting every body. The nurses pet her and call her their mascot. She was all joy yesterday as she leaves to-day.

Hope the classes are O.K. and that I'll be seeing my boy soon.

You can see that this was written while in bed, so excuse the scratching.

Love as always.

Mamma

**Merle A. Kirk to Arthur Kirk**

Mar. 14

Dear Son,

Even though I have not been away from these upstairs rooms for a week to-day I hear of a few things going on.

To-day there have been geese going over. I believe there were as many as eight flocks heard. Dad says there were between fifty and a hundred in the first - I could not see from my window. Also I hear the noise of falling steel; girders are being dropped for a new bridge. We are really going to have the work begun now that spring is here, and we are expecting the next good road section laid too. Maybe our cars won't rattle so soon now. Sunday I got all fixed up, but didn't a soul come to see us. The weather was so pretty everyone must have kept wheels turning. But we had company to-day. Eva Dunn came soon after lunch then three lady friends. I was so glad Margaret had put flowers all over the house and things looked nice.

Margaret, John and the nurse went around collecting flowers from the other house and here this morning. The baby was so happy to be out in his wagon again. He has had cold to settle in both eyes and for four days looked right sick. Dad called him "pop-eye". Now they are all clear and the roses are back in his cheeks.

Dad is as busy as a bee trying to see if he can get out of paying income tax. To-night he is making a last survey of facts to see if he can cancel the \$48.12 he thought last night, he would have to give the government. Do hope he can find an exemption for he can't find the \$48.12.

Yes I know you were surprised about my being in the hospital but you did not spell surprised right.

Guess Josh will be in to-morrow.

Love,

Mamma

**Merle A. Kirk to Arthur Kirk**

Apr. 4

Dear Boy,

Have you seen these pictures before? They came out in Sunday's paper proving Eleanor was not wrong in what she said about Matsie. I suppose it is Daily whom Mildred is to marry. Hattie says to tell you she gives you her deepest sympathy; she will have to tell you why for she did not tell me.

What kept you from making your trip to Washington? The rain kept Mamma at home. She was disappointed in not being able to go. I saw her Tuesday night; we went down to have Brother give Dad's knees a look.

I have some lily of the valley in bloom so this morning sent some to Miss Howell and Miss Thornton. Together with fern, a few rose buds and white ribbons they looked real pretty. Now I would like to have some for Miss Morgan.

I saw about the use of oxalic acid for making blood clot and was glad to know something will do it. A family near Smithfield lost a baby caused by a cut and a young man from an automobile accident which were really due to the continuous bleeding.

Margaret is no better, fever nearly every day. Now that the sun is shining she is hoping to go to Smithfield tomorrow.

My best love,

Mamma

What will you do about "Ducks" invitation? Lewis is going to drive up.

Ma

**Merle A. Kirk to Arthur Kirk**

Apr. 14

Dear Arthur,

You should see Brother's garden [Dr. John Abbitt]! It is prettier than ever. It looks like he planned everything to bloom at this time. I don't know what he will have left to look at when summer comes. We were down there yesterday to see about something for me to take that will strengthen my back; I hate to be such a do-nothing. Spring is here and I must get my garden and house in order for the hot weather. Margaret is still in bed, running a little fever and coughing. I surely would like to see her up again.

Now that you are being taken to see doctors at work on patients you must feel like you are really getting on in your profession. Well, it is wonderful work!

Thanks lots for the pictures. I have not heard from the movie film yet.

Here is your check. Be sure to get enough meal checks. I would hate for you to have to wait for money before eating again.

Love,

Mamma

**Lemuel Thomas to Arthur Kirk**  
2019 Eye St. N.W., Washington, D.C. to Richmond, VA

Apr. 22

Dear Arthur,

Come ahead and be sure to look me up. Mama and Billie Martin [*Chassie's niece*] had said something about coming here next week-end also. If they should, we can stay at the YMCA and let them have the apartment. However, don't bother about that, we can arrange something alright. If you don't find me here at the apartment call me at the office - 7517.

I'll be expecting you

An Uncle

**Merle A. Kirk to Arthur Kirk**

Apr. 27

Dear Son,

That does me good to have my son make 90, hope there will be lots more. It won't be long now before you will have finished the second year of medicine and knowing more about it all the time. All the rest of your life you can learn more and more.

Grandma is going to Washington Friday, Bill [*Billie Martin*] is going, also. You four should have a nice time together. She thinks Lemuel can arrange to have all of you stay in his place and with his friend together. I don't know how it is with him. Mrs. Hoffner says for some to stay at her house.

Summer is surely here now. I have over fifty young chickens getting ready for consumption in the days to come. The garden produce is growing also. Dad had a grand time at Blacksburg. Josh was a nice host showing him all things of new interest. They rode up to Mountain Lake together and alone. There were more high school boys than before. None were allowed to throw pillows as they were watched and cautioned. Pop Owens prepared for 750, expected 600 and there were somewhere near 1000 visiting.

Dad stopped by Uncle Jesse's [*Jesse Davidson- Chassie's half-brother*]. Aunt Laura was the only one at home and she said she expects us all to Dot's marriage in June. She is to marry a Mr. Saunders of Bedford.

Dickie Norfleet is complaining of having the headache ever since the juniors received their rings. Addie Rawls [*Addie Rawls Moore, sister to Matsie Moore*] is to go up to the dance this week end. Josh's invitation.

Love,

Mamma

**Merle A. Kirk to Arthur Kirk**

May 10

Dear Son,

Have you seen this item in the paper? The two cops in the white car nearly caused me to loose my mind when they called Monday morning to inquire about the driver's permit. The boy who was killed is the light complected one who stayed at Henry Worrell's. They said two other cars struck the body before it was moved. I have your permit.

Daddy has been very busy yesterday and to-day going to church meetings in Norfolk at St. Paul's. I went over both days and walked around town Monday nearly all day then went out and took supper with my Ma. To-day we came home earlier.

Brother came up to see Margaret Sunday. She says he told her she had pneumonia which developed into pleurisy and that she would be some time in getting right again. He did not

examine her but judged this by the amount of fever she had at about Easter time and after. I should like to see him also as I want to know what he will tell me about it. I tried to get her to let Dr. Eley see her when he came to see Dad but she did not want him. I think that was when you were here.

Best of love,  
Mamma

**Merle A. Kirk to Arthur Kirk**

June 1

Letterhead: *Ruritan National "Fellowship and Goodwill"*

Dear Son,

The report has not come yet. Have any of the boys up there heard yet? Josh comes home twice a week. He has had four different boys here with him. This Wednesday he will not be here but will see us at Ocean View for the picnic. He is looking forward to that just as the children are. I tried to have the date set up two weeks when the Rippey children, Godwin's and Margaret and Stokes will be here, but could not make a dent.

Did you know Margaret and Stokes have gone to New York? They had not expected to go but Dad had an ad about mill supplies for sale this Tuesday and suggested they go up to look at a planer. They took his suggestion up as they expected an outing anyway to celebrate their wedding anniversary. Guess they will be back Thursday morning. They were as happy as two kids when they left. As I am taking care of John I don't see how I'll be able to go on the picnic.

Jeff took his family to N.C. to see his brother and his house burned the night he was away. Everything was lost. Mr. Simons says they did not know anything of it until the roof was falling in. Daddy is advertising for donations and will let them move into John Doyle's place until he can get a new house built. We went to see Mr. A. Norfleet about beginning work at once.

There was a big account of Dot Davidson's wedding in to-nights paper. I know it was pretty. Have not seen the folks to hear about it yet.

Well, best of love,  
Mamma

**Merle A. Kirk to Arthur Kirk**

June 8

*Thursday*

Dear Son,

Yes, we are much better and that includes Margaret. Dr. Parker has made three visits here to see her - one to-day but she did not improve much until after lunch when her side stopped aching some. The cough has been quite bad and I have been applying mustard plasters twice a day also hot water bottles.

Dad is all in a dither about going to VPI tomorrow. There are nine boys who wish to go and they will have to draw straws, eliminating four as he can take only five. The Suffolk cars are filled, too.

Have you found out what Madeline's out of humor about? Could anyone have told her anything - it seems she would tell you what is wrong unless she is simply tired of your companionship.

So glad you will have the trip to Washington and hope you will learn much. Lemuel was in Portsmouth last week end. We went down last night but found Mamma out. We tried the Southland Hotel's new Kish's restaurant, but it wasn't so wonderful.

*Friday*

Saw Jane Wagner in Suffolk this morning and she wanted to know if you are still studying medicine. I told her I hoped so and if you did not, you had better come home. Dad is off for the mountains!

Love,

Mamma

**Merle A. Kirk to Arthur Kirk**

June 21, Wednesday

Dear Son,

A card did come to-day when I had about decided you were not going to write. Glad you like the place.

I took the car to Norfolk Monday to get it worked on – we are getting ready to take a trip to the mountains the last of next week through to the 4<sup>th</sup>. The one last year was so pleasant Dad wants another. After all no one here can do anything to the car until parts are ordered for the rear end. Do hope we will get it done in time.

Grandma told me three times you did not get down to see her and wanted to know why; she says you are so thoughtful.

When we were parked beside the Packard shop in Norfolk Saturday we looked up and there was Josh with three other boys getting off the street car. He said he did not know where he was headed for, but came home with us. Mary Virginia [*Mary V. Johnson*] and Addie Rawls came to the house with him Sunday night and seemed to enjoy eating ice cream. He gave each a gardenia and Polly [*Polly Moore, sister to Addie Rawls Moore*] had to use pressure to get Addie Rawls' flower to wear to church Sunday night.

The picnic will be next Wednesday (28<sup>th</sup>). Wish you were here. Josh is counting on going. It will be at Ocean View.

Bud Gill is back from the fair and full excitement. Margaret and Stokes had to go over last night to see what he brought and hear about the trip. Mr. Jenkins finishes the papering to-day and I'll say "it looks nice."

Write me a nice letter soon.

Mamma

**J. Stokes Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**

June 26

New York World's Fair to RFD #4 Suffolk, VA: Postcard

Monday P.M.

Don't meet the boat Wednesday as we will catch the bus to Suffolk & call you from there. Machinery of no interest. Having a wonderful time, but still seems like we are on the boat because the trip up was rough. Expect to be home Wednesday, hug John for us.

**Merle A. Kirk to Arthur Kirk**

July 6

to Carlisle Barracks, PA

Dear Son,

Well, we are back home again and nothing happened here while we were gone. After leaving Winston-Salem we drove up to Ashville and went through the Vanderbilt home [*Biltmore*] and Dad has not finished marveling about it yet. He wants to go back again and spend a day there. We did not see any signs of an accident during the whole 1100 miles we made.

Guess you are back at work again. How do you like Atlantic City? I went there when I was about 20 years old. As I think of it, Atlantic City is just Ocean View and Virginia Beach on a large scale. Son, we are so happy about the report. That will mean another year of medicine and still another if you keep up next year.



Atlantic City, MD. Arthur Kirk

Will Mathews is going to let them have furniture, so it looks like Jeff is fixed.

Josh was home Saturday, went back Sunday and here again Monday night. Guess he will stay now until Saturday.

Best love,

Mamma

**Robert M. Gill to Robert Henry Gill**  
Smithfield, VA to 1324 Pine St, Philadelphia, Penn

July 9

Dear Daddy,

I am sorry I have not written you before now. Mother has been moving and I have been helping her and playing ball for the Smithfield A.C. so I have not had much time to write. I want to thank you for the money you sent it was a great help to all of us. I passed all my work and I will be a junior in high school next year. This year I won two letters one in basketball and the other in baseball. I played in every basketball game and scored next to highest number of points, and in baseball I pitched six games and won six and I was awarded the trophy for the most valuable player on the team. In my three years of high school pitching I have lost 2 and won 13. This year in high school I struck out 82 men in six games and I allowed only 12 runs in six games and I have won 5 and lost 1 for the town club this summer. I have a very good high school coach who taught me a lot. I may get a chance to see the World's fair in August with the Future Farmers. I am sending you pictures of our team and myself. The team is 15 out of 17 this season.

Robert

**Merle A. Kirk to Arthur Kirk**

July 12

Dear Son (Captain) Arthur,

You did not say how much you expect the trip on the 27<sup>th</sup> to cost you and I have not asked Dad "how about it" either. Money is pretty scarce. He is trying hard to see if there is some way to cut down on cost of labor or shut down, but has done nothing yet but get rid of Mr. Skinner and do the sawing himself. Mr. G. says all new men he takes on he lists as apprentices and pays them 18 cents per hour. I was sure all along he was getting by the regulations some way



and yet claiming to be abiding by the rules. Stokes is way behind in receiving his wages and Margaret says she thinks she will have to get a job. Let me know how much you will have to have and I'll see what I can do. Can you boys get rates as the scouts did? They went for \$25.

Did you see the Johnston's when you were in the east? Matsie and Josh were interested in having heard from you. Billy Moore was here Sunday night with Josh and I believe his legs grow by the hour-Josh looks so small besides him. Josh and three others have bought a car and paid about one fourth on it. Don't know how they will pay for the rest and gas too. He expects to go to Norfolk visiting this afternoon, so we won't see him until Saturday.

We are expecting Elizabeth [*Elizabeth Brady Bilisoly*] and her family out this afternoon. Bessie [*Elizabeth Bessie Kirk Brady*] says the boy disappoints her in looks - his head and face are so long and the little girl has a mouth like Elizabeth only more so - if you know what that means. They will be in Suffolk for about two months. Hope the captain is doing fine and will soon be major.

Love,

Mamma

**Merle A. Kirk to Arthur Kirk**

July 25

Dear Son,

It was quite a party we had here Saturday for Margaret and Elizabeth. When night came Margaret and I were so tired we could not sleep. Things looked mighty pretty and tasted good, also (so I was told), only twenty of the 30 invited were here, so many were away, sick or had to work.

Mamma has been expecting Lemuel home for some time, but the last time I was down there he was still expected. I don't know if he is there now or still in D.C. Perhaps when your bus stops for a while in Washington you had better call his place and see if he is away or not, before you attempt to spend the night with him.

I heard this morning that your friend Walter Long skipped with Alec Tynes' clothes, the suit Stokes sold to Alec and other things. John Ross was arrested, tried and fined \$8.50 for cutting Curtis causing the doctor to take seven stitches. Albert had Cornelius arrested for fighting while drunk and he is now resting in jail. The negroes have big ball games in Capehart\* field each Sunday. That is all the news.

Love,

Mamma

*\*Capeharts owned part of Pruden farm near Everets*

**Merle A. Kirk to Arthur Kirk**

Sept. 25

Dear Son,

That rushing Daddy was the cause of our not seeing you Friday. We waited from three thirty until after four when Mrs. Swartz said you were not out of classes until five so Dad decided he could not sit still any longer. I would be glad to let you know ahead if we go, but you know I never am sure. This time the try was to attend the Southern Pine Association's meeting, to have the Hours and Wages act explained. Dad was not entirely convinced he would be included in the group, but was assured he belonged with the others. This morning it goes into effect and Saturday he gave the men a talk explaining what he was doing and expecting of them. Yesterday it was raining so he went in search of a sawyer. He expects to be more among the men to see that each does his part. The sawyer is a Berkley man and said he would be here to-day.

Last night we took Mamma to Windsor to the Joyner 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. They were old friends of Papa's and Mamma's. Nearly the whole length of the village was lined with cars all facing the N & W tracks. Russell says all of Isle of Wight, Nansemond and Norfolk Counties were there. Many from Richmond and Norfolk.

Do you know what Josh has done? He had the mumps last week. I did not know the boy was yet to have the mumps! I was talking to Eleanor Scott last week and of course she brought up Matsie's name, so she told me – Matsie is so glad you and Josh have been taking Billie around, as she felt he is safe with you two. A nice compliment and it makes me feel proud. Daddy says he will get the money some how, but does not have it to-day.

Best of love,

Mamma

Ben and Louise Kirk were here Sunday, so the two ducks were eating mighty good too. Paul, Bessie, Claiborne Sr., Stokes, Margaret, and also John Kirk were here for the day. They said they had expected to see you.

M

**Robert M. Gill to Robert Henry Gill**  
Smithfield, VA

Dec.11

Dear Daddy

I received your letter the other day and I want to thank you for the money. All the family are well and I hope you are the same.

I spent a week in New York this summer looking over the World's Fair and the city. I saw the Giants and the Dodgers play in New York and had a chance to see the Yankees and Washington. Everything in New York was very interesting. I went up with Dr. Warren, Mr. Marton the Agriculture teacher and nine other boys. We passed through Washington, Baltimore, Phil, Wilmington and Trenton. I wish I could have seen you in Philadelphia but we didn't stop long. Take care of yourself.

Love,

Robert

Excuse the writing was sitting in a swing.

Robert

1939  
J. Russell Kirk house



USS Northampton (CL/CA-26)  
U.S. Navy command Light Cruiser

1939  
Everets overlooking  
the creek from the west





Everets; From left: J. Stokes Kirk Jr, Joshua Pretlow

# 1940

By May 10<sup>th</sup>, Germany had invaded France, Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands. The Netherlands surrendered five days later and Belgium on May 28<sup>th</sup>. Winston Churchill became Prime Minister of Britain and in July, the Battle of Britain began with German air raids on the island. Germany, preparing for an invasion of Britain in September, tried to gain control of the skies over the British Channel and potential landing beaches by destroying the Royal Air Force.

Quote from Lynn Kirk Rose:

*When John was two he had appendicitis. They operated on Christmas Day; he stayed in the hospital for eighteen days. Daddy had to go back to Camp A.P. Hill on maneuvers after Christmas so Lynn was taken to Mammy Gill's. When John came home he went to Smithfield and Margaret went to Ft. Belvoir to see Stokes before he left for the Alcan Highway where he was deployed for one year. Margaret would go to Everets every Friday; she could get rationed gas & sugar there.<sup>4</sup>*

At home in Everets, **Josh** received his Army orders to report to Old Point Comfort for induction. Although he was willing to join the fight, the medical exam uncovered a heart condition that disqualified him for active duty.

Before **Arthur** could make plans to accept an internship at Indianapolis Methodist Hospital in Indianapolis, he was sent to Camp Carlisle, PA for his yearly Reserve training.

From J. Lewis Thomas memoir:

*I waited there (San Pedro, California) until 26 or 27 December when I left on a fleet oiler for Hawaii and arrived in Pearl Harbor on Friday morning January 3, 1941. When I reported aboard the USS Northampton it was something. Saturday morning we had to swords and everything. I was the greenest and dumbest Ensign that you had ever seen since I had not received any training or other active duty as an officer. So you can easily understand how I felt toward this inspection. I had my sword and sword knot but did not know how to put the knot on or how to wear the sword. The doctor and supply officer were very helpful. They put the knot on properly and then put the sword on me and away I went for inspection.*

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<sup>4</sup> Sugar was the first consumer commodity rationed, with all sales ended on April 27<sup>th</sup>, 1942 and resumed on May 5<sup>th</sup> with a ration of .5 pounds (0.23 kg) per person a week, half of normal consumption. Bakeries, ice cream makers, and other commercial users received rations of about 70% of normal usage. Coffee was rationed nationally on 29 November 1942 to 1 pound (0.45 kg) every five weeks, about half of normal consumption, in part because of German U-boat attacks on shipping from Brazil. By the end of 1942, ration coupons were used for nine other items. Typewriters, gasoline, bicycles, footwear, silk, nylon, fuel oil, stoves, meat, lard, shortening and food oils, cheese, butter, margarine, processed foods (canned, bottled, and frozen), dried fruits, canned milk, firewood and coal, jams, jellies, and fruit butter were rationed by November 1943.

**Merle A. Kirk to Arthur Kirk**

July 8, 1940

My dear son,

I wonder if you can imagine how well pleased I am to know my boy did good work last year and that now he is assured of another year's work which will almost certainly lead to a good finish. Dad says he is mighty well pleased, also. Josh received his army orders to-day and is just about as well pleased as we were over your years' work. He leaves next Sunday for Old Point. Did you know Mamma has bought a new Ford? Nell has a swell time driving it around. She brought Mamma, sister, Marion Tonkins and Eleanor Merman up here Sunday afternoon. But don't you believe Nell has it without Mamma. Mom said she was so tired of being sick and no way of getting out that she was just going to get a car. Lemuel told her to go ahead and he would give her two hundred. It has made her feel much better.

I have spent most of to-day in town trying to get reduced rates and money enough to have Odell Williams from "Kirktown"\* admitted to a hospital for a major operation. Mrs. Brinkley will try to have the operation reduced from \$75 to \$15- now I am trying to get a part of \$3 per day hospital fee paid by the county.

Dad has been trying to get the Planters Clubhouse for a meeting of the Peanut Club but due to the C.I.O demanding that the negroes use it also or be given one equally as good it has been decided to close the Planters Club. That really is a shame.

How is business?

Love

Mamma

*\*Kirktown- A row of wood framed houses [North of Kirk sawmill] rented to Kirk employees.*



**Arthur Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**

Nov. 14

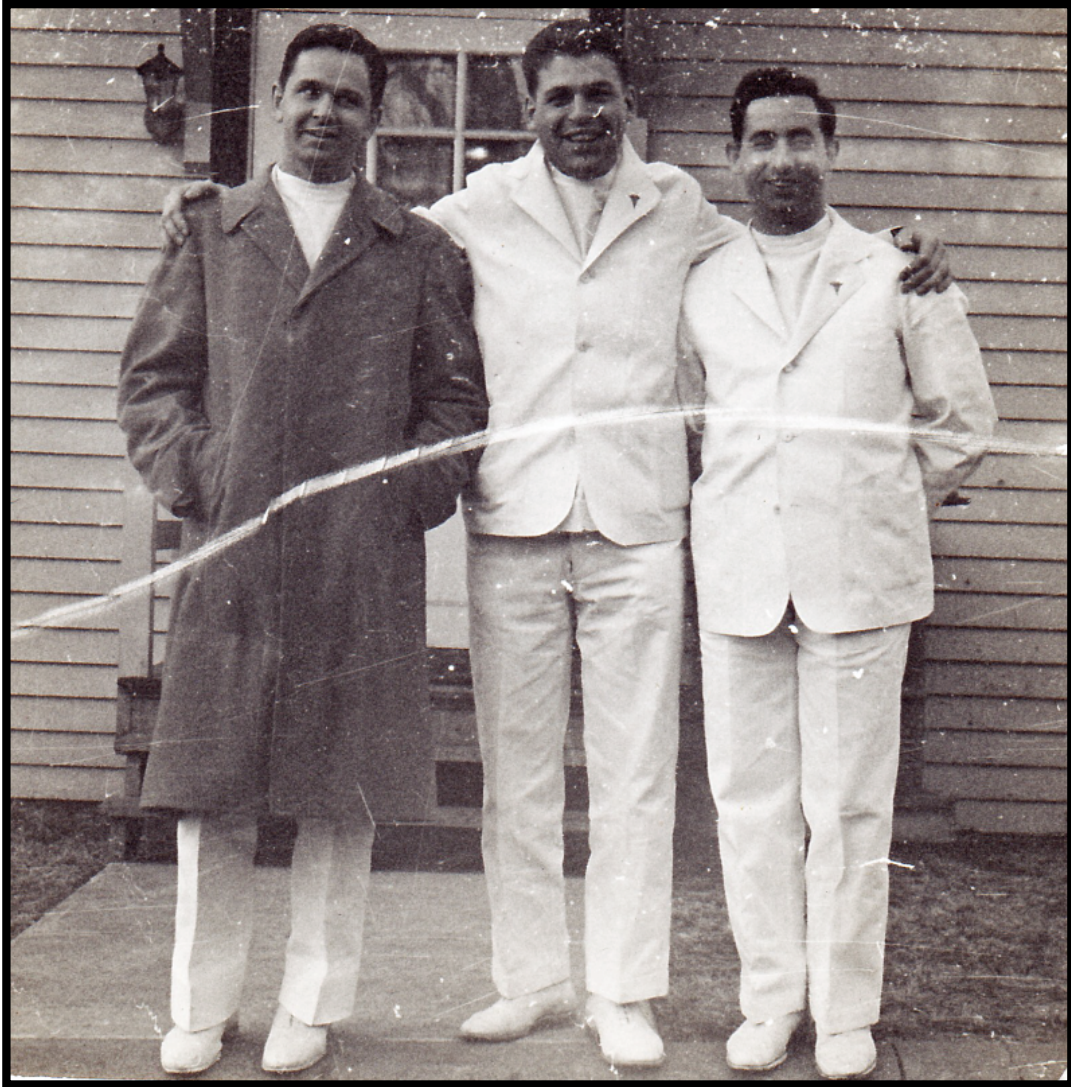
Dear Mom,

I have accepted an internship at Methodist Hospital in Indianapolis, Indiana 600 beds, 20,000 admissions yearly, 8 residents, 20 doctors & 10 per month. The boys that know the place like it very much & I understand that it is hard to get in: I don't understand why they took me but I hope it is not just a dream. They sent me a telegram today & I sent one back tonight. Hope things are well at home.

Love,

Arthur

1940 Arthur Kirk



Arthur A. Kirk at left

# 1941

As America ramped up for war, orders picked up at Kirk Lumber. The mill, combined with the farming operation, employed ninety men. Russell was able to fill the orders from the shipyards as well as from the military. During the day, Josh worked in the mill office and at night studied law. Margaret returned to Smithfield to live with her mother and two younger brothers. Bud and Robert alternately stepped into the role of “man of the house” to look out for Mother “Madge” and “Sister” and they also mentored John and Lynn. Arthur readily helped Margaret with the children on his visits home.

## Merle A. Kirk diary 1924-1955:

July 11, 1941: *Russell and I have just come from New York where we went for a four-day pleasure trip. We went by boat - a pleasant trip up and back. We saw only one person whom we knew - Mr. Francis Chase, who was former Principal of Suffolk High School. He and his wife were returning on a trip from Boston. We enjoyed playing cards with them. While in New York we went to four shows, Hellzapoppin (not so good), The Rockettes at Rockefeller Center Theater, Night Club, floor show at The Hurricane and The Corn is Green starring Ethel Barrymore. I hope I never forget her as she is splendid. And to think we were on a pleasure trip while in Europe people are being killed by the thousands. And I am sure all they want is to go home and be peaceable.*

*Stokes is still at camp near Alexandria. He is acting Captain of nearly 200 New York and Philadelphia negroes. He works pretty hard and does not look well, has not missed coming home but one weekend since he left April 3. Margaret is quite run down, runs up a little fever which is thought to be from worry and need of rest. The children, John & Lynn, are fine. Arthur is at Walter Reed General Hospital in Washington, one of their fourteen new Interns. That means the army can call him at any time - he will rank first lieutenant. Josh was called the second time and rejected again. He has a murmur of the heart. I am glad he is here to help Dad! Everything at the mill is on the increase. More trucks, mules, tractors and more lumber shipped and at higher prices. The emergency needs keep things busy in this district, Norfolk having nearly doubled her population. Russell employs about ninety men. We have two good cars, two old ones and Stokes has one.*

From Fort Belvoir 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant J. Stokes Kirk was deployed to Camp Claiborne, Louisiana, to train the new recruits.<sup>5</sup>

## J. Lewis Thomas memoir:

*On November 28<sup>th</sup>, we departed Pearl with the carrier Enterprise as part of her task force. Later that afternoon Admiral Halsey informed us of our destination; Wake Island to deliver planes, etc. We were to be under full war time conditions. Any ships that*

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<sup>5</sup>Camp Claiborne was located just north of the town of Forest Hill, Louisiana on state highway 165. Built in 1940, it was home to the largest wargames in American history, the Louisiana Maneuvers in 1941 and was the birthplace of the much storied and celebrated 82nd and 101st airborne divisions. During its brief existence, lasting just over 5 years, Camp Claiborne saw over a half million men pass through its gates. It was a small town unto itself, complete with its own railroad linking them to nearby Fort Polk.



*we encountered other than our own were to be sunk. Upon our return to Pearl we were not to disclose where we had been or what we did. Anyone doing so was to receive a court-martial. Since we did not carry any tankers it was necessary that the destroyers refuel from the carriers and cruisers present. On Friday, December 5, I believe, enroute back to Pearl from this mission the Northampton became dead in the water when a line (rope) used in refueling became wrapped around the propellers. We had to send down a diver to cut the line loose and we were there for about an hour with the task force standing by. We regained power and the task force proceeded slowly toward Pearl. We were due in there Saturday, December 6, but the delay and slow down changed our expected arrival to late Sunday morning, December 7<sup>th</sup>. Thus an unexpected occurrence was to have a big effect on the war's outcome because the Japanese had reported the Enterprise, us and the rest of the task force as being in Pearl as we were supposed to be there. Much to their sorry we were not and the various ships of that task force were to inflict heavy damage to the Japanese forces throughout the entire war. We represented one third of the combat force in Hawaii.*

*On the morning of December 7<sup>th</sup> we had General Quarters as usual. Afterwards I went down to my stateroom and went back to sleep (with all my clothes on) as was my custom until we had quarters at 0800. I was awakened at 0730 by the marine messenger who had handed me the dispatch "Pearl Harbor has been attacked. This is no drill." I never questioned the message and knew that the radio circuits would be very busy. As Radio Officer, which title I had held for some time, I was responsible for the coding board and all radio communications. Besides the Radio room was my battle station. On the way to the Radio Shack I had to pass through the Wardroom. We were one of the few ships in the fleet which had radar and it was very hush hush. It was known as CXAM then and Ens. Boyun was the Radar Officer. His nickname was "yum yum" and he was having breakfast. As I passed him I said you had better man the CXAM as this is it. Pearl has been hit.*

*Well, things really started to happen rather quickly as I expected. The radio circuits all became very busy. I had the entire code board alerted and standing by. From the dispatches it sounded like mass confusion was taking place. I believed that many of the messages that came over in plain languages were of Jap origin. Although I was never able to prove this I did read that something of this sort took place. The Enterprise launched planes and we sent off two of our scout planes. Our planes were jumped by a Jap plane which they shot down. Our planes got down close to the water being slower and as the Jap plane dived on them the rear seat man would fire at them. One of the pilots later told me that the only difference between them and a submarine was the fact that a submarine had a periscope as he was down so close to the water.*

*Monday, December 8<sup>th</sup> we entered Pearl Harbor. As we approached the channel we could see smoke arising from the fires in the harbor. Coming on in we passed through the Anti submarine nets and first on our right was Hickman field with its destruction. Ahead was the Battleship Nevada with her nose run up toward the beach where she was grounded and her stern sticking out to the edge of the Channel. She was still smoking and it was obvious that she had attempted to get clear of the Harbor when the skipper realized her sinking condition and decided to beach her. Lucky that she did because if it had sunk anywhere on the channel it would have denied us the use of Pearl for some time. (The entrance channel extended out some ways from the Harbor itself and was cut*

*through the shallow coral ring in the area.) Ahead was Ford Island with the damaged hangers, twisted damaged and destroyed PBY's and other planes plus may fires still burning. To the right was the ship yard and day docks with the Pennsylvanian in one and two destroyers in the other. As we made our turn to the right to go around Ford Island to our normal mooring we got a full view of "Battleship Row" and the damage inflicted there. Fires were still burning and the rescue attempts were still being carried out. A ship located where we normally moored was hit (that was intended for us) so we moved in behind Ford Island to an assigned area. Fuel, stores and supplies were soon on their way to us to enable our return to sea. We were the fighting force left and it was our duty to go after them. I had to go over to the registered publications issuing office to update and draw additional classified publications. This is a routine done each time we came inform any extended time at sea. Ashore I went by the two dry docks and saw the destruction there and the Oglala which had capsized alongside the deck. There was a great deal of activity going on ashore and everyone was jumpy. Any boat in the Harbor was challenged by all and in the confusion would have to yell their identification. It was not too bad during the day, but at night he would be hoarse from yelling the identification. I went on watch Tuesday morning at 0400 and just about day break someone spotted something on the water. A small Jap submarine was reported to have been sunk close to our area on the 7<sup>th</sup> and others reported to have possibly gotten inside the area so you can imagine how we felt then. Our guns were trained on the spotted area and a close watch maintained ready to fire on a moments notice. The object did not move and as day began to break and it got lighter we saw that it was just an oil slick. Early Tuesday morning our task force put to sea to search out and destroy the Jap force.*



Everets: Rufus Martin store in background on right, bridge to left. Photo taken from Wagner home

**J. Stokes Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**  
Ft. Belvoir, VA

Sept.7, 1941 Sunday afternoon

Dear Mom & Dad,

I received your last letter yesterday and was glad to hear from home again. Margaret wrote me how it had been raining the latter part of the week, and from reports in the newspapers you must have been having a flood. I know the pond is filled now. We have had only four rains so far up here. Three lasted for a half hour a piece and one lasted for two hours. We have had ideal weather and I hope it continues so for the next five days.

We leave on the 3 ½ day maneuver at 4:45 A.M. tomorrow and will not get back to the base camp here until Thursday. We leave sometime Friday and I expect to be home again Sunday. I have a ride to N.Y. City and I believe I will take the boat down Saturday morning.

I am glad everything is going O.K. at home. I know I will be glad to get back. There hasn't been so much activity this past week and having nothing to do makes me

tired. I didn't go out on the 1 ½ day maneuver and the President's inspection yesterday cut the 2 ½ day maneuver short one day. But the 2 ½ day maneuver that was cut short was full of activity. We marched about 25 miles in the 26 hours we were gone and I got about an hours sleep during this time. All night long we were on the move and stopped at four different places or fields to camp and spend the night. The first time we were moved before we had a chance to pitch tents, the second time our outpost started firing into a friendly outpost, the third time the infantry retired at forced march to the rear and left us out between the lines and the fourth time we had to move out at four o'clock when the artillery started bombarding the enemy. We started marching back to camp at 9:30 Friday morning and after marching six miles, our trucks came out and brought us the other four miles. Everyone was asleep within an hour after we hit camp.

I hope everyone is well and that everything goes O.K. this week. Don't write anymore after Tuesday as it will get here after I am gone.

Love to all,

Stokes



1941 Everets; Flooding in Wagner yard

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**  
Ft. Belvoir, VA

Sept. 8

Dear Margaret,

I thought I would start another letter to you tonight. I am using Serbell's typewriter and it is a new experience to use a typewriter in writing to you. I expect I will go downstairs now and call you up. I have just placed a call to you and I expect they will call me back before I can finish this sentence. Well I got thru with it all right. It is now a quarter to ten and after I talk to you I am going to turn in.

I had to give up the above type of writing as a long and bad job. I know it is the first I ever started to write you with the typewriter.

It is now Tuesday night and I have been pretty busy since Sunday. I haven't located any of my pocketbook, or money so far. I have to give it up as a bad job as much as I hate to do so. Besides losing the money, I valued the \$20.00 old bank note slightly and also the officer's identification card and driver's license. The work, so far this week has not been bad, but I have been trying to catch up the last two weeks of office work. We leave here about the 29<sup>th</sup> of September and I have to get everything that pertains to company business in order before then. We are shipping all of our tools out Friday and Saturday of this week and then we will have two weeks of fitting clothes and preparing for the departure. Things will probably hum around here until the 29<sup>th</sup>.

I hope you are feeling better now and that John's cold is better.

All my love,  
Stokes



**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**      Sept. 12, Friday

Dear Margaret,

I received your letter yesterday and was glad to hear you had sent me some grapes. I didn't get them yesterday but I expect to today.

It has been good and hot up here up until yesterday. Last night was cold and I believe the coldest since summer began. It is about time since it is about the middle of September.

Today and tomorrow we will be busy loading all of our tools on box cars and trucks. I hope I can be through by noon tomorrow. If I am not I won't be long though in leaving for home and you. It will be two weeks since I have seen you and that has been a pretty long time. (My ink just ran out and I have to finish in pencil.)

So far this week, I have been trying to line the men up for passes and furloughs so that each man will get some time to go home. I had also been drawing a lot of clothing

for them and preparing for cold weather. I guess I had better stop now and get this letter in the mail so you will get it in the morning. I will answer most of your questions tomorrow that you have been asking in your letters.

All my love,  
Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Merle A. Kirk and J. Russell Kirk**      Sept. 24, Sunday afternoon

Dear Mom & Dad,

I just received your letter and was glad to get it. I have heard from Margaret three times but still I don't get all of the news. I am glad everything is going smoothly at the mill and am sorry you had the accident in the car. Which one was it?



Stokes Kirk

Camp is going on about as good as I could expect. I don't think I will really get a good deal out of it though. The biggest thing that we do is observe the N.G. Officers instruct and run the companies. I have been in charge of a few fence and bridge or culvert building details in preparation for the arrival of infantry and field artillery units. But the other phases of work, I have already actually helped do at Fort Belvoir. So it is not new at all. I did go on duty as Officer of the Day yesterday afternoon and just came off about an hour ago. I was planning to go on the thousand island trip today, but being regimental "sheriff" cut that out. Possibly I can make it next Sunday if some other duty doesn't prevent O.D. duty required that I be present during the whole tour.

The food is fairly good up here and we get plenty of it. The Captain obtained an Army cook for the maneuvers and he makes a good job of it. The weather has been fine up here. It rained for about a half hour Monday, Tues., & Wed. and my hay fever was real bad. It hasn't rained since however and I am not troubled with it now. The reason I hadn't had it before this summer is because it was so dry at home.

Margaret suggests that I take the boat from New York to Norfolk when I come home. I may do so because I have a ride to New York when camp is over with my tentmate. He has a car up here and is attached to Co. A. Tell Josh I know he will do a good job and Arthur might be able to help him some if he needs it and if Arthur gets home in time.

I will write again in a few days.  
Love to all,  
Stokes

**Arthur Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**

Oct. 4

Dear Mom,

We have finished our course of instruction and are now getting down to some real useful work. Last week the group of army instructors was divided up, about 7 are going to be sent out to different places, about 12 are with the 32<sup>nd</sup> Med. B. & 7 of us are being kept in the school as assistant instructors to the boys who come up here to become officers in the Medical Administrative corps. (This is different from the Medical Corps which is comprised only of doctors.) The school is called an "Officers candidate school" & is made up mainly of college graduates and other soldiers who are not officers but show that they have officer qualities. I haven't started giving any lectures to them but may do so about next month. It should be very good & interesting work. I got your grapes but they stayed in the post office 2 days extra because you didn't let me know you were sending them.

Love,  
Arthur

**Arthur Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**

Nov. 24

Walter Reed General Hospital Washington, D.C.

Dear Mom,

The operation the other day was O.K. We didn't run into any trouble and the patient lived through it in fine shape and is still living at the present time. Capt. Braswell was going to let me do another one the other day, but Col. Kirk said that he had to sit on the side lines for five years before they let him do any surgery so Capt. Braswell went on and did it himself, but said that he would let me do the next one if and when the Col. was not around, so I hope that we get one in next week and I can do it.

I asked Mary what she wrote to you the other day and she said that she did not remember. So I told her what you said about the letter and she seemed pleased to hear it. As yet I do not know how I'll arrange the Thanksgiving trip up to Lynchburg, but I guess I'll have to go up the night before or leave early the morning of the game and I'll probably see you people at the game. Things have been pretty slack around here for the last two days and I've had very little to do, in fact there is practically nothing to do. I don't expect to be home this weekend for there is going to be a dance here this weekend and I expect to be going to it on Sat. and on a steak fry Sunday, but I may be home two weeks later, or at least Thanksgiving.

Love,

Arthur



Carlisle Barracks, PA

**Arthur Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**

Nov. 29

Officer Candidate Battalion Headquarters, Carlisle Barracks, PA

Dear Mom,

Yesterday we graduated 250 new 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt's. from Carlisle in the Medical Administrative Corps (MAC) and they were a happy bunch of boys. I am sure that each one that I know will make an excellent officer for they have a good foundation on which to build their knowledge of the MAC. Some of them went to hospitals in the US, some went up to Alaska, others to Porte of Embarkation/ POE on the east and west coast (some will stay there and work while others will probably go on convoys altogether they will be spread all over the globe. They are all happy of having ten days leave before going to their new stations, so that they can have a chance of going home for a short while before leaving.

The other day they asked Lt. Crunk and me over to the barracks for a few minutes telling us that they had a few questions to ask us (I had an idea as to what they wanted but Crunk didn't) and they gave him a clock that folds up into its case and they gave me a beautiful leather brief case with my initials printed on it in gold letters. Crunk was ABSOLUTELY speechless and it was at least 5 minutes before he could say anything but a few fumbling words that he could not put into sentences. As I said, I had a suspicion as to what was going on but did not think of anything quite as nice as they gave me. (It was against regulations for them to give anything to us, but you can't put people in embarrassing situations by quoting regulations to them when they feel as if they are doing something nice for you, and in truth they actually are.)



Arthur A. Kirk

The other day I went over to see Jack again and his boy was home from school, he looks to be about sixteen but is actually 20 or 21 and is at Carnagy Tech and expects to be in with the rest of us pretty soon. He has a letter from Lewis that was written about a month ago and I guess you know that he has the raise in rank to Lt. Sr. Gr. which is the equivalent of Capt. in the army. I'll bet he is pretty proud of this, but only about half as proud as his Dad is, even though Uncle Lewis will attempt not to show this. Our new class will start to come in this week and it may be the last of the O.C.S. classes here at Carlisle's, the commandant told us the other day that probably all of us would probably stay up to take over the new classes of doctors that would come in at about the time we would finish with this last (13<sup>th</sup>) class. I guess that I have written enough for the present.

Love,

Arthur

**R. E. Taylor to J. Stokes Kirk**

Dec. 1

France Field, U.S. Air Force Base  
Canal Zone, Panama to Fort Belvoir, VA  
Postcard Kingston, Jamaica B.W.I

Hi Ya Kirk,

How's every little thing. Best of wishes to you and all of the boys of the Good old 95<sup>th</sup>.  
Taylor [*Lt. R. E. Taylor*]



THE ENGINEER SCHOOL, FORT BELVOIR, VA.  
 1st ADVANCED COURSE FOR ENGINEER OFFICERS  
 FROM FEBRUARY 16, 1942 TO MAY 9, 1942

PEEBLES	PISKALDO	PURCELL	RITTER	ROE	SHOEMAKER	SPENCER	TORIE	WEINBERG	WHITSITT	ZARCHIN
KINGSBURY	KIRK	KNAPP	LAWRENCE	LAWTON	LOURIE	MCGREEVY	MICHAEL	MILLER		
GRANT	GRAY	GREEN	GUERDRUM	HARRIS	HODGES	HUGHES	ISLAS	KELLER	KEMPTON	
COCKLE	CORBETT	DAVIS	DENTON	DRAKE	DREWFS	FAUSTMAN	GESECUS	GLADDING		
ACKROYD	ALENIUS	ALEXANDER	ANDERSON	BATTLE	BEITEL	BENNETT	BERNSTEIN	BLATHERWICK	BRASAEMLE	



# 1942

Everets experienced little change during 1942. The fields were plowed and the sawmill continued a steady mechanical drone that reverberated across the water. A small fire in the mill did not set them back as increased orders covered the cost of repairs. While the rationing of gas and rubber caused a delay in lumber deliveries, meat and milk rationing was seldom a concern with their own meat in the smoke house and a healthy flock of chickens in the yard. Russell's nephew Paul Brady married M. Elizabeth Griggs in the summer.

## Merle A. Kirk diary 1924-1955:

May 16, 1942: *This is Saturday night. My boy, Stokes, leaves for War Wednesday. Neither he nor the rest of us know where. He is leaving behind a wife and two babies. My heart is too full to say more.*

May 20, 1942: *The Army has taken my boy away. Alaska? For how long? Will I ever see him again?*

In May, Major **Stokes** deployed from Ft. Bragg, N.C. with a company of men to British Columbia, Canada. They traveled by truck and train with supplies and machinery with instructions to build the Alcan Highway.<sup>6</sup> By June they set up camp in Dawson Creek, building bridges, culverts and hewing timbers. They moved forward five to ten miles at a time and worked long hours to meet their deadlines. Ten thousand soldiers divided into seven army engineer regiments and 6,000 civilian workers completed the road in less than seven months. They bridged 200 streams and rivers and laid a roadway 24 feet between ditches.

By September Stokes had been recently promoted to Captain and he took charge of a ground mill and served as paymaster for the battalion. With a steady supply of logs hauled by teams of horses hired locally, the sawmill cut over 10 million feet a week. As the winter months arrived the daylight hours were longer. Until he stopped to build a small hut for himself, Stokes lived in a tent. The work day started at 4 A.M. and seldom ended until 10 P.M. Stokes battled the harsh winter temperatures which dipped as low as -37 and the sawblades became brittle and broke.

## Merle A. Kirk diary 1924-1955:

June 16, 1942: *He arrived in Fort St. John - we have had letters but there has been silence for 13 days.*

**Arthur's** orders have kept him stateside, teaching non-doctors in the Administrative Medical corps at Carlisle Barracks, PA.

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<sup>6</sup>The Alaska Highway (also known as the Alaskan Highway, Alaska-Canadian Highway, or ALCAN Highway) was constructed during World War II for the purpose of connecting the contiguous United States to Alaska across Canada. The attack on Pearl Harbor and beginning of the Pacific Theater in World War II, coupled with Japanese threats to the west coast of North America and the Aleutian Islands, changed the priorities for both nations. On February 6, 1942 the United States Army approved the construction of the Alaska Highway and the project received the authorization from the U.S. Congress and Roosevelt to proceed five days later. Canada agreed to allow construction as long as the United States bore the full cost, and that the road and other facilities in Canada be turned over to Canadian authority after the war ended.

The Pacific Ocean was a major theater of war between the Allies and Japan. It included most of the Pacific Ocean and its islands with battle grounds around Guadalcanal, Gilbert, and the Marshall Islands.

J. Lewis Thomas letter to Aunt Merle, April 27:

*I was sorry to read about the fire that you had at the mill but am glad that it did no more than it did before you got it out. With the defense orders that Uncle Russell has we sure don't want anything to stand in his way to trim them out.*

In San Diego, the ports had been sealed and anti-aircraft guns were mounted and manned to watch for Japanese dive-bombers. Early in April, the Enterprise Task Force, which included the U.S.S. Northampton, joined the Hornet force for the Doolittle Raid on Tokyo. Replenished at Naval Station Pearl Harbor it sailed southwest, and arrived just after the battle of the Coral Sea. At the battle on Midway Island Lewis was on deck during much of the bombing. Late in November at the battle of Tassafaronga, U.S.S. Northampton, part of Task Force 67 was hit and sunk.



1940s Stokes Kirk house: Margaret, John & J. Stokes Kirk

**Arthur Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**  
Hotel Pennsylvania, PA

Mar. 7, 1942

Dear Mom,

I went to see Der Rosenkavalier which is German for The Rose Braver. The only regret I have is that I didn't read the correct English translation over before going to it. It would have brought back a good deal of the German that I once tried to learn after that I went to the Wivel restaurant where they had a smorgasbord. I had my plate heaped up with a little of each dish & before I was through the food was almost running over the edges. But it was all well prepared & I cleaned the plate up.

I was really surprised to see almost all the street lights off, cars which are mostly taxis going around with dimmed lights & no advertising signs. The train coming up was very crowded & I had to stand up part of the way. It was awfully nice of you & Dad to send up the pictures & the case they are in is an excellent one to carry around. You can tell Dad that this chess game is complicated all right but not so complicated as it seems. If he is down in Ports. at any time he can drop around & Uncle Lewis will explain it to him. I have one just like this one I sent home & find it very interesting & also a good way to spend ½ to 1 hour of your time when you get tired of sleeping. This afternoon I expect to head back to Carlisle after an excellent weekend. After this war business is over I expect to take a trip to western part of the US & would like to drive you & Dad in "your" car if you would like it.

Love,

Arthur

**Lewis Thomas to Merle A. Kirk and J. Russell Kirk**  
Pacific  
Letterhead *USS Northampton*

Mar. 8

Dear Kirks,

I hope this letter finds everyone in fine health. I am sorry in the delay in writing but have been very busy. Now I am taking advantage of Sunday afternoon.

It has been some time since I have received any letters from home (as any where) so I don't know what is going on. I hope Uncle Russell is in the best of health. He more than likely is covered up with orders enough to last a year so now is the time he needs to be able to get around.

Where are Stokes and Arthur now? I suppose they have been moved since the war started to some other camp. Where I am I can not say because it will disclose the position of the ship.

Remember I used to get sea sick when the weather got rough. I must be getting to be an old salt because it no longer bothers me. I have seen it so rough that one minute you walk on one wall and the next time the other one. It is pretty hard to stand up when it is like that but you soon learn how. When we eat we use one hand to hold the plates and tip it so it will be level and won't chuck everything in our lap as it sometimes does.

The other day we had some Cruise Books made up to remember our Australian Cruise by. I am sending one to you so you will have a better idea of where we went. Two of our stop overs are playing a very big part in the war now, Port Moresby and Rabaul.

Let me know where Stokes and Arthur are because there is no telling when we may be in the same location and may be able to get together for a few minutes.

Time for supper so guess I will have to close and wash up.

Love to all,

Lewis  
Ens. L. Thomas  
U.S.S. Northampton

*On 4 March, the force launched aircraft for a strike on Marcus Island, then turned east for Pearl Harbor, Port Moresby, Port Rabaul- New Guinea.*

**Lewis Thomas to Merle A. Kirk**  
California  
Letterhead *USS Northampton*

Apr. 15, Tuesday

Dear Aunt Merle,

The sailor boy is just fine and dandy. Altho I have traveled to a few places I still like Va best of all. Calif. is not exactly what we read it is. We have had rain here for about 6 weeks out of the 10 we have been here. There is plenty of mud all around up to your knees. The weather isn't as warm as you think it is. At night we wear over coats to keep warm. I have not seen any of the pretty flowers as yet and the mosquitoes here are as big as I have ever seen and plenty thick. Outside of that California is right nice.

One week end five of us went up to La Sala Springs and went skiing. We had a lot of fun and no one got hurt. There was plenty of snow there. I believe it was only 100 inches deep at the time we were there. The temp was not very bad in fact I got hot while learning to ski. At first I stayed on the ground as much as I was on my feet but the second day I learned how to stand up o.k. and come down hill without falling.

I am sorry that Stokes got called but glad he can come home some weekends. I know that it is hard on Margaret and little John.

The trouble with us now when we go to sea we stay at sea. We are operating under war conditions which make it bad for everyone on board.

Honolulu is a pretty place but I don't care much for it. Too many Japs there for me. Anyway we don't see much of it because we stay at sea most of the time.

How do you like the stationary? The ship has been changed quite a bit here in the yard. All the ports have been sealed and some new anti air craft guns mounted for dive bombers.

Have to close now and do some work.

Love to all

Lewis

**Lewis Thomas to Merle A. Kirk**

Apr. 27

Dear Aunt Merle,

I got your letter yesterday that you wrote on the first of the month. It sure is nice hearing from you. Of course all our mail comes in batches. I got 21 letters and there is a space of time from the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> that I haven't received any.

This was the first mail in a month so you can see how we all went crazy. When I get a chance I try to write to all the family but don't always have good luck.

I haven't been able to locate Aunt Sis Coleman's grandson [*Jane Eleanor Abbitt Coleman*]. We don't get leave except for about 6 hours a month as a rule so we don't have much time to do anything. He has a class mate of his here on board. He went through Marine Basic School with him and know him very well.

I had to laugh at the tricks that John & Lynn do. I bet they are about to drive Margaret crazy with their goings on. Frances [*Frances Thomas Sledge*] says that she has a time with

Skipper [*Charles Sledge Jr*]. Says that as soon as she gets him asleep the fire engines will go out and wake him up. It seems as tho the station is right in front of their house.

I am sorry to hear that Josh is not feeling so well. You no sooner get one well then another feels sick. I suppose that Uncle Russell is in top form now & feeling fine.

From all reports from home every one else is also worried about how long their tires will hold out. Here we wonder how long the 2 ½ gallons of gas will last that car owners are allowed each week. At that rate of gas here no one seems to worry much about tires.

I was sorry to read about the fire that you had at the mill but am glad that it did no more than it did before you got it out. With the defense orders that Uncle Russell has we sure don't want anything to stand in his way to trim them out. You asked the question in your letter if you had said anything that you shouldn't. Well the answer is no as I don't see how any news from home can't be told as long as it isn't of a military nature. We can receive a lot more news than we can write out. Had better close now as it is 11:45 and I have to get up at 3:30 to go on watch.

Love to all

Lewis

Ens. L. Thomas

USS Northampton

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**  
95<sup>th</sup> Engr. Regt.

May 25, Monday morning

Dear Margaret,

The trip has run along fine so far and I am enjoying the scenery in this part of the country that I have never seen before. I really do miss you though-more than you think I do. When I left you, I was pretty busy running around and didn't have so much time to do much thinking, but now I have right much idle time and I realize how much I miss you. Well, I hope it will be all over soon and I'll be able to come back home to you.

I guess you wonder about the pencil. I ran out of ink yesterday and now have to write in pencil and the way we are being shaken around it is a wonder that I can write or you can read it when you get it.

The Missouri River is really a beautiful sight. It seems as if we have been going by it for hours now and that it is just as wide here as when we started several hours ago.

Hope you made it home alright. Did you get your cute soldier boy that you wanted to pick up? I am anxious to hear from you and find out the latest news as to how John & Lynn were and how you made out Saturday night in your hunt for some shoulder to cry on. I will cut this short and write again tomorrow.

All my love,

Stokes

**Margaret G. Kirk to J. Stokes Kirk**

May 25

Dearest Stokes,

I don't think there has been five minutes since you left that I have not thought of you and wished you were at least in the United States. I suppose you still are now but I know you will soon be across the border, and that is what worries me so much. I have made a resolution not to write you blue letters no matter how things were here, but it looks like my resolution is going by the board in my first letter, though I'll try to think of a few bright things to say. I don't believe

you wanted to leave any more than I wanted you to, and I suppose you will have worries enough of your own without listening to my troubles.

Well I'll try to bring you up to date on what has been going on since you left Fort Bragg at four o'clock Saturday. By the way, don't you think I was brave not to cry when you kissed me good bye? Of course, the tears were in my eyes but I didn't actually shed many tears until the train passed out of sight, and then I must admit the storm broke. Mrs. Belote cried also, and Barney said she better not come out to see him off if she was going to do that over someone else's husband. There were sad moments all during my stay down there but when that train passed out of sight that was the worst thing I had ever experienced. Mrs. Belote and I went to Mrs. Thompson's and had a drink and stayed until five-thirty and then we packed up Barney and went to the Grill to get dinner. The two Mrs. Thompsons joined us there and Barney said he had a harem, four women. Lee took pity on me that night and tried to amuse me but I am afraid I was not very good company so I went to bed early with my tears. Mrs. Lloyd told me, when I came in, about going down to the station in Fayetteville and waving at you. If I had known I could have gotten another glimpse of you I would have dinner over there also, though I suppose you all would have gotten there before I did. Mrs. Belote called me about quarter to eight the next morning and said she was ready to go down and eat then so we could get to the Fort by nine o'clock. I was dressed but not through packing so I hurried up and Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd helped me get things in the car and the darned thing wouldn't start, so I had to be pushed.

However, I got to the restaurant just as Mrs. Belote drove up. I managed to eat a piece of grapefruit, but didn't touch another thing, not even my coffee. I had cried so much and was so nervous that I decided not to go to see Barney off because I cried just thinking of it, and I knew I'd be still worse out there. Mrs. Belote said she wanted me to go, but I was in such a state, she really didn't think I would do much good. So I started home about quarter to nine, and took route 301 but the wrong way and picked up a soldier who wanted to go to South Carolina and he told me my mistake, after I was thirty miles out of my way, so I had to turn around and go back to Fayetteville, and I left there again at ten o'clock and got here at exactly four so I think I made pretty good time. I was surely tired, but nothing happened on the way and I arrived safe and sound. I didn't have a full tank of gas when I got here though because I didn't find a station open from Scotland Neck on. I filled up there because I was afraid to let it get too low but I wanted to fill up again in Franklin or Windsor, but nothing doing.

When I got here Mother was just ready to take both children riding with Mrs. Sinclair. She came from Franklin and was going out to see Sister Virgie before going out to make her home at the Chamberlain for the duration. I was surprised to see Lynn here but Mother said Mrs. Kirk brought her over Saturday. They had been to see Josh Thursday and he was very blue and suffering right much, so they wanted to go see him again yesterday. Mrs. Kirk talked to me last night and said he seemed brighter but he was in a plaster cast up to his hips which was very uncomfortable. She also called me tonight to see if I was going to a tea in Williamsburg, given for Hattie Willis by Dean's sister. We both decided to decline due to the gas situation, or rather it was the clothes situation with me but my real reason was that I just don't feel very cheerful and I don't want to impose my blues on anyone just yet. She told me that they had a call this morning saying they had taken the cast off Josh and they could come and bring him home this afternoon, so the army isn't the only organization that changes without warning. Doctors and hospital can do the same thing. She said they had just about used all of their gas going to see Josh and Mr. Willoughby in the hospitals. She is going to give Hattie Willis a buffet dinner next Tuesday and wants me to come down and help here and then Aunt Hattie wants me to help with her tea the

next day so I think I will try to do that. I can use my car to carry Mrs. Kirk down there and maybe I can go down with them to the wedding and reception. I do wish you could be here to go also. I gave Mrs. Kirk your address so she'll probably write you the home news so I'll not waste my more space on that.

John and Lynn are both fine and John looks like he has grown an inch this week and he weighs 46 pounds. Mother says he has been eating more at noon than Mrs. Brown, so you know his appetite is good. Both the sunsuit and the overalls I bought for him were too small, but Lynn's dress was all right. The garden looks good now and Mother has been using radishes, lettuce, onions, and turnip salad out of it, but John insists upon pulling up the carrots, even though they are not large enough, so "Bud" says he is going to spank him if he catches him in there again. They enjoyed the cakes you bought for them so much. I didn't know you had gotten them, and I thought it was so sweet of you to think of them, when I looked in the bag of groceries and found them.

I am sending you some Air Mail stamps, because I am so anxious to hear from you and I thought they might speed them on their way a little. I didn't think about it but Mrs. Belote and Mrs. Thompson said they each gave their husbands some 3¢ stamps at the last minute and told them to use two of them and mark Air Mail on it.

I got my sugar today, and then turned your card in, so I have attended to that much. I am going to have the tires changed tomorrow and the horn fixed, I have to have a horn before I can get a sticker.

"Bud" [*Richard Gill*] put his hand on a fence post in the garden tonight and swung over the fence and turned his ankle when he landed and fell down, and just tore his hand on the post. I started to bandage it but it looked so bad I went with him to the doctors and it had to have two stitches in it. Write soon.

All my love,

Margaret

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

May 26, Tuesday

Dear Margaret,

I finally located some ink yesterday afternoon after I wrote that screwy letter to you. I hope this one will be a little better. We have really been thru a variety of states so far. NC, SC, GA, Ala, Miss, Tenn. on up through Missouri, Nebraska, SD and now we are in Wyoming. We will have really been all over the country by the time we end the trip. In about an hour we are going to have a rest stop and I will mail this letter then.

I played a little with the rest of the fellows last night and it seems that if this luck holds up I will be able to buy what you wanted although right now I can't for the life of me remember what it was. Anyhow my one hour and a half playing time netted \$10.00/hour so you can figure out what it amounted to. Not bad, eh?

We have really been traveling thru some beautiful country. I just looked out of the window and as far as you can see there is not a tree in sight. We have seen a lot of cattle ranches, sheep ranches and in spots some excellent farming lands while traveling across Nebraska.

Oh, yes, I called my letter of yesterday screwy because I couldn't get any ideas coordinated. Of course, my sentiments about you are the same regardless of what I called the letter. I just couldn't seem to concentrate about writing a letter.

The trip has been pretty nice so far and we have really been eating in style. Yesterday we had all of the strawberries and ice cream for dinner and supper that we could hold. Missouri is evidently a strawberry raising state-they were as good as any I have ever eaten.

This is really sparsely settled country here. You can travel for miles and miles and see only horses and at right cattle and only occasionally then it is way off in the distance.

I will really be glad to hear from you again. I am used to either seeing, talking to or hearing from you at intervals of less than two days and now here it is Tuesday afternoon and not able to get a word until at least after Friday. Any how I will voice my sentiments in yesterday's letter and say that I hope you got home all right and that everybody is all right.

Your loving husband,  
Stokes



Margaret G. Kirk

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

May 27, Wednesday A.M.

Dear Margaret,

We passed through Billings, Montana early this morning and now we are on our way to Great Falls, Montana. This is really some picturesque country that we are passing thru. When I say country and picturesque, I mean it too. We travel for miles and miles and the only thing we see are hills, valleys, plains and practically nothing else. Looking out of the window now, there are lots of snow capped mountains in view and it really is a beautiful sight. Now and then we see a ranch house and occasionally we pass thru a town.

I had an exciting time for a few minutes last night. I had wired ahead to Sheridan, Wyoming for some provisions and we arrived there about 10:30 p.m. It took quite a while to settle the accounts and load the food and gasoline and while I was in the station paying the gas the train whistle blew and the train started to pull out. Lt. Powers was with me and I told him to go out and stop the train and the station agent rushed out to stop it, too. It sounded to me like the train meant business so I went out in time to see Powers jump on board and by that time I couldn't get to it in time to get on. Anyhow the station agent said he was stopping it when the last car came by and the engine was in a dead getaway. Anyhow, I saw the brakeman making frantic signals to stop the train so I went back in the station and proceeded to finish up my business. After that was over I went out and found that the train had stopped and then had to run over a quarter of a mile to catch up with it.

It was quite an experience. You will have to tell Johnny that Daddy was left at the station by the long fast bird train that he was riding on and that the train had to stop and let Daddy run to catch up with and get on it.



We passed by Devil's Mountain yesterday and just could see it in the distance. You remember that a man parachuted to the top of it and had to be rescued by mountain climbers. It was some mountain. It seemed to rise straight up and was about the same size at the bottom as it was at the top.

Guess I will stop and write again tomorrow.

All my love,

Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

May 28, Thursday A.M.

Dear Margaret,

We are having pretty bad weather at the present time. It is raining with some snow falling and just as cold and disagreeable as can be. We changed over to the O.D. uniform this morning and just at the right time.

The scenery is not quite as pretty as it has been while in the states-mainly because of the rain, snow and muddy looking roads that run along the tracks now and then. Although if it were not raining and snowing it would be beautiful. Right now we are halted in between two lines of freight cars in some small town.

In this part of the country it seems that whenever we stop, the population of the towns turn out to watch and wave. In talking to some people they say they saw a long freight loaded with trucks etc. come thru and every time the people heard a train whistle they rushed down to the tracks to watch and wave. The little girls at one place were running around getting autographs of anybody that had on a uniform. The people up here seem very friendly and wave at the colored soldiers just as much as if they were white.

The train has just pulled out and the train conductor came thru and said that up the line the temperature is +24 and snowing to beat H. We will be there in about three hours if all goes well and try to mail this letter there.

I have just finished reading an interesting article in the May 30<sup>th</sup> issue of Colliers. It is about the projected route from the U.S. to Alaska and is very interesting. Buy a copy and read it if you get a chance. The game is very plentiful there and I am beginning to believe that I'll buy a shotgun for ducks, quail, prairie chicken, etc. if I can find one. Along the tracks I have seen numerous small lakes and hundreds of duck also prairie chickens and dogs.

Tell Johnnie that Daddy's still riding on that long fast bird train and that he will be back to see everybody when he can.

All my love,

Stokes

**Margaret G. Kirk to J. Stokes Kirk**

May 29, Friday night

Dearest Stokes,

I received my second letter from you today and I was delighted to hear that you were enjoying your trip and having plenty of good things to eat. When you mentioned the fact that you had all the ice cream you wanted to eat, I knew you were happy, for I really believe that is your pet dish. After reading your letter I looked at the map and followed your route as best I could. You really are seeing something of the country. Parke said when he went in the army that he wanted to see the country if he could because he never had traveled any, and he seems to be starting out to really see it. He went from here to Camp Lee, there on to Fort Benning, Georgia and now he is at some Fort in Massachusetts. I'll be glad when you can describe your trip home

to me though instead the one away from me. Both of your letters have been very interesting though and I was quite thrilled to receive three pages today. I particularly enjoyed the “sweet”



Lynn and John Kirk

parts of your letter for I do miss you so much and every word that shows you care makes me feel better. I know it has been as long as two weeks since I have seen you several times since you were called to active duty, and it hasn't even been a week since I saw you yet, but it is the idea that you will not be here this weekend, or not for a long time, that hurts me so much.

For a day or so I couldn't even mention your name without just sobbing, but I finally got a hold of myself and told John Tuesday night about you going away on a train with a little bird pulling the cars, and that you expected a fast bird would pull the cars later. He said “Mama, tell me “dat again.” So I had to tell him several times until it really became quite a story. The last thing you told me was to take care of myself and the children and I am afraid to let them out of my sight almost. Mother says she thinks I am afraid to even leave them with her now, but she made me leave them long enough to go to Suffolk today for she said I just couldn't stay here in the back yard with them until you came back. I suppose she is right but I just don't want to go out at all, or even see people, because they make me cry.

They told me at the post office not to write you so much when I mailed the letter I wrote Wednesday night, and found it cost 12¢. I think it was the U.P.I. pamphlet I sent you though that time and even if it wasn't I can't help it. Writing to you and getting your letters are the only bright events in my life now, so I am afraid you will continue receiving long ones, unless you get tired of them. Please let me know when you want me to stop writing.

Herbert Gilliam came by Tuesday night and said he was working in the Navy Yard and that was the first day he had been off since he started two months ago. He told us lots of interesting things about his work there, but said he didn't like it there. He went with 300 other Ford workers when the plant closed down, but did not intend staying, and now they cannot leave unless it is to join the Army or Navy.

Sidney Clarke is a Private First Class now and his people are as proud as if he were a General at least. Langley Gatling has been promoted to a Captain now and he went in as a second lieutenant after you were called, so you better start worrying Gavin or somebody about your promotion again.

Bud failed his English and will have to take it in summer school to the tune of \$20. His hand is also giving him a lot of trouble so he is really quite unhappy.

I told you I wanted a pretty white nightgown if you were lucky on the trip out, but you won enough the first night to buy about two of those so I suppose I might as well aspire to something better, such as a diamond ring or fur coat, or maybe I better take the money and buy some new dresses. Even if I don't have any desire to go out I don't want to join the nudist colony while you are away.

I mailed your clean uniform today, also a suit of underwear and some handkerchiefs. I still have three undershirts and one pair of shorts here so let me know if you want them. Also let me know whether you want me to send you anything else, such as reading material, cigarettes

and so forth. The article in the Colliers said that such things were not very easily obtained up there. Now the only thing I can do for you is write to you, and I would be so glad if there were anything else I could do to help make things easier for you.

I went to Everets today and then went on to Suffolk with Mrs. Kirk in the Chevrolet which had to be inspected. I read your letters to them, all except the card playing part which I didn't think would interest them. Josh looks terrible to me and he says he still suffers a great deal. They expect to bring Mr. Willoughby\* home Sunday, as he was not able to come today as they expected. Little Alex is driving to the Navy Yard every day and carrying Brinkley and several colored men who also used to work for Mr. Kirk. The Chevrolet needed so much done to it that we couldn't wait so we had to hurry back with a piece of machinery, so Mex [*Mexlon Baker*] was waiting when we got back to carry it right back to Mr. Andrews to be fixed. You should have heard him fuss today; he was really wound up. Mrs. Kirk told him the car was O.K. except tightening the brakes, so he said he could get to it in an hour, but when we went back he said it has to be re-bushed or whatever you call it and he couldn't do it for about two hours. He was greasy and dirty and said he was working for the first time in his life.

All my love,

Margaret

*\*Mr. Edward Willoughby- worked at Kirk Lumber after Lone Star closed. He walked to work from Chuckatuck.*

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

May 30, Sunday P.M.

Envelope: *Miss-sent to Smithfield, NC*

Dear Margaret,

Things have been happening pretty fast around here. Capt. Stokes came back yesterday and seemed to be in pretty good condition except that his arm is not out of a sling yet. Also, this new bivouac we are now in is close to several beaver dams. The day we moved in I walked down the hill from camp and was actually looking for ducks that Lt. Trent said he heard the night before. Anyhow I stumbled on a series of beaver dams with slides across the dams from one water level to the next. I saw one beaver house in the middle of one of the ponds and they are very similar to muskrat houses. To finish the story about the ducks, I didn't have any luck in locating them.

Last night in traveling the road I noticed a very small animal in a deep tire rut that was running back and forth in it. I stopped and went over and grabbed the animal by the body. I was lucky that I had my gloves on because he took a bite at one of my fingers and bit through the gloves without getting any meat. About that time I slung him about twenty feet to get him off. Next time I stepped on him and took him by the tail and picked him up. To my surprise it was a muskrat just about 1/3 grown. You will have to tell John about that as a late birthday story.

I got three letters from you yesterday and about three the day before that. The pictures of the kids are very good and I was glad to get them. I will bet that they do enjoy the swings and the slide very much. I am glad you got both for them.

I heard a funny story the other day and it makes me laugh every time I think about it. It seems that Major Munro was on a trip from one company to another and after he got to his destination he proceeded to take several drinks too many and got pretty well plastered. Then on his way back he went to sleep and his car slid in the ditch or ran into a truck and his chauffeur had to get another truck to tow him. After being towed for several miles the Major finally woke up and ordered "Henry, pass that truck" I can see him now telling Henry (his chauffeur) in a stern voice to pass the truck. It has kept everybody in stitches every time it has been told. But to

make it even funnier, I was down at C Co. when I first heard it and Moliver was telling about it. He was telling the story in a loud voice and everybody was laughing and having a hilarious time and just at that time the Major walked into the mess tent where we were eating supper. You can imagine how quiet everything got. He cast several dirty looks and after about fifteen minutes he left. I thought sure someone would bust out laughing while he was there but nobody had any thoughts of "committing suicide."

Another thing I wish you would send as soon as possible is a box of #4 shot 12 gauge shotgun shells. I can't seem to get a hold of any up here and the gun is no good without shells. You can ask at the post office if they can be shipped a box at a time and if they can't you can put a few at a time in a bundle of the papers you send every week. There is plenty of game up here and I would like to get in some of it.

I am glad you went to the dance the other night. You will have to go more often because there is no reason to sit at home and decline invitations. You could be enjoying yourself instead of wondering whether it is all right with me. It is perfectly all right.

All my love,  
Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**  
Dawson Creek, BC

June 2, Sunday A.M.

*I don't know when I will be paid so I am sending a check for \$40.00*

Dear Margaret,

I was just thinking about you and had a few minutes on my hands so I thought I would write. I saw "Lucky" Lee last night and he said that you and he went out to Andy's last Saturday night. I hope you had a nice time. I am still wondering how you made out on your trip home. He said that you were going to follow Mrs. Belote on your way home. His words were certainly welcome since I hadn't seen or heard from you for over a week. I hope mail will start coming through soon. I broke my own record yesterday when I failed to write. I believe I have written every day since last Monday except yesterday and I was so busy getting consolidated that I didn't get a chance. Distribution of rations, getting lined up for a tent, taking a bath, purchases of food and beer for the men and various other odd and end jobs kept me busy.

I am really getting sleepy now. The weather and the short nights make you feel as if you haven't gone to bed. I didn't get in bed until 2 o'clock last night and was up again at 7:00 a.m. It doesn't get dark up here until about 11:30 or 12:00 o'clock and it just doesn't seem right to go to bed before it gets dark. It is a fact that you can sit outside and read a newspaper at 10:30 or 11:00 o'clock and that the sun doesn't go down until about 10:00. It looks like when the sun-shine in the west dies down it starts getting light in the east and it is also very light in the north after the sun is down. It is very hard to get used to. Everybody is griping about it - as if something could be done about it.

Lee says that he went down town last night to get a haircut, shave and shower but the barber said he had sold out of haircuts, didn't have any more shaves, and all the baths were bought up. So he didn't have much success on that deal.

This town seems to be one of the frontier trading posts in this section. It has a population of about 1200 people and most of them are French-Canadians. I was talking to one last night, a woman about 50 years old and she said that these soldiers here now were the first colored people she had ever seen. Of course she had seen pictures in papers of them. I expect we are going to

have some trouble with them sooner or later as far as the white people here are concerned. The white people are very friendly and I have seen several cases of the inhabitants carrying colored soldiers into the beer parlor here and buying them beer.

Tell Johnny that Daddy expects to ride on a ferry at Fort St. John over the Peace River sometime tomorrow or the next day.

All my love,  
Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**  
Dawson Creek, BC

June 3, Wednesday afternoon

Dear Margaret,

Here I am back down at Dawson Creek again. I went up to Charlie's Lake up on the other side of Fort St. John day before yesterday with the 95<sup>th</sup> shovel and right much other equipment and came back down yesterday afternoon with the empty trucks. It was quite a job getting the equipment moved up there safely. Wooden bridges necessitated the trailer and truck to be moved over separately and when we came to the Peace River we had to take the shovel off the trailer and move each one on the ferry separately. There was too much weight involved to load both on the same spot on the ferry and there was too much danger of the river banks caving in. That Peace River is far from peaceful. It has about a 10 mile/hour current and is about a half mile wide. It is the famous river that so much trapping has been done - maybe you have heard of the Peace River valley.

The 95<sup>th</sup> really has the equipment now. I don't know how many trucks we have but we are supposed to have 90 dumps. Motor equipment has been rolling away from here for the last five days and it looks like that there is as much here now as we had to start with.

Yesterday I came back from Charlie's Lake and spent the night here. Today has been a dull day. I don't have anything to do until the train comes in with more equipment and it is hard to tell what I will have to do then.

Today is Wednesday and I am still looking for a letter from you. It will soon be two weeks and no word. I guess I will have to find an Eskimo gal and start running around a little - ha. Well, nobody has gotten any mail yet, so I guess I will have to be content and wait. I certainly hope you have heard from me by now. The air mail leaves here on Friday and I believe you should get this letter either Monday or Tuesday.

There are a few things that I want you to send me. My coveralls is one thing and I wish you would see if you could buy another like it in color and size and send it. Clothes in weight less than 8 pounds can be sent thru the APO at Seattle I would also like for you to see if you can buy a shot gun and send me. I don't think you can get a new one but maybe one can be bought from a second hand store. A 12 or 16 gauge one will be allright - probably a 16. If you do get one it will have to be broken down into two parts and mailed separately in order to be less than eight pounds a piece. That is all I can think of right now.

I hope you and the family are making out O.K. Tell Johnny that he ought to see the army trucks up here. They are really thick and he should see the big hop-hop rabbits that are up and down the road. I bet I saw 250 rabbits in travelling 40 miles the other day. I also saw some bear foot prints in a ditch yesterday.

All my love to my darling,  
Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Merle A. Kirk and J. Russell Kirk**  
Peace River, BC

June 3, Wednesday P.M.

Dear Mom & Dad,

I just got here about 30 minutes ago and it looks like I will have to wait about four or five hours so I thought I would write to you. There is no bridge across the river and with two ferries that are in operation a serious bottleneck is caused for trucks and road equipment going north. Right now there are about 25 trucks waiting to be ferried besides about 9 D-7 and D-8 caterpillar diesel tractors with 12 cubic yard carryall scrapers and loaded trailers towed behind them. It is hard to imagine the size of this equipment and the difficult operation of ferrying them across the river. There is no slip for the ferry and they jut out in the river which has about a ten mile/hr. current and is a half of a mile wide.

A bridge is going to be built and it is expected to take only three months to complete. That is another tremendous undertaking for this part of the country. The bridge site is forty miles from Dawson Creek (where I have been since last Friday) which is the nearest railhead. The railroad from Dawson Creek to Edmonton almost is all single track and is 495 miles long. That will give you an idea of about how far up we are. I am heading for Fort St. John which is about fourteen miles from here. The 95<sup>th</sup> is located just a little distance from there on the edge of Charlie's Lake. Charlie's Lake is the jumping off point for the road construction. Work by the 95<sup>th</sup> was begun several days ago and is progressing rather slowly. It will pick up though just as soon as we can get the balance of our equipment up there. I helped move a ½ yard Osgood shovel [*steam shovel*] up there Monday. I left with it at 3:00 p.m. and carried it 60 miles in 11 hours. That is right good time considering the steep hills and three hours lost time in moving the equipment across the river here.

We really did have some beautiful scenery along the way on the train. I wouldn't have missed the trip for anything. It snowed before we got to Edmonton and turned real cold. It cleared up quickly though and now it is real dry and the temperature is around 80\* to 90\* in the daytime and about 50\* at night that is, for what we have of it. It gets dark a little after 11 p.m. and the sun is up by 5 a.m. These short nights are about to get me down. I can't seem to get to bed before 12:00 A.M. because I usually, or at home it gets dark around 8:30 and I hardly ever get to bed at that time but wait until several hours after darkness to go and that habit is hard to break.

The scenery is really pretty around here. If you ever take your trip some summer to Alaska you will go thru some of the prettiest and richest country in the world. I don't think any will surpass it. The soil is as rich as any and the black or topsoil doesn't go down just a few inches but down to about twelve feet in some spots. In fact it is not uncommon to get 150 bushels of wheat/acre on some of the farms up here. You will be surprised to know that the average farmland sells at about \$50.00/acre.

I think I will send this letter airmail otherwise you won't get it for at least over a week. I wrote to Margaret this morning and sent it airmail so both of you should receive the letters Tuesday. I hope everybody is alright at home. In case you write, the address is on the envelope.  
Love to all,

Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**  
Dawson Creek, BC *Fort Belvoir, VA Stationary*

June 5, Friday afternoon

Dear Margaret,

The trip is progressing along fine now. It is just as warm and pretty outside as can be. It stopped snowing about one o'clock yesterday, warmed up and I believe it must be at least 85\*. We are almost at our train destination at Dawson Creek. The country is getting a little more rugged and there seems to be right many muddy spots on the road that borders the track. It must be the main road from Dawson Creek to Edmonton. We left Edmonton about 3 P.M. yesterday and it is now 5 P.M. and we expect to arrive at the rail head most any time. It is a distance of 495 miles between the two points so you can see how far we are out in the wilderness.

There is right much timber here - mostly birch and spruce pine. Right much has been burned over though and leaves only dead trees by the thousands. It seems as if the Indians burn it in order to make hunting lands for moose. The moose can travel over the burnt over areas where trees are criss crossed after falling over and escape from the wolves where as they can't do so in thick timber. It allows the Indians to be able to see them farther also.

Tell Johnny that Daddy is finally on the last part of his trip and when he was writing this letter he was only six miles from the place that he gets off the train. Tell him also that the train was so long that for the last 300 miles the train had to be split in two with a big engine for each train. Will try to write again tomorrow,

All my love,

Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

June 8, Monday

Dear Margaret,

Everything seems to (I just ran out of ink) be going along fairly good up here. I can't tell you more about the job or where we are, but if you have read that issue of Collier's I told you about several letters back you will know about where I am and what I am doing. The view of the lake is fine from here and I expect to find out what it looks like from the other end sometime tomorrow.

Sixteen days have passed since I saw you and I haven't received any letters from you at all. Guess I will have to look for an Eskimo or do like the men say, "There's no people up here, I guess I will have to hunt me a bear." So far that is a joke because several bears have been seen and the men have all run for their lives. So did the bears in the opposite direction from the men. They are entirely harmless but I expect every day to see one walking down behind me and I keep wondering what I would do.

Well, darling, I know you have written me and I expect when the mail does come that I will have to take a day off and read them. Don't take my writing seriously I know where the blame lies for no letter - not even any letters to anybody in the regiment. It seems as if sector headquarters promised to wire Seattle for the mail and forgot to do so. That is what Gavan said today. He told them to send the mail last Friday and when he checked today, they had forgotten to send the wire.

We got some dandy sleeping bags the other day. I have been using my sleeping bag with blankets and then last night I used the G.I. \$80 bag with no blankets and woke up this morning full of perspiration. I was pretty warm. Guess I will stop now and write again later.

All my love, Stokes

P.S. They are not lying about the mosquitoes in Collier's. I believe they minimize them.

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**  
Montney, BC

June 12, Thursday A.M.

Dear Margaret,

We have had very disagreeable weather up here lately. It has been raining for a couple of days now and it is beginning to clear up gradually. Gordon & Powers are the only officers here with me and when we got here "Pappy" had a few men build a lean to hut for us to live in. It is enclosed on all four sides with spruce boughs interwoven until you can't see thru it. We have a canvas truck top on top of the hut. It is dry on the inside but the humidity while raining is so high that clothes feel damp practically all the time.

We had a funny happening last night. The men seem to all be scared of bears and it has been the favorite topic of conversation as to what would be done if a bear was seen or started to poke his head in the pup tents. Well, anyhow, bears [some say two and others say three] went into our kitchen late last night and the mess sergeant was just getting up from his bed in a truck when he heard the pots and pans rattling and making a lot of noise. He flashed his light at the mess tent and saw the bears tearing things up in general. The bears then left the kitchen in a hurry and in leaving tore the kitchen door down. The mess sergeant was so scared that he couldn't yell or do anything. Consequently he stayed in the truck and didn't come out until light and breakfast was an hour late. You will have to tell Johnny about the bears tearing the kitchen up. The reason for them coming in it was several jars of jam and apple butter were left open in one of the cook pots.

I was over at the little town yesterday and really saw some beautiful furs. There were fox, bear, beaver, muskrat, wolf, wolverine and many other different kinds. I hope I will be able to locate a silver fox pelt and buy it. When I come home (possibly late in the fall) I will bring it along and you can have it made up into a neck piece. I inquired how much they were and the storekeeper said about \$65 for a good one and that it could be fixed up for about \$15 into a neck piece or whatever you make them into. I haven't been paid off yet for last month so you will have to do the best you can until I can send you a check. I understand that we will be paid in Canadian money and I will probably have to send a Canadian money order. U.S. money is worth 10 % more than Canadian money so I will get \$1.10 in Canadian for every \$1.00 in American money. That makes you think you have a lot more.

I haven't been doing so bad as far as money is concerned. I think I left Bragg with about \$25 and now I have just about \$24 in my pocket. Lady luck has been shining my way lately. I know I have spent at least \$20 since leaving Bragg.

I want you to start sending me a carton of Luckies every week. Cigarettes are .25 pack up here with no assurance any longer of getting more. At local stores we are supposed to have a P.X. in each one of the companies with cigarettes \$.66/carton but so far the cigarettes last about a half hour before they are bought up and only one lot of supplies have come thru for the P.X. so far.

No letter or word so far but I expect the mail may get thru by Monday. You will probably get this letter by Tuesday and by then I guess I will have several to read. Don't forget about the shotgun and I guess it would be a good idea to send along a box of #4 shells.

Guess I will quit or I will have to put two A.M. stamps on the letter.

All my love,  
Stokes



**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**  
Fort St. John, BC

June 14, Sunday morning

Dear Margaret,

I finally heard from you last night after not hearing or seeing you for a few hours over three weeks. I was certainly surprised when Major Thompson came in our bivouac area among the small poplar saplings and asked me how much I would give him for a letter from you. He was waving three letters two from you and one from Mamma. Anyhow I didn't believe him at first and had to see the letters for myself. That was quite a surprise. All three were dated between June 4<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> and I started reading the earliest one, about that time Major Thompson started sorting the mail with the help of the mail orderlies and you should have heard the uproar which went thru the camp. Before he came, the usual camp noises just could be heard and when the word went thru that some mail was here everybody became delirious. The trumpet that usually bust into music for about a half hour every night started playing some really hot tunes. It was way after twelve before the camp settled down.

To get back to my letters before I had gotten to the third page somebody hollared Kirk and I had three more. After several more interruptions I had a total of eleven letters, eight from you, two from Mamma and one from the station agent that I had bought some bread from back in Edmonton, Alberta. It looked like I got the letters in almost reverse order because I would start reading one and then get one postmarked at an earlier date and then have to stop and open the earlier one. After one or two more "issue" of letters I finally got your first one and started reading back up the, or should I say, down the line from the first letter to the last one which you wrote Monday night June 8<sup>th</sup>. So now I am only about five or six days behind instead of three weeks.

Everybody seemed to get mail last night except "Pappy" Gordon. Lt. Reid beat me out though on numbers. He got 14 letters to my eleven but then you doubled up on two of them. I should say doubled on eleven of them because they were so long. I don't mind. I read the letters sitting in a jeep in front of the lean to and finished up at about 11:30. It took me about an hour and a half and it was beginning to get a little dark when I finished at 11:30 P.M. Around home this time of year it is usually beginning to get dark between 8:00 & 8:30 so you can see about how much daylight we have. I really did enjoy the letters a lot and then too the parts about John & Lynn wanting me, made me want to be home so much now. You will have to tell John that I haven't seen a bear yet, but Daddy is going to go looking for some water streams later on today to try to locate a water point and that he is going to carry a gun and he may see a bear to shoot and bring back to camp.

I will bet that the story about the long train leaving me at Sheridan, Wyoming has really grown out of all proportion by now. It is funny now to think about it, but it was rather serious at the time.

One thing I would like to have is a newspaper from home occasionally and each issue of Coronet as it comes out. You might mail a copy of the V. Pilot [*Virginian Pilot*] when there is some interesting news in it. I heard something about the Jap action at Dutch Harbor and several days ago I heard something about the U.S. Naval victory at Midway Island. Don't send the ham because the limit is about 8 pounds and if I did get one I would rather that it be much larger. Don't forget the shotgun though.

So far none of your letters have been censored that I have received. I doubt if they will since they go straight thru the APO to an Army transport plant which carries them to Fort St.

John which is about 25 miles south of here. From there they are divided up and sent to the units and actually they never leave the hands of US military authorities.

I happened to think while I was reading your letters last night that Hattie Willis must be happily married by then. That was about 1:00 A.M. Eastern Daylight time. I was wondering about where they were and what they were doing. I mean, uh, that must have been a beautiful nightgown. I'll bet so.

About financial matters, instead of others, I understand our checks are ready at the finance office for the month of May. Just as soon as I get mine I will mail it to you. Don't need any (I went over to Colonel Lane's outfit night before last and collected a little from the boys over there, so my bank roll has grown to \$30 dollars now. I was just ready to go over again last night when the mail came) and any that you don't need you can put into war bonds. As far as the accounts of John & Lynn are concerned you can write me the amounts and enclose a couple of blank checks and I will mail it right back. You can do the same about my small account. Of course if Daddy has had those "power of attorney" recorded he can sign for me and probably save time.

I haven't been writing so much lately it is really a problem to get mail out. Sometimes I can get to the little town (about 40 people) about twelve miles east of here and mail a letter but since I have been here (a week tomorrow) I know of no mail that has gone out. So you will have to expect two to four days in between letters.

It is raining again and right now I doubt if I will be able to go out on my reconnaissance this P.M. It looks like a day which will have to be spent inside.

I had something else to talk about oh yes, I said that "Pappy" Gordon hadn't received any letters. He got one this morning from the outfits surgeon, an official letter. Everybody has been kidding him about his wife not writing because she wasn't worried about anything he might do up here. Anybody with any running around notions up here might just as well leave running around notions while in Alcatraz. Anyhow, all the sweethearts and wives can rest in peace while we are up here. Wine, Women & Song are not around this forsaken place and as far as I am concerned they can give it back to the bears and the rest of the wild animals.

Guess you are tired of reading by now. I will stop and write again tomorrow or next day after I have read your letters over again and answer some more parts of your letters.

All my love,

Stokes

P.S. Address your letters as follows and I will get them quicker.

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

June 16, Tuesday

Dear Margaret,

It seems as though it is getting colder up here every day. Yesterday in addition to my wool uniform and field jacket I had to don the light sweater and raincoat. Today in addition to the above I put on one of my work undershirts besides the cotton one and then had to put on the other sweater that Grandma made. In other words, I have had on about seven thicknesses and then thought I would freeze. You can imagine about what kind of weather we are having. I don't think I am supposed to say anything about it but you can imagine from what I am wearing exactly what it is, without me coming right out and saying what it is. Anyhow by the time I get this letter in the mail it will be too stale for anybody to use it to any advantage. Everybody around here knows what it is and if it gets in the mails at Fort St. John by Friday I know I will be lucky. You are probably running up in the hot weather down there.

Well, I have the honor of being the first one in the 95<sup>th</sup> to kill a bear. Yesterday afternoon Major Thompson & I were walking down a new road we are building and he said "will you look behind us?" I looked and there was a huge looking bear about 2 ½ to 3' tall walking across the road. Well I took the shortest way to camp to try to get my rifle (G.I. Springfield Army rifle) and when I got here I looked down another path and there he was again looking at me. He was about 100 yards away, but by the time I got my gun he was going thru the bush again. There were about 30 or 40 men in camp at the time and in a few seconds they were strung up and down the edge of the bush looking for him. Every now and then someone would holler "there he goes" and I followed the yells until finally I saw him walking along. He got to an open spot, looked and saw all those men and stopped just about long enough for me to get an aim and fire. He went down like a ton of bricks. So the whole of D Co. had bear for dinner today and I have a bear skin. He weighed about 300 pounds and in cutting him up the cooks told me that the one bullet broke three ribs, behind his shoulder, his back and finally stopped in his hind leg, farthest away from me when I shot. The bear steak that I had was pretty good, and tasted a little like fried chicken although it was tough. There was quite a bit of excitement around here for a while. One cook was up there with an axe and wanted to go get him as soon as I shot. It was too dangerous and I wouldn't let him. Everybody was running around saying "did you see the bear that Lt. Kirk killed?" and then at dinner today the topic of conversation was bear meat-everybody wanted some. Anyhow it was the first fresh meat that anyone had eaten for about 11 days, the first that I have had since I got off the train May 29<sup>th</sup>. The bear was a black bear. There are really a lot of good stories going around about the bears here. The favorite I guess is the one about Capt. Berne and Major Thompson. They were walking down the right of way day before yesterday when Berne looks over on the side of the road and said "Do you see what I see?" Major Thompson said "yes" and both made for the trees on the other side of the road. Berne had a rifle and a pistol and gave the Major the pistol. Well, Major Thompson said that they stayed there sighting and aiming at the bear for 45 minutes while the bear was eating somebody's lunch on the other side of the road. Berne was supposed to shoot the bear with the rifle and then Major Thompson was to slow him down with the 45 if he charged. Well, Berne got "buck fever" and couldn't pull the trigger. Anyhow the bear looked up at them every few minutes, licking his chops and then continued eating. Finally he finished and walked off. So Berne is the laughing stock for the officers.

In walking back, the same afternoon Major Thompson heard something behind him, looked back and saw a heluva big bear walking along behind him like a dog. He says he started walking just a little faster & faster and soon out distanced the bear. I would like to have seen the Major take off. Haha.

I have been reading your letters over. I couldn't answer all of them in the last letter to save my life so I thought I would try to answer them one at a time. I think it will be fine if you send Mr. & Mrs. Lloyd a ham. I have finished the bar candy but haven't quite finished the box yet. It has really come in handy at times.

I got your picture and thought it was real good. You really do look like that you've caught "off guard" in a natural pose. I have looked at it a lot and it has made me long to get home. A lot of love making would come in now after almost a month away from each other. I hope you read between the lines that I do love you.

The way that you talk about Lynn wanting her Dada and also about John wanting to know when I am coming makes me want to come that much more. I have about three more of

your letters to answer now and I will save them until about day after tomorrow when I write again. I am about "written" out now so I will quit.

All my love,  
Stokes

P.S. sending U.S. stamps back - can't use them in Canada. I have about 30 A.M. Canadian stamps.



**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**  
June 23, Sunday P.M.

Dear Margaret,

I am sorry you have been so blue lately. I don't know exactly how to try to cheer you up although you say we are so far apart, I have found out that it is only about a 36 or 40 hour trip from Fort St. John to home by plane. That doesn't sound near as far, does it?

I hope you will get this letter on our wedding anniversary. I don't know exactly how to get you anything at all for it. The only thing I have is a bear skin to send you right now.

We are quite a distance from any kind of store, telegraph office or flower shop where I could get something. I was hoping that I would get my check before now so I could send that and possibly let you get something that I would suggest out of it. I can't do that because I haven't gotten last month's check yet. Anyhow I guess you will have to tell John to go out and pick a bunch of flowers for you or maybe Lynn would be the one. She seems to be picking all of Mrs. Wilson's by what you say.

Everything seems to be pretty bright up here now. It rained only a little yesterday and it looks like it won't rain very much more today. We had a heckuva rain during last week though, almost continuous and I was lucky to get thru with no colds, although I did get a blister on my heel from wearing my light boots. The blister is gone now and I feel fine again.

My record as having gotten the first bear and only one still stands as far as Col. Neuman's outfit stands. The other officers in some companies carry their rifles around continuously, have gotten several shots, but haven't brought home the bacon yet. They all want to know how I got him, what kind of bullets, how far and where I shot him.

I got a couple more of your letters lately one about three days ago written about the 29<sup>th</sup> May and another day before yesterday written on the 6<sup>th</sup> June. The latest letter that I received was dated June 9<sup>th</sup> and it was in the first "batch" that I received. I hope you do better than I do. I wrote last Sunday and Tuesday and intended writing again Thursday but I have been so busy up and down the road that I didn't get time. Any how it was the two/week that I told you that I would write although I am beginning to enjoy talking to you on paper, maybe I can say a little more, ha! But seriously I guess you can tell that I like to write a lot better now than say six or eight months ago. The letters I think are right much longer and I hope more interesting.

In case you haven't mailed my other shirt (wool) you can keep it at home. The army has finally relented to the extent of issuing officers two pair pants and two shirts. I got my pants and one shirt today. I have also got some clean clothes now. I have been washing clothes for about an hour and a half previously to starting this letter. I washed two prs. O.D. pants, one shirt and a lot of underwear, socks and handkerchiefs. Today has been about the first chance to dry anything out after being washed.

Major Thompson happened to see that Report of Survey that was put in for the pistol and told me that if I finally had to pay for it that he would recommend me for Captain. I don't like the idea of compensation for a loss that way but I surely wish that he would put the recommendation in. Gavan said that he was going to start some action on it a couple of weeks ago but I haven't had a chance to see him yet and find out what he has done. I guess I will finally get it, but it looks like promotions are always very slow in this organization.

A funny thing happened the other night at Charlie's Lake. A guard came in one morning all bruised up and his rifle broken and claimed that a bear had grabbed him and squeezed him. Anyhow the officers think that he must have thought he saw a bear and ran over one of these big tractors getting away from the bear. The next night Land woke up and some big animal was licking his face. He said he could feel the hot breath but it was too dark to make out what it was. He was too scared to move and couldn't get out of his sleeping bag because it was zipped all the way up to his neck. Finally he yelled over to Trent to get his flashlight and see what it was. He thought it was a bear and finally when Trent turned the light on they say that it was one of those big St. Bernard dogs that hang around camp. Was he relieved.

Guess I will quit and go over to Col. Lane's outfit and see if I can pick up a few dollars. Collected about four last night and still have about \$25. Not bad eh. No censored letters yet.

All my love,

Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

June 26, Friday P.M.

Dear Margaret,

I just received and read your letters that you wrote the 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> and also received one from Mamma. The gun came along on the same mail so I scored pretty good today. You can see though that it takes mail as long to reach me as it does you. Although at first it took almost a month to receive the first letter. I keep wondering about when you will receive the letter about my bear and what Johnny will say about it but I guess I will find out soon enough. I saw a moose yesterday for the first time since I have been here. He came loping out of the bush about a half mile away when I first saw him. He came closer until he was only about 1560 yards away and then stopped and looked at the men at work for at least a minute. Then he started moving across a wheat field and jumped a 5 ft. fence. Soon he was out of sight. It must have been a "he" because he was so large although no horns were visible. They generally loose their horns in February and should have horns beginning in May although they are very short. I guess he must have weighed around a 1000 pounds. He was really huge and when I examined his tracks they were the largest I have seen yet. I wished for my rifle then but Major Thompson carried it up to F Co. where I borrowed it, and turned it in. The Colonel issued orders the other day that no more hunting was allowed but I hope he relents later so that I can use the gun you sent me today or rather that I received today.

I have been thinking right much about today. It is our fifth wedding anniversary and I was wishing that I could be at home and have a big night out with you as a sort of celebration. I

shouldn't be but I am getting disgusted with this muck up here and that makes me want to be home that much more. The four day rain we had last week did a lot of damage to roads and bridges and I have been busy since trying to repair some of them. It slowed down the work on this project by at least 6 days according to my estimation. However, the dust has begun to fly now and it has also gotten fairly worse today, I had on Grandma's sweater and a field jacket and now I finally had to take both off.

I hope I can get over to the 34<sup>th</sup> tonight for a session. I hope it will not turn out like Walter's session did but I can't lose over about \$20 and I have won a lot more than that since I have been here.

Talking about financial matters, I guess you had better deposit that check I gave you and use it as necessary. I expect my check for May in a few days (I talked with Rasilliston over the radio a few minutes ago about it and he said that it would be in in a few days) and I will mail it as soon as I get it.

Guess I will quit now - I just had an interruption I was called to the radio by Capt. Wells and he wants to start a session up at Co. D.

I certainly hope that you did do something today and had as swell an anniversary as possible under the circumstances.

All my love, and so forth,

Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

July 4, Saturday night

Dear Margaret,

You have really been good to me lately in writing and sending me different things. Day before yesterday (Thursday) I received two letters written Sat. & Sun. and mailed on Monday. These were written to the box number and just took from Monday to Thursday to get here. That is the best of any that I have received so far. Yesterday I received three letters from you that you wrote Wed., Thurs. & Friday of last week so you can see that the Box 244 is much quicker it actually cuts about four days off the traveling time. However I expect after about the vicinity of Fort St. John to a point 50 or more miles to the north and we won't be able to use the box anymore. Anyhow continue sending the letters to the box number until I tell you to stop. It is also probably best that the newspapers and other packages be sent to Seattle.

I have received both boxes of candy that you sent. The first one I have probably told you that I had gotten but I know I didn't tell you about the second one that was wrapped up in the coveralls with the anniversary card in it. I appreciate it very much and although I haven't opened it yet I expect it to come in handy when I am candy hungry in the next month or so. I received the first box while I was working on the first bridge at Becker's Ranch and put it in the pocket of the jeep. That afternoon I moved into E Co. and carried the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalions weapons carrier and Major Thompson moved 14 miles away up to D Co. with the jeep. Consequently I didn't see my box of candy until yesterday when E Co. moved 22 miles up the line and I moved back into Battalion H.q. at F Co. During the meantime that box of candy has really been traveling and funny, most of it is still there.

Well, we are moving again tomorrow further up the line. That seems to be the biggest thing that we do now. About three or four days in one spot seems to be the maximum time. It hasn't rained for almost 18 days now and things are running fairly smooth although the marshlands are still wet and boggy. It seems funny when I tell you that the sun hasn't shined enough in the last three or four days to throw a shadow from the trees, but it is a fact. Forest fires

about a hundred miles S.W. of Ft. Nelson have resulted in a dense pall of smoke all over this section.

I finished my second bridge about a half mile west of Montney yesterday morning. It is a pretty good bridge even if I do say so. I enjoyed the construction even if we did have to hew most of the timber. However, I managed to get the Public Works of Canada to finish the decking and even went to a sawmill and had them cut me exactly what I wanted. I was in my glory there even if it was just a dinky one. They cut a lot of lumber though and only had a five man sawmill crew. Daddy will be interested in this and I think I will write them either tonight or tomorrow. He will also be interested in the kind of timber around this section. It is really beautiful to see mile after mile of virgin timber ranging 80 to 90 ft. tall with 4,000 to 12,000 ft. acre. If it were in Virginia it would be worth at least \$40 to \$100 per acre. But there is no market here in the woods and it so expensive to get to a market that it is not worth cutting.

I haven't been paid yet for either May or June and I am beginning to wonder if and when I will be paid. Anyway you should be getting the \$150 allotment sometime between July 1st and July 10th for the month of June. If you haven't already done so you will have to cash the \$700 check and replace it when you get some money.

I believe I will be getting my Captaincy before so very long. Major Thompson sent in my commendation today and it made me feel pretty good. When it goes thru and finally gets back in the form of two bars I will feel much better. I certainly believe I deserve it and also believe I had a bad break when I went to the school at Belvoir although they were some of my happiest days while I was with you and the kids.

Tell John that Daddy hasn't seen any more bears but that he saw a big porcupine with real long sharp quills on his back the other night. I also saw two wild turkeys and I am wondering what they are doing up in this part of the country. I received a letter from Mamma yesterday and have also received the coveralls with a box of cookies in it. I wish she hadn't sent them though because it takes so long for packages to get here, that they were pretty hard. Also rough treatment broke them up into crumbs. Anyhow, I have eaten right many and they are pretty good. Expect to write again tomorrow & gossip some more.

All my love,  
Stokes

**Lewis Thomas to Merle A. Kirk**  
Letterhead *USS Northampton*

July 5

Dear Aunt Merle,

From all the reports from home the wedding must have been some affair. Wish I could have been there but that seems to be asking too much at the present time.

What is Stokes's address? From what you said in your letter about him I know where he is. It is possible that I may meet up with him some time now that he is on the western side or West Coast somewhere. This ship moves about quite a bit so there is no telling where we will show up next.

I am glad to hear that Josh is getting better. He sure has been having a time but from all reports he is well on his way to recovery.

When I get back to Everets Bridge I won't know the place. The new dam on Mr. Morgan's place sure will change things a lot. That just goes to show you how things are building up. Daddy wrote and told me Norfolk has a big water shortage now and no one is allowed to even wash their car. We make our own water on board so don't have any shortage unless we start

to get careless and use too much. We average 16 gallons of water a day in warm weather per person.

I suppose mother and daddy keep you informed of all the news I can give them. So little happens that we can write about that it is quite a job now to write a letter. Stokes knows about that by now because I suppose where he now is, is as tight on censorship as we are.

We don't have much trouble sleeping when we get the chance. At sea we stand four hours on and four hours off and have to get up 1 ½ hours before sunrise. We can go to sleep in a few seconds and sleep through anything. The motion of the ship rocks us to sleep provided it isn't rough enough to almost toss us on the deck then it knocks us to sleep. Right now it is 5:30 in the morning and I have been up two hours already. Won't get to stop until after midnight tonight because of watches. As long as it helps beat the Jap we don't care.

Have just about run out of all the news so I had better close.

Love to all,

Lewis Lt. (jg) L. Thomas

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

July 6, Monday P.M.

Becker's Ranch (10 miles W. of Montney, or 21 mi N. of Fort St. John)

Dear Margaret,

I have been kept so busy lately that I didn't get a chance to write you yesterday. So far I have written most every Sunday but had to skip yesterday. Major Thompson decided the other day that I had better help E Co. out as far as from here to Montney in building bridges & culverts. So far I have completed, with the help of one platoon of men, one culvert and one bridge and have started rebuilding another bridge. The first bridge was 28 ft. long and had about 6 ft. of water in the channel. You have no idea about the work involved in the construction of such a bridge. We actually had to hew out practically all of the timbers for the bridge besides going into the bush and cutting the trees to hew the timbers out of. We did have the flooring for it. It took just about three days to finish it.

Yesterday (Sunday) I started work at 7 A.M. & stopped at 11:00 P.M. (I started out to tell you why I didn't write) so I didn't have time to write. Today I only worked 10 hours so now I have time to write.

The bridge holds up ok because a 20 ton shovel and about 15 22 ton bulldozers and other contractor's equipment went over it without making it sink the least bit. I hope the one I started this afternoon does as well.

I got your picture of the kids and it really is good. It does a lot of good to look at them every now and then and admire them. I don't know whether I told you that I had received your post card picture or not, but I think it is real good. I take it out of my pocket and look at it every now & then.

I also received the Richmond clipping of this country. In all I think there is underestimation instead of overestimation. Yes I have been stung by the "do not sees" or something and in places I have been the mosquitoes have been pretty bad. In this grove of poplars they are not so bad now.

Tuesday P.M. the dust clouds are pretty bad along the roads. In fact the dust is almost as deep as the mud, usually is about 4 inches of dust in all except the wet places and muddy spots.

Have to stop now and write again later.

All my love,

Stokes



**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**  
Farther up the line

July 12, Sunday

Dear Margaret,

I am moving forward again today and this time it really is a long one. Here to fore the moves have been 5 to 10 miles but this one is for about 30 miles. Everything is going along pretty good now. The last letter that I have received was dated July 4<sup>th</sup> and I got it on the 9<sup>th</sup> along with one from Mamma and two others from you. Every time the mail comes I get letters but the mail comes very seldom. I know you can't say that every time the mail comes that you receive a letter. I am sorry because you seem from your letters to just live for letters from me. Every time I read one of your letters I resolve to write at least three letters a week but it seems that I just fall down on the job. Anyhow, I am going to do better in the future. I said in my last letter that I was going to write Mamma but never did. However I will sometime this week.

I guess this will reach you sometime after your birthday Wednesday. Anyhow I only can hope you (have) a good time on it. I hope you took the day off and went to the beach or somewhere. By the way, the "Box 244" will close after the 20<sup>th</sup> of this month so you had best send the mail to Seattle after you receive this letter. We will be so far away from Fort St. John that it will be impossible to get any more letters from the post office there.

I am enclosing the three signed checks for drawing out the children's accounts and my small balance. You can have mine and can use the children's until I can send you some more to buy their bonds with. I haven't gotten a cent yet but I expect it in a few days. I am glad you have gotten your check for \$150. That helps you out right much but I know you need more.

We have more bears around this camp. One got to be a nuisance the other night and we had to shoot him. He was the largest I have seen since I have been here. He must have weighed at least 500 lbs. I will have to tell you the story about him. He scared the daylights out of Lt. Thompson when he walked up beside him while he was sitting on an outdoor latrine. He was really caught with his pants down and lost no time in getting away. The night he met his Waterloo we were having a session and a big disturbance of yelling, shouting and general confusion was heard. Lt. McCord went out to investigate and he met "Shorty" with his bed roll and all his belongings walking down the road and several others out on the road. "Shorty" was talking "He wasn't going to stay in that tent if the bear was too." He was pulling out for I don't know where. Anyhow, the story was that the bear started in the First Aid tent and all the patients went out the back end "Shorty" with his bedroll, etc. The bear then proceeded to go around the side of the tent and go to sleep. All of the men started coming back and standing around watching the bear and refusing to go in the tent again and be "trapped" again. So Reed and McCord had to finish him up.

The cook had a funny tale yesterday morning, too. He said that the bear's mate came up to the kitchen while he was getting ready to start breakfast. It was dark and he proceeded to get an axe and chase the bear. Well, he chased the bear down a path a little ways and he says the bear ducked behind a bush and started waiting for him. The cook said "But I saw him duck behind that bush and I stopped and ran the other way and the bear was right down behind me. So I turned the light on all the trucks close by. He lurked in the bushes for me to come out again. But I fooled him, I mean I fooled him. I didn't go out of the mess tent again". It was really funny to hear him tell it.

Guess I had better quit and move up the line. Best hopes for a happy birthday.

All my love,  
Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**  
farther up the line

July 12, Sunday night

Dear Margaret,

Just moved in the new camp and had a few minutes to start another letter. This will make two for today and it looks like I have started out on my resolution in pretty good style. I hope you get the other one before you get this one. The two of them shouldn't get to you at the same time because there is just about a day's time in distance and time written between the two letters. So John still likes to hear about the bear and train stories, does he? I bet he really does get a kick out of it. You will have to tell him the stories I told you in my morning letter. That ought to get a laugh from him. I also saw a deer yesterday morning. He was standing in the road while I was driving down it. There were three trucks on the other side of him coming his way also. He started to run into the woods on the right, then changed his mind and ran down the road towards me until he was only about 100 ft. from the truck. He then turned into the woods on the left. It was really a beautiful sight to see him bounding along.

*Monday p.m.*

Had to quit writing yesterday as I had some work to do. I really got some mail today. Three from you dated July 1, July 5 and 7<sup>th</sup>. I also got my second carton of cigarettes which make a stock of four cartons. I guess you had better stop sending them though, for about a month. This carton was pretty badly mangled and packs of cigarettes were loose in the mail bag. I got all of them, however. On second thought I guess you had better stop sending them altogether. Colonel Lane's outfit is close by and they only cost .85c a carton there and I bought 8 packages today. Several officers say that any drug store you can have an order sent there for men in the foreign service for cartons at 65c per carton. You might inquire about it and if I need more I will write and you can have them sent to me. I understand that you just give the name and address besides paying 65cents/carton and the rest is taken care of.

The mail that I have been craving to see finally came - my May & June checks. My May check is a U.S.A. one and I am sending it along with this letter for you to send or mail to Suffolk. I am also enclosing a check for \$150.00 made out to you. The June check is a Canadian check and can be used in Canada only, so I will have to cash it and make out a money order for it or most of it to you. Hope I can get it in my next letter.

I also got a letter from the Veteran's Administration about my insurance which is paid up for a year. I received the two receipts for premium payments and will mail one back to you if I can find it.

Grandma wrote me a very nice letter, and I want to write her soon. Hers was also mailed July 1<sup>st</sup> and you would never guess it was censored. She ought to get a kick out of that. Sister Virgie also wrote a nice birthday note to me. I don't know when I will be able to repay all of them but it is a hard job to get time and also write on your knee when an occasion comes along. I have been writing practically all my letters lately like that.

We have a radio in my tent and am getting practically all of the news. I don't guess it is worth sending the newspapers anymore. They get here anywhere from two to three weeks late and then, too, I don't get time to read them so I guess it is just a waste of postage to send them. I am glad you are carrying the children out to swim occasionally. I'll bet they have a grand time and really enjoy it. I thought I had something to tell you. Today I saw a woman for the first time in over 9 days. She was riding in a civilian truck that passed me. Boy, that is something in this country as wild and woolly as it is. It was quite an experience.

Well at the rate we are going now we should be thru by the end of Sept. or middle of October. I don't know what difficulties lie ahead but I know that miles of road are being built daily at the present time.

I have an exposed roll of film that I want to mail you. The scenes are as follows:

1. a typical inside woods
2. bulldozer work at 58
3. another shot - 180\* from #2
4. a jack pine forest along a stretch of uncompleted road
5. the incompleted road along a 2<sup>nd</sup> growth jack pine forest
6. a distant mountain

I don't know what 7 & 8 are. Anyway I thought you would like them and I know Daddy would like to see what the trees look like up here. I have had some pictures taken of me that I might be able to send you in about a month, that is, after they are developed.

Guess I will quit and call it a letter. Hope you are making out ok.

All my love,

Stokes

P.S. I need a new check book, this is my last one.

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

July 23, Thursday P.M.

Dear Margaret,

I have a little time before dinner and I thought I would start a letter.

I went from here to Montney yesterday and on the round trip I traveled over 200 miles. I had to pay some teamsters off who used to haul for us back at some spots which were impossible for trucks. It took about 14 hours to make the trip and I finally got in around 1:30 A.M. this morning. I had to drive the last two hours with lights on.

I got a letter from Mamma yesterday and a carton of cigarettes from you today. That makes the fourth carton that I have received so far. I want to keep you posted on them so that you can tell how many have not gotten here yet.

We have two men lost in the mountains or marsh somewhere up here. It seems as if about 16 men left C Co. last Sunday morning for Pink Mountain just as a Sunday hike. The mountain looks very close but is actually about 25 miles away. Early Monday A.M. eight of the men finally came in. They had split up and the eight that came in had turned back before reaching the mountain and they got lost and then they went up on the mountain so they could see which way to go. They got straightened out and came in. The original eight kept going to the mountain, got lost and then split up into two groups of 2 & 6. The two came in Monday afternoon. Then the 6 split up into two groups of 2 & 4 and the four finally came in Tuesday night. The last group of 2 haven't been found or haven't come in yet. We have had six or eight searching parties out for the last four days besides shooting dynamite, building fires at night on high points, searching by airplane and even have a party of Indians on horseback looking for them. I expect they can make out for several days yet.

Lt. Singer is going to Dawson Creek so I guess I will cut this short and give this to him to mail.

Will write again later in the week.

All my love,

Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Merle A. Kirk and J. Russell Kirk**  
British Columbia

July 26

Dear Mom & Dad,

I have received some mighty nice letters from you during the past several weeks. I have told Margaret that I was going to answer them "tomorrow" or "sometime soon." It seems that by the time I finish her letter that I either don't have any time left or that I don't have any thing else to write. This time I am starting yours first and will write Margaret tomorrow.

We are progressing pretty rapidly on the road during the present dry spell. In fact we are about 130 miles from where I wrote you the first time on the Peace River. This time I am doing some of the same work that I was doing then escorting a shovel over the mountainous terrain. It is very slow as it makes only about 1 mile/hour so I have a good deal of time for writing.

This time I am headed for the Sicinny River [*Sikanni*]. I don't know if it is in any of your maps or not. It is halfway between Fort St. John & Fort Nelson. One of the companies in this regiment has just completed a 20 ton bridge with 13 16 ft. spans over it. It was built in a total of three days. It is an all hewed bridge except for the flooring which is of sawn timber. Both of you can appreciate this when you consider the short construction period and the work involved in hewing out the timber for the trestle bents and stringers besides working in from two to four feet of water to place the trestles.

We are getting into the mountains now and the timber is getting much smaller in size. I guess the biggest reason for this is that about 110 years ago this region here was swept by fire which killed all trees except a few down in the muskegs. I have noticed this or the evidence of the fire for the last 60 miles. About 70 miles to the rear the jack pines and spruce range from about 6" to about 36" in most places and the land there is much lower and damper than it is here. The fire probably burned out before it got back that far. Here the jack pines are from 4" to 10" and look almost exactly like a second growth southern pine forest except that the trees are much thicker.

This is really beautiful country up here. It is very hilly and in most places the road goes along the crest of the hill in order to avoid as many muskegs as possible. This affords an excellent view of the mountains on the west and the hills on the east. The climate is very dry and I have noticed a big improvement in my hay fever. The road is very dusty but that doesn't seem to bother me any except that I need a bath after a five mile trip on it. (That doesn't mean that I didn't need one before). Everybody looks like they have just finished a day's work around a peanut picker after being out on the road a while.

How's business? I guess it is booming as usual. Margaret said the other day in one of her letters that you wanted the check I gave her for some deal. I think is a good idea to put it in land or timber if you can at the present time. I am buying a \$100 bond each month and I think that will be my share as far as the bond effect goes so it is OK to put the money in property. Guess I will quit and I will try to write again soon.

Lovingly,  
Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

July 26, Saturday P.M.

Dear Margaret,

I have just finished writing Mom & Dad and have time to write you. I told them that usually I don't have time to write them or am just "writ out" after I finish your letter and consequently they haven't gotten many. (one is all besides this) So this time I told them, I would

write them first and then write to you tomorrow but as it happens I will have time to finish yours. I am escorting a power shovel which travels at one mile per hour from the old to the new bivouac. You can see it will take quite a time to move it the 14 miles that I am going. So far we have been five miles and it is 6:00 P.M. so at that rate it will be about three or four o'clock in the morning before we arrive. Well, tomorrow is Sunday and it will be the first Sunday that I haven't actually moved on, so I will just spend the first three or four hours of it actually moving so I will have moved every Sunday by the time we get there.

I forgot to tell Mamma that I had received the birthday present two years subscription to Reader's Digest and that the first issue came about a week ago. You will have to tell her how much I appreciate it.

Right now I am eating some of the home town (Suffolk) product one of a bunch of Planter's peanut "Jumbo Blocks". That sounds kind of funny since the nearest civilization (even a farm) except for that on the road is over a hundred miles away.

You will have to pardon the dust since I am only about forty feet from the highway or road and passing trucks and heavy equipment are throwing up clouds of it.

I wonder if my writing is any better in this letter. I am using the little desk that pulls out on the right hand side across from the driver. It is a little handier than writing on my knees.

I just saw Molvie and he says that he hasn't found the two missing C Co. men yet. Tomorrow morning they will have been gone for seven days and if they are not in by then their chances are slim. The two Indians found their trail, but then they doubled back and got mixed up with the various trails of the searching parties and then they said "We no can track anymore".

I received a letter from Grandma the other day and it was interesting. Guess I will quit now and probably write Grandma & you tomorrow.

All my love,

Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Aug. 2, Sunday A.M.

Dear Margaret,

I expect to move forward again today. This being Sunday it is no more than usual. Right now, I am with D Co. - 1<sup>st</sup> platoon and living with Lt. Powers. I rather like it as we are off by ourselves and about 15 miles from Battalion Hq. but however we are only a half mile from Regt. Hq. Our P.X. supplies finally arrived the other day and you can cease sending cigarettes entirely. We have plenty of them now and they cost only 90c Canadian money, or about 80 American money. That is much cheaper than what you have to pay and I don't think it is much more than if you ordered thru a drug store. The conveniences of buying here makes up for any difference in cost.

I received my last batch of newspapers day before yesterday. They were dated thru July 19<sup>th</sup> so that is not such bad service. I have changed my mind about them and would like for you to begin sending them again. I have sort of gotten interested in them again and I know I will miss them when they stop for a while so please start sending them again.

Your letters have been coming in regular all along. I may have missed a few sent to the wrong address but I don't think so.

I went in swimming the other day for the second time this summer. This time it was in the Sicinny River and boy was it cold. After coming out I was numb all over and really did feel good. Most of the water that flows into this river has ice just a few days before. In fact ice conditions on the frozen south bank made crossing very difficult and now solid ice can be seen

just a few inches in the mountain side. I got a hair cut the other day and had it all cut off except for about an inch of hair on top. It used to be hard to control but now it is impossible.

Powers and I wanted to take a bath before moving so I guess I had better stop and will write later in the week. I really do miss you and hope we will leave here for home before long.

All my love,  
Stokes

**Arthur Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**  
233 W. Walnut St Carlisle, PA

Aug. 5

Dear Mom,

I have been pretty busy this week & that is the reason I haven't written sooner. I got my first ride in a jeep last Monday & it was pretty nice. I also gave my first lecture to the men on Monday & the 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. who is pretty outspoken as to what he thinks, said it was a good lecture. We will have to give more as time progresses. I am going to start a class in beginner's swimming next week & help with the athletics as well. I think that this month in the Bar. will be pretty interesting & will teach me a lot that I will need to know. Some of my classmates are up here this month taking the course & I guess I'll see different ones all year long. I am going to try to get home any day this month if it is possible. I got on as O.D. this afternoon.

Love,  
Arthur

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Aug. 7, Friday P.M.

Dear Margaret,

I think I told you in my last letter that I expected to move. Well I didn't move Sunday but I came here to fight forest fires eight past five Monday night. "Pappy" Gordon had a blaze to start near his camp Monday about 4:00 P.M. and by Monday night at 12:00 M. it had traveled about 2 miles. About that time the wind died down and it has gradually been coming under control ever since until now there are just a few stumps burning. This type of fire is awfully hard to stop because it travels so fast from tree to tree when the wind is blowing the least bit. Then, too, when there is no wind it will just burn for days in the spruce and jack pine needles which are covered with a timber dry moss. Also in this area, the ground is covered with dead trees which were killed in a forest fire about 25 years ago. This wood is perfectly solid and also tinder dry. These conditions make a fire awfully hard to control. For the past two nights I have been in charge of the night shift from 7 P.M. to 7 A.M. and expect to have another night of it tonight making the rounds along the outside limits of the fire keeps me pretty busy though I guess I walked at least ten miles last night on my rounds.

I have seen two displays of the "Northern Lights" so far. Night before last they were centered east of here at least 50 or more miles away but were not near so vivid and bright as they were last night when they were centered directly above this area. Night before last they appeared at about 2:30 A.M. and last night at 4:00 A.M. and lasted about a half hour each time. They were really beautiful both times.

I got a couple of letters from you day before yesterday one mailed on July 27 and the other on the 28<sup>th</sup>. They seem to be coming thru slower than before we moved up the line so far.

You have been talking about your hot weather right much. Hope it is beginning to get cooler. We had a sample of it during the last two or three days. I don't know what the temperature is but it is surely hot & dry. Right now I am just in my underwear writing this letter

and it is about 5:00 P.M. and I am still hot and perspiring. I just finished taking a really long bath and boy was I filthy after four days of tramping in the burned bush. I used about four wash pans full of water to bath and last time the water was so stiff with mud & charcoal that I could hardly pour the water out. That is getting pretty dirty. How about it?

Guess I will quit this one and write again Sunday.

All my love,  
Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Aug. 14, Thursday P.M.

Dear Margaret,

I just finished reading five of your letters and one from Mamma. The latest one was written by you this past Sunday night when you were so blue. I am sorry I haven't written oftener but during the period from the "resolution" to now, I have been so awfully busy. As I wrote last Sunday I had been fighting fire the previous week and this week I have been placed in charge of E Co and have really been having a time of it. Capt. Stokes of E Co. broke his arm in two places last Sunday and the Colonel put me in command of the company. The operation of this Company is a little different from others and thereby is a little harder to actually catch on to. I can't say but just so much now, but I will tell you all about it later back in the states.

Don't know and haven't heard what we will do during this winter, but I certainly hope that we will be back soon after the first of November. All kind of latest dope, rumors, grapevine knowledge, etc., is being spread but officially there is no news that I know of.

The fishing is splendid up here in this vicinity. The Colonel sent his chauffeur fishing today with orders to catch some fish for him. Well, Corp. Little took the day off and went fishing. He came back thru our new bivouac over to which we moved today with several small fish and one huge speckled trout which was about 24 inches long and I guess it weighed about 4 ½ pounds. So the Colonel eats fish tomorrow. (Send me some fish hooks a couple with a ¾" dia. mouth and a couple with an inch diameter mouth.)

The Colonel also called an officer's meeting after dinner for the H & S Co. officers. Just as soon as they were assembled he dismissed all except Gavan, Williston and another officer. He then proceeded to get a mirror and told the officers to look at themselves in the mirror and asked them "Don't you think you ought to do something about it"? He meant that they ought to shave and immediately after the one question he dismissed them. Well, Gavan & Williston were fit to be tied. They could almost snap your head off all afternoon from under that beard. Aubrey Holmes says that they went tearing into everybody all afternoon.

Guess you got my last letter pretty long after it was written. It was returned to me because they have stopped accepting Canadian postage. Will stop now and write again later.

All my love,  
Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Aug. 16, Sunday P.M.

Dear Margaret,

It is still pretty warm up here and just as dry as any place I have ever seen. You have probably seen an inch or two of dust (I mean plain dust without any sand) around home, but you ought to take a drive over one of these mile stretches up here. There is over 12 inches of dust in some places and yesterday we had a truck to get stuck in it. It seems to be just a powder probably

ground rock dust. It has bothered me just a little lately but to no great extent (that is as far as my fever is concerned).

You should have gotten at least three letters in addition to this one lately. Your long stretch without receiving any letters is over I hope because you certainly should have received four (counting this one) since the stretch started.

I have been counting property and trying to look after other work at the same time today. Consequently I am pretty tired and think I will go to bed early, even if I do have to work Sunday. I stayed in bed this morning until almost ten o'clock which I really enjoyed. About your contemplated job, I think it might be the best thing you could do. I don't know how to tell you to arrange it as far as the children are concerned but if you could get someone for them, I know a job would do you a lot of good.

Don't know of much to write about that would pass the censor except that this is another Sunday that we didn't move. However, I expect that we will have to move sometime Tuesday. We just got into this area last Thursday.

All my love to my darling,  
Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Aug. 17, Monday

Dear Margaret,

Today was moving day again and each time it looks like we move about fifteen miles. We are now located in a jack pine and poplar grove. In coming up today to locate a place for the company, I had a fairly hard time to find one. These spots such as this we are camped on now are usually very small and the road always runs thru the middle of them since this type of forest is always a sign of hard ground and that is what we are looking for. I was looking at a small muskeg about twenty feet across this afternoon and in building the road across it I noticed that it had been dug into about four feet and that rotten wood and vegetable matter besides burned wood were noticeable at that depth. It probably took centuries or maybe thousands of years to cause the burned wood to be buried at that depth. So the fires that we have had are really not an uncommon thing. They were probably caused centuries ago by lightening or Indians. I haven't found an Eskimo yet. Gotten tired of looking so there is no need of getting worried about that.

Tell John to "guess what, Da ya saw a bear yesterday, the day before and the day before that." It was the same one each time that I saw him because he had a white V in the center of his chest just below the neck. He was really a beautiful bear and had a coal black fur that just glistened in the sun. Somebody had dumped some garbage on the side of the road and that was the reason I saw him so much. He was after the food and made his appearance very often at this place. He wasn't afraid of anything and Major Thompson actually hit him with a rock.

Got a couple of letters from you day before yesterday and I was very anxious to know whether you had heard from me or not. You didn't say yes, but you didn't say anymore about not hearing. Then this morning while moving out of the tent I found another letter on the ground back of my bed, or cot. That one gave me the information about hearing from me that I wanted to know. This letter had probably fallen back there or blown back there from off of the bed. Guess I will quit now and retire.

All my love,  
Stokes



**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Sept. 6, Sunday

Dear Margaret,

I hardly know what to write about tonight - about the same things are going on as have been for the past several weeks. I have seen several bears during that time. Actually I don't believe I have missed seeing at least one for the last ten days. Day before yesterday some of Casto's men caught one by a foot with a rope but he finally got away. He really did claw some trees up before he did get away. Then today I watched them catch the same bear in a trap. It seems as if the bears like to rummage around in old garbage pits so there was an old pit close to Casto's bivouac area and his men constructed a cage around the garbage pit, put a top on it and constructed a trap door designed to fall down and close the cage when the bear went in it. Well just as soon as the men finished and got away about thirty feet the bear walks up, looks at the cage and walks in. Casto ran over to the tree at which the trap door was operated by a rope and let the rope loose which closed the door. The bear stayed in there just long enough to turn around and go out between two of the bars. I went out on recon for about two hours and now I will finish this letter as I understand that Casto has now repaired the cage and caught the bear. Some officers have not even seen a bear yet so I guess this one will be an exhibit. I saw a picture which one of the radio boys took when I killed mine. He won't let me have a copy as he only has one. I will send it to you as soon as he has more copies made.

I have received right many pictures of John & Lynn here lately. You mentioned that I hadn't said anything about getting them, but I have received a bunch of them and have just failed to say anything about it. I really appreciate them because it gives me an idea on how they are, what they are doing and how they are growing. I can't see so much difference in John but I can see a lot of difference in Lynn. I don't know how long before we leave here but I would very much like to be home with you & the children. It has been a long time and I certainly hope it won't be so much longer.

I wish you would send the Kodak or Mamma's camera to me. I would like to have a few pictures of this wilderness when I leave. Don't forget to send several rolls of film because it can't be bought up here. What I can't tell you on paper I can show by pictures or movie later on.

I received the fish hooks & candy day before yesterday. The peanut brittle was good and I want to open the other can in a few days but I am afraid it won't last long so I will put it off as long as possible. We can get several different kinds of candy such as Mounds, Baby Ruth, etc., but the brittle is a welcome change.

Our long daylight hours are getting short now. I have been listening to the radio while writing this letter and it is now about 10 P.M. and I have to use a light to write. In fact, it has been dark since about 8:00 P.M. and the days are growing short very fast. It is about time to turn in so I just stop by sending you

All my love,  
Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Sept. 7, Monday P.M.

Dear Margaret,

I received two letters from you and one from Daddy today and I feel rather badly for not writing you more often. It looks like I get at least seven letters from home for every one that I write and then I resolve to write more often and find my resolution has fallen by the wayside at the end of two or three days. The main reason for the long time in between letters is that my job with this company causes me to put in so many more hours work than it would with any of the

others. It is now five o'clock - quitting time job. It is practically a twenty four hour job with no rest for the weary. Although I haven't been putting in but about fourteen hours a day if I did everything I was supposed to do, I guess it would take 24 hours. I want to do some electric welding on the jeep that I drive and have been intending to do it for the last week but haven't had a chance yet. You know how crazy I am about electric welding so you can see I am pretty busy.

You have been talking about how cold it is at home. We have had a little cold weather up here, too. A couple of mornings last week there was a thick skim of ice on all the small ponds of water around here. I understand too that there has been snow farther up the line. Well, what with the weather conditions, the progress of the road, difficulties encountered and most everything else being censored there is nothing left to write about. Oh, yes, there is something else - I am going to take a bath tonight in a wash tub. I have already heated one bucket of water and have another just about boiling now. I guess between dust & mud that taking a bath is about the cleanest thing that I can write about and I am sure no one can censor that. As you used to say "It is doing it again" so you use your imagination as to what I am washing off.

The letter from Daddy was typewritten and he really didn't waste any words in telling me what was going on at home. Although it was about a page and a half long it was really equivalent to about six pages chock full of Everett's news. I want to write them again soon to answer their letters because I do like to hear from them also. I will have to wash up now so I will write again later in the week.

All my love,

Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Sept. 16, Wednesday

Dear Margaret,

Well I guess you can start doing some of your talking to other people instead of listening to some of their bragging. Your "old man" is a Captain now and has been ever since Monday about 4 P.M. Boy, am I glad that I finally got it. It was a long hard struggle but it finally came thru from Washington and is dated Aug 25, 1942. That is the date of rank and Monday Sept 14, 1942 is the date of the beginning of Captain's pay (I gave out of ink and some red ink was handy so I am using it.) I wanted to write you about it Monday night but I was kept so busy celebrating in a G-5 meeting that I didn't get a chance. Then last night or yesterday I took a 150 mile trip and didn't get back in time to write. The raise in rank will mean a raise in pay of between \$50 & \$60 which "ain't hay." You will have to celebrate by buying yourself a new outfit with the check I am enclosing. Let Joe DeGrimes carry you to a dance or someplace that you will enjoy yourself.

I am sorry that you hurt yourself in lifting those heavy boxes. You will have to be more careful and let someone do that heavy work for you. I don't want a banged up wife when I get back because I am really going to do some stepping when I get back - that is if the gas and the little woman hold out. How about it? There won't be any time a-wasted and we have a lot to do and have a lot to make up for because of these last four months. Anyhow I am glad you are feeling O.K. and don't have to wear the adhesive tape.

If by the time you haven't sent the camera or Kodak you can let it go because I am getting one from Lt. Bradley and is expected to be here by latter part of this month. Don't forget the shotgun shells because it is next to impossible to get them here. On that box of shells I got from Aubrey Holmes I got a muskrat that required five shots and I also got one duck yesterday morning out of four shots and four more ducks last night out of four shots. That makes a total of eight ducks and one muskrat out of twenty-two shots. Not a single duck that I wounded has

gotten away and I have clearly missed only twice. I had to shoot some of the ducks twice and one other four times to get them. I think that is a pretty good average so far but I guess now I will have to stop hunting as there are only three shells left. I will leave those for some of the grouse and spruce hens that are so thick up here. They are about the size of a frying size chicken and usually just sit and look at you when you come up on them. There is no more news at present and there goes the chow call so I'll stop.

All my love,  
Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**  
Fort Wilson, BC

Sept. 21, Monday

Dear Margaret,

I have just finished dinner and have a few minutes to write so here goes. We have been here for over a week and one or two exciting things have happened since my promotion. Colonel Twitchell is leaving the outfit along with Major Munro and Capt. Holmes. They will probably go to some job in connection with the road but are not going back to the states just yet. I don't know yet exactly what is going to happen this winter. Rumors fly thick and fast one day we are leaving by the last of October and the next day we are staying up here all winter and leaves will be granted up here. It is hard to tell what will happen until somebody higher up comes to a decision.

We are really having fall weather up here today. It is very warm and bright and windy. In fact it is so warm that I am perfectly comfortable in O.D. uniform plus a woolen undershirt. I guess this must be the lull before the storm of cold weather. The leaves on most all of the poplar and birch trees have turned yellow and are falling very fast. It sounds like rain every time a breeze blows thru the trees and the leaves fall down on the tent.

I expect that all of the geese have left this part of the country. I haven't seen or heard any for several days now. I also looked for some ducks at my secret duck pond night before last but didn't see a single one. Some men had been cutting wood close by all day and I expect they were frightened away. I am very short on shells, but you forget about sending any. It is like you said in your letter that it is dangerous to send them as I suggested. I am glad you decided not to send them because there is no telling the amount of trouble it might cause you. I started to write you Wednesday and tell you not to send any, but I got your letter along with about four others telling me that you had decided not to send them. Anyway I have a friend in the air corps who is going to get them from Edmonton for me. It is over 800 miles from here to Edmonton but I expect that he should have them inside of a week. He is getting three boxes and then I will have plenty of ammunition for ducks, spruce hens and grouse. I wish I had a dog or two to help me hunt the spruce hens & grouse but that is the impossible up here. By the way, I believe you wrote me once that Pep (the dog) had been missing for several weeks and that he was believed dead. Did he ever come back?

I received your box of candy and chewing gum the other day and it came in at a good time. Our PX is completely sold out of candy & chewing gum and has been for about two weeks. Some goods are expected in the next two or three days, so don't send any more until I let you know. What I have now will last a month or more. I really was glad to see the box that is more proof that you think a lot of me (as if I needed proof). I have also gotten all five cartons of cigarettes and don't need any of them since the P.X. has a right good stock of them. Will stop and get busy again.

All my love, Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Sept. 23, Wednesday noon

Dear Margaret,

I got a letter from you this past Monday that you wrote last Wednesday and mailed Thursday A.M. Four days time for mail is exceptionally good. Even though we are now farther away facilities are so that mail does not have near as much delay as formerly. I also got a letter yesterday that you wrote a day earlier and was also mailed a day earlier but I received it a day later than the one you wrote Wednesday.

I am sorry that I can't be at home to answer Lynn & John when they call me. I really do miss the little rascals and I know I will hardly be able to recognize them when I do get home. I can tell by the pictures you send me that they are growing fast. I don't know what we are going to do this winter but it looks like we will spend the winter here. I haven't heard anything official on it yet but everybody is giving up hope of getting back for the winter. As I get it however, leaves will be granted while here to take effect after reaching some central point in the states. When I get mine, I certainly want it to be dated just prior to Christmas and to last thru New Year's Day.

You said in your letter that you had fried chicken well today for dinner we had fried grouse, celery, apples, tomatoes and tea. Major Thompson went out hunting last night for fifteen or twenty minutes and brought back two grouse. You can kill them very easily and only a 22 rifle is needed. (The Major will probably be out done when he returns for dinner today to find most of his grouse already gone or eaten. He went out on the road and hasn't returned.) I would like for you to buy me a very cheap single shot 22 (second hand if no new ones can be bought). You can send it by mail and get Sears Roebuck or Montgomery Ward to ship the 22 shells by express (or any way they choose) and save yourself any possible trouble about it. You might also get them to ship a couple boxes of 12 gauge #5 shot (heavy load) to me. They will know how to get the shells to me.

Guess I will cut this short and get back to work again. I have got to go down the road and see how things are coming.

All my love,

Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Sept. 30, Wednesday

Dear Margaret,

Lately I have been expecting a letter from you addressed "Capt." but as yet I haven't received one. I wrote you the Wednesday following the Monday that I was sworn in as a Capt. Let's see, that is, I wrote you about it two weeks ago today. Anyhow, I received three letters today and the last one you wrote was Tuesday night down at Everets and you hadn't received my letter up to that time. I gave it to Capt. Stokes to mail for me over at the APO a few miles away and it should have gotten to you by Sunday, Sept. 20. I have written twice since then and if Capt. Stokes forgot to mail the letter I expect you will get one of the others first and wonder why the changes in my return address. I was surprised to receive a typewritten letter from you. At first I just glanced at it and thought it a letter from Daddy because he usually types all the letters I get except official ones. When I got back to the tent and looked at it I saw that it was from you. It was the easiest reading of all the letters I have received from you and gave my eyes a chance to rest up a little - Ha.

I also heard from Josh and he really did tickle me. He said that he guessed that I had heard all of the news from you and "Cousin Merle" but he was going to give me the inside dope. Then he rambled on about his girl, Arthur's and finally ended up talking about the mill. I enjoyed his letter and also Mamma's page that she put in.

You will have to tell John that Daddy received the picture of a train and army truck (I guess I received one in some news papers even if Riley did throw John's away that he cut out.) Also tell him that Daddy sees lots & lots of Army trucks every day, but that he hasn't seen a train for a real long time for over four months now and was real glad to see a picture of one. Trains are very, very scarce up here.

I went hunting last Saturday night and Sunday. The best way to hunt up here is to get in a truck and ride until you see something. Saturday night Capt. Bone and I went hunting in my weapons carrier and went about eight miles before the W.C. broke down. It always seems that way when you go out on purposes other than something strictly official something happens. We had to be towed in backwards by a passing truck. One of the favorite ways of towing up here is to lash bumper to bumper and then travel. After my rear bumper was lashed tight to his rear bumper we started and that driver really traveled for eight miles. Anyhow, we were seeing where we had been in that one ride. Berne had it fixed that night and we started again early (6:30 A.M.) the next morning. Both of us had army rifles and Berne had his pistol. We stopped twice and shot at some of the spruce hens and grouse that are usually on the road but only got one since they are hard to hit with a pistol and we wanted to save the rifle ammunition for moose and deer. Well, we hunted off and on all day and didn't see a thing that we were interested in and finally gave up in disgust when a couple of moose were reported as being seen by truck drivers right after we had been along the place where they were seen. The drivers said that they just stopped the truck and looked at the moose and the moose just looked back at them. Then, too, three moose and six deer had been seen by some men coming in from work the day before. We spent about five or six hours on the road and didn't see a thing other than P.C. [*Prairie chicken*], or grouse.

Well, I am back at it again - lumber & trees. We are running a saw mill and Major Thompson put me in charge of it. It is an "issue" or "G.I." sawmill and brand new. Daddy will probably be very interested in it and I will try to give most of the details. At present (it is a ground mill) it consists of only a carriage, mandrel and frame, roller table and 120 H. P. engine. It had already been set up by some civilians and had cut maybe 2 or 3 M feet. It was decided though that we could do more with it so it was taken over yesterday morning. I have one small tractor to log the mill and we managed to cut almost 8 M feet yesterday. I don't think we did much better today, but with new crews and breaking in sawyers, etc. that is not bad. The supply of timber is no bother at all. Saturday & Sunday I was timber cruising along with the hunting and where the mill is I estimated 325 M ft. and the timber looked as if it kept on & on so I turned around and went back to the mill and hadn't been much over ¼ mile from it. So you can see, timber is no problem.

Guess I will stop this now and give your eyes a break.

All my love,  
Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Oct. 4, Sunday

Dear Margaret,

I received a couple of letters from you yesterday and three today with the latest one mailed last Wed. & written Tuesday. That is doggone good service and will probably continue to

be as long as we are fairly close to *censored*. I also received a letter from Mamma and hope to be able to answer it in the next two or three days. I am not as busy now as I have been previously. Sunday is an idle day with the sawmill not operating on Sundays. We did pretty good last week at it, 10 M feet is not bad for 5 days cutting and at the same time breaking in crews and getting everything organized. Then too we only have the circular saw, no edger's, trimmers or cut off saws at all.

Sunday, I said a few lines back, is an idle day. Not so as far as today is concerned. Lt. Paquette came in and said that he had shot a bull moose on the road about thirteen miles from here and wanted to know if I wanted to go back with him & help get him. He shot at the moose five times but ran out of ammunition and believed that he was lying wounded just a few hundred yards off the road. He got some more ammunition and Capt. Berne, Lt. Jenney & I went with him. The moose trail was easy to follow as he had lost a lot of blood and after going for a half mile we came up on him and just got a fleeting glimpse of him running thru the woods. Paquette shot at him again but missed. We followed his trail for about two more miles thru the bush and at times it was very difficult to follow because he would double back on his trail and confuse us. Any how we followed the trail until the footprints became so mixed up with other moose footprints that it was impossible to attempt to trail any longer. After loosing the trail we followed another trail for quite a distance and could find no evidence of it being the same one we were after so finally it was called off and we went in. After snow gets on the ground I want to try to get one. They are easier trailed then. The one that got away today was as big as a horse and I guess he must have weighed at least 1200 lbs.

How I wish that I had brought some of my 30 caliber ammunition up here with me. I hope you get what I mean on the 22 caliber rifle and extra long ammunition. I meant for you to purchase it for me and have the company you buy it from mail or express it to me. I thought I made it clear but from your letters it wasn't very clear. Maybe there is another missing link in my letter chain to you. I am not sure but I think I wrote a letter between the 6<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup> of Sept. and I know I asked you in one to buy a cheap 22 rifle and have the store send it to me along with the ammunition. I guess you will get it sooner or later.

You have said a lot about your hot & cold days at home. We are having our share, too. It is nice and comfortable during the day but practically every night now it is freezing. This morning we had about a quarter inch of ice on all standing water. It usually is frozen over solid up here in about three or four weeks so by the end of October expect it will be pretty cold. We have been issued warm winter clothing so it won't be so bad. I have my parka and heavy shoes and also have my heavy socks & trousers. The parka has sheepskin lining and promises to be very warm.

I am glad John is getting along well at kindergarten. Evidently he likes it fine and I believe it will help him a lot. Tell him to study real hard and Daddy will see how smart he is when Daddy gets home.

It looks like we will be stuck up here for the winter. However, I believe leaves will be granted for a month to all personnel and boy will I be happy to get mine. I would like for it to start around Dec. 15 and last until Jan. 15 if at all possible. I would like to be at home for Christmas as the kids are at an impressionable age. Last Christmas wasn't as happy as it could have been since John was in the hospital at that time.

I thought I would never catch up on the papers you have been sending but today I read the last one I had which was dated Friday Sept. 18. During the last three days I have read all that

you sent me that were dated from about Sept. 1st to the 18<sup>th</sup> that shows how far I was behind. Guess I will quit and write again some time during the middle of the week.

All my love,  
Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Oct. 12, Monday

Dear Margaret,

I thought at first I would put date and location in the heading but since the censor cut it out one time, I guess I had better stop it. There is no justification for the cutting out of the place in the other letter since we had a P.O. Box for a month or two at another place on the line and no one ever said anything about that. The same should apply for here as applied at St. John.

Just came from the saw mill and everything seems to be going pretty good. We are working until 10 P.M. and starting at 4 A.M. now. It is pretty bad to have to work such long hours but I guess whatever we get done now will take that much off of what we have to do when it gets cold. However it is getting pretty chilly now. It has been below freezing since about 6 P.M. tonight and I expect the temperature is about 27\* or 28\* now. In spots water didn't thaw out at all during the day so we must be approaching the cold spell. Anyway don't you worry about the cold weather up here because we now have clothes to take care of the cold. The tent is also nice and comfortable.

I got three letters from you today - also got one from Mamma. The last of yours was written on the 7<sup>th</sup> so I expect I have all of the last minute news. Tell John that Da-ya received the picture of the apple that he drew and it looked almost just like the one that he ate today. Your going to see Dr. Campbell reminds me that I will have to see our dental officer pretty soon. Six months is not due yet but I know I have some work to be done.

About the present for Xmas, I hope I will be able to be at home Xmas and that you will not have to mail a present (the pajamas look pretty good to me), however, Dec. 1 will make it arrive here in plenty of time.

I paid off the battalion during the last three or four days. I started early last Thursday A.M. and got back this afternoon and I expect I traveled at least 450 miles I have yet about 30 men to finish paying but that small number doesn't worry me now because it is almost impossible to pay them unless I travel about 1000 miles more so I will wait and let them come to me (came out only 50 cent short).

Guess what! I had a turkey dinner yesterday. It must be the first time I have tasted turkey in well over 6 months and boy was it good. I ate at a civilian camp and they really did dish it out. Topped it off with pie but they didn't have any ice cream. I have gotten so now that I don't know what ice cream is. That is a heck of a way to be isn't it.

I bought a box of blue plums today for \$2.50 and they are real good. There must be 300 or 400 plums in the box and I will probably be sick before I finish eating them. (I just had to stop then and eat a couple of them.) I am getting a pretty good assortment of eats on my table next to the bunk. I have the box of plums, a beer (quart size), a whole box of Hershey's (with almonds), a can of chicken noodle soup, a can of apple juice and two large cans of grapefruit juice. It sounds pretty good, doesn't it?

I am getting up pretty good and early tomorrow morning (3:30 to go out with the early shift at 4:00 A.M.) so I will stop and write in two or three days.

All my love,  
Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Oct. 13, Tuesday

Dear Margaret,

I expect today has been about our coldest day so far with a maximum temp of about 40\*. It hasn't bothered me so much though as it is a rather dry cold. I wish I could trade my open weapon's carrier for a truck now. We are getting heaters for all vehicles and unless there is a closed cab with the heater, it won't do much good. Guess I can bum rides as I have been doing and at the same time be careful that the rides are in closed cabs.

Guess you are surprised that I am writing two letters in two days. I haven't been writing near as often as I wanted to and may be during the next month or so I can partially make up. You should get the letter I wrote last night sometime Sunday. It was mailed fairly early this morning and should be on the plane now. I guess that this is the first time that I have written you in succession without hearing from you (except during the first 25 or 30 days).

"Pappy" Gordon is now my new boss. He has been made Cmdr. and is really happy to have it. I broke the news to him night before last when he came into his camp. I happened to be there paying his Co. off.

I guess being his adjutant, there won't be so much trouble running this battalion. Right at the present time though I am on special duty with the Regt. Hq. and will be while I am operating the saw mill.

Don't know whether I told you or not but we increased daily production from 8,000 ft. per day for the first week to 10,000 ft. per day for the second week. I hope we will reach the 12,000 ft. average per day during this week. Daddy will probably be very interested in this. I expect we have at least two months cutting where we are at the rate we are going. It is just about as pretty timber as I have seen although it is very scarce here. Forest fires during the last fifty to seventy five years have left very few places untouched.

Well, well, mail just came in and I scored with one letter mailed last Thursday (written Wednesday night Oct. 7) and two sets of papers dating from Monday Sept. 21 to Sunday Sept. 27. Glad to see them along with the Coronet and Tech gram. Reading material was getting scarce.

I expect I had better run down to the mill for a while so I will close and write again later.  
All my love,  
Stokes

**Arthur Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**

Oct. 14

Medical Field Service School  
Carlisle Barracks, Carlisle, PA

Dear Mom,

Things are still just about the same as before. George Shope & Alison have been sent down to Texas to a Mixed Regiment & I imagine he will probably be there for about 5-6 months.

I can understand why they will keep Stokes up there in place of sending him home, because it takes quite a while to acclimate men, whereas those already there were conditioned to the weather & conditions. As far as being safe is concerned it is just like putting him on ice for the greater part of the war. They tell me that Canada is like an ice box anyway.

It was rather strange to see boys that I knew in school come up for a few weeks & then move on to a new station. Last night the boys in the OCS [*Officer Candidate School*] had a night problem as one of our squads came in 1<sup>st</sup> out of 20 squads & another came out last.



Last night between the time I was checking trucks in & out of the post I went over to the gym & heard Gene Krupa & his band who were sponsored by Coca Cola & we had all of the free Kolas we wanted to drink. Everything seems to be about the same.

Arthur

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Oct. 21, Monday

Dear Margaret,

It looks like my stay up here in the wilds of Canada is going to be pretty profitable. I was just going over my check book and since my July pay I have cashed only one measly \$10.00 check. Then, too, I had \$111.47 left from my May and June pay. I believe I sent you right much of the pay for those two months after adding Sept. pay in, I had \$377.18 in bank. I also have two \$100 bonds coming to me, one for August & one for September. \$75 is being taken out each month for a bond and I expect you will be getting them from the government sometime soon.

I have taken some pictures with your camera (the one you sent me) and had them developed by one of the men. The camera took pretty good pictures considering that there is no focus adjustment and the shutter speed is not variable.

Your travel check finally came and you can deposit it in bank in Suffolk sometime when you are over there. I am also enclosing my check so that you can get your money.

We moved the mill to a new location since yesterday. That accounts for me not writing since about last Thursday. I started preparing the site last Saturday and had it all ready yesterday afternoon. We stopped sawing at 3:00 P.M. yesterday and started sawing at 11:30 this morning. Although the move was only a quarter of a mile the time required was remarkably low, I think.

Daddy might be interested in knowing that the average day cut for the last two weeks has been about 10,500 ft. That isn't so bad but I hope to step it up to over 12,000 in the new location.

Guess I will stop and write again tomorrow night. I expect the censor will open this letter with all the pictures and checks in it so you will probably not get this one until it has been delayed four or five days. So I expect you will hear from me tomorrow night before you get this one.

All my love,

Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

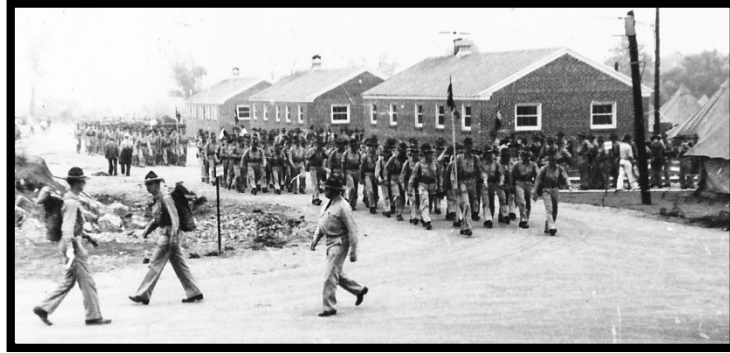
Oct. 27, Tuesday

Dear Margaret,

I didn't get a chance to write last Thursday hope to make up for it tonight. I left here Friday A.M. and finally got back yesterday about noon. I didn't go so far but the snow held me up a day. It didn't snow so much but it made the roads slippery by thawing and then freezing. I found out what I wanted to know though about the timber in that section. It is getting so here at the sawmill camp that we have all of the comforts of home - except a wife and bathroom. We have electric lights, wood floors (sawdust) and a stove that is about to drive me out. The reason we have electric lights is that we put in a generator for lights at the mill and ran lines to all of the tents. The mill is running nights so we have light up to 10 P.M. They are really a help too after having candle light for several months.

I was really swamped with mail when I got back yesterday. That was the first mail since Sunday before last. I am like you now from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 26<sup>th</sup> is a long time between mail. It isn't your fault or mine either because I understand that all mail planes were grounded during that time.

# Carlisle Barracks, PA



Arthur Kirk  
on right, facing  
camera

I haven't heard any dope about leaves lately that is, official news. The latest latrinagram (gossip) has it that leaves & furloughs will start Nov. 1<sup>st</sup> with a max of 28 days plus travel time. That sounds mighty good to me. I could use a week of that time at home right now. How about it?

Don't know what to say about what color dress for you to get. I haven't seen a "skirt" for so long that I don't what is the fashion or what to tell you to get. Better let your Mother get it because she always pleases you and I am always well satisfied. I received about four letters from you yesterday besides one from Mamma and another from Daddy, a book from Wesley Chapel, an official letter, another one stating that I didn't have to pay for the pistol since neglect was not proven, the letter I wrote Sebell (which was written last April) was returned. (It went all over the country and back to Bragg and then to me) and I also got the proofs of Lynn. I think that they are really good and I would really give most anything to see her and the rest of my family. You will have to squeeze them for me and get them to do the same to you for me.

Guess I will quit and write again later on in the week.

All my love,  
Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Oct. 30, Friday P.M.

Dear Margaret,

The cigarette question has arisen again - that is, they are not available up here since our P.X. has sold out and there are none to be had. Guess you know what I want, that is right. I would like for you to send me about two cartons as soon as you can after receiving this letter. However, by that time I will probably be reformed as for as sending is concerned. I've about five packs left which will last about five days until just about the time you get this letter. Then I will have to wait at least two weeks for them. I just hope that they get into our P.X. the new shipment which has been on its way for a month before the end of 4 or 5 days.

The sun is really sinking down in the sky now. Today it came out from behind the clouds for the first time in about ten days and I had a chance to see where it was. In about two more months I don't guess we will be able to see it at all. I just took a notion to write tonight but I don't know of anything really interesting to write about. I expect I had cigarettes on my mind more than anything else.

I am glad John is making out well at school.

All my love,  
Stokes

(P. S. A screwy letter)

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Nov. 4, Wednesday P.M.

Dear Margaret,

I just received four letters from you with the last one written Sunday night, a week ago. The others were in order starting with Thursday night. I also received John's & Lynn's pictures and I think they are pretty good. It helps a lot to get pictures of them every now & then because I can keep up with them as to growth & everything. Then, too, pictures tell more than words can. By the way I haven't received a snapshot of you for a long time.

I guess by now you are wondering what happened to my pen. It ran out a few minutes ago and when I started to fill it out of the bottle on the table I found that the ink was frozen solid. Did that stump me? No, I started with a pencil while the ink is thawing out next to the stove.

(One foot away just like I am.) There is still a big cake of frozen ink in the center of the bottle and it is gradually thawing out. It has been pretty chilly up here for the last few days. In fact it was down to 5\* below 0 yesterday A. M. and only rose to +15\* during the day. However, I think it seemed colder at home sometimes when the temp was down to 30\*. At -5\* we still have a long way to go to reach - 40\* to - 60\*. The ink thawed out enough to allow me to fill my pen.

The mill is not going so good now. I know what it is when Daddy had difficulty with frozen logs. All of them are frozen now and really is a problem to try to make the saw run smooth and cut good lumber. Anyhow, I have other saws ordered which should solve the problem or at least help solve it. Just received some bad news I understand I am getting a planer, edger and cut-off saw. Don't know exactly what I will do with them but I guess they will help out a lot.

You can forget about the cigarettes since I have found a source up here for getting them at the same price of 70c carton. I have two cartons of them that I bought tonight.

I received the candy that you got from M & R and it is a real treat. I have really been enjoying it.

Guess I better quit now and I'll write later in the week.

All my love,

Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Merle A. Kirk and J. Russell Kirk**

Nov. 8, Sunday P.M.

British Columbia

Dear Mom & Dad,

I have been receiving your letters right along and it really had been a pleasure to hear from home and find out exactly what is happening. I am glad that you have invested the extra Beaver Dam money in the timber or land at the Three Black Cats. It makes me more anxious to get home and see what the latest purchase looks like.

Talking about getting home, there has been nothing "official" heard so far. Grapevine and semi-official rumors are heard every day but nothing in print with an official signature underneath has appeared.

Today has been a "do-nothing" day. We didn't work and consequently I have been taking it easy practically all day. Just a little exercise this afternoon when I cut some dead saplings up into wood to use tonight in our stove. It has been pretty cold most of this past week and I don't think the temperature has been above 0 for the last four days. One morning it was down to -18\*. We have about six inches of snow on the ground and that hasn't melted any since it started coming down last Sunday. I expect that the freeze up is here to stay until sometime in April of next year. The weather hasn't bothered me a great deal so far though. We are clothed to stand this cold weather and I still have a lot of wool warm clothing to draw. It includes waterproof boots, heavy socks, shoes, etc. I already have my high top shoes, arctic trousers, parka, arctic field jacket, etc. It looks as if we won't have any trouble keeping warm during the winter as far as clothing is concerned.

I have felt at times that I was back at my old job at home again, but a sawmill here is too far away from home to make me feel exactly the same. We did pretty good during the first month of "milling" up here, but now we have really run into difficulties. The frozen timber cutting is something that I know nothing of and it has been a real problem during the last two weeks. At first our problem was to get out enough logs to feed the saw, but now one tractor can keep it logged. About the saw, it seems that in the frozen sap the saw just seems to run cross-country

and then when it hits the last of the log it runs as straight as a dollar. The timber averages about 13" on the little end with about 1 ½ of frozen sap and 10" of heart. The sap is as hard as a rock and has caused right much trouble with heating saws. We have two 60" saws with 3x8 American teeth and the Canadian millers have told me that it is a summer saw and I need a Simonds 48" saw with winter teeth (style F). They say this saw will end most of my difficulties and I have two on order which should get here most any time. Any comments?

Hope everything is going O.K. at home and that everybody is fine. I will write again in my next "off" day.

Love to all,  
Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Chassie Thomas**

Nov. 8, Sunday night

Dear Grandma,

We didn't work at all today, and I finally have a chance to write to you. I know I should have answered your letters long before now but rush work here has prevented me from writing Margaret as often as I should. Then too, I figured Margaret would keep everybody informed at home.

You asked me if it was cold up here in one of your letters. Yes it is pretty cold but the army issues warm clothing and so far the cold hasn't bothered me a great deal. I guess Margaret has told you that I am back home as far as my work is concerned. Yes I am in charge of a saw mill and it keeps me trotting just about as much as the one at home did. It is not such hard work and I really do enjoy it since it is just a continuation of what I did in civilian life. While I have been up here I have spent less than I ever did before. This is one place that money means almost nothing since you can buy only cigarettes and candy and that is about all that it can be spent for. Since you can't spend it, you have to save it so it has its advantages. I hope I will be able to use some of it and come home to see everybody sometime soon. You will see the money I have saved fly at that time.

I hope you have been feeling well lately. When I heard from you last you had been sick and by now I hope you are over it. Your letters have been appreciated a great deal, Grandma, and I hope you continue to write.

Your loving grandson,  
Stokes

**Arthur Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**

Nov. 9

Headquarters; Officer Candidate Battalion; Medical Field Service School  
Carlisle Barracks, PA

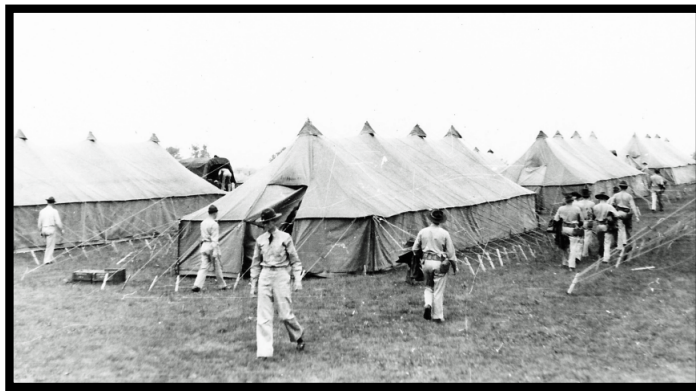
Dear Mom,

Things have been just about the same. We had a march the other day where we had gas, land mines, tanks and airplane attacks. The boys seemed to enjoy it very much, and a large number of them want to go on another one of the same type. I went over to see Jack Minger the other day and he invited me over to go to a hockey game with them at Hershey. Everyone appears to be pretty excited about the invasion of French West Africa, but I guess we must still be prepared for any bad news that may come for it won't all be good from now on, and we will have to expect both good and bad news.

This class will finish up at the end of this month and the boys are counting the days until graduation arrives, and they will all be officers. Jack says that his brother is a Lt. Col. in the



Carlisle Barracks, PA; training for gas attacks



engineering corps, and is keeping pretty bust. He said that his boy will soon be in the army, and hopes to be in as an officer if possible. I guess I'll write again next week.

Love,

Arthur

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Nov. 15, Sunday

Dear Margaret,

I have been intending to write since last Sunday, but just haven't had the opportunity. My difficulties with the large saw at the sawmill have been increasing in proportion to the weather and by Friday the mill was just one big headache. Finally on Friday the two saws that I ordered arrived and I put one on immediately. The new saw cut so much better there was no comparison. (I ran out of ink & had to stop and thaw the ink out again.) From now on I should have a little more free time than I had last week. The only other trouble I can think of right now is that we may have some difficulty getting enough logs cut to feed the little saw. It is really a slick running piece of steel and the power required is only about half of what the other saw required. I have the edger installed now and it is doing fine work. You can tell Dad that it is an American #2 edger. The planer has arrived but is not in operation yet. It is an American Triumph and is really a baby machine. I expect it will do very good work though.

In one of the letters I received this week you wanted to know my telegraph address. I hardly know what to tell you but I expect the following address is the best since Aubrey is at Fort St. John for an indefinite period of time.

Capt. Aubrey N Holmes  
Fort St. John  
British Columbia  
Canada

For Capt. John S. Kirk

Addressed in the above manner will result in his opening the letter and radioing the telegram to Col. Hughes' outfit of which I am a member (instead of Col. Neuman's outfit). I expect a telegram addressed to Col. Hughes' outfit, Fort St. John, B.C. will get here just as soon, but if it reaches Aubrey he will expedite the telegram as much as possible. Anyhow one address is about as good as the other so you can use anyone you choose.

(Sunday P.M.) Guess I will finish your letter up now. I received a package of papers from you and have been doing quite a bit of reading. I have also been drawing up some plans for our winter hut and I expect we will need it very soon. It has been snowing for the last 24 hours and I am glad we didn't have to work today in the snow. Our hut will be on skids so it can be moved and I expect it will be very warm compared to a tent. I also received a box of pecans today from the Morgan's. I am going to try to write them & thank them but you can mention that I really appreciate them in case I don't write.

All my love,

Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Nov. 17, Tuesday P.M.

Dear Margaret,

I am going to be a little better this week about writing. I wrote Sunday and expect to write every other day this week and hope I can keep it up. The shorter days and longer nights will probably give me more time for staying in the tent and more time for writing than the summer days did several months ago. Then too, the colder days make you hug the fire in the tents a little closer and consequently there is more time for writing. I bought myself a Coleman lantern Sunday and it has really been put to use since then. Our light plant is an old CCC set and can't be depended on. Last night & tonight we have been without electric lights and I believe now that I invested \$6.50 for the lantern very wisely. Up to now I have been using candles when there was no other light and the Coleman lantern really makes a difference.

Today has been one of the coldest we have had so far. I don't know what the temperature read but it must have been about -15\* to -20\* at the coldest time. However, we haven't had any wind along with it and it hasn't bothered me as much as most of the +32\* weather did at home. Most mornings when I wake, it is usually caused by my face touching something cold (my bed roll) and at first I wondered why the edges of my bed roll were so cold. Finally I found out that my breath was freezing as I hit the edge of the bedroll and this icy edge was what seemed so cold about my face. I just got up from writing a minute ago and put my inner sleeping bag close to the fire to thaw it out. In both sleeping bags is the most comfortable place to be and from now on I expect I will be getting my beauty sleep before 10 P.M. I expect to hit the hay before 9 P.M. tonight. You will probably not have a tired husband on your hands if I get a leave anytime soon.

Talking about leaves there has been a rumor started that there is a directive out on the subject. I understand that one officer has already left on his leave but he is from some other outfit. I actually believe this leave business is fiction and not fact but I hope it is the other way around. However, I have heard so much so called latrinegrams that it has put me on the dubious

side and that explains my belief. Anyhow, there are strong indications that we will eventually get them. This officer who left was authorized a total of 10 days travel time to & from with 15 days leave. That doesn't sound bad at all. I hope I can start traveling about Dec. 15<sup>th</sup> if this report is true.

I was just thinking about what I would do in case of a leave. Just as soon as I got to Edmonton I would get a hotel room and take about three baths and send all of my clothes to a cleaner & presser, have breakfast in bed and visit a barber shop. Then after about 24 hours of cleaning up, I would catch a plane or the first available transportation to the states especially the state called "Virginia". You see, I have it all doped out as to procedure after I leave here.

We started our hut yesterday P.M. and now the two carpenters are ready to lay the floor joists and I expect that by Saturday the building will be completed. It will only be about 10'x18', but my construction plans call for a very tight building which I hope will be very warm. I know it will be much more comfortable than a tent and I am anxious to get in it. Expect to write again day after tomorrow.

All my love,  
Stokes

**Arthur Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**  
Middlesex, PA

Nov. 17

Dear Mom,

Things are still O.K. up here but I doubt if I can get home before Jan. or Feb. for we will work right along through Christmas. They have me teaching a few subjects up here. I never thought when I got through med school that I would turn out to be a school teacher & have to take papers home to grade but here I am with about 250 papers here on the desk waiting for me & one of these days when the kids ask "What battle were you in Grandpa?" I'll have to remember "The Middlesex war, son" & he will ask, what battle was that Grandpa & I'll answer "A sham battle up in the middle of Pennsylvania, son."

Well it does seem like a dull war, but I do hope that I'll teach something of battle importance to someone that can use it & I hope it will help.

Well, I'll close now & grade these papers.

Love,  
Arthur

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Nov. 24, Tuesday P. M.

Dear Margaret,

I wrote last on this past Thursday night so by now I have ruined my record of writing every other night. I didn't get in until late Saturday nite and Sunday and then last night I spent looking at some of your papers I received the other day. Sat. nite we had a session in which I came out pretty good. (Check enclosed) Another one like that and I will have had my expenses up here all paid for. Will try to pay for every thing this Saturday nite. Sunday I went down to H & S and stayed long enough to see the doubleheader that night. I saw "This Life we Live" and "Birth of the Blues". The latter I had already seen before but I enjoyed both since they were the first ones I had seen after leaving Bragg in May.

Back to the subject of leaves, I don't think I will be home for Xmas. At present, we have about 17 officers in the battalion and only one officer will be allowed to go at a time. The lineup for the first four is about determined and I am not included. It seems as if it is being worked on



the basis of he who had the last leave will be the last to get one and the ones who haven't had one for the longest time will be first. "Pappy" Gordon hasn't had one since about Sept. 1941 so he is about the second or third one to leave on a 15 day leave. My last leave was Xmas 1941, so I may be lucky and be somewhere between about the 5<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup>. If I am 5<sup>th</sup>, it means my leave will be 3 months from now or if I am 8<sup>th</sup> it will be almost 7 mo's from now. (Assuming 25 days for each officer - 5 days travel time; 15 days leave and 5 days travel time back) I don't know what to mail you for a Xmas present - there is nothing to buy up here and nowhere to go to get anything. However, you asked me about mailing my present so that is the best thing to do under the circumstances. Your present will have to be a piece of paper in the form of a check so that you can buy what you want.

I got five letters from you the other day, and Sunday I got one addressed to Seattle, Virginia. I got a big laugh out of it, so I am sending it back. It was mailed on the 16<sup>th</sup> and I got it on the 22<sup>nd</sup> which is a lot better time than most I have been getting lately. Maybe it pays to address them wrong - creates more interest & attention in them probably.

Will write again day after tomorrow - I expect to start the every other day letter at that time.

All my love,  
Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Nov. 27, Friday

Dear Margaret,

I started to write about a half hour ago but my pen was dry and had to thaw the ink out again. I guess by that you know it is still pretty cold up here. The ground has been frozen for over three weeks now and I have yet to see any thawing even where the sun is shining. I don't think it has been below -20\* but one time and I wrote you about that spell. It snows about every other day, but it doesn't amount to much. There is only about 4 inches of it on the ground.

Our hut or cabin is coming along very slowly. We had two carpenters working on it, but this week we had to take them off for other jobs and they only spent one day on it. It can be finished up in two days time since all that has to be done is to put the remainder of the sheeting on two ends, the top and cover it all over with roofing paper.

The mill is progressing very slowly due to the cold weather. The main difficulty is with the tractors. Cold weather has taken its toll among them. All of the saw troubles are over now.

I am sorry I couldn't or didn't write a line last night. Tonight's letter is written on the third day instead of the second day from the last letter I wrote. However, I expect that the past two week's average is a lot better than before. This one makes the fifth letter for the last 13 days. Anyhow you should be hearing from me about once every three days or better.

I understand that the first officer in this battalion is leaving on his leave tomorrow. He is Capt. Stokes and this time I wish that name had a Kirk on the end of it. How about it? Will write again Sunday.

All my love,  
Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Nov. 29, Sunday P.M.

Dear Margaret,

Been doing a lot of reading today. I received five letters from you and one from Mamma besides another bunch of papers yesterday. So you see reading has been the order of the day for today. It hasn't been so cold today as it usually is. I guess the temperature is around 0 but it is not nearly so bad as it was reported one morning last week. I think in my last letter I said we had only one cold snap that was below -20\*. The next day some enlisted men told me it was down to -37\* the other morning (one day last week). I guess I am getting used to it and the -37\* wasn't as bad as the -27\*. Anyhow it is not nearly as bad as it sounds.

I feasted on turkey Thanksgiving Day and we had turkey with trimmings again today. I didn't even know last Thursday was Thanksgiving until I came in for dinner and turkey was on the table. Thanksgiving day or not, it didn't make much difference because we worked as usual. Guess I will take my first plane ride some time soon. Maj. Thompson wants me to go on an aerial timber reconnaissance. It will be a lot better than walking myself to death looking for it. It sounds funny but sawmill timber (spruce) is hard to find fairly close to the road. Forest fires have burned 95% of it up about 50 years or more ago. There are just patches here & there of virgin timber. Will stop and write again Tuesday.

All my love,

Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Dec. 4, Friday P.M.

Dear Margaret,

I have to write in pencil tonight since I have lost my pen and can't find it high or low. It was the black one which I have had for a number of years. It was similar to yours but just a little longer. I miss it so much that I guess you had better buy one and mail it to me your first opportunity. (Have to stop now since the show is on - will write more later.)

The show was one of these travel pictures showing scenes & people of distant lands. Since we don't have a speaker for D.C. current it was silent but the boys enjoyed it just the same, especially the picture of Bali where the women don't wear anything above the waist. All in all it was quite an exciting show.

The temperature was just down to - 17\* today. It has been hanging around that for the last five or six days and seems undecided whether or not to get colder or warmer. A change on the warmer side of about 45\* to about 28\* would be welcome. Then it would still be freezing but fairly comfortable compared to the temp now.

I went on my timber run flight Monday. It was my first time up and I really enjoyed it. The flight lasted only 45 minutes but we flew over 110 miles. I found plenty of timber in the short time I was gone.

We are still busy as possible at the sawmill and from the looks of things it will be in operation from now on. The demand for lumber in a brand new country like this is enormous. So far we have cut almost 500,000 ft. which is no small trifle.

Will write again Sunday.

All my love,

Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Dec. 9, Wednesday P. M.

Dear Margaret,

I haven't found my pen yet so I am writing again in pencil. I really do miss it and then too it was one of my most trustworthy and valuable possessions.

The hut was finished yesterday and it is all ready to move into. However, moving day is being delayed until quarters for the enlisted men are finished. Their huts are almost completed and I think moving day will be Sat. P.M. or Sunday. The sooner we finish the better I will like it because our (officer's) hut is really built to keep out the cold. We have already had a fire in it several times to dry the green lumber so that it won't be days when we move and it is really warm with a very little bit of fire going in the stove.

It has been pretty cold all day today. This morning the temp at H & S [*Heat and Serve*] was -30\* and you come to think about it and realize it is damn cold. However, this weather is supposed to be unusual in this country. The report has it that Nov. was the coldest on record for the past 15 years. These are usually several Chinook summers during Nov. & Dec. but we haven't had a one so far. I hope we have several of them though in the next two or three months. However, I guess we are blessed by the fact that we don't have any wind at all in this part of the country. I understand that in the mountainous section that the wind is pretty severe.

Guess I will call this a letter and write later on in the week.

All my love,

Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Dec. 11, Friday P.M.

Dear Margaret,

I received two letters from you written on the 28<sup>th</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup> of Nov. I believe that is the first time in about 5 or 6 days. However, I did get two bundles of newspapers and the box yesterday. The newspapers were welcome and the box was much more so. I have finished up one box of dates and have made serious inroads on the balance. I guess by now if Lt. Jenny were here that there wouldn't be much left. It is all very good and I certainly did welcome it. It helps to be able to sit in your tent and eat where it is fairly comfortable and then too it is a big change from the regular ration.

You should see the ice house where the officers eat, in this sawmill camp. You know how the Frigidaire frosts up on the ice trays? Well, the inside of our dining hall tent has frost on it that looks like a 12" snowfall in comparison with the ice trays. Honestly, it has to be swept off every few days and if we stay here much longer we will have to move the mess tent because there is so much frost on the floor. You can hardly stand up in it now, no kidding.

I am certain I will be here for Xmas now. I expect you will get this letter by the 20<sup>th</sup> and you will know for certain without my writing that I won't be able to get there. Another sawmill is on its way here and it should get here in two or three days. I expect to get it in operation about ten days from now and from the present outlook, I will have my hands full from now on. I am going up the line tomorrow and pick out the site for it. It will be about 25 miles from one to the other so from now on I will be a traveling man.

Hope I can write again Sunday.

All my love,

Stokes

**Arthur Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**  
233 W. Walnut St. Carlisle, PA

Dec. 13

Dear Mom,

I'm sorry that I didn't get a chance to write to you last week, but I was pretty busy with the new class having to be with them from 6:30 A.M. until 8 P.M. at night & then having to prepare lectures for the next day. This will probably continue for the rest of the month & next month it may be a little easier. I expect to go to the Ice Follies over in Hershey this Sat. & expect them to be good. I had a letter from one of the boys in the last class who is in Tyson Hospital in Tenn. & he says it is exactly what he wanted but has a lot of work to do & thinks it is a lot different than being an enlisted man. I think it would be best for Josh to make arrangements for applying for his commission again & with things as they are at the present time they will probably take him & also get some idea of whether or not the draft board will take him down on his physical condition (find this out just before applying for active duty under his commission). It certainly sounds like Charlie Pinner starting up cars and shooting at them. That is about all for tonight.

Love,

Arthur

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Dec. 16, Wednesday

Dear Margaret,

I am comfortably settled in my new dwelling now. It is really a big difference from the tent to this hut. It is just large enough for two and I really wish you were here to make the second. I think it has been long enough that I have been away from civilization. But others are in the same boat so I guess I can take it. I will take some pictures of the hut in a few days and send them to you.

It has been considerably warmer during the past six or seven days. The Chinook was gratefully received by me but now it is getting colder and I expect the warm weather is over with. I believe the weather actually got up to +15\* day before yesterday. However, the warmer weather brought snow and there is at least 16 inches on the ground now. It has been snowing about 30% of the time since Sunday night.

I didn't write Sunday as I expected to. Our gasoline motor caught fire early Sunday am and practically ruined all of the outside parts such as carburetor, radiator, gas tank, etc. I was busy running here and there trying to get enough parts to put it in shape again. I have practically all of them now and expect to start sawing again sometime tomorrow. I can't explain the fire unless it was caused by a spark falling near the gas tank and setting it on fire.

I got a bunch of letters from you and Mamma yesterday. I also received a card from Sister Virgie. I got a card from Cecile and she is having the Reader's Digest sent to me for a year. I believe I have a two or three year subscription to it now and I will have to have one sent to me at Smithfield so you can have it. I can't wait to find out what the kids are giving me for Xmas, I will write you just as soon as it arrives. My other presents will also be a surprise but I think I know what one will be - that is yours. I think I will go to the session tonight and see if I can pick up a few dollars. I have made up for the last \$30 check I sent you already. Your Xmas present will have to be money so there is a check with a few Merry \$mass written on it enclosed with this letter. Buy yourself something you want with it. This letter should arrive right around

Xmas so that is the best I can do. Thank Cecile [*Cecile Gill*] for me and tell everybody else Merry Xmas for me.

All my love,  
Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Dec. 21, Monday

Dear Margaret,

I just got a letter from you written last Monday. I also got one today written Sunday and was glad to hear all of the news. John must have been real cute when he told you that he was going to tell his "Da-ya on you." I also wish that he could do so.

We got some pretty good news night before last. The number on leave at one time has been increased to 10%. That means that 5.8 officers can be gone at one time. Lt. Powers has already gone on an emergency furlough (his Mother suffered a broken back) and Capt. Stokes, Capt. Wills and Lt. Grabman are due back in a few days. The 5<sup>th</sup> left Fort St. John the other day when the new order of 10% came out. It was Maj. Munro who had been on special duty at Fort St. John. He was assigned back to this outfit and allowed to go on leave to take up our 5<sup>th</sup> vacancy. I haven't heard about the .8 officer or whether he will go or not. I don't guess I will get a chance until maybe March or April when not much will be able to be done at the sawmills. As long as there is an urgent need for lumber my chances are very slim.

The mill is starting again tomorrow. We have lost about 8 working days due to the fire. That time really couldn't be afforded to be lost but it was just an unfortunate occurrence.

I understand that the temp got down to -50\* the other morning at a river some distance south of us. It is not nearly so bad as it seems, especially since I am in the hut now.

Don't worry about me & take care of yourself.

All my love,  
Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Dec. 24, *Christmas Eve*

Dear Margaret,

To celebrate tonight I don't know exactly what to do nor of anything to do. I have to go about 2 miles down the road and mail some letters for the civilians here in camp and I think I will grab a cup of coffee at the same time. There is a large civilian camp there and it is about the only way to get their mail out. I don't know whether I told you or not but we have 4 civilian teamsters here in camp to help with the logging of the mill. They have 4 teams of horses and it is 100% better than trying to log with broken down tractors.

I got a bunch of packages from Santa Claus, you and the kids yesterday and today. I was never more surprised than the present from John & Lynn. I think it is really a beautiful picture of two of the best looking kids in the world. I think so much of it that I have opened it up several times so far and just stared at it. I don't know how you ever thought of such a present from them, but I don't know of anything I would rather have up here for Xmas unless it would be to have you & both of them here but of course that is impossible. I really do think a lot of the picture. I got both of the pajama sets and they really look too nice to sleep in. They really look warm but I don't think I will use them until warmer weather arrives. It's usually too cold to expose any parts when dressing in the A.M. Of course, I could put them on and wear them during the day also, so

I guess I will give that a little thought. The card will certainly come in handy along with the chips and I will try the candy later on.

I received another package (of cookies) from you today and a package of fruit cake, etc. from Mamma. One fruit cake is gone already and I am going to save the larger one for New Year's Day. I think I will hold the cookies to look at for a while. They really look good.

The bull session has started now with the four teamsters so I guess I will have to quit until later. Hope you have had a merry Xmas.

All my love,

Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Dec. 31, Thursday night

Dear Margaret,

Santa Claus has still been coming to see me. I received two large packages tonight and two letters. One letter was from the bank (deposit slips) and the other from you. (I want you to drop the bank my correct address - they continue to send the deposit slips back to the finance office). Your letter was written on the 18<sup>th</sup> and it is the first one in over a week. I guess the Christmas rush is holding them up. I am anxious to hear how the children made out for Christmas. I took their picture down a while ago to take a look at it and the more I look at it, the more I want to see them in person. The picture had some frost on the back where it was tight against the wall and I had to move it to another place.

The packages were from Aunt Eleanor & Aunt Hattie. Aunt Hattie sent me four pairs of wool socks and 2 cartons of cigarettes. Aunt Eleanor sent me 2 cartons of cig, 2 boxes of grain popcorn, cookies, figs, peanuts and candy. I guess I could live for about a month with the food and other things I have. I really appreciate it all, but if I get much more I don't know where I will put it.

I opened your box of dates day before yesterday and they are just about gone now. They have really been good.

It has been pretty good and warm here for the last four or five days. I guess the temperature has been almost all the way up to 0. If it gets much warmer I guess I will have to leave my coat in the hut and stop packing it around.

My horses are doing fine in logging the mill now. All four teams are here since the other mill hasn't arrived yet and they are running the place over with logs. I guess we have 600 or 700 logs around and close to the mill just waiting to be sawed up and they have been working only ten days. Besides that, they have been keeping the mill working full time for the last three days. That is not bad at all. The teamsters hut has been finished and three of them have moved to it. Lt. Jenny is back now and that makes three in each of the two huts.

There is some talk about leaves for officers being suspended for the present because they are too indispensable at the present time. However, I also understand that the quota of officers going on furlough has been jumped to 15% so if they do lay off for a month it will only take two months to catch up.

I am glad my fountain pen is on the way now. It is bad to write with a pencil and I have fallen down since I started writing with one - this one is the first since last Thurs. night.

All my love,

Stokes

P.S. Haven't used chips and cards yet but poker is still profitable. Already won \$20 of \$50 check I sent you



Front row center: Arthur A. Kirk

# Building the Alcan Highway



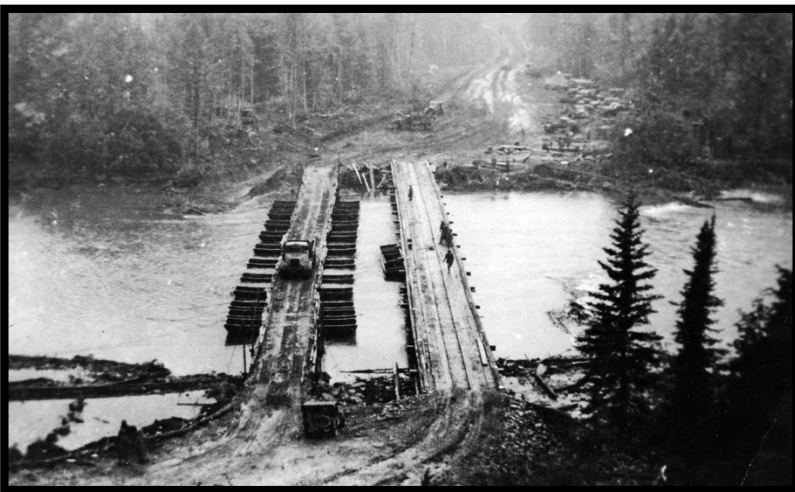
Hauling lumber B.C







## Stokes Kirk Sawmill



# 1943

Heavy rains had come to Everets in the spring, causing flooding in the buildings around the wharf below the Kirk house. All of the supplies from the warehouses, the Wagner store, and sheds were emptied ahead of the rising water.

The Allies reached their great turning point in the Pacific with the defeat of the Japanese at Guadalcanal in February. The remainder of the year, the Allies began taking strategic bases across the pacific.

## Merle A. Kirk diary 1924-1955:

June 7, 1943: *Arthur is still at Carlisle Barracks. He has joined the regular army, is now a Captain and employed in the dispensary. Stokes has come home after being in British Columbia for a year. I am happy to say he was not sent to Alaska. He came home looking very well, stayed only two weeks, then took Margaret and John with him and went back to camp at Alexandria, La. They have been gone three weeks. The precious baby is with me. Lewis came home last week after being in the Pacific waters for 2 1/2 years. He wears nine stars which signify his having been in nine battles. Yesterday he was married and soon he begins one year's work at Annapolis. I am happy for each day that passes and brings the war that much nearer to an end. The Lord has blessed us.*

In a June 15<sup>th</sup> letter Margaret responds to a letter from Merle: *I am sorry the gas situation has gotten so bad there again, for it really makes you think twice before using the car. They have tightened up a little here also because they only allowed Stokes enough for three trips a week to camp and he has to ride with someone else on the other day.*

Margaret's brothers were called into service, and by summer **Robert** was in the Army. **Bud** planned on joining the Army also, but he ended up in the Marines. The recruiters sent all the young men from Smithfield to the Army physical evaluation center in Richmond by bus. They were bunked at the YMCA until their names were called. The next morning Bud awoke to find his pants stolen and asked the Army staff for help. No help arrived from them, but the Marines offered a pair of their own. Bud followed them back to their desk and signed on with the Marines.

## Merle A. Kirk diary 1924-1955:

September 5, 1943: *Things are coming to an end for me. Arthur is on a furlough before going to Camp Edwards, Mass. - that means overseas duty; Stokes is soon to complete his instruction course at Camp Claiborne, La. and then overseas for him; I am just over an attack of diarrhea. Since I am not gaining strength and still have fever it means my lungs are involved. Now that I know that, I can look back and recall how I have been going back for months. Well I hope the road won't be too long and rough, but Oh! Lord, save my boys! And don't make it too hard for my sweetheart and Mother. Finis.*

December 5, 1943: *Well that spell of sickness is over but there is another trouble - deeper. Stokes is sure he will be shipped abroad by the army. He has just left us and his baby girl after spending his furlough here, taking John and Margaret back with him to Alexandria, La. where they will remain until his departure. My constant prayer is, "Oh, God save my boys." Arthur could not get a leave at this time and he has not seen Stokes*

*since May 1942. He called and talked to all four of us - he may get home in Feb. God please save my boys!*

*December 26, 1943: I don't believe Stokes has left yet. It takes five days to get a letter from them, so I am not sure! I am still hoping.*

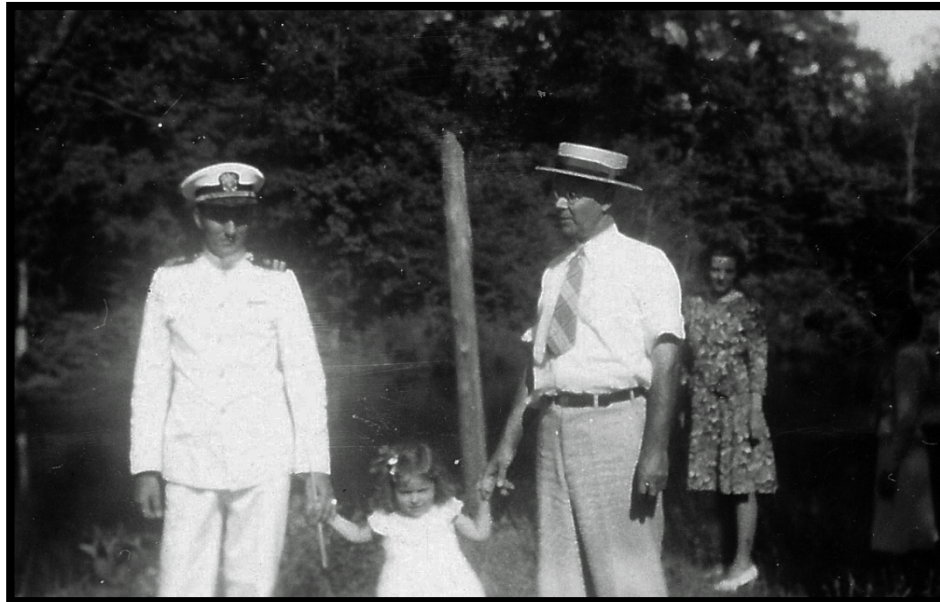
Lynn Kirk Rose:

*From Alcan, Daddy was sent to Camp Claiborne. He was given six weeks of leave and when he went back John and Margaret went with him and stayed in a hotel. Lynn went to Everets and stayed with the Kirk's. John was again in the hospital five days with strep throat. When they got a house, Grand & Granddaddy Kirk drove Lynn down to them and all she would eat was beets. The temperature was 107 degrees when they arrived. It was a one-bedroom house, so John slept on an army cot and Lynn on the sofa. Christmas was celebrated in October, with a tree and presents, because Stokes was to be deployed any day.*

In September at age twenty-nine **Paul** Brady was drafted into the army. After completing his training at Camp Lee near Petersburg, VA, he bivouacked with 50,000 troops in Camp Shanks, N.Y. His new wife, Elizabeth, took over running *Radio Service* during the war. From New York, T-5 radio technician [Corporal] Paul was sent into Swansea, Wales.

P. Kirk Brady Jr:

*Being a "southerner" and the oldest among his company, he was nicknamed "Cap'n," which sometimes confused other troops into thinking he was an Army Captain.*



1943: Everets :from left: Lewis Thomas, Lynn Kirk, Russell Kirk, Frances Thomas Sledge



Left: 1943: Smithfield: Lynn & John Kirk with Shirley Wiggins

Right: 1943: Smithfield: Bud Gill & John Kirk



# Lt. Lewis Thomas



Norfolk Virginian-Pilot,

## Catherine Harrell Becomes Bride of Lt. Lewis Thomas

Evelyn Ficarra and Lieutenant Commings  
Are Married *June 6, 1943*

Trinity Episcopal Church, Portsmouth, was the setting on Sunday afternoon for the marriage of Miss Catherine White Harrell, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Henry Harrell, of Edenton, N. C., to Lieut. Lewis Thomas, USNR, son of Mr. and Mrs. John Lewis Thomas, of Portsmouth. The ceremony was performed at 3:30 o'clock, by the Rev. Charles H. Holmead, rector of the church, in the presence of relatives and friends. The altar was arranged with palms and lilies, and Mrs. Gaston Foote, church organist, played the nuptial music.

The bride was given in marriage by her father. She wore a two-piece dress of Victory blue crepe, made with matching lace revers, and her accessories were white. She carried a prayerbook covered with white orchids. Mrs. Nelson Williams was the bride's matron of honor and only attendant. She wore a dress of beige lace with white accessories, and a corsage of pink roses.

The bridegroom had his father as his best man. The ushers were Charles Rives Sledge, of Hilton Village, brother-in-law of the bridegroom, and John Cornelius Thomas, brother of the bridegroom.

The bride's mother wore a dress of navy blue crepe with white accessories, and a corsage of orchids. Mrs. Thomas, mother of the bridegroom, wore a dress of powder blue crepe with matching accessories, and a corsage of orchids.

After a short wedding trip Lieutenant and Mrs. Thomas will spend some time with the bridegroom's parents before going to Annapolis where the former has been ordered for duty. The bride wore for traveling a yellow linen suit with white accessories, and a corsage of orchids.

The guests from out of town were Mr. and Mrs. John Henry Harrell, Miss Sarah Margaret Harrell, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Harrell, and Mrs. W. E. Harrell, of Edenton, N. C.; Mrs. Olivia Hobbs and Mrs. Charles Johnson of Hertford; Mr. and Mrs. Charles Rives Sledge and Charles Rives Sledge, Jr., of Hilton Village; Lemuel Thomas, of Washington; and Mr. and Mrs. J. Russell Kirk, of Everetts.



Lewis Thomas holding Lynn Kirk

## Thomas Home After 3 Years

Lieut.-Comdr. Lewis Thomas, U. S. Navy, son of Mr. and Mrs. I. Lewis Thomas, of 219 Broad Street, is home on 30-day leave after three years of duty in the Pacific, visiting his parents and his wife and daughter in Port Norfolk.

He wears the Defense ribbon with a service star, besides the Atlantic and Philippine areas ribbons, and the Pacific ribbon with nine battle stars. He participated in all of the South and Southwest Pacific battles, the Philippine invasions and bombardments, and, also, the Borneo invasion. He served under Admiral Halsey with the Third Fleet and under Admiral Kincaid in the Seventh Fleet.

Thomas' experiences with the Japs began with the sneak attack on Pearl Harbor when he was with the Task Force outside Pearl Harbor that escaped the attack and began at once a search for the Jap forces.

He began his service with the Navy as an ensign in the Naval Reserve December 1, 1940, and was assigned to the heavy cruiser Northampton, with which vessel he served until she was sunk the night of November 30-December 1, 1942. He held the rank of lieutenant on the Northampton at the time of her destruction, having been promoted in October, 1942.

He took part in the bombardment of Wotje, was with the force from which Doolittle's fliers took off to bombard Japan, and participated in the Battle of Midway and the action around Guadalcanal.

After the sinking of the Northampton, Thomas served with destroyers in the Pacific until May, 1943, when, after two and a half years' service, he came home on leave. Afterward he was assigned to the cruiser Houston, then being built at Newport News, and continued in duty there until July, 1944, when he was transferred to the Pasadena, which vessel went to the Pacific in September, 1944, and survived the typhoon in which three destroyers were lost. He was promoted to lieutenant-commander October 17, 1944, and in December was transferred to staff duty with the Fifteenth Cruiser Division.

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Jan. 3, 1943, Sunday night

Dear Margaret,

I received three letters and a bundle of papers this morning and have just finished my Sunday funny papers. They are exactly two weeks late but better late than never. I really do enjoy them.

I bought a 17 jeweled Watertite Bulova wrist watch last night from the PX for \$20.00. The retail price is \$42.50 and I have needed one for so long I thought it was a good buy. I wish they had fountain pens, but I guess the red one you mailed will be here soon. It is awfully hard to write with a pencil after becoming used to a pen.

Monday A.M.

I stopped writing for a few minutes last night and fell back on the bed and slept until 12 midnight. That is something that can be done very easily in this hut since it is about the same temp all over.

This morning is not so cold. It must not be a bit colder than -20\*. Sat. was pretty good and cold. The civilian teamsters said that it was around -45\*.

You make me shiver when you say it was 9\* at home. It must be pretty bad. I know about how cold that is but when it gets below 0\* it just doesn't make sense to climb back up the scale again. Then too -20\* means about the same as -30\* up here. You don't notice it so much. I am waiting for the -60\* & -80\* weather, no one is going to work then.



Stokes Kirk at right

I would have certainly liked to have been there for all the excitement and goings on. That is only one of the reasons though.

It has warmed up considerably during the last two or three days. It was so warm today that the trees lost all of the snow in the form of water. The temp must have gotten up to +35\* this afternoon but none of the snow on the ground is gone. It got a least little bit mushy on top, but otherwise there is still just as much as ever.

Guess will call this a letter - will write again Wednesday.

All my love,  
Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Jan. 7, Thursday night

Dear Margaret,

As you can see I have received the pen and I am really glad to get it. It came day before yesterday along with a couple of letters. I received three more from you and one from Daddy besides two packages of papers today. One came in from Mamma along with a package of newspapers when your two came in day before yesterday.

You told me all about the children's Christmas and what you did during the holidays. It looks as if it wasn't such a bad Christmas after all.

There is a game at 0 tonight and I thought I would join in but it is too late to run down there. However, the next one I hope to be there with bells on and lift a few bucks off the boys.

I expect to be by myself again for the next three weeks. Lt. Jenny is the witnessing officer for the payroll again this month and it will take at least that long to pay off.

I owe a lot of letters to everybody now for all the Xmas gifts I have received. I hope I can start writing them very shortly. Guess I will quit as this is my last sheet of paper.

All my love,  
Stokes

**Arthur Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**

Jan. 10

Dear Mom,

It is snowing again up here in the far north, but of course it is not 50 below as yet and I don't expect it to get that cold this year. The river outside Harrisburg is frozen over at this time though, but it is not solid as yet. Out of this class I have not gotten to see any of the boys that I went to school with or any that I knew before coming up here. We are expecting another 500 doctors up here this week to start the 20<sup>th</sup> class. I haven't seen where they are going to put all the men, but I expect that they will find a place for them. It appears that they will have to have their classes in the wooden buildings that the OCC boys used for their classes. Because of this new change they are having it fixed so that 3 men in each department will be able to give the same lecture on the same subject so that each can give it to a different class.

On the 19<sup>th</sup> I expect to go to the inauguration ball at Harrisonburg when the new governor goes into office, and I hope to have a good time. You can tell that to Josh so that he can see that he is not the only one that gets invited to those things. Since there is no more of importance happening up here I will close and write to you again some other time.

Love,

Arthur

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Jan. 13, Wednesday night

Dear Margaret,

I have just finished eating two eggs that I soft boiled in the hut. They were really good and I enjoyed them. I managed to chisel a few off of some civilians down the line a few days ago. They (civilians) really do eat good compared to the army rations. However, during the last week we have had turkey once, chicken once, beef twice and moose once. That is not so bad. The moose tasted a lot like beef, but it is right much browner in color than beef. It was shot up the line about six days ago and the piece that we got was the front half of the carcass. It was a bull moose and must have weighed about 1000 lbs.

The mill is running pretty good now with an average output of 12,000 ft/day of nine hours. It starts long before daybreak and works until after dark. Our light plant is working pretty good, so we can manage that all right.

The last ten days have been most pleasant as far as the weather is concerned. I expect it has been up to +35\* at times during the days but the snow hasn't begun to melt yet. I expect you can guess how most every body feels after such a long spell of -20\* to -40\* weather with this weather so mild now. The mean temp must be about +25\* now. I was reading about the weather in the Norfolk paper tonight and I couldn't help but smile at the "extreme cold weather of +15\*" that was being experienced just prior to Xmas. But you have wind so that is a big difference.



I am still feasting on Xmas gifts and I think they made me a little sick at the stomach last week. I stayed in one day to recover and now I am feeling fine.

Rumor has it that work may stop at the mill sometime soon. This is the first time that I could draw an easy breath though since it started. We have about 40M feet on the yard which is more than has been there for 3 months. It is not being used quite so fast now and may stop being used entirely.

Guess I will quit as my paper is about gone.

All my love,

Stokes

P.S. Got a martin with my shotgun yesterday. Expect to send it to you tonight. It is a beautiful piece of fur and worth about \$20 to \$25 up here.

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Jan. 17, Sunday afternoon

Dear Margaret,

Today has been a lazy day for me so far. I got up late this morning, ate breakfast and have been stoking the fire to keep warm. It is not much under 0\* today but being idle has made it seem colder. Yesterday morning the temperature was around -40\* and it was one of our coldest so far. It had been very mild up until Thursday and it turned colder Thursday night. I am glad to see each mild day, it means that there is one less day that could be cold as H\_\_.

Lt. Jenny left here yesterday to go on his leave. He is going down to Dawson Creek to finish paying off and after that duty his leave will start. I hope when he gets back I will be able to get away on my leave. If it works out I will be home during the latter part of Feb. or the first part of March. However, don't bank any hopes on it, because the notice of any leave isn't given until about one or two days ahead.

The picture you sent of the dog team and frozen clothing or laundry is no exception for this section of the road. There are several dog teams around here; in fact one came in this camp the other day minus a rider. There were two ferocious dogs pulling it and they just stopped in the middle of some work we were doing and dared anybody to touch the sled, harness or anything. Finally I managed to get them away from the mess hall site, unharness them and tie them up. Four or five hours later, an Indian came for them in a V-8 Ford, put the dogs on the back seat, tied the sled to the back bumper and left in a hurry. That was some climax.

The mill is doing pretty well now. During the last 15 days it has averaged 9 M ft. per day. I hope to step that up later on. With warmer weather and longer days it won't be so hard to do. I can thank the teamsters for the increase in production though. Cold weather is awfully hard on tractors as it will make good metal snap at any small amount of excess strain. The horses don't seem to mind and don't break down when cold weather comes.

I managed to get myself about fifty sheets of this writing paper the other day so I am pretty well set for stationary now. There is one thing I would like for you to send me and that is a thermometer. It should be able to register -40\* but a -20\* one is alright. I never do know exactly what the temp is and just hear reports of how cold it is at other places.

I have been popping some of the popcorn Aunt Eleanor sent me. I made a gadget to pop it with out of a piece of screen wire and it works fine. The popcorn is really good, too. I just had to stop and pop some and eat it while I finish your letter. A little salt and butter will make it taste better.

I indulged a little last night in a friendly low stakes game with the teamsters. I managed to come out about \$1.00 ahead which wasn't so bad for a 10 cent limit game. After the game we

ate cakes and had boiled eggs. I still have about 1 ½ dozen eggs left. The chow call will probably come most anytime now. We will have turkey and some of the fixings. I hope I can beat the teamsters to the table this time, only two can eat at a time since there are only two sets of silver and plates.

I had to cash a check the other day for \$15.00. No, I haven't lost what little money I had, but lent a man \$50. so he could go on his furlough. I now have \$680.08 in bank at Suffolk and expect it to be over \$800. by the end of this month. I wish you would write the American Bank & Trust and give them my proper address. They keep sending my deposit slip to the office of the Finance Officers at Fort St. John instead of sending it direct to me. Guess I will stop gossiping for a while as I think chow is almost ready.

All my love,

Stokes

P.S. Tell John, Daddy enjoyed looking at his picture with all of his school mates and that he really thanks him for letting Mamma send it.

**J. Stokes Kirk to Merle A. Kirk and J. Russell Kirk**

Jan. 17

Dear Mom & Dad,

I wrote to Margaret this afternoon and am not busy tonight so I thought I would write you a letter which I have been owing for so long. I have been receiving yours all along at about the rate of one a week. I am always glad to get the news from home and get an idea of what is going on there.

I don't know when I will be able to get a leave but I hope it is not over a month and a half off. Lt. Jenny (the other officer here at the saw mill) left day before yesterday for Dawson Creek and after he gets done with his duty there he is going on his leave. There is a strong possibility that I may be able to go after his return. The way things are going here now, two officers are not actually needed.

We have few civilian teamsters along with eight horses and they really have been doing a good job of supplying logs to the mill. I am using two teamsters to snake logs in the bush, a third one sledding to the mill and the fourth is being used to drag sawdust away, sled the lumber away and sharpen an occasional cross cut saw. All four are hard workers and they keep things moving. The mill is not half as much bother as it used to be. There are no more tractors breaking down and we don't have to spend half the day starting them anymore. The cold weather has really taken its toll as far as the tractors are concerned. The metal seems to break for no reason at all. For instance, we had three equalize springs to break inside of a month on different tractors. We are averaging 9m feet/day and sawing about 110 logs in 9 hours. That is not so bad for a circular saw running in frozen timber with temperatures sometimes colder than -30\*.

The last three days have been pretty cold with the temp. about -10\* to -40\*. We had a lull in the cold weather about ten days ago and it stayed pretty nice for a week. I think the temp. must have gotten up to +35 because all the snow melted off the trees. The ground didn't thaw a bit and it is still just as hard as a rock.

I received the Christmas presents OK and really do appreciate them. I haven't finished the large fruit cake yet but it won't last much longer. Margaret seems to be real tickled over the twin beds and from what I hear the children seem to like them fine. When I get home I expect they will be using them for most of the fifteen days.

Hope everything is running smoothly and that too much trouble is not experienced with priorities, rationing, etc.

With love, Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Jan. 21, Thursday night

Dear Margaret,

I was just lying on my bed reading Sinclair Lewis's "Main Street" and suddenly decided it was getting warmer outside. I was about asleep when a drop of water struck me between the nose and the eye and I really awoke with a start. The ceiling had just a little frost about it and when it melted and dripped it felt like somebody had hit me with a sledge hammer. From the melting frost I decided it must be getting a little warmer.

Yesterday and day before were really "barn burners" though. I don't have a thermometer here but day before yesterday the temperature 15 miles north of here it was -55\*. Yesterday 2 miles south of here it was -50\* and we are farther down in the valley so I know it has been colder than -50\* for two days. Today was considerably warmer though as the temp 10 miles south of here was only -15\* at noon when I was there. I think I know what cold weather is now and hope to H\_\_\_ that we don't have any more of it.

I had to get up a minute ago and let the cat in. She has taken up with me since I have been in this hut. It is pretty nice in here during the cold snaps and she comes to the door every night about 7:30 and meows to get in. You didn't know we had a cat? Well, it has been with us for over three months now and is a fairly large gray one. I believe every camp has at least one pet. The pet dog at Hq. has multiplied the pets there and now there are six dogs there. It may be possible that I will get my leave sometime towards the end of Feb. Major Gavan is back and he told me today that as soon as the saw mill ceased operation I would get my leave. There is strong possibility that other troops will take it over before 30 more days are up. However, it might be longer before it is taken over but don't think it will be over 6 weeks.

I received three letters from you tonight. They were very interesting and since I hadn't heard for quite a while they were that much more so. The teamsters are Canadians from Montney which is only six miles from Fort St. John.

When I move to Dawson in a month or so I wish I could take this hut along with me. Anyhow, at that time I will probably be going on leave and when I get back it will be warm enough to be comfortable in a Nissen hut. I think "Pappy" Gordon is leaving in a few days on his leave. I gave him your phone number, so don't be surprised if he calls you up from Washington. I told him to call you when he got home.

Guess I will quit and continue with my book. The dripping water seems to have stopped and I can drowse in peace.

All my love,

Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Jan. 25, Monday night

Dear Margaret,

I hadn't heard about the ship Lewis was on being sunk before Saturday. I got your letter Sat. night telling about it and I had been talking to Lt. Van Dyke that afternoon when he said that he had read in the paper about the Northampton being sunk and inquired about Lewis. I didn't know anything about it at all and decided that Lewis must be safe because I hadn't heard anything to the contrary. I am severely glad that he is safe.

My lone existence here at M-10 is being interrupted tonight. Lt. Casto is here since I persuaded him not to go back to the company tonight. It is a peculiar situation since he is

actually my company Commander. I am on "Special Duty" with F Co and running the saw mill with his men and he is in charge of F Co which makes him my C.O. of F Co.

Guess I must be "Bush". That is the name that is being given to anybody that seems to be going slightly "loco" in this part of the country. It is short for "Bush Whacky". Actually, I know of one officer who did go "Bush" after about four months up here. He is now back in some hospital in the states.

Hester did my laundry the other day and it is now hanging up in the hut drying. It consisted of one pair of bluey blue pajamas that are being used as pajamas and long underwear (you know where they came from), a pair of OD pants, some socks and handkerchiefs. I am not doing any more of my laundry now.

I'll write again Wed. or Thurs.

All my love,

Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Jan. 29, Friday night

Dear Margaret,

I just finished three of your letters that came in tonight. The last one I read was written last Saturday night and you hadn't heard from me for over a week. The only reason for this that I can think of is the cold spell we had about that time holding the mail planes up. I didn't get any letters at that time either and the reason was the cold weather.

This week was pretty tough on all concerned up here. Today was fairly comfortable with the temp. up to +8\* at 1:00 P.M. It is not so cold out tonight either. I can tell by looking at my window and seeing that the ice on the inside of the window is gradually melting and running down. During the real cold spells the cold glass seems to collect the moisture and freeze it to the inside of the window.

I don't know why I never mentioned receiving the woolly socks from Grandma, it was an oversight I guess in the midst of getting so many boxes at one time. I haven't tried the socks yet as I bought a half dozen pair about two months ago. The socks are real nice ones and even if I haven't tried them yet I wear the sweater Grandma knitted every day.

To give you an idea of the normal amount I wear during the day I will list it off.

1 the blue pajamas	6 Grandma's sweater
2 light socks	7 another light sweater
3 woolen shirt and jersey-lined trousers	8 turtle neck sweater
4 heavy socks	9 arctic field jackets for medium days or the parka
5 shoe pacs	for cold days and one day both of them.

That is the order in which I dress each morning.

The techgram is coming to me direct from Blacksburg now. I saw my name in it the other day. You told me about seeing it tonight when I read your letters. The address is alright, I will get all letters mailed that way. Guess I will quit and settle for the night.

All my love,

Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Feb. 2, Tuesday night

Dear Margaret,

I have just finished writing Grandma and Aunt Hattie, so shortly after getting this letter I expect you will hear about it a second time. I thanked them for the presents and want to write to Aunt Eleanor and thank her tonight if I don't get too sleepy first.

The last letter I got from you was received Friday night Jan. 29 and you mailed it the past Monday. You hadn't heard from me for quite awhile and I can't understand it at all. Lately I haven't been missing over four or five days without writing and I try to write at least twice a week. The last letter you received was written on Jan 7<sup>th</sup> and I have written on Jan 13<sup>th</sup>, 17 also I believe on Jan. 20, 24 and tonight.

I got the pictures of the kids and they are good. Lynn is really growing up to be a young lady now. I would really like to see both of them, not to mention you. I guess I will go "bush" if I stay up here much longer.

There is more demand on the saw mill now than we have had for some time. There is a new bunch on this section of road now and most of my fellow officers are down at Dawson Creek The saw mill was left behind but when it breaks up I hope to H\_\_ I can get my leave. Pappy Gordon is on leave now and so is Capt. "Lucky" Lee. Holmes is still up here and I expect he will stay for awhile.

Will write a longer letter next time as my pen is running a hot box tonight.

All my love,

Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Chassie Thomas**

Feb. 2, Tuesday night

Dear Grandma,

I have been intending to write to you for quite a long time now but I usually write Margaret first so this time I am writing you first so as to be sure to get it in. I received the woolen socks that you knitted me and I think it was a most appropriate gift. I have used them several times during the cold snaps and they really come in handy. I am glad to say that at the present I don't have to use them since the weather is comparatively warm. The temperature has been up to 25\* during the day and I have really been enjoying the milder weather. Right now it is perfectly comfortable outside with a light jacket and the sweater you knitted me pulled over my OD clothing.

I haven't written Aunt Hattie and Aunt Eleanor yet for sending me Xmas presents, but I expect to do so in a few days. It is almost too late to thank anyone for a Xmas present, but conditions have been so that it was almost impossible to do so.

I am getting a fairly comfortable camp made up for my men here at the sawmill. They have two prefabricated huts to live in and we just finished the mess hall today. I have a real comfortable wooden hut to live in and it is just as warm as can be during the cold spells. All in all this sawmill camp is just as comfortable as any place I have seen on the highway.

I went up the road far enough to see the Canadian Rockies yesterday. They are really beautiful when you see them about 50 miles away on a clear day. Their white snow covered tops just seem to jut up into the sky and are very noticeable above the darker foothills.

I will write again in a few weeks and this time it won't be so long between letters.

Your loving grandson,

Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**  
Muskwa, B.C.

Feb. 4, Thursday night

Dear Margaret,

I'll bet the first thing you will do after reading this letter is to get your map out and find out where "Muskwa" is. It is only a couple of miles from Fort Nelson. This may help you a good deal in finding it. I am only sixteen miles (west) from Muskwa so you will have a pretty good idea in what part of Canada I am in. I usually get down to Muskwa about once in every three or four days. It has a store, a post office and about four one room shanties. You can imagine how big a "city" it is. The saw mill camp has more buildings.

It has been getting nice for the last several days but tonight the wind is blowing and it will be cold as H\_\_ in the morning.

I am wondering how long it will take for you to get this letter so don't fail to let me know. I haven't received any mail since last Sat. and don't expect any for about a week more so I will just have to be content with talking to you by writing every now and then.

We are having fresh eggs about three times a week and plenty of beef. Our mess hall has been completed and my appetite has improved immensely.

Guess the border censor will pass all of this so I will quit until possibly Sunday and write again then.

All my love,

Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Feb. 7, Sunday night

Dear Margaret,

Received a letter today written a week ago Friday. That is not such bad time for where I am now. The reason you heard from me so soon (four days) is that I wrote that letter at the airport and mailed it while waiting for a plane. That same day I bought a pair of moccasins each for John and Lynn. Today I just got around to wrapping them up and I expect to mail them tomorrow. John's pair is moose hide and Lynn's is deer. I hope they fit as I just had to guess as to size to buy. They were made by some local Indians up here and I believe they will be a lot of good if used mainly as house slippers.

I am sorry your mother will soon have to move. I don't know what to advise or what to tell you to do about it. I expect everything will work out O.K. but it is worrying not knowing what the 1<sup>st</sup> of April will bring.

McCord is going on leave sometime this week and I am assuming command of D Co. after he leaves. This is actually a provisional battalion and I am ranking officer so as Col. Twichell said "you are the battalion commander" besides being in charge of D Co.

Received the Coronet the other day besides the Reader's Digest. The Coronet isn't quite as good as it used to be since they have replaced the "feature picture" with other kinds. Guess after McCord gets back I will get my leave. He should be back by the 15<sup>th</sup> of April and then I will finally be on my way. Boy, I really will be glad to see home then. I will have been away for 11 months and hope it will never happen, to be that long again.

All my love,

Stokes

P.S. Check enclosed for \$50.00, hate to have my wife borrow money. If this isn't enough let me know.

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Feb. 9, Tuesday A.M.

Dear Margaret,

I haven't lost my pen this time, last night I lent it to a civilian teamster and he hasn't returned it yet. It is now 10:40 am and I had a few minutes so I thought I would just write a note. I expect this is one of the first times I have written during the day, but this P.M. I expect to go to the A.P.O. and this letter can be mailed right there and possibly you will get it by Saturday. I wrote a letter and sent it thru the Canadian mail last Thursday. I wanted to test it and see how the time was in your receiving it. It might be a little ahead as far as the other way of mailing is concerned but it will probably be held up at the border.

The government engineer who married Eleanor Scott (William Musser) [*daughter of Ann Eleanor "Kid" Abbitt Scott*] is stationed not so far away from the sawmill. He is located at a government camp two miles from here and although I haven't met him yet I expect to drop in to see him some night. I happened to be talking to a mechanic there and he said that Musser was asking about me and where I was located. It is quite a coincidence that he is located so close. I did have an idea that he might be there when you wrote and told me about being as close as 30 miles at one time.

It is about time to see how things are running so I guess I will quit.

All my love,  
Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Feb. 14, Sunday night

Dear Margaret,

I just received the letter in which you told me Gordon had called you. I am certainly glad he did call you because it does give you an idea or first hand information by voice of what is, how is etc. of your husband. I will be anxious to talk to "Pappy" when he gets back and get the low down on things at home from him.

I also received two bundles of papers. Expect to be moving down to Dawson in about 10 days or two weeks. The Q.M. has begun to take over the mill and we will soon be out of a job so it will be necessary to move to Dawson Creek. I surely hate to leave the mill after 19 weeks here, but it will mean that I get a leave and can get home for a while. That is the only good part I can see about giving the mill up. I really wish we could continue operating it and still get my leave. That would be the perfect solution.

I don't want to go to Dawson at all. I know there is more going on down there, but the restrictions will be pretty tough compared to an almost free life up here and at the same time being my own boss. Practically all of the men here have the same idea as I do. I don't guess it will be so bad though as I understand there is a company of WACS coming to Dawson. Ha Ha. That is just another latrineagram though and probably will end up like Belote's 1000 bed hospital with 600 nurses up here, just a lot of hooey.

I wanted to go down and see Musser tonight but I've got your blues slightly and don't want to talk to anyone except you. I am in no mood for talking but will have to visit him some night this week. I think I will call early tomorrow night and have supper with him. Guess I will quit gabbing and hit the hay. It's almost 10 P.M.

All my love,  
Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Feb. 18, Thursday night

Dear Margaret,

Haven't given up the sawmill yet but expect to do so before much longer. There are two outfits after it and as yet I haven't received orders to give it to either one so I am holding on for a few days longer.

I may not move to Dawson right away. There seems to be some work to be done here before going down, but don't know how long it will take. Jenny will be back most any time and he will probably be assigned back to his platoon and then I hope to get my leave. It can't come a bit too soon either as I am pushing 9 months at being in the bush. It is more civilized now but it is still the bush.

Today has been the warmest we have had since November first when everything froze over solid. The ground isn't thawed yet but the snow has been melting rather rapidly and I guess this is the first time the temp has been up to 40\* during the middle of the day since the latter part of October. I am still wearing my blue pajamas during the day but believe me I will be comfortable without them before very long.

With a possibility of leave so close I don't think it well to send the packages. They will be welcome when I get there or here now but don't like the idea of a package waiting here for me while I am on leave.

Just got the Feb. 15 Life and the March Esquire from a civilian store. They frequently have the Sunday news and other magazines and papers so you see I am not so bad off as far as reading matter is concerned. The papers you have been sending have always been welcome, but now I am able to get other reading matter and I won't miss the home newspaper quite so much. Guess I will quit.

All my love,

Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Feb. 21, Sunday A.M.

Dear Margaret,

The last four or five days have really been swell. It has just been warm enough during the day to melt snow in a few spots and make it a little muddy. But it freezes over by seven o'clock at night and the temperature gets down to maybe 20 above during the night. I have just come back from walking and although the temp is just around freezing it is very comfortable out with just a field jacket on along with a shirt and the blue pajamas top. The wind this morning is just like a March wind and I can hear it whistling thru the trees outside the hut. In fact, I took one of the windows out this morning and I don't have any fire in the stove so you can imagine how nice it is today compared with two weeks ago.

My stay here at the sawmill is very indefinite. I understand two Greyhound buses are supposed to take the platoon out to Dawson and that there is one waiting now. I have no orders and I would severely like to know what the score is. Jenny came back from furlough late last night and I haven't been able to get any dope from him yet. He saw the C.O. day before yesterday and I believe he knows what I am supposed to do but guess I will have to go see McCord and find out. He brought some messages up and left them with McCord and is so damn bullheaded and self centered that he doesn't tell anything. He hinted around last night and ended up by saying McCord would tell me. He came back for his clothes and says he is staying for a week. If he is I hope I leave tomorrow, I just can't stand him being around. Lt. Van Dyke is



supposed to be leaving for Portsmouth on leave today. I gave him your address and phone number and he is going to call you when he gets to Portsmouth. He is a very good friend of mine and the Thomas's and is very well liked here.

My furlough leave is coming up some time in the near future but I don't know when. (There's the dinner whistle.) The sooner it comes along the better I will like it. Guess I will quit now.

All my love,  
Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Feb. 22, Monday noon

Dear Margaret,

Expect to go down to Ft. St. John sometime soon and find out what the score is. We are still operating the mill and I expect this trip will settle the doubt and probably the "hash" of the mill. I don't know whether it will or not but something definite to work on is what I want. I am keeping a log of events during the last week which will probably be very amusing when some future date I look over it again.

There is nothing much to write about as I am away from the outfit and don't get the low down on everything that happens.

I received a box from Arthur the other day and it was a pleasant surprise. He had everything in it from a tooth brush to a salve for athlete's foot. There were aspirin tablets, some tablets to keep me awake and other various and sundry items for hangovers or that feeling you have after the night before. Why?

Maybe it will come in good when I get back home again. How about it? He also had chewing gum, life savers, a small box of candy, nose drops and a lot of this, that and the other. It was a nice box and it is really appreciated I will have to write him and thank him for it.

I understand Barney Belote is on leave now. I don't know when he left but it must have been some time ago.

Guess I will quit and write again later.

All my love,  
Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Feb. 28, Sunday A.M.

Dear Margaret,

I got my blouse out of a box that I have been keeping excess clothes in. It is in fine shape and doesn't have very many wrinkles in it. I also got out my pinks<sup>1</sup>, the pair of dark green pants and one O.D. pair of pants that I have been saving since being up here. They are all in fine shape and look none the worse for 9 months of mud, dust and cold weather. I got them out so that I might clean them with white gas if necessary and hang them up to lose any wrinkles.

Prospects of leave are kind of good for the month of May. I was hoping for a March leave, but as yet it hasn't materialized. The saw mill is being broken up and moved by other troops on Wednesday of this week. This saw mill platoon will then go on telephone line construction and not to Dawson as I expected. I wrote you last Monday and told you that I expected to go to Ft. St. John soon. Well, I didn't want to worry you until you got the next letter so I didn't say that I was at the airport waiting for a plane. It was a swell trip down and after finishing up the business I went to Dawson by truck and was there inside of five hours after getting on the plane. While there I didn't get a chance to see the remains of Dawson Creek after

the fire they had there. I understand that one whole block was completely leveled by the combination fire and dynamite explosion. The principle buildings in the whole town were in this block and consequently it was a serious blow to Dawson. There were about 8 people killed and 150 hurt. I also heard that LaFratts had a field day down there.

Pappy Gordon and Barney Belote hadn't gotten back from leave when I was there Monday. I wanted to talk to them and get all the dope from home, Virginia. I came back by the truck-plane route and made it in about six hours after having to wait for a plane for three hours. It was a swell trip and was the first time I have been down the line in just about 9 months or when I first came there.

We have had some fine weather during the last couple of weeks. The snow has been melting pretty fast during the day and at night it freezes up. The roads are getting free of snow and ice very gradually, but are getting slick due to the thin skim of mud. The weather getting warm is very acceptable but then it brings mud and later dust but I believe the mud and dust are the lesser evils of the three. It is snowing now and there is no sign that it will stop anytime soon. If there is no cold wave following it up it won't bother me any. I hope that your cold weather is over and that temps are back to normal. If it is still cold you can change the oil in the car to 10w and it will start easier. My pickup starts pretty easy at -20\* with 10w oil but with anything heavier I doubt if it would start at 0\*. I just finished dinner (chicken) and think I will have to go visiting down the line this afternoon so I will quit for the present.

All my love,

Stokes

<sup>1</sup>*Pinks – Men's winter Officer's Service Uniform, with mouse grey trousers*

### Diary; Stokes

Mar. 2

Notebook 2 1/2"x4 1/2" McCutcheon's

Box 310 Edmonton, Alberta

USA W 9 11 944

Edmonton to Daw. C - 492 [Dawson Creek]

Daw. C. to St. John - 52

St. John to Ft. Nelson -258

Ft. Nelson to Watson L. -352

Watson L. to Whitehorse -328

Whitehorse to Fairbanks -800

2282

Edmonton -Lv. 905 P.M. on Can. Nat.

Winnipeg- Arv. 5:40 P.M. to Twin City by next A.M. to Chicago on G.N.

*Tuesday March 2.* Drew rations went to P and met Zimms from there to Q.M. with McVey and Aubrey discussed Alcan Hwy [Teapot dome a bubble compared to it] over 40 oz. of rye. Ate turkey dinner with cranberries & all dressing. After we discussed hardship of fighting war on Alcan -50\* weather, pup tents, C rations, mud, water, rain, no women, wine or song. Killed 40 oz. and later returned to 10. Weather down 40\* listened to radio.

*March 3* Snowing and wind blowing to beat hell. Temp about +10\* rain in P.M. and went to 0\*

Got some gas and T 4th walks up and says "need any oil chum?" I said "I don't know, wish you would check it." He does and then said "oil O.K. pal." Then he sees bars and said "I beg your pardon sir" in a very silly change of voice.

Back to 10\*

*Thurs March 4* How peaceful it is in the country. Gave up sawmill to B41st. They started working at 2 P.M. Finish tomorrow. Saw "Pacific Blackout" at airport.

*Fri. March 5-* Started at N-6 on pole line after noon.

*Sat. March 6* Felt like the devil and went to O. Met Capt. Bartlett at 5:30 and had quite a discussion about pole line. Played poker at zero, won about \$200 and was in bed by 10 P.M.

Would like to know who boss is as sector had been abolished. Wrote Margaret as it takes two to make a bargain in correspondence.

*Sunday March 7* In O reminiscing and loafing. Wrapped moose moccasins for John and Lynn. Snowed pretty hard last night.

*Mon March 9* Up Simpson road to S-12 or 15 and back. Road rough as one can be. Took over Co and Co D

*Wed. March 10* McCord leaves Sunday and I take over. Stopped by mile 8 on way back for some rubbers of bridge with Phil Messer. Saw Dr. Kelly and Cecil Lowden. To bed at 1 A.M.

*Thurs Mar 11* To O and back to 8. Traded coffee for eggs while there. To carry coffee down Fri.

Col. Lane - Thornton taking leak when "came up."

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Mar. 5, Friday A.M.

Dear Margaret,

The saw mill is finally out of operation as of 2 P.M. yesterday. It is somewhat of a relief since all of the talk about taking it over and no one doing it until after three weeks is up. The mill didn't do so bad though, we cut pretty close to 900,000 ft. while in operation at this one place. Now we are cutting telephone poles and beginning today on digging the holes for the line. We have many a mile of this to do in this frozen north. However, I like it. It is so peaceful in the country. Dawson can go to H\_\_ and stay there as far as I am concerned. I saw enough of that double time rat race while there last week and I am beginning to really appreciate the country. The above underlined phrase is getting to be a byword among the O's up here.

This is a new writing tablet I am initiating and expect it to stay with me for a long time since it is a very thick one. Canadian paper and it seems to be pretty nice writing material.

The platoon radio is fixed for the first time since we have had it and I am really enjoying it. Latest news, songs and other things on it have been keeping me up to all times of the night. I heard about MacArthur's bombers blasting the 22 Jap ships and all of the other war news so you can't keep me posted on that by means of newspapers anymore in more than one way.

It has gotten cold again and has been so for the last three days. Just another one of the hardships though that we gripe about. -70\* weather, C (iron) rations, no wine, women or song, sleeping in pup tents, water, mud or ice everywhere, what hardships there are fighting a war on the Alcan Highway. Night before last I went to a turkey dinner (and all of the fixings, cranberries, etc.) and just stuffed until I couldn't eat any more. Really enjoyed it but it made me very uncomfortable for a couple of hours after it was over.

Saturday A.M.

I became pretty busy yesterday in turning over equipment and getting the platoon started off on the new telephone work so I didn't finish this letter. I have a little time this am to complete it. I received a letter from you yesterday written Feb. 22 and also received one from Mom. All of your letters are very interesting and are eagerly read. This one was particularly so and you expressed my sentiments exactly. When I do get home on leave we will go somewhere just to be together for a night or so. That will be a lot of fun and a big relief for you to get away

from the children. I want to see them badly right now, but I guess several days of it will be too much of a shock and I will probably want to get away for a while also. I took some pictures the other day and yesterday I sent them off for developing. I hope they turn out better than the others but I will send some of them to you as soon as they get back from Edmonton. Guess I better quit now and write again probably tomorrow.

All my love,  
Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Mar. 7, Thursday night

Dear Margaret,

I am at the office now and am waiting for the payroll to come in so I thought I would write tonight while I had some time. It seems like I get more letters written to you when I am busy as H\_\_ than I do when I'm not so busy. I guess the reason is that when I am not so busy I get into the habit of loafing and sleeping. It is so easy to say I will write tomorrow while stretched out on my bunk. But now I don't get a chance to stretch out any except when I mean business, sleep.

McCord is expected by Tuesday and I will really be glad to see him. So far I have made out O.K. with his company but I just don't like being the C.O. or "Old Man" anymore. I think I have had my share of that job since I have been in the army. I expect McCord has called you up long before now. He said he would call you and when he says he will do a thing you can depend on it. He is a pretty good officer but sometimes tends to be a little overbearing. "Pappy" Gordon is a Major now and he has been due to get it for a long time and I am glad that he finally did for he deserved it.

Made out pretty good at the game last night. We started about 10:00 P.M. and finished up at 2:00 A.M. I won \$31.00 which is not bad for a night's work. That is about 3 times what I get for a day's work so it was pretty profitable. It puts me about \$35.00 ahead since I have been here. I guess I will have to send you a check since I was fairly lucky. I thought I would be pretty sleepy today but I have made out all right and haven't 'paid' for my winnings yet. I know there will be another game tonight but I guess I will go to bed early.

Haven't heard any more news about a leave yet. If I get one unexpectedly I am going to wire you as soon as I hit the states and then let you know my progress from day to day across the continent. I am really hungry to see you now, as I never have before. I have been like that for a long time but it was working up to a pitch when I was 'sure' of seeing you and then all of a sudden there was a flop which left me stranded. However, I do have a lot of loving stored up just waiting until I see you and I expect you will be glad to have me let you alone for awhile while I am home. You most likely will get very little peace and will really be in condition before I leave. (Poor condition Ha.) I had a shower bath the other night in the officer's quarters. It is really civilization I am living in now, running water, shower baths, (my first one in seven months) ping pong tables, movies every other night and coca colas. Up until Monday of this week I had had one (mind you, one) coca cola in the ten months or more that I have been up here. I have missed them at times during that ten months but most of the time I didn't think about them and it seemed as if there wasn't any such thing anymore. I have had at least a dozen or more since Monday. It is raining now and has rained more the last five minutes than it has during the whole winter since the middle of October. I just received word that the payoff will be tomorrow so I guess I will quit and try to get in the clover again.

All my love and I mean it, Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Mar. 11, Thursday

Dear Margaret,

I sent some films out to be developed last Thursday and just received the prints and negatives yesterday. They are all pretty good this time and are not distorted like the first ones I had made with the camera you sent me. The most interesting I am sending you. Last night it started snowing again and we have had a near - blizzard since then. The wind has been blowing hard along with the real fine snow. So far it has been snowing for about 14 hours straight and I don't think it has added over two inches on top of what was on the ground. McCord is leaving Sunday for his approaching leave. He will probably get back about April 15<sup>th</sup> and then I will get my chance at it. The sooner it comes the better I like it. It is going on ten months that I have been away from you and home and that is entirely too long. Your last letter said that you had something for me when I get home. I just can't imagine what it is but anyway I miss it and guess (censored).

Went to see Bill Musser at the P.R.A. camp last night and played bridge until about eleven. It was a good game and the second time I have played bridge since being up here.

I am sorry John was sick and I know it must have worried you. However I am glad he is all right now and rarin' to go. I have been receiving the clippings all along and really do enjoy them. I guess the reason I haven't said anything about them is that I have been taking them as a matter of course and gotten so that I expect them. Guess I would have said something about them if you had stopped. However, you can stop sending any Sunday funny papers as I can get ahold of them on time up here. Keep clipping the weekly ones and send them though.

All my love,

Stokes



The promotion of Arthur A. Kirk, of Suffolk, from First Lieutenant to Captain in the Medical Corps, United States Army, was announced today at headquarters of the Medical Field Service School, Carlisle Barracks, Pa., where Captain Kirk is the Assistant Surgeon at the Camp Dispensary.

The son of Mr. and Mrs. J. Russell Kirk, of Chuckatuck, Virginia, Captain Kirk received his commission in June, 1941, and was assigned to Carlisle Barracks in July, 1942, where he attended the Officer Refresher Course prior to active duty.

Captain Kirk is a graduate of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute, of Blacksburg, Va., and the Medical College of Virginia, Richmond, Va., where he is a member of the Phi Beta Pi medical fraternity.

**Arthur Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**

Mar. 14

Dear Mom,

Today is Sunday and I am on duty again after last night or at least after 24 hr. duty, which will make my 24 hr. duty for this week if I happened to be in a labor union, which I am not. It appears that things are looking up again, and today is a beautiful day. Well my captaincy came through yesterday but there is no need to tell Margaret for a little while yet for it would only make her feel bad and a little jealous that it took Stokes such a long time to get his, but it is only because I am R.A. [*Regular Army*] and situated at a post where the promotions are a little faster than at most places. Don't let the R.A. bother you as to what I do and where I'm going for that doesn't make any difference, for they are going to send you where they want to regardless of who you are or what you are. If you do not believe that you can look at the history of Roosevelt's sons in this war so far. What I want to know is, has Dad gotten that bed finished for me and has he gotten that X-ray taken as yet, and if he hasn't I want an explanation on both counts with a statement as to when they will be finished. I know nothing else of interest so I'll have to close.

Love,

Arthur

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Mar. 18, Thursday

Dear Margaret,

I have been pretty busy lately and haven't had much chance to write. Between taking D Co. over and running this unit I have had my hands full. McCord left yesterday for his 26 day leave and that means I have 26 days before I can leave here for home. Actually it will be about 30 days because he will take about two days to get here from Dawson and two days to take the company back over so by April 18 I should be in Dawson and getting ready to leave for home. This is just about definite that I leave when McCord gets back. By the way he is going to call you from Baltimore some time while he is there.

I went up the line about 90 miles yesterday and changes have really been taking place. I am planning on a couple of camps up there and this saw mill platoon is moving into one this Sunday. This one is about forty miles from here. About a week from now I am moving another platoon about 80 miles from here. There are some girl waitresses about two miles from the camp site I picked I found that out when I got back here. Eight of them went up to work (and 8 more are coming) at a civilian contractor camp a couple of days ago. I guess I will have to move the company up with this platoon. That will be a really brilliant move as McVay says. What do you think? (I know it ain't good!) It looks like the women are taking over the road from what I understand. I read in the paper that 38 had left some town in Canada to work at Fort St. John so evidently the road will be lousy with them this summer. Finally the road appears to be getting civilized. Don't worry about your husband; he can take care of himself among them.

Coming back yesterday it was pretty slick on the road in spots. I turned completely around in one spot and rammed into snow banks three times before I put chains on. At one little draw in the road a civilian truck was at the bottom and couldn't move one way or the other it was so slick. On both sides of the draw there were 15 or 20 trucks waiting to get by and I finally had to pull him up the hill with my pickup. The road in most places is just like a table top with a skim of mud. There is ice under the mud which makes it double slick. Six wheel drive trucks without chains just sit and spin on perfectly flat and level roadway so you can see how slick it is.

I played bridge with Bill Musser a couple of nights this week and really enjoyed it. Next to poker I don't know of anything I would rather do as far as amusement is concerned.

Don't you worry about the women up here. There are thousands and thousands of men here and a handful of the female sex so your husband wouldn't stand a chance with them even if he wanted to.

All my love,

Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Mar. 24, Wednesday night

Dear Margaret,

I was counting up the days before McCord will be back and it is 19. With a couple days at Dawson a couple to travel to here and a couple of days to straighten out, it will be about 25 days before I am ready for leave and before he is in charge again. I like it pretty well here with D Co. I am "boss" and the higher ups haven't been up here during the last two months. Actually we are not accountable to them though.

I will really be glad to get home again to see everybody and most of all to see you. I guess you had better be prepared for a little heavy petting and I don't mean maybe. It will be eleven months to be made up for and probably several months more to store it up for. I don't

guess I will be able to do much storing up though. I know I will miss you the first night that I leave. Anyhow I expect to make up a lot of lost time.

I received a letter from you and another from Dad today. I also got the letter from "Uzzie" and also the card from her. Been intending to write her just like everyone else but opportunity seems to never present itself.

I don't have to turn my income tax report in until the 15<sup>th</sup> of the third month after the month I return to the states.

It looks like I will have to pay about \$65 from a rough counting up. It has been pretty cold lately. Day before yesterday it was down to -10\* after over a week of fine weather. Yesterday it was -15\* and then this morning it was -20\*. It may be a little warmer in the morning but it is snowing now and probably we will have a couple more inches by morning.

Guess I will quit until later on.

All my love,

Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Mar. 29, Sunday night

Dear Margaret,

I received three letters from you today and one yesterday. I am glad the children like their moccasins and that you got the pictures all right. They show pretty well what I was engaged in at the mill. The telephone line is now coming along pretty good. The biggest thing that we are doing is clearing and hole digging.

Boy, hell is being raised in the officer's quarters tonight. First Lt. Heard was playing his violin, a checker game was going on, Lt. Coughlin was acting like a Tennessee hillbilly with his hunting cap and rifle looking for the army so that he might "Jine" up. Then too, the phonograph was going full tilt along with everybody talking at one time. Things are quieting down now as everybody is beginning a letter home. McVay is determined to write home tonight he started a letter about two weeks ago wrote about a sentence per day for five days before he finally gave up on that one and started another. It is pretty tough to even try to finish a letter here. I just stopped for about an hour and played "Fan Tan" and thus interrupted your letter. The boys just stopped the game to go to the army show at Nelson and I decided not to go as I had to finish this letter. It is about the first one they have had that I could go to during the last four weeks. However, there will be another one Tuesday and I believe I will go to it.

McCord will be back in 15 days, but I just understood that all leaves and furloughs have been canceled. However, I also heard that they will be given later on. I expect to be in group "Priority #1" at that time. You will just have to be patient for a little longer time. I want to see you very badly, too, but there is nothing I can do about it but wait the next opportunity.

Well, guess I will quit until later in the week.

Your loving husband,

Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Apr. 1, Thursday A.M.

Dear Margaret,

Sunday noon,

The above is about the shortest I have ever written you I guess. I started to write but other things caught my attention and I had to give it up. Now is about the first chance I have had to

write. I am now in Dawson Creek and mixed up in the rat race here. I moved to here by driving all night after I started writing and my time has been pretty well taken up.

It looks like I won't be able to leave as I expected and I don't know when to expect it again. I have been disappointed many times but I really do hate to disappoint you any more. I was down to counting the days before I would leave and I guess you were doing the same thing, but it just can't be helped. However, Gavan has reassured me that I will get it before so very long and I certainly hope he is right. Much longer in this godforsaken place and I guess I will go really bushy.

I am sorry I haven't written more often during the last two weeks. I think it has been only once a week but I reform about every two months and I write oftener for a month or month and a half. I expect to keep up writing at least twice a week from now on though. Well, it is just about time to go to work again so I will quit.

All my love,  
Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Apr. 7, Wednesday night

Dear Margaret,

I have been pretty busy during the last two or three days and expect to be so from now on. I still would rather be back in the country where it is "so peaceful." I received a letter from you today and I know you will be disappointed when you get the last letter I wrote. However there is still a good chance so there is still hope.

I am writing during the middle of the week like I promised in my last letter. Expect to keep it up again and not break off to one a week again.

I am getting in a poker game practically every night now. During the last four nights I have been in three of the games. I got in Saturday morning about 5:30 A.M. after driving all night and then got in a game that night but had to get some sleep Sunday night. That shows how anxious or how I missed the games. So far I am about even, maybe a few dollars ahead.

We got a carload of beer yesterday and I mean the officers and men have been going for it. It is mighty weak and doesn't nearly compare with the Canadian beer, so I am told as I haven't tasted it at all. Normally I don't like it and when I do drink it I get a bad case of hay fever.

Don't take that waitress story seriously as you were evidently doing in your letter I received the other day. I never did get a chance to put a camp anywhere close to the place anyhow. It was 84 miles from the camp I was planning to move from.

It is about time for supper and I have a lot of work to do between supper and 10 P.M. when the poker game will start so I guess I will quit now as I won't have a chance to finish this afterward.

All my love,  
Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Apr. 12, Sunday noon

Dear Margaret,

I have about twenty minutes before I have to go back to work and I thought I would begin a letter and maybe finish it. I am still as busy as ever and every now and then I find a few minutes to write. Garrison life is pretty nice, comfortable, good living conditions, etc., but it is a



rat race and everything keeps you as busy as can be. However, the time passes fast and I do have more opportunities to write mainly due to more comfort.

I have been to two court martials lately and have another to attend this afternoon. On the first one I was the accuser and the man got 6 months confinement and 2/3 pay taken away for six months. He was due it though since he refused to obey a lawful order I gave him. The 20 minutes is up now so I will stop and mail this short letter.

All my love,  
Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Apr. 16, Friday night

Dear Margaret,

Just came from the show about an hour ago. It wasn't so very good but I enjoyed it anyway. A month ago any show would have been good but now we have something to do or go see most every night and I can be critical.

Talking about difference there is a real different picture now from what there was a month or more ago. Here I am back where I started from, plenty of dust, no snow in sight anywhere, the temperature has been up above +70\* and the day light hours are twice as much as in December. Now it is light at 500 and doesn't get dark until 2100 and then it was light at 900 and dark at 1700. Quite a difference isn't it?

"Pappy" Gordon is a Major now and has been one since April 1. He mailed a letter to his wife on April 1 and didn't mention it at all but just made the return address to "Major" Gordon. She seemed to think it a practical April fool joke. He explained it in his next letter.

McCord has been back for four or five days now and I was glad to give his Company back to him. He told me that he had called and talked with you. I was talking with Gavan the other day and he says I will get my leave sooner or later. When I do get it though, I will be on my way without any notice at all to you. However, the first inkling you will get will be a definite assurance that I really do have a leave this time and will be home to see you. As soon as I can I will send a telegram that I am on my way so you may be surprised at most any time from now on as I am 1A priority on the leave list. There are about 14 officers who have been up here the entire time and who haven't had leaves, but I rank as high or higher as most any of them as far as priority is concerned.

I got your letters telling about the fire Daddy had at the mill. I am sorry as can be as that generator was my pet also. I hope the damage has not proven extensive and that it will soon be in operation.

Went to a dance the other night and had a fairly good time at the first one I had been to in quite a long time. We had a good orchestra and I guess 100 women were present and I know not over 110 officers so it was pretty sticky. Guess I will quit as it is time for the lights to go out.

All my love,  
Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Apr. 18, Sunday afternoon

Dear Margaret,

I have been working today as usual and now have a few minutes in which I believe I can write a letter. Things are pretty busy 7 days a week and getting up at 6:00 A.M. every morning except Sunday and then at 8:00 A.M. That is the big reason I didn't want to come here. I knew when I was well off while I was running the sawmill. Then we worked only 6 days and got up at

7:30 except on Sundays and it wasn't necessary to get up at all then. Here, Sunday is just another work day.

I got a letter from you and one from Mamma today. It was the first ones in quite a while I believe about six days. That is an extra ordinary length of time in which not to receive a letter from you. I guess it is partially due to the break up since it has been warm here ever since I have been here. The temperature was only 35\* at 800 this morning and it has been nice all day except that now it looks like rain.

You can tell Dad that I have already mailed a check to the VPI alumnae fund. I sent it in about two months ago so it won't be necessary for him to send it in for me.

I think I will run over to the show tonight. The first showing is at 2000 and the second at 2130. Shows are one thing that we are getting plenty of up here. Last week we had one play and about six different motion pictures besides an officer's dance on Wednesday night. I guess the dance was one of the social events of the season. It was almost a command performance since the C.O. issued the invitations to everybody on the post. I enjoyed it but I wish you could have been here to go with me. The music was good, and there was plenty of beer, sandwiches, cake and sliced meats at the midnight supper. There is plenty of entertainment here but it is still a darn fast rat race going on.

I bought a new supply of cigarettes the other day. The purchase was six cartons of Luckies at .50c/carton and I think I am now pretty well stocked for the next three months. Hope I will be able to see you again before so very long.

All my love,

Stokes

P.S. Buy yourself some Easter flowers with part of the check.

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Apr. 19, Monday afternoon

Dear Margaret,

The days are pretty long in more ways than one now. There are a lot more daylight hours, I get up a couple of hours earlier and then I have a hard time finding something to do all day. At the present time I am Pappy's adjutant and in garrison there is not much for him (adj.) to do. I could be on my leave now and I wouldn't be missed very greatly at all. Well, I still have definite assurance that I will get it so every day passing is one day closer to getting home.

It turned a little cooler today and the temp must be around 45\*. That is not bad at all considering that at times this past winter that figure has had a minus in front of it. It is hard to believe that I have experienced weather conditions 100\* colder than what it is today. I believe I would rather have the mud, mosquitoes and rain than the cold weather.

There is another show on tonight and I believe I will go. It stars Ginger Rogers and is about six or seven years old, but it ought to be good. The one I saw last night was "Mortal Storm" and wasn't any too good.

This morning the officers in this unit had physical training for the first time. We normally have drill for all the officers for 15 minutes every day and this morning it was changed to Physical Tr. and I was unlucky enough to be called on to give the training. I made out pretty good though. There were about 55 officers in it, including the Colonel. I hope they won't form a habit of selecting me for this training because I ran out of breath so quickly now since I haven't been doing any physical work for six or more months. This training should get us back in shape again.

Guess you are wondering about what is going on now and I believe you did ask a lot of questions in one of your letters. Hope I will be able to answer them in person before long.

All my love,  
Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Apr. 20, Tuesday afternoon

Dear Margaret,

I have a few minutes again this afternoon and thought I would write a few lines. A while ago I went down town and got some cleaning and pressing and a booklet on the Alcan Highway. I want to bring the booklet home with me when I come. It cost a dollar, but I believe it will be worth it because it is very interesting. I then went over to the PX and bought some candy and cheese crackers. It is really a big treat to be able to have a few conveniences around after not being able to even see any for so long.

The movie last night was "Top Hat" with Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire. There is another tonight called "The Hard Way" with Ida Lupino. Most all of the shows that we get are old ones but they are enjoyed just the same. I have a court martial to attend before the show tonight. I guess it will be made short work of. This will be the fourth one that I have attended lately.

The longer I stay around up here the more I want to get home. Heretofore I have been pretty busy and my mind was taken off of going home for most of the time. But now, I have more time on my hands and it gets back to, subject "When is my leave coming?" I have just got to get home to my wife before so long. As the old saying goes "It is a helluva long time between drinks" and I mean I am getting as dry as possible, if you get what I mean. About 11 months now and I am like you are - I can't stand it much longer. I think I will be with you before the full twelve months are up - the way things stand now. Don't believe me though, until you see me or get a wire from me saying that I am on my way home.

Guess I will quit and write again soon. (Not bad three letters in three days.)

All my love,  
Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Apr. 23, Friday A.M.

Dear Margaret,

I received three letters from you this morning. I was glad to get them as they were the first I had received in about four or five days. They were especially interesting since you seemed to be answering each one of the three letters I wrote on days which you received them. I read all of the clippings and looked over the pictures, but I couldn't recognize anything on the pictures of the dam. The appearance of Everetts Bridge must be changed completely. I hope I will be able to see it personally before so very long. One clipping about Hambone amused me very much. The one about the officers playing ping pong and I think I will post it on the bulletin board in the officer's quarters. Most of the officers will probably get quite a kick out of it.

I went to see the show "George Washington Slept Here" night before last and I really enjoyed it. Jack Benny was in it and it was very humorous. I believe it is the most recent and best picture that I have seen since being here.

I have to get back to work now so I will stop and write again in a few days.

All my love,  
Stokes



# Alcan Highway



Paymaster J. Stokes Kirk

1943 Dawson Creek, B.C.  
95<sup>th</sup> Engr. E Co. Center-R; Lt. Johnson, Lt. Molvie,  
Capt. McVay



1943 Alcan Highway J. Stokes Kirk; back row on right



Alcan Highway  
95<sup>th</sup> Engr. troops headed home



HEADQUARTERS  
DAWSON CREEK RAILHEAD AND DEPOT  
DAWSON CREEK, BRITISH COLUMBIA

26 April 1943.

SUBJECT: Commendation of 95th Engineer General Service Regiment.  
TO : Commanding General, Northwest Service Command, Whitehorse,  
Y. T., Canada.

The commendable performance of the 95th Engineer General Service Regiment while stationed at Dawson Creek Railhead and Depot should not pass unrecognized. For a period of four months this Regiment provided the bulk of the labor necessary to the establishment and operation of this Post and its numerous utility installations. Their effort reflected a continual efficient performance of duty and a spirit of mutual cooperation that set a high standard by which other units could pattern their own activities. They exhibited an admirable ability to adapt and to create. Good morale was abundantly in evidence. Their officers demonstrated intelligent leadership and maintained sound discipline, and by their continual application of initiative brought about the competent execution of all assigned tasks. I personally have inspected and observed the conduct of their activities about the Post of Dawson Creek and commend the entire Regiment for its efficiency, discipline, and good morale.

s/ Albert L. Lane  
ALBERT L. LANE,  
Colonel, C. E.,  
Commanding.

A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY:

*Robert L. Williston*  
ROBERT L. WILLISTON,  
Captain, 95th Engineers,  
Adjutant.

Arthur Kirk to Merle A. Kirk

May 24

Dear Mom,

Yesterday I went to Harrisburg to see a friend and missed the last bus to Carlisle. The last bus leaves at 12:15 and because I went to sleep it was about 12:30 before I knew what time it was. So I had to wait until 5:45 this morning before I could catch a bus back here, and I have been tired all day. I suppose Stokes was pretty glad to get back here to the states, and is also glad to have his wife and John with him down in La. If this moving keeps up poor little Lynn will never know that she has a father, for she will never have seen him long enough to recognize him as such. Well, I am sure that you are happy at home with the little girl, for many has been the time that you have wanted one and I think that this will satisfy you for a while and you will realize that they are no better to have around than boy babies. This will make you realize how lucky you were to have had such nice boys rather than a female child. Well best of luck to you all.

Love,

Arthur

**Margaret G. Kirk to Merle A. Kirk and J. Russell Kirk**  
Lacage Hotel Court, Alexandria, LA

May 27

Dear Mother Kirk and Daddy Kirk,

Well, I am a "widow" again and really a lonesome one this time as, I don't have you all here to lean on. Stokes called me about ten-thirty this morning and said he had to leave this afternoon for Arkansas with ninety men. I went out this afternoon and carried two clean uniforms I got from the laundry for him and John and I bade him as cheerful a goodbye as we could under the circumstances. We stayed about an hour, but he had quite a few things to do after that and couldn't be with us so we came on back. We are waiting now for a couple of the other "widows" to come by so we can go down town to supper together. Some of the wives only saw their husbands the night before they left and they have been gone two weeks now. I guess I am lucky to have had Stokes two weeks at home, practically a week on the road and a few days here but I was really hoping the river would go down so he wouldn't have to go at all.

Stokes just sent a letter to me by Lt. Carr and I enjoyed it so much. Lynn does get those notions about not sleeping sometime, and John does also. He took a nap each afternoon on the trip down here, but he hasn't had an afternoon nap since. I always give him his bath and make him lie down awhile but he hasn't been to sleep. He and Stokes have been having romps at night until late so he has been sleeping until after nine o'clock in the mornings so that is probably why he isn't inclined to take a nap.

I was so sorry to hear you all couldn't take the trip and I hope Daddy Kirk did manage to get away for a few days anyway. A change does anyone good I think, but this is really too much of a change for me without a husband, and I really like to be home. Stokes said he didn't think he could possibly be up there more than a week and I might as well stay here as to go home and come right back. If he finds he'll be there longer though I'll have to come (now in pencil...no ink) home because we are paying \$4.00 per day and have to eat all meals out so you know what



that means. It was \$4.50 while Stokes was here but even that wasn't so bad when we could be together. But I don't think I need the Louisiana sun enough to continue paying that. I have looked at apartments but nobody wants to rent to anyone with a child. Please send my check as soon as it arrives for I know I'll need it by then if Stokes doesn't return before that time. Since Stokes isn't here maybe you better address it to me c/o Lacage Hotel Court, Alexandria, Louisiana.

Love,

Margaret

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**      May 29, Saturday night  
Reydell, Ark. to Lacage Hotel Court, Alexandria, LA

Dear Margaret,

I was too sleepy and tired when I got in last night to even attempt to write, telegram or call. I left Claiborne about 8 P.M. Thursday and arrived here about 6:30 P.M. Friday. I had twelve trucks and it was about the worst convoy trip I have ever been on. I was the only officer from the 95<sup>th</sup> on it (there was one more who was going part of the way) and did I have a headache when I finally got here with the 12 trucks and

Margaret, Lynn & John Kirk



Stokes & Lynn Kirk

89 men. We got lost three times, one truck ran out of gas at 2 A.M. in Hodge, one truck broke down for about a half hour in Alexandria, another had to be towed 200 miles after ramming into the back end of one of them and finally flood water cut me off on two separate roads and I had to go on a detour to get around these places. All in all I drove about 450 miles in a little over 22 hours at 25 MPH. One more thing to happen and I would probably had told the whole thing to go to H--. Either that or I would have been immune to any kind of trouble from then on.

I want to get over to Altheimer or DeWitt tonight and call you up or send you a telegram. I hope you and Johnny are making out alright while I am gone. I miss you like everything and I haven't been gone but two days. As I get it though we will be back in Claiborne in five or six days.

Guess I will quit and try to find a ride to town.

All my love,

Stokes

P.S. Address-95<sup>th</sup> Engr. G. S. Regt.

E.V.T.C. Camp Claiborne, Hodge, Louisiana

*Dispatched to Arkansas because of Ark. River flooding*

**Margaret G. Kirk to Merle A. Kirk and J. Russell Kirk**

May 31, Saturday night

Dear "Folks"

Stokes called me tonight from Reydell, Arkansas and I really was delighted. He said he had quite a hard trip up as he was the only officer with twelve trucks and ninety men, but they finally made it after twenty-two hours on the road. He wrote to me Saturday night after he couldn't get me when he called, but I haven't received the letter yet. I asked him when he thought they would come back here and he said all he could hear was "in four or five days" but he really thought they would be back by Friday as the river had gone down a foot and a half and they were rebuilding roads now. I surely hope they will be here by Friday, because I am not exactly enjoying myself so far away from home, without him.

We are quite close to the City Park and I have taken John to see the animals a couple of times and one day we ate lunch near all the slides and swings. We also went to the swimming pool last Wednesday, Friday and today. He is just as brown now as he was the end of last summer and I am beginning to look a little like some of these Creoles down here. They have a place just for little children, not more than six inches deep at any place and he really has a grand time. If it isn't too much trouble I wish you would look in my small cedar chest and see if my bathing suit and cap are in there. I usually keep pretty good track of my belongings, but I just can't remember whether I brought it down there with the children's summer things, or whether I left it at Mother's, so I am going to ask her to look for it also. If it is there I wish you'd send it to me, for I might get tired of just watching John splash after a while. Stokes told me to get another suit but I don't have much use for one at home and mine is good enough. Then, too, I can't get a cap here and if you find the suit the cap will be there also, so I thought you might as well send both of them.



I really wish I could be there to squeeze Lynn some for I never missed anyone quite so much. Do love her for me if you still have her. I haven't heard a word from my home since I left so next time you write try to let me know how things are over there.

Stokes also said tonight that he thought he'd be sent out on cadre (I'm not sure of the spelling on that) and if so he would be sure of being in the states five or six months more. It really sounds too good to be true and I do hope he hasn't gotten my hopes up for nothing, however I'll try not bet on it until I am sure.

Love to all,

Margaret

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

June 3, Wednesday night

Camp Reydel, Stuttgart, Ark to Lacage Hotel Court, Alexandria, LA

Dear Margaret,

It is now about 10:30 and I really wished I were back with you. It is now 11:00 P.M. and two sentences written. We are having a bull session with rum cokes in my tent and I am trying to write a letter at the same time. I got a shower tonight at a farm house down the road and it does feel good to be clean again and I believe I wouldn't "smell" you out of bed if I could be there now. I am enclosing a check for \$100 so you should be able to tide over. We should be back by Sunday.

All my love,

Stokes

**Margaret G. Kirk to Merle A. Kirk and J. Russell Kirk**

June 4

Alexandria, LA

Dear "Folks,"

How is my precious child these days, or do you still have her? I have not heard a word from you all since yesterday week ago, and I haven't heard anything from Smithfield since I left so I am beginning to feel a little neglected. It probably isn't your fault though as mails are funny around here. Lt. Reed brought a letter to me from camp yesterday and I really was quite disappointed when I found it was from Bud "Thrift" instead of one of you precious people.

I had a letter from Stokes tonight, written Wednesday and he said he thought he would be here by Sunday, but no one seems to really know when they are coming. Each day we hear a different date for return and almost every wife has a different rumor as to when they are returning, where they are going and so forth. I had a letter from Stokes Wednesday but it was written last Saturday so his telephone call Monday night gave me later news than that. Lt. Reed also told me yesterday that he had talked to Stokes that morning and he said he'd be here sometime this weekend as he was bringing some men down to go to school so I am just hoping I'll see him.

I am enclosing a picture of a baby John cut out of my new magazine, to send Lynn. He never walks down the street that he doesn't want me to buy something for her and I think he really does miss her. He saw a new crib in a window day before yesterday and he said Lynn was "bound to have that". He also wants to buy all the dresses and dolls he sees for her. I sent her the little birds I got for her hair; I thought she might like the idea of getting a package. I mailed some of those cut out and paste books to the Bilisoly children, as they seemed crazy about John's and Elizabeth said she hadn't seen any there. I could only get two kinds but I think they will enjoy them.

My side started bothering me quite a bit several days ago, and I have had it strapped up for four days now with three bands of adhesive each three inches wide. They only lack about two inches of meeting on the other side so you know just about how nice that feels as hot as it is down here. We do have a good breeze every night but the days are very hot. I haven't had any temperature today though and I really feel better tonight, maybe news from my husband caused that for it really does help to get a letter from him, or this was really just a note for it wasn't quite half a page. He said he had taken a shower that night, the first one in a week so he felt clean for a change, and that was about all except he hoped to be here Sunday.

I have been house hunting and so far no luck. This place normally has a population of thirty thousand and from the housing situation it seems to be about three times that many now. I went to one real estate agent and he wouldn't even take my name and said he had six hundred applicants already and not a single vacant house or apartment to offer. I really think we will be compelled to buy a trailer. Captain Larsh and his wife are still staying at the Bentley, The Hotel of the city, and she says she reckons they will just have to mortgage even their souls and continue staying there. She can find a single room, but no children and they have a three year old boy she wants to bring down here as soon as she finds a place. The child is with her mother in



Stokes & Margaret Kirk  
down to investigate a desertion and was the only officer who came back. He expected the others

Franklin now. I was really glad to see someone from so near home. I went to see a couple of nice apartments, but they wouldn't rent to anyone with children.

Well, your eyes probably need a rest now, so just hug my little Lynn and write soon.

Love to all,

Margaret

**Margaret G. Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**  
Alexandria, LA

June 6

P.S. Just read a page at the time so you won't strain your eyes.

Dear Mother Kirk,

I suppose you are anxious to know more about Stokes' return than the card I wrote yesterday, so I'll try and go into detail a little more. He stopped the convoy in the street about quarter to twelve Friday night and ran in to tell me he could spend the rest of the night here if I'd come out to camp and get him. There happened to be four other "widows" in my room so two stayed with John and the other two went with me. It must have been around three-thirty when we finally got to bed because he had messages for some of the wives and they all wanted to know what was going on up there. Then too, it took him sometime to get clean once more. 16 stayed here until noon yesterday and then went out to camp and stayed until about five-thirty. He didn't have to go out this morning but had to be there by five o'clock as he is O.D. tonight so I'll not see him again until tomorrow night, It seems to be a case of "Here today and gone tomorrow" over and over again these days. He was sent

would come in tomorrow, but Lt. Thompson called his wife last night and he said their orders had been changed and some would come the 9<sup>th</sup> and the others either the 14<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup>. I do hope Stokes can stay here this time, for this is rather an expensive vacation for John and me, and I feel like we are wasting money when he isn't here.

About the time on the air mail and regular mail one seems to be about as good as the other. A letter written May 24<sup>th</sup> reached us the 27<sup>th</sup> by air mail, and one written June 2<sup>nd</sup> reached me the 5<sup>th</sup> by regular mail. In that one you said you had written on Monday also, but we haven't received that yet. It may have gone to camp and been forwarded to Stokes in Arkansas and didn't get there before he left to come back. I was wondering what had happened for the letter I received yesterday was the first I had received since the 27<sup>th</sup> of May. I am always glad to get mail from home and I enjoy your letters a lot. I have been using air mail envelopes because I happened to have a bunch in my bag, but I think I'll get some other kind.

I finally got a card from Mother yesterday and it was the first word I have had from her or anyone over there since I left. She only wrote a couple of lines asking if I had applied for my No. 3 ration books and thanking me for a check I sent her for her birthday. I would not have understood her not saying more if I had not received your letter on the same mail saying she had been sick. I do hope she is better now, but I don't suppose I'll really find out how she is unless I write Dr. Parker because she'll never tell me about it.

Grandma [*Chassie Thomas*] is a mess isn't she? You tell her I wish she could move her big house down here so I could have a place to live. This business of being in one room is OK for a while but I'd like to do a little cooking for a change. This eating three meals a day in various places doesn't suit me exactly. When are you going to Virginia Beach to pay \$3.00 per night and stay with Grandma?

I finally located a roll of films for my camera and they are colored. I have several pictures of John and some other "widows" one at the pool and Stokes took a shot of some beautiful crape myrtle trees yesterday. There is a street here with a double row of them down the middle and they are the shade of pink you like so well and have the largest clusters of blossoms I have ever seen.

Do write and give us all the news about Lewis and the approaching wedding. Wish we could be there but don't imagine he will wait very long for the event now that he is here in the states.

You can just discard my invitation to Marion Lee's graduation exercises but tell me her address next time you write so I can mail her something. Also you might as well open the statement from Ballard and Smith and just let me know the amount so I can send a check to them after I get my allotment check.

I am glad my house is all wired and as you say I could read there if I were there. I have a chair and some old magazines so I guess all I need now is the floor to put the chair on. Maybe that will be there by the time I get home.

Love,

Margaret

Don't forget to love my baby.

**Margaret G. Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**

June 13

Dear Mother Kirk,

This will really have to be "short and sweet" this time for it is my last sheet of paper. But I wanted you to know I received the bathing suit and cap O.K. and appreciate your sending them.

Stokes told me approximately what he wrote you Friday, but said he forgot to mention the suit and cap. He received a letter from you Friday and when he gave it to me to read he wanted to know if I had received the card you mentioned but I didn't get that until yesterday. This mail business really works funny.

Tell Lynn I am glad she has such a good opinion of her Mother for she really picks out pretty pictures of me. The one she said was her was really quite a bit like her. I am glad she liked the birds [*barrettes*] and she probably needed them if she has been loosing as many as usual. I was glad to hear you all were not having such a time at night and that she was eating better. But it really doesn't sound as though she is getting enough milk if she only drinks some at breakfast and at bedtime. How about some after lunch? It is going to be rationed I understand so Daddy Kirk better be putting aside some for her at the store. There is a full case at Mothers if you need it.

By the way if you have not already gotten something for Lewis and Kitty please add from five to ten dollars to it for us and if you have gotten something I wish you would get something for us; anything up to ten dollars and I'll send you a check when you let me know about it. Stokes said that would be better than trying to get something here when we don't know anything about what they have.

I am enclosing a letter I had from Elizabeth. It was quite nice and I thought you all would enjoy it. Stokes was O.D. last night so I haven't seen him since six o'clock yesterday morning, but we are going out at five o'clock to meet him and have supper at the club out there.

Some more men returned from Arkansas Thursday and the rest are due Tuesday so maybe the "widow" days are over for a few weeks anyway.

I had a letter from "Bud" yesterday enclosing a note from Mother. It is the only time I have heard from her except about three lines on a card a week ago. Mother is still not well and seemed heartbroken over "Bud" having to go to Parris Island the 17<sup>th</sup>. I do wish I could see him before he leaves but doubt it.

Love to all,

Margaret

**Arthur Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**

June 13

Dear Mom,

Today I am on OD again and everything has been pretty quiet all day long, so I went to a show and for a swim. It was very nice and it is the first swim that I have been for this summer. It has been hot all day but it has cooled off this afternoon so that it is quite pleasant, and there is a little breeze. I wish that you would pick out something nice for Lewis for me and take it off of the rent money that I have coming to me or do I have any coming as yet? The other day I was in the parade and walked up front with the Col. and it was just like I was a big shot. We walked around and came up beside the General and reviewed the troops, just like you see in the movies and like the Col. and his staff used to do up at VPI. Since Lewis has stepped off it leaves only three of us, Jack, Nell and me. Your guess is as good as mine as to the next one of the three. I'll take Jack. On one of these fine days I want to run down to Wash. to pay Lem [*Lemuel Thomas*] a social visit. Jack Menger called the other night to tell me that he has moved out to his summer place and wanted me to drop out to see him.

Love,

Arthur

**Margaret G. Kirk to Merle A. Kirk and J. Russell Kirk**

June 15

Dear Mother and Daddy Kirk,

We received a grand letter from each of you today - Mother's written on Friday the 11<sup>th</sup> and Daddy's, Sunday the 13<sup>th</sup>. We both had a big laugh over the idea of Lynn having Daddy cutting out paper dolls. There really must have been some changes made since we left home, if things like that are going on.

Stokes is O.D. again tonight but we went out to camp with Mrs. Thompson to get her husband and saw him for a few minutes, and gave him both letters to read. The Colonel had a brilliant idea whereby there is an O.D. for each company plus Headquarters Company, then a Regimental Field O.D. and a medico making nine men out there on duty each night, whereas only one officer had been doing the job. The wives really are in a "stew" about it but, of course, there is nothing we can do.

I'll bet Lynn was a sight after her mud bath, but she must have had a grand time before she was stopped. We had a day of showers not long ago and John put his galoshes on and promised to just walk on the walkway during a few sunshine moments but of course he managed to get in a puddle before he came in and consequently had to be dressed again from head to foot. I made him stay in after that, but when his Daddy came home he let him out again. All in all I changed him completely three times in one afternoon.

About Stokes' trip to Washington - there is apparently nothing to it now, and I am rather sorry because we would have come with him and that would have given me a chance to see all of you for a little while. I was especially anxious to see "Bud" before he left. I didn't feel very well for a few days, and Monday night Stokes said I could come home for few days to see "Bud" if I felt like it, but the first train out then wouldn't have put me in Newport News until late Wednesday night, even if I made perfect connections. So I just gave up the idea as he had to leave Thursday morning and I was afraid I'd miss him entirely. Stokes was sent back from Arkansas early in order to investigate a case of desertion. While the man was A.W.O.L. he managed to commit some crime in Washington and Stokes expected to have to go there to investigate that part of the case. However, he just settled the desertion part here and the man will be sent to Washington and that affair will be investigated by the authorities there.

Stokes has gotten Josh's shoes and just hasn't had a chance to mail them so I told him to bring them in next time he comes and I'd mail them in town.

I know you are glad Mag [*Merle's house keeper*] turned down the "Jew lady's" \$15.00 per week and I do hope she'll be satisfied and stay with you. It seems the help situation is bad here also, and race riots occur frequently in New Orleans and nearby places, though things have seemed fairly peaceful since we have been here. I am sorry the gas situation has gotten so bad there again, for it really makes you think twice before using the car. They have tightened up a little here also because they only allowed Stokes enough for three trips a week to camp and he has to ride with someone else on the other day.

I have thought at times that one child bothered the other where they wouldn't take a nap each afternoon, but from what you say Lynn isn't doing so nicely about it alone, and I know John seems to have abandoned the idea entirely. I still make him lie down but sleep is apparently unheard of, however he does sleep quite late every morning so he isn't exactly losing sleep.

We thought we would be heading home by now but if Stokes goes out on cadre he'll probably be here quite awhile. Our problem now is to find a house and a way to relieve you all of your duties as nurse for Lynn. Any suggestions would be appreciated.

Love, Margaret

**J. Stokes Kirk to Merle A. Kirk and J. Russell Kirk**  
Postcard: 1312<sup>th</sup> Engr. Regt. Camp Claiborne, LA

June 18 Friday

Dear Mom & Dad,

Just a note to let you know that everybody is feeling pretty good now. John ran up a pretty high fever day before yesterday and we carried him to the hospital and found out he had a bad case of tonsillitis. We had to keep him there until today and Margaret brought him home here this afternoon. He is a little weak but seems to be alright otherwise.

I guess you will notice my new address on the other side so from now on if you write to the camp send it to the above address. We always like to hear about happenings at home and are glad that Lynn is getting along O.K. Guess Margaret will write more details later.

Love to all,

Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Merle A. Kirk and J. Russell Kirk**

June 25 Friday noon

Dear Mom & Dad,

I just received a letter you wrote Tuesday and was glad to hear the news from home. I know when I carry it in to Margaret to read that she will really want to go home and see everybody especially Lynn. She likes to know what Lynn is doing and I think that when she reads that Lynn wants to go to Smithfield and see Mamma that she will really have a desire to get home as quickly as she can. Anyhow don't use that as a cue to stop writing about what the little lady is doing.

John is fine now and has gained back the weight he lost while in the hospital. He was pretty sick while there and lost about six lbs., but he is the picture of health now. He goes in swimming at the pool in town about every day and is getting just as brown as can be. He will have to have his tonsils out before very long.

The new unit is being activated today. I don't know when we will get some men in to fill up the vacancies in the different companies but I expect they will begin coming in small lots before long and possibly be up to full strength in about a month. However, so far another new unit which was activated about a month and a half ago has only about half of their men in now and they can't begin their three months course until after they have received 90% of their men.

I hope everything is running smoothly at home now. I am glad that Josh got another deferment and I hope by that time that this thing will be over with.

Love to all,

Stokes

**Mary Gamble to Arthur Kirk**

July 1

Dear Arthur,

I was very surprised on my return here Thursday to receive your card and to realize that you were gone. I had thought that it was just a rumor – else I might have stayed home this last week, as I really wasn't essential at camp. Also when you told me to have a good time, I thought you thought I was going; I didn't know you would call so soon and be surprised that I was gone.

The paper from Clarksburg carried a short account of the Evacuation Hospital Unit's being in the tornado stricken area, so I decided you were probably one of the five doctors along, and I discarded from my mind the idea that you might get away in less than a week. Also as we

drove into Elkins on Thursday afternoon and I saw so many trucks and soldiers, I was again sure that you were still here.

Today, Saturday, all the mules, or donkeys, from out in the maneuvers area were driven past our house and over across the river near the high school and Mother's farm. They are still there this evening, but I presume they will be loaded and shipped soon. Colonel Holman had a nice letter in the Elkins Inter-Mountain last night addressed to the Mayor and Council of Elkins. Everything is being wound up concerning the closing of the W.V.M.A.

Monday night, July 3<sup>rd</sup>, my brother Ben will arrive. His wife and two small daughters are here now. They expected to leave Tuesday morning, but a telegram this evening gives him two days' leave. Probably they will leave Friday morning for Charlottesville, Virginia and on to Ft. Bragg, N.C., where he will rejoin his outfit after three months absence. Perhaps, I will go with them for a Virginia visit, as my camps do not begin again until July 17<sup>th</sup>. If I knew where Camp Pickett was and thought I could see you I might look you up. I think it is near Farmville. Write me and tell me if you'd be hard to find.

My Dad says he took your medicine and found it made him very comfortable as to sleeping, but he doesn't like the necessity of extra mineral oil. I don't know whether he will continue to take it or not, but I reminded him that you thought he should take it for one month longer than he felt any discomfort.

My sister, Peggy, arrived here Tuesday evening with her three daughters from Philadelphia. Incidentally, all those little girls loved the mules!

Thank you so much for sending me the card about your activities. You were most thoughtful. And I have enjoyed very much our acquaintance. I am sorry we have both been away so much during the latter part of May and in June.

I will go by, probably tomorrow, to see if Phyllis Goode and Patty Ransom are still here.

Be good, and perhaps you will get to see your family now that you are fairly close.

Sincerely,

Mary Gamble

**Chassie Thomas to Arthur Kirk**

July 2

Dear Arthur,

Your card received, I am glad you are nearer us than you were. Hope you will come to see me now. Eleanor will leave for Boston soon will stay with Lewis until his ship will leave. His wife & baby are up there. We had a party here last Saturday for our preacher that was married last week. We had plenty music & a good time. You ought to have been here. Lemuel called & said he was so busy he could not come to see us until the last of July.

Miss Cofield was married last week. She lives a block from here. When is your time?

Frances was to see me yesterday. She looks quite weak yet. Her little girl is very little. Her husband left for the Navy Monday. Well the war have all of you now. I will be so glad when the war is over so all of you can come home.

Much love,

Grandma

**Al Galbraith to J. Stokes Kirk**  
Montney, B.C. to Camp Claiborne, LA

July 2

Dear Sir,

Just a line to let you know I am still alive & hope you are the same. Well, now I will get down to work. I am writing you to find out what is wrong are money never came. Only the first 8 days & for the oats. They still owe for 886 oat bundles at 5.c each, so if you will try and see what you can do about it. As the money would come in handy. Well if you ever come down this way be sure to call in.

Yours truly

Al Galbraith

Montney, B.C.

For God sake Capt. See what you can do for us. Best luck to you.

**John W. Weaver to Bud Gill**  
Smithfield, VA to Parris Island, S.C.  
Weaver Printing Company, Commercial Art Printers Smfd., VA

July 2

Dear Richard:

I certainly enjoyed your postcard, and very glad you are having a fine time, although the work is hard. That is what a Marine must expect from all accounts. But you will find out, no doubt, that hard work in a good cause, is what manhood is made from.

We are having a cool spell here just now, after that terrible hot weather last week. A rain the other night has started our victory garden on its way rejoicing.

Nearly all the boys have left this town, and the streets are bare, but one thing is certain – we know where they are and almost know what they are doing: they are doing their duty to their country. Know this – you and all the rest – we at the home-base are remembering you and rooting for you, whether we see you or not. We are betting out last dollar on the boys – you among them – at the front.

I have just finished a hard job for the Smithfield Ham and Products Co., a large ad 8 ½ x 14, printed on both sides. It required all this week up to yesterday. And now comes on a quantity of the Pocahontas folders. The new slide for putting a heavy form on the press works fine. I don't see how I could get that Pocahontas form on the press at all without the new invention. I'll sell it to you maybe, for another postcard or letter. How about it?

Give my love to all the boys and yourself, and salute the officers for me.

Affectionately

John W. Weaver

**Margaret G. Kirk to Merle A. Kirk and J. Russell Kirk**

July 3

Dear Folks,

Well, John had his first ride on a bus this morning and he was delighted. Stokes had to drive the car today and Lt. Thompson went with him so we could use his car, but he went off with the keys in his pocket. His wife was really provoked with him but I think she has about decided not to fuss when he gets in tonight as it will be their last night. The regiment goes under guard tomorrow morning at reveille and she can't see him any more. These last few days have made me more and more thankful that Stokes was transferred for I do feel so sorry for these other wives. Night before last two doctors were transferred from the 95<sup>th</sup> to the 1313<sup>th</sup> and 1314<sup>th</sup>



respectively and they are all still hoping that their husbands will be fortunate enough to get a transfer at the last minute. Of course it may just be postponing a bad parting, but I feel like each month in the states makes their chance of returning even better and I am still hoping Stokes will not have to go at all.

I really believe Stokes could get along better without me than he could without John, but I think now that he has had him for a while, he would really be lost without him. We will get into our house either tomorrow or Monday so I think things will be better for all of us then. What we need now is our Lady Lynn; how about coming down to see us and incidentally dropping the little Miss here for awhile? I thought something about coming home for a few days with some of the wives who are returning, but Stokes is able to get in almost every night now and he seems to want us here. Later on when they get all their men he'll probably not get in over two or three nights a week. It is such a treat to be with him that I hate to lose a minute of his company.

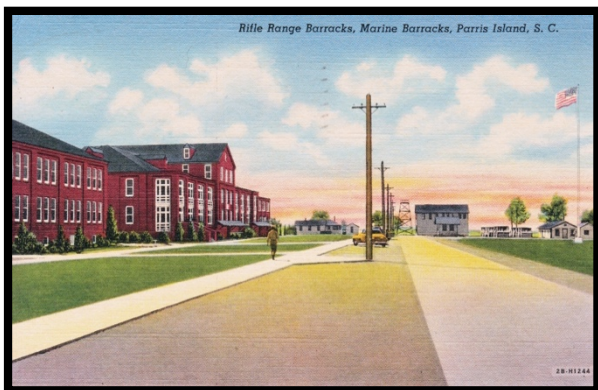
Mrs. Thompson gave John a nice Holgate wooden train today for his birthday and he has been playing with it all afternoon. It is about the size of his electric train and has the engine, coal car, freight car, oil car, flat car loaded with lumber and the caboose. We went in a gift shop downtown today and he saw the train first thing so she told him she'd buy his birthday present in advance. He wanted her to buy one to send Lynn also, but I told him Lynn was probably playing with the trains he left at home now.

Stokes has been quite tired each night this week for he says he is doing his first real work since returning to the States. They have been getting in men this week who have only been in the army four days so they really have to learn Army ways from the very bottom. He usually says it is bedtime as soon as he eats and has a romp with John or sometimes he doesn't have the energy for a romp, but we'll go down for an ice cream cone or to the park to watch the people at the swimming pool for awhile. We haven't been to the pool for a swim this week though as we have had a thunderstorm every afternoon so far and when it rains here it can't be called just a shower either. The drainage evidently isn't very good here for the streets get covered with water from one sidewalk to the other and the curbs are high here and in some places the water will be up to the running board of the car.

I received a card from Mother this morning but I still can't get any news from her. About all she does is ask me to come home. She did say this time though that Lynn was coming over to stay a while with her and she was so glad. It does make it lonesome for her I guess to have had me leave with both children after having us so long and then "Bud" leaving so soon afterwards.

Love to all,

Margaret



**Bud Gill to Emma Roeder**

July 4

Parris Island, S.C. to Smithfield, VA

Dear Giggie,

I got your letter today and I sure was glad to get it. I don't get much time to write but I get time to write a card now and then. Hope you and your people are all right. I am having a fine time.  
Bud

**Bud Gill to Emma Rolder**

July 9

Dear Giggie,

I got your letter about one o'clock and I was very glad to get it. Hope you are all right. Don't work too hard. I am having a fine time. I like it down here a lot. Tell all the boys to get a life. Be good.

Bud

**Bud Gill to Emma Rolder**

July 18

Dear Giggie,

Received your letter the first of the week and was glad to hear from you. Hope you are all right. I am at the rifle range now. I like it a lot but is hot down here. Tell all the folks hello. Write when you get time. Be good.

Love,

Bud

**Margaret G. Kirk to Merle A. Kirk and J. Russell Kirk**

July 9

420 Park Place Drive Alexandria, LA

Dear Folks,

John received the boats and seems to be thoroughly enjoying them. I have been so busy this week, we haven't been to the pool but he puts them in the bath tub every afternoon and at other times he rides them around the room on his train Mrs. Thompson gave him. I am glad there was a card enclosed for we would have been curious sometime, as the package arrived Monday and the letter yesterday.

We moved Monday afternoon and I am wondering where so many things came from. When we left home everything was in the trunk of the car and when I moved I had to make two trips and had things piled everywhere except on the front seat. I have been busy as a bee trying to get the house cleaned and trying to find some cooking utensils and also getting some food in the house. I thought first of writing home for some of my things, but I know it would be a lot of trouble to get them packed and shipped and Stokes said just buy some cheap things here. The house is furnished except, of course the bed and table linens and towels, but there was only one pie plate and a small kettle in the kitchen, one plate, two saucers and one cup and two glasses so you know I had to have more than that. The gas wasn't cut on until Tuesday afternoon so Wednesday morning was my first cooking. It must have been a rare sight to see me frying bacon in a pie plate and then fixing eggs in it also. I finally located a glass frying pan and I am scared it will break each time I put it on the stove. I had pork chops, butter beans, corn on the cob and tomato and lettuce salad, iced tea and watermelon Wednesday night for Stokes and last night I had steak, black eye peas, corn on the cob again and combination salad and cantaloupe. Stokes said he wanted steak Wednesday night and I went to seven stores and was greeted with an empty meat case each time. They expected some yesterday afternoon or this morning so I made the rounds again and was rewarded with a nice sirloin steak. It was 45 cents per pound which wasn't so high for here I don't think, but it took 22 points for what I got, so I told Stokes he'd have to be satisfied with that for some time. I have enough of it for another meal though and he seemed to enjoy it so much. Getting meat will be my problem though, for he absolutely will not eat canned meats and cold cuts since getting so much of that last year. I am trying to locate a chicken for Sunday.

I really am longing for Lynn now since we are in a house and have a place to cook. It was hard to manage even John when we had to eat out and it was terribly expensive. I hope you all won't wait until September to take a trip down here for we may be elsewhere by then. Some say they only train the men here for three months, but I know of some who have been here longer so it is hard to say about that.

I asked Stokes each night if he had written to you and finally he told me last night that he had absolutely no time to write now and would have still less as time went on, so I thought I'd write first thing this morning. Stokes is stuck with the job of S 3 [*Battalion Operations and Training Officer*], or plans and training officer and it seems to be a full time job. He may get some other job though as they are still getting in officers.

The 95<sup>th</sup> moved out Monday afternoon for parts unknown, and I did feel so sorry for the wives as well as the men.

Love to all,

Margaret

**Margaret G. Kirk to Merle A. Kirk and J. Russell Kirk**

July 9

Dear "Folks,"

I wrote to you this morning but forgot to mention Lynn's shoes. It will be quite all right to do whatever you think best about the shoes; you can charge them to me at Ballard & Smith or if you get them elsewhere, let me know how much they are and I'll send you the money. She has always fallen down for quite a while after getting new shoes, and I don't know whether it is due to them being slick or too large. However, I am afraid to get them just a good fit at the time as she might out grow them before another coupon is good. I have obtained ration books for Stokes though and she could use his coupon if necessary. I have John's old shoes in the shop for heel repair and the new ones will probably need attention by the time the old ones are fixed. As a whole though I think he is very good on shoes.

We received a nice letter from you all today, enclosing a picture of our daughter and her Granddaddy. It is precious and John has looked at it so much it looks worn even now. He says he wants his little sister so bad, so I guess we'll have to have her packed up and shipped down. How about it? John also keeps asking us to have his slide and tricycle sent down here, but Stokes told him they were too big to move around and he told him to get me to take him to the park to slide, thereby giving me an extra job. I haven't had much chance for play this week, but I am going to take him to the pool next week as I should be about settled. I do want to wash the curtains the first of the week, but I can do that one morning, I think.

In one letter from home you mentioned or rather suggested that we insert an ad in the paper, playing on the patriotic feelings of people so we could be together while Stokes is in the country. I intended sending you a sheet of the ads running in the paper showing how some were worded. It evidently didn't do much good though for the same ads keep appearing, and some even offer twenty-five and fifty dollars reward for information regarding rooms or apartments for rent. The dentist in the 95<sup>th</sup> had relatives here and they got this house for him and if the 95<sup>th</sup> hadn't moved out I don't know when we would have located a place. I would be home now I suppose if we hadn't gotten in here for the other way just about took every cent we had and as Stokes said he was just a Captain and he thought a General would feel strained at the rate we were going. He wouldn't listen to me when I told him I'd come on home and relieve the pressure so he evidentially really wanted us here and I am glad for his sake as well as mine that we have the house. He is not here very much, but seems to enjoy it while he is here. He has to leave at

5:45 the mornings Captain Belote and Lt. Paquette drive, and at 5:30 when he drives and has to pick up the others. And it is always 7:00 P.M. when he gets in usually later. Monday night it was 9:15 and John and I were both a bit uneasy. He eats breakfast and lunch at camp every day and sometimes supper, but I fixed supper for the past three nights and he said he thought he'd be in by 7:30 for supper tonight.

I haven't forgotten we owe you some money for the wedding present you got for Lewis and Kitty, and I'll reimburse you as soon as my check comes. I have been expecting it for the past couple of days but probably the 4<sup>th</sup> held it up. Please "chase" it right out this way as soon as you see it.

It is a pity the gas situation is so bad there, but it sounds as though you all get lots of fun out of the truck trips to Driver, Va. We certainly did enjoy our meal at Eberwine's before we came down here; they are lovely people and the rest of the gang seem quite nice also.

I have to stop and start fixing supper now,  
Love to all,  
Margaret

**Margaret G. Kirk to Merle A. Kirk and J. Russell Kirk**

Aug. 1

Dear Folks,

I certainly wish you both were here again this weekend for the kids and I are really lonesome. But, as for seeing Stokes you probably did the right thing to come last weekend even though he was O.D. Saturday night. He got in last night at nine o'clock after telling me he'd be in for supper and probably early since it was Saturday. Then he had to go out early this morning and will not be in until tomorrow night after supper. This is the first Sunday he has had to work except for his regular turn at O.D. like he was last Sunday, but they have fifteen hundred men now and start their training program tomorrow. He said he knew he wouldn't get in for supper tomorrow or Tuesday and he would be lucky if he got in at all, but he didn't know about the rest of the week. We moved here on July 5<sup>th</sup> and he was here to sleep each night and to eat almost every night until the 22<sup>nd</sup> when he was O.D. so that really spoiled me. He was O.D. Thursday, late coming in Friday and you know how it was Saturday and Sunday when you were here. Then Monday he was here at six-thirty, Tuesday O.D. again, Wednesday nine o'clock for supper and Thursday ten minutes to eight, Friday night ten o'clock and last night nine. He didn't have to leave until nine o'clock this morning though so he woke Lynn and John both up to eat breakfast with him. He said he hadn't even seen Lynn since Thursday. This morning I told her to come and give me a hug and kiss and after she did that she said "I want to get down and go give Dada a sweet kiss," and that pleased him quite a bit for she doesn't usually pay much attention to him.

Daddy Kirk, the ice cream money is holding out just fine and they each still have fourteen cones to go. Lynn says she has 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 more and John says he has 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 16 more so I don't know exactly which one of us is figuring right. What do you think about the matter? I really thought about you last night and wished you could have some of our steak. I had a sirloin steak, 1 ¾ pounds, that really was delicious. It took 22 points but only cost 80 cents which I don't think was bad. It was cut an inch thick and you could easily cut it with the dull knives I have. John was about to have a fit for beefsteak when he saw it so I cooked it about quarter to eight as Stokes would be here by eight, I felt quite sure but no such luck. I had butter beans, potatoes and rice pudding and hot biscuits and I was really upset when Stokes didn't get in for supper. However, he ate a piece of steak and some butterbeans when he got in anyway. I

intended having corn on the cob, but knew that wasn't specially good for the children so didn't cook that.

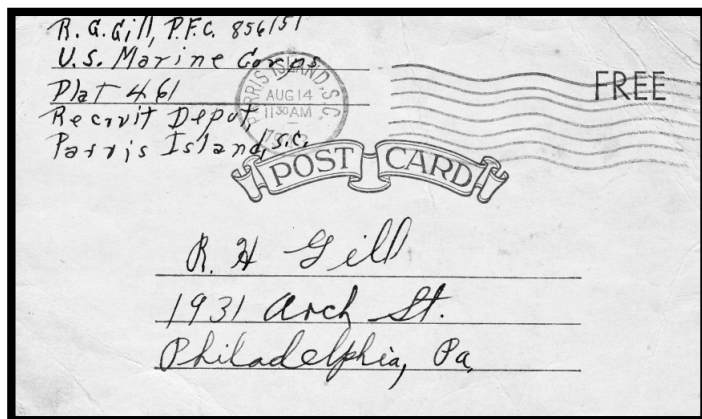
By the way I made a corn pudding last week and Stokes said it tasted just like Mother Kirk's so maybe I am not such a bad cook after all. She told me last Sunday what ingredients to use but said she never measured them, so I just dumped in some of this, that and the other and was lucky enough to have it turn out right. I'll probably miss it a mile next time but I hope not. There really isn't much incentive to planning good meals now since Stokes will be here so seldom since the training program starts tomorrow in full swing. But I'll still have to see that John gets liver and beef so that means we'll all probably eat fairly well-balanced meals even though it is a temptation to have sandwiches and fruit. I have not been able to locate any raisins for Lynn, except those on the cookies, and I get those whenever I can. The cookies look like they have had the smallpox when she gets through picking the raisins out of them.

Do hope we'll get a letter from you two sweet people soon, as we are quite anxious to hear about the return trip.

Love,

Margaret

P.S. I had my hair cut yesterday and really feel light-headed.



P.P.S. Bought Lynn a doll and tiny carriage first of week and she promptly washed the doll so it is no more good as it is sticky as can be. She say's, "Doll all wet."

**Bud Gill to Robert Henry Gill**

Aug. 13  
Parris Island, S.C. to 1931 Arch St.  
Philadelphia, PA

Dear Daddy,

I got your letter the other day and was so glad to hear from you. I was to go home today but I didn't. I hope to leave by noon and will be home for 10 days. I wish I could see you. I hope you are O.K. I made P.F.C. and am going to Cherry Point, N.C. to the Marine Air Station. I will send you my new address. Be good.

Love,

Buddy

**Merle A. Kirk to Chassie Thomas**

Aug. 20, Friday

Everets to Fleetwood Inn 35<sup>th</sup> & Ocean Front, Virginia Beach, VA

Dear Mom,

Today must be the real turning point for my improvement. I feel very much better and the medicine seems to have had its effect. I am still upstairs but have been moving around a little and find sitting up helps now that I am some stronger.

I had a letter from Arthur in which he stated he wants to come to see us before long and may go down to be with you for about three days. I don't expect him before Sept., I wrote him that you would be back to Portsmouth again soon after Labor Day. Have you decided yet?

Josh went with the Cross sister and a boy friend to stay at Nag's Head from to-night to Sunday night. The oldest Cross girl is the wife of a squadron leader who is in that section at present. Josh expects to go up in a plane or that is what he said. I doubt that Josh really gets a ride. He has given up the idea of going to see Arthur - I don't know why.

Russell has put a large ceiling fan in his ("J's") room and Josh says it really cools things off. He really needs it for that room has always been so hot. We have been needing no cooling for these days as it has been cool enough for even Russell to cover up. I have had to use a hot water bottle to my feet. Don't you worry, it will be hot again soon.

How is the dish washing?

Love to my Mom.

**Margaret G. Kirk to Merle A. Kirk and J. Russell Kirk**

Aug. 26

Dear Folks,

How did you like the news that your son was a "Major?" I was quite thrilled and he seems so pleased. Belote got his promotion a couple of weeks ago and I had about decided it would be quite a while yet, and Stokes gave very evasive answers to my questions. When he finally got it Sunday he admitted he had been a little worried when Belote got his and the other one didn't come through, for he knew they had been sent in at the same time. He didn't tell me they had been sent in for he wanted to surprise me and he really did for I didn't know a word about it until I saw the gold leaves on his cap and collar when I went out Sunday. The promotions went in when they had only been with the new regiment seventeen days and Gen. Schultz, the Commanding Officer at Camp Claiborne, called Col. Hannas to know why he sent in promotions when he had only known the men seventeen days, but Col. Hannas told him the two come well recommended from Col. Thompson of the 95<sup>th</sup> and from what he had seen in seventeen days, he thought they deserved it also.

Well, our cool weather didn't last as they expected it to, and today and yesterday have been the hottest days of the summer according to the papers. I have the fan going in my bedroom where Lynn is asleep and John seems to be fairly comfortable, but I am just plain sweating, it has passed the perspiration stage by now. Mother Kirk wrote about using blankets and hot water bottles and those things really would have felt good here for three of four nights though the days were quite hot. The house gets so hot in the afternoons that we have been to the pool each afternoon this week. We didn't have the car Tuesday or today but it isn't so far through Mrs. Allen's yard so we walked over anyway.

John received his package from Swartz yesterday and I tried to persuade him to wait until Sunday to open it, but he just had to open it. He was delighted with his boat and took it to the pool with him this afternoon. I read them a little from the new book last night and also tonight and they seem to like it fine. We have read "Bambi" several times and Lynn and John both call the deer in the park by that name when we go over to see them. They were pretending to be rabbits eating carrots at lunch today and Lynn suddenly decided she'd be "Bambi," and of course John wanted to be a deer also so we finally had to have little "Bambi" and big "Bambi."

We ate at the Lafayette Sunday night to celebrate the promotion and John didn't want to go because he said he wanted to go there on his birthday so his Daddy promised to take him there also on this Sunday night. I really enjoyed the meal there, my first since you all were here and I have been on twenty-four hour duty with the children, cooking, washing, ironing, cleaning and so forth so I was specially glad of a change from my cooking. We were invited to sit at the Colonel's table at the opening of the new officer's club last Saturday night but Stokes was O.D.

so we couldn't go. They say it is beautiful out there so I really am anxious to see it for myself. I have seen nothing pretty at Camp Claiborne, except of course those gold leaves on my husband's cap and collar last Sunday.

We were so glad to hear the sick one was able to be up and do hope she is entirely well by now. I haven't had any temperature since last Saturday I just decided I'd not try to have a spotless house each day and that did the trick for I have been OK all this week. I just give everything the "once over" each morning, plus one room real good, and don't try to have everything, floor, windows, furniture, children and clothes all clean at the same time. The dust is so bad on this street that I have just about given up hopes of having a clean house again until we can keep the windows down. We need rain badly too, haven't even had a drop since that last little bit we had the Sunday afternoon you folks were here and the kids get so dirty there is really mud in the bathtub after each time they have a bath.

I can't blame Grandma for wanting to get back where things are peaceful. She is quite a frisky lady, but I really think she tried more than she should have this summer when it wasn't really necessary to make a living. We all like to try things though I guess, even though they don't always turn out as we'd like for them to.

Tell Josh to write us again soon and tell us about his trip to Parris Island. I am anxious to know whether he actually went up in airplane or not.

Lynn seemed quite pleased with the bunny rabbit and put it in a box with her collection of pictures she has cut out. She sees the big flying fortresses go over and says "Airplane go home see he Mama." So it seems everything and everybody has a Mama to go home to as far as she is concerned. She isn't at all afraid in the water and wants to keep on ducking her head under the water. John likes to go to the pool and play and always wants to go to the big pool for a while with me but he doesn't like any water on his head. He is O.K. as long as he can keep his head out, so, I think Lynn will swim before he does. He wants his Daddy to go to the pool with him and I hope that can be arranged on Sunday morning. Stokes has been here very little this week and he is so tired when he does get in that they can't have much play time. He got in late Monday night, not at all Tuesday night, and about eight-thirty last night. He left this morning at five-thirty and will not be in any more until Saturday night so even if the kids did have a bar to act on he'd not be here to teach them tricks as they are usually in bed when he does get here or it is dark out anyway. I do hope he can be here Sunday though, but he usually has to go out in the afternoon anyway.

Love to all,

Margaret

P.S. Don't forget to let me know to whom I should send a check for my new dress. I like it very well and I have worn it twice - last Sunday and once before to Camp Claiborne.

**Pauline Anna Preston to Bud Gill**  
Carrollton, VA to Memphis, TN

Sept. 5

Dear Bud,

I received your card a long time ago. Forgive me for not writing sooner. I guess I don't have a good excuse, but I wrote two letters and never sent them. I guess they were kind of crazy letters too, so it's better that I didn't send them.

I'm glad you like it down there.

I gave your address to Charlie Friday. I hope he writes this time. I asked him if he took you anywhere while you were home - he said he didn't know where to take you.

Bud, I think someday pretty soon everything will be all right again. I hope so anyway.

I guess you thought I was nuts talking to you like I did when you were here, but I meant all of it.

Bud, I saw Alma in Suffolk the other day. Don't forget to write to her. It's awfully lonesome around here since school started. Did you see Joe Roedar while he was home? I suppose you knew Fred Chapman is in the Navy.

We got 2 letters from Jack one day last week. He said it's awfully hot over there and he's awfully homesick. He wants us to send him some pictures. We don't know where Ted is now. He was in New York for a while and was assigned to his ship. I guess it's been 2 weeks since we heard from him. While he was in New York he had his picture taken. We got it in the mail yesterday – It's real good. He had it tinted.

Well, the pleasure ban\* has been lifted, now there's no place to go.

We're going to move again. This time I think it will be at Benn's Church. I hope so – then we'll be closer to civilization (I hope). I like it back here pretty good. It's swell outside this afternoon.

We're going to have a wiener roast next Friday night. Wish you could be here.

Hope you saw Beale while you were here. Guess what! Jesse's not going back to college. He's taking a post-graduate course at school. Guess he's taking commercial.

There's a new senior teacher this year. Janice must have had enough of Smithfield. The kids say the seniors are awfully stuck up. I think they say it every year.

I went down to see Emma one day last week. She's still the same. She's tired of Smithfield. I suppose Frances wrote you that she and Teaser couldn't find anyplace to stay in Richmond so they could go to Pan-American. I guess they're going to Newport News.

I guess I've said all there is to say so I'll sign off for this time. Please write soon and be good.

Love,

Polly

P.S. I just read this letter and it sure sounds crazy – I change the subject too many times.

*\*During the war gasoline was rationed and purchase required a coupon. The Pleasure ban was a ban on pleasure driving.*

**Margaret G. Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**

Sept. 12

Dear Mother Kirk,

I am enclosing three pictures taken the day we first learned of the promotion hope you can see the gold leaf in the "Major's" picture. I took that one and he said I didn't get the children in it as I should have and I told him I just had my eyes on the "leaf" that time. He took the ones of the children and they are about the same pose but one is better of John and Lynn looks cute in the other one so I am sending both to you.

We received a letter from you Friday the 10<sup>th</sup> which was the first time we had heard from you all since a letter we received August 30<sup>th</sup> which was written on the 26<sup>th</sup>. Stokes and I were both getting a bit uneasy and we were really glad when the letter came. We also received another letter yesterday telling us of the good news from the doctors. I well remember the trip last year and I know you can't help but worry, but you'll just have to stop worrying where you don't recover from an illness as rapidly as you think you should. For it seems you really get worse by worrying, I know you did last year for you were really sick when the time came to go and find out the results of the x-rays and when you found out everything was O.K. you improved rapidly.



The box arrived Friday afternoon and it was about like Christmas! I was so delighted with the sheets, blankets and spreads that I immediately fixed my bed all fresh and Stokes was quite surprised when he came in that night. He said things were beginning to look more and more like home around here. Lynn loaded everything within reach in her wagon and had a grand time pulling it around in the house, then when John came home they took them outside and have played with them practically ever since. Many thanks for the paint job - they look like new. Stokes greased them today with 3 & 1 oil and they don't rattle quite so much either. John was so pleased with his locomotive and even carried it to Camp Claiborne with him this afternoon.

Stokes is O.D. tonight but we went out with him this afternoon and saw the parade. The children enjoyed that, especially the band. Then we had supper at the Club and the kids and I came on in and they are both asleep now. I had a husband each night last week except Monday night, which was really something unusual so I guess I neglected my correspondence a little bit. He said they were just relaxing a bit after the first five weeks of training, but he'll probably be out there several nights this week so I am afraid I'll have more time to write letters than is really necessary.

I mailed Daddy Kirk a bond for each of the children last week, which I'd like for him to put in his safety deposit box if he still has room in it. I wanted to write a note and stick in with them but I had waited in line so long to get the bonds that Lynn was about to have a fit so I just stuck them in an envelope and mailed them without the note.

I know you enjoyed having Arthur at home especially since he told you about taking the salt and water. That sounds like good treatment and not too bad to take either. Goodness knows how we would have gotten along without salt tablets here when it was so terribly hot and though I didn't keep a record of it I imagine we consumed quite a lot of water during the summer also. Hope Arthur likes Camp Edward. That is where Parke Griffin was stationed last time I heard, also Captain M.L. Simpson (the Lt. Simpson whose apartment we had in Alexandria, Virginia). Stokes met a classmate of Arthur's out at camp last week a Major Pence.

I know you all enjoyed the trip to Richmond. What was the occasion, another Ruritan convention? Mrs. Eberwine believes in Christmas shopping early doesn't she? Well, last year I was all through the main things by the last of October, but don't know about this year. I have seen a few cute things I'd like to get but Stokes doesn't seem to think we'll be here Christmas and doesn't want me to get anything else that we'll have to worry about getting home.

Your mention of the grapes made me really homesick. It just doesn't seem possible that those tiny grapes that were on the vine when we left could be ripe. I must remember though that my intended stay of four weeks has turned out to be four months and lots can happen in that time. By the way we should be near enough together now so you could stay with me when Stokes is O.D. and I could keep you company when Daddy Kirk is church-minded.

Don't worry about Lynn crying over John's birthday package, because John was practically the same way when she got presents on her birthday and he'll probably wonder why he doesn't get something this time when hers comes. They are too young to understand why people have different birthdays. It is a good thing Christmas is the same for everyone for they all get satisfied in one way or another then.

I received my check also the note of thanks from Kitty and the insurance notice which you forwarded. Thanks again for looking out for us down here.

I was sorry to hear about Paul having to go in to the Army soon, but Stokes said he should be able to get in as a specialist with a rating before long after his induction anyway. I know Aunt Eleanor is glad Jack will not have to go, but she'll have Lewis to worry about again if

he goes on a ship again soon. I thought he was being sent to Annapolis for a year but evidently I misunderstood.

Love to all,

Margaret

P.S. The express charges were only \$3.00 which wasn't bad considering what was in the package. I had already spent more than that for cotton blankets which we had to have early last week when it was quite cool.

**Margaret G. Kirk to J. Russell Kirk**  
Alexandria, LA

Sept.18

Dearest Daddy Kirk,

Yesterday I mailed you a hundred dollar bond which I wished you would please put in your box for me. Stokes gave me the money and told me to get a bond and when I asked him if I should have it made to him alone or one to the two of us together or how did he want it, he said he didn't care how it is as fixed as he was giving it to me. I was delighted and had it made out to me or him which I thought was the proper way.

We enjoyed Mother Kirk's letter which was written in Portsmouth. Are you still a widower? You should be close by tonight so we could keep each other company as Stokes is O.D. tonight. The kids are asleep and it is really lonesome here. It has been raining since Thursday morning and is still hard at it. It reminds me of the Northeast storms we have at home, except I imagine the wind is from a different direction since they say the disturbance is moving in from the Gulf with wind of gale force expected tonight. I am enclosing a clipping from the night's paper which should give you some idea of the weather here.

The blankets you all sent are really coming in good and I'll probably have to be bothering you for some sweaters and skirts if this keeps up. After all I left home May 17<sup>th</sup> to stay four weeks and it has stretched to four months so my clothes which were then for hot weather to start, with have really gotten thinner from so much wearing and washing. The kids each have two sweaters so they are O.K., but I don't have a wrap of any kind except my raincoat which has really been very useful lately.

I saw very little of Stokes the first five weeks of the training but last week he was O.D. Monday night then came in every night before eight o'clock and just had to go out Sunday afternoon to be O.D. that night. We went with him and had supper at the club after seeing the parade. He was in Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of this week. Then out on a night compass problem Thursday, in here last night and O.D. again tonight so this week hasn't been too bad. We'll go out to get him tomorrow afternoon as we did the weekend you all were here.

Little Billy Allen, whose people own this house, had his birthday party this afternoon and invited both John and Lynn. They seemed to have a grand time and I was really quite glad to get them out of the house for a couple of hours after three rainy days and being with them every minute. I wrapped them up good and carried Lynn in my arms over there, then went back for them when it was time to come home. Lt. Taylor's little girl had a birthday party Wednesday and we went to that so the children are having quite a time eating cake and ice cream and I am struggling to find suitable birthday presents. Hope they don't keep up at the rate of two per week.

I wish we could have gotten some of those good watermelons from Gray's that Mother Kirk mentioned in one of her letters. There have been none on the market here for several weeks now and the last couple of times we did price them, they were \$2.00 each which ended our desire for watermelon at once.

When we were in Baton Rouge Elizabeth [*Elizabeth Brady Bilisoly*] said she had trouble making her sugar last so I gave her a coupon and she seemed to appreciate it so much. I have some now that I'll not need and I asked Mother Kirk and Mother both if they needed extra sugar and both said "no" so I'm going to send Elizabeth some of the coupons. I know Aunt Bessie [*Elizabeth Kirk Brady*] enjoyed her visit there for she certainly has a nice home and seemed so glad to see anyone from Virginia so I know she must have been overjoyed to have her mother.

The Kiwanis Club was sponsoring a horse show the 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> and they have really had terrible weather. No show so far, but tonight's paper mentioned that they might try tomorrow. I have really seen some beautiful horses go by here for exercise. The famous racing stables in Kentucky have horses here as well as others well known to horse lovers.

Well it is twelve o'clock so guess I better get to bed. I ironed until ten-thirty so feel a little weary.

Love,

Margaret

**Robert Henry Gill to Bud Gill**  
Philadelphia, PA to Cherry Point, N.C.

Sept. 20

Dear Buddy,

Have just written Robert so will drop you a line too. How are you doing now & how do you like Cherry Pt. & just what are your duties there – I know it is an air base, I thought I knew the Carolinas but I don't know where Cherry Pt, what town is it close too.

I am very glad you have added one stripe, work hard & you can all ways add some more you know it's up to you nobody else can do that for you.



Shirley Wiggins

I had a postal from Robert at Fort Bragg but he didn't say what he was doing. Maybe I will get a letter next time & let me hear from you, you little rascal. If you're still around this part of the country Xmas maybe we can all get together for a day maybe Richmond. We will keep in touch all of us & maybe I can make it that far. Riding the busses all over the country gets me down, want to see your mighty bad.

I sent Robt. \$5.00 & as soon as I can will send each of you money to have some pictures taken. I know Mother, sister & Cecile would like one & I know I would so we will have to do that at the first opportunity. Write me if there is anything Daddy can send you.

I hurt my back sometime ago & am not working full time but hope to be soon – take care of yourself & be good.

Love,

Dad

**Robert M. Gill to Robert H. Gill**  
5<sup>th</sup> Regt 4 Fort Bragg, N.C.

Sept. 21

Dear Daddy:

I got your letter, and the money to-day. It's so good to hear from you. I got home last weekend to see mother and my girl, but I couldn't stay long. Daddy my girl is very pretty, and very nice. I have been going with her for over a year now. She

lives in Hampton and comes over to see mother when she can. I would like to marry her some day and I hope I can. I am so sorry to hear about your back. Take care of yourself and don't send me any money if you need it yourself because I can makeout alright. I hope I can see around Xmas too. Write me whenever you can and I will write to. Cecile writes me right many letters too. I will try to get Shirley to write you. Shirley is my girls' name. Take care of yourself and write me whenever you can. I am in the Field Artillery and I think its pretty nice. I am taking a test for OCS [*Officer Candidate School*] next Sat.

Lots of love,  
Robert

**Margaret G. Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**

Sept. 25

Dear Mother Kirk,

The grand package arrived yesterday and a letter today. I certainly wish you could have seen Lynn's eyes when she saw the doll for that was really the grandest part of the whole box for her. Had I known what was in it I think I would have kept the package until Stokes came so he could have seen her also. I love surprise packages like that and you certainly did not leave out any member of the family. Here, Stokes has not been in since Thursday morning at five-thirty, but we are looking for him in time for supper tonight, and I know he and I will enjoy our share of



the candy. It was like Christmas and the children played until bedtime with their soldiers, the boat and airplane and the doll. They are saving the sparklers until Daddy comes home, John like the picture of the train also and he has quite a collection now, for he and Lynn did a lot of cutting during the rainy days we had.

I was glad to see the cap and sweater and especially glad to see the pajamas as Lynn didn't have but one pair except the short ones and I had a pair of John's on her night before last when hers didn't get dry. They are large for him and they really looked funny on her for the seat came down to her knees.

I sent the laundry case home Monday with some summer things in it and wrote that night asking for a few warm clothes and Stokes said I should have done it much sooner. Because then it had been cold and raining since Thursday morning and as soon as I wrote for warm clothes it cleared off and the weather has been grand since then. I hope it continues so, at least until I get a sweater and skirt and some wool dresses from home. I am enclosing a check for nine dollars (\$9.00) to cover the cost of the dress you got for me and the postage on the clothes I asked you to send. The enclosed tag is all that was on the dress and I had no

way of knowing where it came from and you evidently forgot to mention it in your letters for I did inquire several times. When I mailed the laundry case the postage was 69 cents including insurance, but the wool things will probably be heavier, however the extra dollar should take care of it. I know you want a picture of Stokes very badly and I do also, but the situation still remains the same as I told you when you were here. Stokes has

absolutely no time off during the day except some Sundays and I have inquired at several photographers considered good and they do not remain open at nights or on Sundays either. So we will have to be content with Kodak pictures taken whenever we have a clear Sunday until such time as he is able to get a few days leave. I have had his blouse cleaned and pressed and told him it was in readiness should he have a couple of hours in town someday. He informed me that his job allows him no time for running errands in town, so I decided there was no need to mention the picture subject again until he did get a leave.

I had thought several times of asking you about making Lynn another doll if you had too much time on your hands, in fact I saw a pattern a couple of weeks ago for a Dutch doll and ordered it. So I was really glad to see the "Old Mammy" as they are surely the most practical dolls for Lynn. She is at the age now where she loves dolls but she also wants to see what they are made of and she always manages to break anything breakable or tear anything that will tear. I see this doll had pants on. I will remember how the gang teased you last year because the other one had no pants. It is certainly perfect and Mrs. Doctrow and Mrs. Allen thought you did a grand job on it. Why not go in the business for dolls like that would bring quite a good price. They'd be worth it too I guess, for I know there is a lot of work on them. I'll write more later.

Love,

Margaret

**Margaret G. Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**

Oct. 5

Dear Mother Kirk,

You'll never guess what we did Sunday afternoon. We went chinquapin (I wouldn't vouch for the spelling even if I did have to write it a thousand time while in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade) hunting and we really had fun. Stokes had seen some while on the rifle range last Friday and he brought me seven and told me he ate five hundred. Do you think that was very nice? Well, at least he didn't forget me entirely so I am satisfied. He had to go out to camp Sunday afternoon at four o'clock to investigate a court-martial case and told us to ride with him and when he was finished he would take us to get the nuts. We waited two hours and fifteen minutes for him during which time I read until I was hoarse and did everything I could to amuse the kids. It was so late then that we didn't have long to get the nuts, but we managed to get a quart milk bottle full almost full. The bushes are only about two or three feet high so they have evidently not been any around here for sometime either and they are just putting out again. The kids and I have a chigger for every nut I believe, but we enjoyed the outing just the same. Lynn picked golden rod, mountain aster and three other yellow flowers I didn't recognize, also a pink one and a blue one. She had a good time I think even if she couldn't get the nuts out of the burrs.

I am enclosing four sugar stamps and you may give them to Mrs. Eberwine and two to Grandma. I know they are the ones supposed to be used for home canning but I used those numbers out of Lynn's book (to finish it up after getting her shoes) and no questions were asked. Mrs. Doctrow has used hers also so it seems you can get sugar with no trouble on any of the three stamps, 14, 15 or 16. I sent Elizabeth some also. I would have had six to send you but Stokes asked me to make some candy like I used to. I was almost afraid to try because I had not made any in so long, but I made some Saturday and it really was just perfect. So now I have to keep making it and consequently will use more sugar than usual.

Tell Maggie I certainly did appreciate her letter and all of us enjoyed it. I told John and Lynn what she said and they both promptly wanted to go see Mag. I was afraid she wouldn't like the aprons, but evidently she did, for she seemed quite pleased.

How are you all getting along closing the store? I'll bet you really needed a hoe in places though Mrs. Brinkley did seem to keep it cleaner than it was when Mr. Morgan was there. Speaking of the Morgan's I never did hear anything from Marian Lee. As for Mrs. Brinkley's brown dog, you are not the only one who will be glad when he is gone. I remember Lynn would scream when she would see him and even John was afraid of him after getting nipped on the hand once.

The clothes you sent me have been very welcome the past few days as it had been cool. I lighted every stove in the house yesterday morning and we also had to have a fire last night and this morning, though it does seem a little warmer tonight. Stokes is O.D. tonight so I did mending while Mrs. Doctrow was over and now I am trying to get a couple of letters written. Mrs. Doctrow's husband left last Tuesday on a troop train for San Francisco so she is quite lonely. He was expected back in about ten days so she is hoping he'll be here by this weekend. She has been making Christmas cards to pass the time away and she really has made some lovely ones hand painted. She has spent as much as two hours and a half on some and they are too pretty to send.

Don't worry about the belt to the gray dress for it is here. In fact I was a bit worried until I got your letter as I thought maybe the dress had been taken out on the way those packages are so easy to get into. But as long as the dress is there nothing is missing according to the list you sent. In fact you said one skirt, but I actually received two so I am over the list. The blouse I used with the red suit was left in a drawer at Mother's, but as it was pretty well worn. I'll just get another. I was glad to hear the clothes were in good condition in the closet maybe I can get shelves in it someday and put all my blankets and winter things in it. Stokes' leave was just not quite long enough to enable him to finish the job. I am glad you put the things out of the chest down there for I know they'll be in much better condition. I hate for you to have to worry with my things so much though. Was glad to hear you were feeling much better and do hope you enjoyed your trip to Richmond. Josh wrote us that night and said it was ten-thirty and you still had not returned so I guess you had quite a day of it.

Chuckatuck people really seem to have a fever for getting married, even Miss Brothers. I have received the invitation to Margaret Eley's wedding and I'll try and get something next time I go down town. Stokes and I both appreciated the nice things Captain Dickson and Mrs. Eley said about us it surely helps to know people think well of you.

Well, enough scratching for now.

Love to all

Margaret

**Margaret G. Kirk to J. Russell Kirk**

Oct. 7

Alexandria, LA

Dear Daddy Kirk,

Don't you think I am doing pretty good as far as writing home is concerned? I wrote Tuesday night and again last night and now first thing this morning I am having a "chat" with you. I wrote to Mother Kirk and Grandma both last night as we just received the letter written September 1st in which Mother Kirk enclosed our birthday money from Grandma. I mentioned it here because you'll probably get this Air Mail letter first. I don't know about that though because we received one yesterday, the 6<sup>th</sup>, which was written Sunday, the 3rd. I don't think even Air Mail will do better than that.

My reason for writing now is that Stokes told me last night that he only expected to be here three more weeks or five at the most, and he did not think there was a chance of his even being in the States for Christmas. We decided to have Santa Claus come a little early as he was not with the children last year. We will pretend October 16th is Christmas Eve if you all would like to send something for Stokes and the kids. Don't bother about me and only send some little thing for the children that can be used right away or will not take up much room on the return trip. We will, of course, have to celebrate the regular Christmas so we are only getting a few things from the dime store for the children. I am sorry I have no suggestions to offer you as what to get for Stokes for I have no idea myself. He needs nothing and wants nothing apparently, except to be allowed to stay home and live a peaceful life with his family, which none of us can give him at the present time.

I am writing you because I did not know exactly Mother Kirk's condition, so you can do as you think best about telling her. I slept on the subject last night, or rather I should say, "didn't sleep" and decided I'd write you. Of course you know how changeable the Army is and he may be here much longer but we selected the 16th to be on the safe side, as he is O.D. the following weekend.

The letter Mother Kirk forwarded from the Insurance Company contained two bills, one for \$2.10 which was on our silver and so forth and another for \$6.30 which I imagine is the house. I mailed them a check for \$8.40 to cover both so don't pay on the house again. Just thought I'd tell you so you wouldn't be looking for that extra bill.

Stokes said he was going to try and get a leave and he'd help me get the children home on the train and then I could come back with him and only have the car to worry about. As I said things may change. I am only telling you what he told me last night.

Love to all,

Margaret

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Nov 10, Wednesday night

1312 Engr. Regt. Camp Claiborne, LA to Park Place, Alexandria, LA

Dear Margaret,

Seems like long past times now when I pull out this old writing tablet to write to you. I expect that it (the tablet) has been out of use since the third week in April about seven months. However, I would rather not be using this at all - I would much rather be home and talking to you personally. It won't be so long now though as I expect tomorrow week, we will be moving back in and I will get a chance to see you again at least every other night. Then too, my leave may be approved and we can leave for home. I haven't seen the Colonel yet about it and I was hoping to see him tomorrow or the next day. I didn't like bothering him right at the present with things so busy getting started on this new job out here. Now things are quieting down, details are being worked out and work is progressing fairly smoothly. It was pretty cold last night and the night before. I really wished for some of that butane heat back at home. I bet you are freezing though. How is it now without a husband to keep you warm?

Barney just dropped in and we had a long talk about work and old times. He said that "Pappy" Gordon had been transferred to another unit.

I had intended to write last night but didn't feel like it. I had a meeting with the Colonel at 8:00 o'clock and had an awful headache afterwards. I feel a lot better now - in fact, I woke up this morning without it. Guess I will turn in shortly so I better quit.

All my love, Stokes

**Pauline Anna Preston to Bud Gill**  
Carrollton, VA to Memphis, TN

Dec. 16

Dear Bud,

I'm glad you got back all right. I really didn't expect to hear from you so soon, thanks for remembering.

I hated to see you go back this time. I had fun the last nite you were here. I'm glad you rode down the street with us. It seemed sort of like it used to be when we were all going to school.

Well, Ted came home a 4:30 this morning. He got back in the States last Saturday morning. He sure looks good. He weighs 180 pounds now. He was in Ireland & Italy. He said those cities were certainly wrecks over there now. He was awfully glad to be home again. He'll be here until Sunday nite. We're going to have a party for him Saturday nite. He liked it pretty well over in Ireland I guess. He's out to Vivian's tonite.

I got a letter from a boy that was with Jack until just recently. This guy is married & has some children so he was sent over here, he's going to be an instructor at Washington, D.C. Anyway he said Jack was all right & was on his way to England. I suppose he's there by this time.

You should have seen Ted this morning – he was handling Daddy's pistol and he didn't think it was loaded. He touched the trigger 3 times before anything happened then the fourth time the thing went off. The bullet went thru the curtains & out the window. Scared the dickens out of Ted. Dick was standing right by him. I'm glad he wasn't in front of him.

There's snow on the ground tonite. Boy! It sure has been cold here today. We can't move until after Christmas now. The other man can't find a house to move in.

Did you know Charlie didn't pass the V-12? Well, they told him he could pass the V-5 test. He'll have to go to Washington if he takes it. I don't know whether he's going to take it or not. That's for the Naval Air Corp, you knew didn't you?

I saw your mother yesterday in town. She was worrying about Robert [*Robert M. Gill*] because he's out on maneuvers & the pup tents aren't hardly big enough for him.\*

I guess I'll sign off for this time. I hope you get along all right. Will your new section graduate at the same time as the other one you were in first?

I hope you can read this. Oh! Do you know Billy Mountjoy? He's in Memphis now going to school. Maybe you'll see him. Be good. Bye now,

Love,

Polly

This is a crazy letter. Bud you remind me of spring time joke.    \**Robert M. Gill was 6'4" tall.*

**M. Cecile Gill to Bud Gill**  
Surry, VA to Base Gerard, San Diego, CA

Dec. 17

Dear Buddy,

Sending a little package off to-day. Hope it will reach you O.K. Was in hopes you would be here for Christmas but don't expect it will be much longer before you are.

Best love and a Happy Christmas.

Cecile





Church St, Smithfield, VA  
L: Robert M. Gill, Shirley W. Gill, Bud Gill

# 1944

Allied forces continued their advance into Italy as well as offenses into France. The invasion of Normandy began in June with the Utah and Omaha Beachhead Operations. On the Pacific front, fierce battles raged in the Marshall, Guam, Tinian and Iwo Jima Islands, forcing the Japanese to retreat.

The sawmill at Everets was running at full capacity. With ever increasing orders and loads of pallets and lumber trucked to the ports weekly, Russell was able to pay his debts down. Two small fires in the sawmill caught them off guard but were quickly extinguished, a small one near the saw carriage and a larger one in the filing room.

With a few days leave due, **Robert Gill** returned home to Smithfield early in January to marry his sweetheart Shirley Wiggins. At the end of the month he deployed to North Africa. Robert's unit, the 5th Army was organized in North Africa and bore the brunt of many of the battles.

## Robert M. Gill Jr.:

*As I remember she went to a dance at Burrell's Bay with her cousin Urna (sp?) who she was visiting from her home in Hampton or Newport News. Her cousin lived in Dendron or Surry. This was before the war when my Mom was about 16, so 1942, when she was still in high school. He called her cousin's house the next day and left a message for her to call him at the packing plant in Smithfield on his lunch hour. He went to Washington-Lee University for a semester after high school and then came back home and started working at Gwaltney<sup>7</sup> as the war started getting more heated. That was the beginning of a trans-James River romance that led to their marriage a couple of years later in January, 1944 just a few weeks before he left for North Africa.*

## Merle A. Kirk diary 1924-1955:

January 3, 1944: *Stokes and Arthur are still in U.S.*

January 12, 1944: *A telegram has arrived. Stokes has reached the west coast.*

Early in January, **Stokes** was deployed to New Guinea and landed at Ora Bay a month later. The engineers were to set up at the air base in Dobodura to build and repair the bombed sites.

## Lynn Kirk Rose:

*Jeff Gibson went down on a bus to get Mama & John (She had had pneumonia). It started snowing in Atlanta. They left there at 7 a.m. (Louisiana time), but going through Atlanta at 2 a.m.*

*Spent a.m. snowing. Got to Everets 2:30 a.m. next morning, only stopping for gas & something to eat. John slept on blankets on suitcases on back seat. Mama read, napped & Jeff drove. When they got to Everets the car could not be moved for three days because of the snow.*

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<sup>7</sup>Gwaltney Meat Packing Plant located in Smithfield, VA

Merle A. Kirk diary 1924-1955:

March 10, 1944: *Stokes is in New Guinea - our last letter was written February 18. No news of him since.*

May 2, 1944: *Arthur is in Elkins, West Va. We have been to see him. Stokes is yet in New Guinea.*

**Arthur** was deployed to Fort Pickett, Virginia from his post in Elkins, West Virginia. As commanding officer at Lawson General Hospital in Camp Pickett, Blackstone, Virginia, he scheduled leave in late summer and invited Marie Linge home to meet his parents. He had fallen in love with Marie while stationed in Camp Carlisle, PA. In the letters sent to each other arranging Marie's introduction to his parents, Arthur attempts to alleviate her concerns and teases her. Her responses were full of wit and humor too:

August 19: *Dearest Arthur, (I'll have to get used to calling you that.) It was very nice of you to ask me to come down to visit you and I would like to very much. However, I hope that your Dad isn't too prejudiced against me because I am a damn Yankee because in that case, I'm not too sure I should come. After all there is one thing worse than a Yankee and that is a rebel.*

Ann Kirk Mendes:

*She [Marie] was a lab technician, graduated from Cedar Crest College in Pennsylvania. She also worked in the office with my dad when he first started his practice. I think she may have worked at Carlisle Barracks or whatever medical center was there because that is where they met. She had a roommate who loved to party and she was coming home from work to one of these parties. She stepped on a crack in the sidewalk and fell. Someone asked if there was a doctor in the house and my dad appeared. He asked if he could look at her ankle and she said "Don't touch me" and that was the beginning of a 62 year marriage.*

Merle A. Kirk diary 1924-1955:

December 27, 1944: *Arthur came from Camp Pickett to see us for the last time and to eat Christmas dinner Dec. 20th. Margaret, Lynn, John, Betty, Dad and Josh were with us also. He left his car and all his possessions which he could not take to the European fighting zone. He is now in New York waiting to be shipped across. His A.P.O. address came yesterday and a telegram last night saying "I am somewhere on the east coast and well, Arthur." Now I will have one in the Pacific war area and one in the European area. The news from the German front has looked very bad for the Allies for ten days. Will I ever see my boys again? Good Lord, please bring these wars to a close soon and save our boys! Stokes has been gone over 11 months. We all want to have them at home most of anything we know. I thought when John was sick at Christmas time and two years later Stokes was leaving it was as much as I could endure. Now this Christmas both of my boys are gone! Arthur gave Marie an engagement ring and Josh gave one to Betty. Lewis is again in the Pacific and has recently been made a Lt. Commander. Jack has been in Europe less than two months and was wounded on Nov. 30th. He has been taken to a hospital in England and he keeps writing though he says he has received no mail. Lord please save our boys!*

Rebuffed by the Navy twice, **Jack** signed on with the Army. To his surprise the Army refused the Navy Yard's request to release him back to work. Attached to the 104<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, Cousin Jack Thomas was part of the first army division to train specifically for fighting in nighttime conditions. While in basic training Jack describes what he is doing in a letter to Everets on July 3rd: *We fired hand grenades off our riffles and I was kicked flat on my back, but was lucky as it didn't bruise my shoulder. Most of the fellows here can't move their right arm because it kicked them so hard.* The "Timberwolves" sailed for the Western Front in August, landing in France September 7th. They joined the Battle of Hurtgen Forest, and traveled by train to the Belgian - Dutch border to wait for word to attack. In December, during the Battle of the Bulge, the 104th actively defended its sector near Duren until February 1945. Acting as a scout, Jack was injured, but returned to his unit. Injured severely in the next battle on Dec. 12<sup>th</sup>, he was taken to a field hospital to recuperate. Once he was able to walk again, he was ordered to join another unit, as the Timberwolves had moved farther into Germany. Jack refused this order and went AWOL, until he rejoined his outfit.

On June 12<sup>th</sup>, 1944 D-Day + 6, **Paul Brady** crossed the English Channel, landing on Normandy Beach. Arriving on a Higgins landing craft the troops disembarked long after the firing and bombing by the Germans ceased. Still, one of the soldiers in his boat shot himself during the crossing. From Normandy the troops moved into France, Belgium and crossed the Rhine River over the Remagen Bridge into Germany. As they passed through destroyed villages, they saw many Europeans still carrying on with their daily lives. In several villages Paul took many black and white photos and was able to get his camera film processed. The winter weather was often below freezing, with heavy snows as well as thick mud that made living under tents difficult and uncomfortable. Heavy downpours flooded encampments and foxholes. Occasionally the unit came across deserted storage buildings or barns in which they sheltered.

P. Kirk Brady Jr.:

*Assigned to an Army Field Artillery Unit as a radio technician, Paul's unit supported various ground operations by infantry troops with fire missions using 155 mm canons, leading finally to the Battle of the Bulge. He came under fire from both German artillery and airplanes (Luftwaffe) during the five week long battle from mid-December to late January 1945. There were close calls, but he was never wounded or sick.*

The 1<sup>st</sup> Provisional Marine Brigade **Bud Gill** was deployed with joined the U.S. forces moving through the Pacific Islands. Once they arrived on Guadalcanal the unit was told to set sail overnight, immediately leaving for Guam. The harbor admiral resupplied them and sent them on the next tide. But, on route, the captain was radioed to pull back to Eniwetok Island. Japanese troop activity was spotted in the vicinity on the islands and at sea. During the long wait on board before they could safely disembarked, Bud played cards. He and his shipmates played for hours, filling his pocket with more than enough money to send home to his Mother, Madge, for her month's rent. Not long after arriving in the Pacific, Bud transferred to the VMF 534 Night Fighter outfit as the designated squad leader of an eight-man team heading to Guam. And as such he was one of the first off the Landing Barge. The coral reef was close to shore, which meant the men had to wade onto the island. He and his ground defense outfit worked under sniper fire unloading ammunition and aviation gas for planes on the airfield. Instead of working on aircraft as trained, he was initially tasked to set the perimeter for the anti-aircraft guns. He was eventually part of the work force whose job it was to get the planes back into the air, refueling and maintaining them. Once the island was secured from Japanese fire, he was among those

tasked with the unpleasant job of burying the dead Japanese. This was not done out of respect, but for sanitation.

In hopes of avoiding the censors, **Stokes** writes to Margaret that he knew where Bud was deployed. He writes on November 9: *Bud must be getting along O.K. also. Actually he is farther west than I am. However the sooner we get a strangle hold on those Japs the better.*



1944 Russell Kirk house



Robert Gill  
Wedding Announcement

**Margaret G. Kirk to Merle A. Kirk and J. Russell Kirk**

Jan. 4, 1944, Tuesday night

Dear Folks,

We are going to spend the night here in Atlanta at the Henry Grady Hotel and John is having a fine time taking a shower at the present time. I thought I'd drop you all a few lines so you'd know we were making out O.K. and the car is still holding out, though I am almost afraid to mention that for fear it will get notions tomorrow.

We stayed in Charlotte last night, so I think we have made fairly good time each day. We want to try to make Meridian, Miss. tomorrow night. We went off our route a little today in order to go by Stone Mountain, and it was a wonderful sight. We stopped in Murfreesboro yesterday about twelve-thirty and got something to drink and we ate our chicken and pie, or rather part of it. It was so good and we do appreciate your fixing it. John had another piece about three o'clock yesterday and we finished it up today.

I surely do miss Lynn and wish we had her though I really believe she is better off there. John has been to sleep each afternoon for a short while but he is terribly excited. Hope Gran's cold is better.

Love,

Margaret

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Jan. 5, Wednesday

Camp Claiborne, LA

Dear Margaret,

I didn't call home today as much as I would have like to talk to them in the long interval. I started to write Wednesday but didn't get far. However, it is now Sunday (Jan. 9) night and I am O.K.

I started writing about calling home but just could not get time to call home or write. Therefore I didn't call you that afternoon. Well, I hope Jeff made it to Alexandria on Thursday night. I have been doing a lot of thinking about what kind of a trip you had, where you stopped, how you and Johnny are and when you made it home. However, I guess I will hear at my new post office address pretty soon, that is if you have received the number yet. I don't know so I will have to leave my address off.

Well, it has already seemed a long time since I have seen the family. John, I guess, will miss me quite a bit. I know I will miss him more and more as time goes on. He used to bother me at times, but he didn't think so and I guess it was all right. Before long I will wish I had him to bother me. As far as you are concerned though there was no bother at all and I miss you already and it will be more. However, I know it is mutual, but we will have to make the best of it that we can and hope that it will be over soon. Prospects look pretty good for an early finish and the earlier it is the better I will like it. Tell everybody hello for me and also tell John that he is Mamma's man now for a little while.

All my love,

Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Jan. 10

Western Union telegram 10:40 P.M.

ARRIVED OK WEST COAST WEATHER IS FINE. HOPE YOU'VE MADE IT HOME ALL RITE. STOKES

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Jan. 15, Saturday night

Dear Margaret,

I intended to write last night after I called you but when I came in I thought I would rest awhile and when I woke up it was about eleven P.M. So I went straight to bed after that and really got a big night's sleep. Today I have been feeling extra fine and now I feel like I would like to go somewhere but I know of nothing to do but go to the show so I guess after I finish this letter I will see what is on.

I enjoyed talking to you last night. I placed my call at about 5:15 P.M. and got Smithfield about 6:00 P.M. You were at Everetts and the line had to go through another operator so I had to wait until just before 6:30 P.M. before the circuit was completed. It cost \$ 5.70 but was worth it. I didn't know how long I had been talking when I told you I had better quit I thought maybe I had used up \$10 or \$12 time and I didn't have much more than that.

Taylor is in the same room with me now and he went out a while ago and came back with two quarts of wine. I just went out too and came back with a pint of milk, some potato chips and cheese crackers. You see I didn't get to supper and after I had tasted Taylor's wine I got hungry very suddenly and just had to eat. My milk and everything is about half gone and I feel a lot better than a while ago.

I got my hair cut yesterday. I still have some side burns but the top has been cut to about 2". The barber was very fast. He cut one EMs [*Enlisted Men*] hair to 1" in four minutes flat while I was there. There were six ahead of me when I got there and I only had to wait thirty five minutes before it was my turn to be sheared. However, he did a pretty good job and took a little longer, I guess because of my rank.

You and Jeff did pretty good on your trip home. Forty two hours and one blowout. That is not so bad, however, I hope you can fix the tire because I don't have much hope for you in getting a new tire. I expect they will be pretty hard to get on an "A" book.\* The trouble should have developed in Alexandria where we could have gotten one pretty easily.

Well, I have only been gone a little over a week now and I would really like to have a fight with Johnny as to who you belonged to. I enjoyed those times immensely and will remember them for a long time. I am really getting the urge to be home with you and to have you and the little ones all my own again. I guess my stay in Alexandria was the happiest of my life. It was more or meant more to me then because it was the first time I really had a home or you might say a refuge to go to after a day's work. That is partially what a home is for and you really did your best to make it one for me. I really found out there what it is we had been missing for so long. I know now that I will be only waiting for the day on which we will be back together again.

I hope Lynn had a nice birthday today. Tell Johnny to give a "great big hug" to her for her Daddy. I haven't received any letters so far from you. I got my deposit slip, the Techgram and a letter from Mamma today. I guess I will get a little more mail or a letter from my darling either tomorrow or next day.

All my love,

Stokes

*\*A book- "A" sticker on a car was the lowest priority of gasoline rationing and entitled the car owner to 3 to 4 US gallons and limited tire replacements.*

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Jan. 17, Monday A. M.

Dear Margaret,

I expect this is the last chance I have to write and is probably the last time you will hear from me for a while. However, I expect to write a few lines most every day and will send letters at every opportunity. The biggest thing I want you to do, and I mean it, is to not worry about me because I will make out alright and return to you as soon as it is humanly possible.

Well, I guess you have seen the stamps by now. Lt. Woodman gave them to me and since I have no use for them and you do, I thought I would send them. It will help your shortage of #9 tickets that we lost 6 in going to Louisiana.

Taylor heard from his wife yesterday and she told him all about your taking off from Alexandria, the trouble you had in finding Jeff and all about the packing of clothes and boxes. It must have been pretty exciting, however I guess you thought it tragic when you couldn't locate Jeff [*Jeff Gibson*].\*

Guess I will get a \$100 check cashed today to tide me over. I am kind of low on cash and I will probably need it. Whenever you feel like you can, you might invest any of your excess in war bonds or add to the \$500 Dad has of mine for purchase of timber lands, etc. I am having my money come straight to me in treasury checks now and when I do get an excess of them I will mail them to you.

I hope I will be able to call you sometime today. However, if I don't call today, don't expect anymore from me right away!

Tell Johnny and Lynn to be good and help Momma all they can until Daddy can get back.  
All my love,

Stokes

*\*Employee who drove Margaret and John Jr. from Alexandria, La to Everets after J. S. Kirk left to go overseas.*

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Jan. 18, Tuesday A.M.

Dear Margaret,

I received two letters from you yesterday and two again this A.M. and also one from Mamma. The one from Mamma was evidently written in Richmond while Josh, Daddy, etc., were all there. I have evidently received all letters that you have written thru Jan. 14<sup>th</sup> except your first one. The one you wrote Monday Jan 10 stated something about writing twice but I haven't seen the other one written that day yet. I guess I know most of the details of your trip from our telephone conversation, but I would like to get the rest of the details.

Johnny was real cute over the phone when he said "All right" in his original way. I didn't know when I was talking to Lynn. There was a lot of talking that she evidently was doing but I didn't understand her. Well, it took me almost 2 hrs. to get you but that wasn't so bad. I was afraid I would have to leave as it was pretty early in the afternoon and I had work I just had to do.

I guess this will be the last letter for awhile so I want you to keep a stiff upper lip and remember that no news is good news. Regardless of how long it is – and I know it will be a long time between this one and the next.

I am glad you like the picture and I am also glad I got that one "must" done before I left.

My call wasn't so bad after all – it cost \$8.30 and it was worth it. I enjoyed talking to the whole family and it looks like I hit it when everybody was there. Guess I will have to quit and get this off in the mail.

All my love, Stokes



P.S. I burnt the paper with my cigarette and then had to tear the corner off. I will also try to write a line a day so you will probably get a big mail next time you hear.

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Jan. 19

Somewhere at sea; V-Mail

Dear Margaret,

I am glad I was able to talk to you the other day. It will probably be a long time before I will be able to do it again. I am beginning to really miss you and the children already and the memory of our last talk together will last throughout the time I am gone.

You are right in that we can't get very much on a V-Mail letter. But there is not much I can write except about the weather (which is good) how I am (fine) and that I wish you were with me. The last part however is very impractical at the time being. Guess I will stop for now and will write again later.

All my love,

Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Jan. 23

Somewhere at Sea

Dear Margaret,

I just about finished a V mail letter to you on the 19<sup>th</sup> and I will add a few more lines to it in a few minutes. I expect to mail this Air Mail letter to you at the same time as the V mail letter and you can tell which makes the fastest trip. I have no doubt but what this will be the first to reach you. Upon thinking about it I guess this will be the first that you have received for quite a while, probably a month or maybe more. Well, along with this letter I hope you get quite a few more as I expect to write at least every other day and they will be mailed all at the same time. I also want to write one to Johnny as I think he would like to have a letter from his "Daddy."

I have been having a fine time so far. I went to see a show for officers tonight and it was very good. Night before last I saw "My Favorite Wife" and tonight it was "His Wife Returns" or some such title. I don't remember the exact title, but any picture or recreation is very welcome now since there is not much space to move around in or anywhere to go.

I took a salt water shower last night and I expect to take another tonight. It is pretty warm and clothes tend to stick after the day is over. A shower and wash room is one of the conveniences I share with Maj. Pinnell. We are in the same "stateroom" and have it pretty nice compared with what the rest of the officers have.

Well, darling, I wish I were at home with you and I hope I will be before so very long length of time. I miss you more and more and I know we are missing the best part of our lives together. However, it has got to be so that Johnny and Lynn may live their own lives in peace so I want to do what I can do to make it so.

All my love,

Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**  
Somewhere at Sea; V-Mail

Jan. 25

Dear Margaret,

I am just fine and making out O.M. other than a little sunburn that I got on my arms today. I stayed out in it for about forty five minutes with only an undershirt and pants and it turned my arms pretty red. However it is not so bad and nothing to worry about.

I am playing a little poker every now and then. We played a lot to start with and it soon became rather tiresome and now we are settled down to about a two hour stretch each day. I have been making out all right breaking even mostly but stand now just a little ahead. Barney is lucky as usual and has won quite a bit. I don't see how he does it but the good hands and money seem to just flow his way.

I finished that book you gave me Christmas with the funny cartoons in it. It is now being passed around by the other officers. My room looks like a library though. There are eight books of various kinds on the table.

All my love,  
Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**  
Somewhere at sea

Jan. 30, Sunday

Dear Margaret,

I have been playing a lot of cribbage during the last three days. Doc Pinnell, Barney and Lt. Wood were playing with me. We used the board you gave me and it has really come in handy. Wood and I have been playing partners and it looks like we always come out as loser, especially yesterday. We must have played about twenty hands or games yesterday and we won only about five and lost the rest. They are the luckiest guys I have ever seen and boy have Wood and I been griping about it. We have finally decided to cut the games to about three a day until their luck runs out. You can't beat them, we usually have one or two points to peg and win when they have 10 or 12 and they come up from behind and win. It is especially bad when the games are for 50c but I guess I am now getting enough Foreign Service pay to take up any losses but still I hate to lose and guess I will continue to gripe about it.

I also read a pretty good novel yesterday called "The Flaming Forest" by James Oliver Curwood. It was about Northwest Canada and it brought back familiar places and things about the North Country. I couldn't stop reading until I finished it so you know it must have been good. I have already started another one "The Country Beyond" by the same author.

I have been buying a couple of Coca Colas each day while on the boat. They are usually real cold and have been enjoyed immensely. They also have all kinds of cigarettes, candy and other things which tend to help.

I have been thinking a lot about our stay in Alexandria. The good things you gave me to eat, our rides together, the fights the three of us had, the bathroom talks and everything else comes back very clearly and makes me wish for you, the children, and home again. I just wish I had you again, to be able to touch you and love you as we did then. I guess it was as I told you before, the happiest days of my life with you and I know they won't be forgotten by you either.

It is getting close to dinner now so I will stop and write again tomorrow.

All my love, darling,  
Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**  
Somewhere at Sea; V-Mail

Feb. 1

Dear Margaret,

There is hardly anything to tell you but I thought I would write anyway. I am going to write to Grandma and to the Saunders boy sometime today or tomorrow. This is the best chance I have had for a long time to pay back any letters I might happen to owe and I am gradually taking advantage of it. I have a bunch of them for you and a couple for Mom + Dad that I want to mail as soon as possible.

Boy, will I be glad to set foot on dry land again. It has been rather confining for a long time now and to be able to go somewhere is getting to be an ambition. However, I guess we are doing a lot of traveling but you don't notice it much under the present situation.

I thought at first that I would type this letter to you but on second thought it would be a long laborious task for me and probably a lot worse than my writing so I decided on the pen.

Just been thinking that I brought too much stuff with me. I sent my stout overvest home thru Taylor. Maj. Taylor is going to mail it to you. I should have sent my blouse, pants, etc. and a lot of other miscellaneous stuff.

All my love,  
Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Chassie Thomas**  
Somewhere at sea

Feb. 3

Dear Grandma,

It has been quite a long time since I have seen you and also since I have written so I thought I would catch up on things. I haven't had any news for some time from home and I expect it will be quite a while yet before I hear. I know Margaret has been writing practically every day but we won't get any mail until after we reach our destination, consequently I am not expecting any right away. I have had good writing conditions lately and have been trying to take advantage of it, but there is not very much I can say in a letter so after all it is pretty difficult to write and say much more than "I am O.K." Lewis really had a streak of luck when he was sent home. He really deserved it though, he had been gone so long. I expect he is gone again now and is probably in the same position as I am "somewhere at sea."

How is Nell now? I hope she is very happy. If I understand it right she was to be married to "one of us Kirks" but haven't heard definitely. I was really glad to have my chance at a stay in the states. I didn't like being so far from home, but with Margaret and the two children, it wasn't so bad. Margaret had her first real opportunity to make a home and I must say that she did a splendid job of it. I enjoyed every minute with them and will remember our days at Alexandria, Louisiana for a long time.

I miss Margaret, John and Lynn now very much and would really like to be home with them. They are at their cutest age right now and I expect that they will be considerably older and much more grown up when I see them again. However, I hope not and also hope that this war will be quickly finished. I expect that Mamma is still trying to get to Portsmouth once a week like she used to. It must be pretty difficult now since gas is probably more difficult to get now. I am enjoying my trip immensely. I had never traveled so much before I entered the army and my experience since entering shows that the army gets around all right. The news broadcast for this morning is just before getting started so I will stop for a minute. Well, I heard about the landings

that are being made in the Marshall Islands and it seems that this part of the war is progressing. There not being much else to write about right now I will stop and write again when the chance occurs. I hope you are feeling fine and are making out all right, Grandma.

Love,

Stokes

**Marie Linge to Arthur Kirk**

Feb. 3

183 Market St, Harrisburg, PA. to Fort Dix, NJ

My Dearest Arthur,

I'm really sorry about asking all those foolish questions when you called last night. I should know better by this time. But I am expecting any time now to get a little card telling me what your A.P.O. number is and I certainly hope it isn't in San Francisco although the Japs might make you lose a little weight.

Gene got a card telling her Dick Steele's new A.P.O. address. He is somewhere in Europe, I imagine. He wrote a month or more ago and said he was coming up this way and he would come to see her, but he never came and now he probably won't for a long time.

I don't mind you going over seas, but darn it I wish I could go with you. I'm missing all the excitement.

Things have been rather quiet around here lately. The sgt. is working at night part of the time and isn't coming over as often.

Gene's aunt is talking about selling this house so I guess we will have to keep our eyes open for a new place to live.

Today was pay-day and I have exactly \$5.00 to last until next pay which is two weeks from tomorrow. I am seriously considering going to jail rather than pay my income tax. Hard labor doesn't appeal to me too much, though.

I hope you don't get this letter until you return from Harrisburg, but I'm not counting on it too much. I miss you very much.

All my love,

Marie

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Feb. 4

Somewhere at Sea

Dear Margaret,

It looks as if a chance might be had to mail letters before long and I expect that this will be the last one again for a little while. In order to make sure you get them all I have written three V-mail letters, this one makes the third air mail letter or a total of six to you. I have also written one (Air Mail) each to Aunt Paul, Mamma, Scott Saunders, and Grandma. That is the extent of the letter writing so a check up might be helpful in determining whether they were all received or not.

I have enjoyed the trip very much. Among other things I have been doing is getting plenty of sleep and you know how I love to do that. Every afternoon I have taken one to two hour naps and I think it is the first time since I have been in the Army that I have been able to do that.

I had to open up Mamma's letter and take a whole page out and rewrite one of yours the other day. I talked of a few things the causes of my sunburn, etc. and found out later that I couldn't do so therefore the changes. The second page of Mamma's letter (which I took out) was

the most interesting. Maybe I can send it later after the trip has been forgotten. I may be able to make my letters a bit more newsy or interesting then. It is kind of hard to write very much and not be able to tell what you are doing or what is happening.

I can say that I saw another show last night "The Male Animal". It was an old show but still very good. Now we could go to the same show several times and not get tired of it.

Guess I will play cribbage (or poker) again tonight until the wee hours. I have been making out, breaking about even but now just a little behind. I can even up by winning a couple of extra hands which shouldn't be difficult.

I would really like to be with you tonight. I can see a big steak in front of me if I were and then later a lot of loving from my precious wife. That is what I do need now but I expect I would be rather rough about it and I guess you know what I mean. Anyway it would be swell if you were all my own for just a while. Guess that's all for now.

All my love to my sweet wife,

Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Feb. 7 Tuesday night

New Guinea

Dear Margaret,

Guess I will go to the show tonight after I finish this letter. We are beginning to have them in our own area three times a week and tonight will be the first.

I picked a bunch of bananas yesterday and boy are they green. They are five to six inches long and I believe that a month longer on the tree would have made them much longer and probably more edible. Anyhow I will wait until they begin to turn yellow and then eat them. I had to pick them as a month from now they wouldn't be there. I also ate a tree ripened coconut yesterday. The milk was good and the meat excellent. There are plenty of the coconuts around here but until recently there was not enough time to gather any. Anyhow, I couldn't quite climb up that far in the tree; there are no monkeys to throw them.

I just came from the show. We saw a Popeye comedy and the show "Flesh and Fantasy" with Charles Boyer and Barbara Stanwyck. It was fairly good and I rather enjoyed it.

The outlook on getting back to the states is not as bad as you imagined "Five years." I understand that after a unit has been over here for 18 months, a small percentage are allowed to return to the states. I hope though by that time that it will be over and everyone will be returning. However, after six months here another small percentage is allowed to go to Australia on leave so it won't be so long between peeks at civilization.

I want to write John a short letter before long and tell him about my hut, my bananas and the coconut trees. Guess I will do it a little later. I haven't received a letter in a week now. I hope I will soon get news about you hearing from me.

All my love to my darling wife,

Stokes



Banana picking in New Guinea

**Eleanor "Nell" Thomas to Arthur Kirk**  
219 Broad St, Portsmouth, VA to Camp Edwards, Mass.

Feb. 10

Dear Arthur,

Well it won't be long now before I'll be a member of this Kirk tribe myself. With all that has to be done in the next few days wish I could sleep through them, but guess I can't.

Know it's too late to invite you down for the wedding – wrote you some time ago telling you when it was to be in hopes you might be able to be here then, but in all the turmoil and confusion the letter was misplaced before I found your address. Anyway – we will be in Boston two days and three nights and if we have time will drop by to see you. As yet I don't know just when we will be in Boston – around the 15<sup>th</sup> and if by any chance you should be there about that time give us a ring at the Stratler Hotel. Mike's initials are M.M. [*M. M. Kirk*] He has to go up there on business and hasn't found out just when he has to be there so I'll try to drop you a card from New York as to the exact time and if it is possible to stop by to see you.

Seems kinda funny to be getting married and have none of my first cousins present. I'm hoping Lewis will be here, but doubt it because he didn't come in this week-end as he has been doing. At any rate, I'll see him again before he leaves for good and we are just hoping he'll be here when the baby is born.

Frances [*Frances Thomas*] seems to be getting along fine now and hope she continues that way. Rives [*Rives Sledge*] has just been put in 1-A and that has her worried, but he will most likely be deferred because of his work.

Well, hope that things work out so we'll be able to see you.

Best wishes,  
Nell

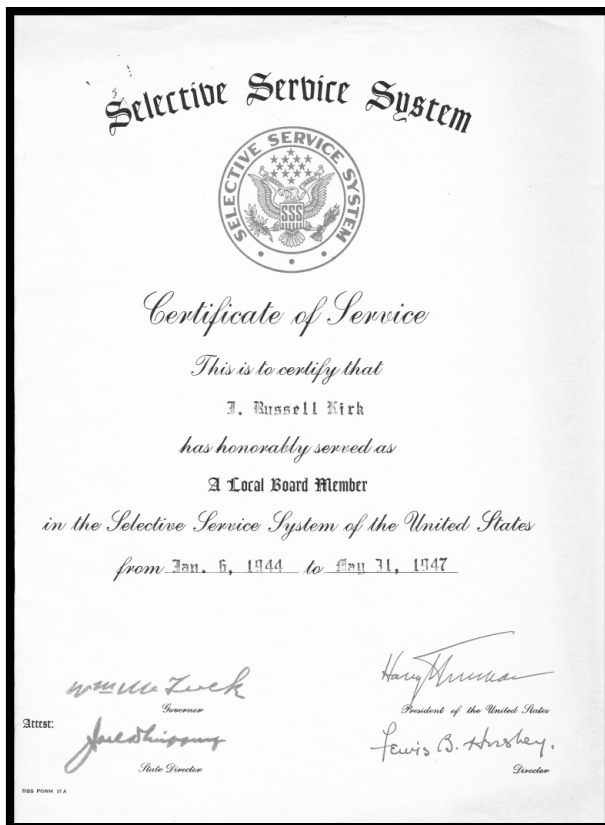
**Merle A. Kirk to Arthur Kirk**  
Suffolk, VA to Fort Dix, NJ

Feb. 11

Dear Son:

You did not say anything about your Company so I am addressing this to the 640<sup>th</sup> believing you are all at Fort Dix together. I know you would hate to be separated from those with whom you have trained – you know each other. Stokes said he liked the old 95<sup>th</sup> better than the newer regiment.

Your letter came to-day with your bond on the same mail. Nansemond County has gone over its' quota – it always does that.



2-7-1944

## Eleanor Thomas, M. M. Kirk Wed In Williamsburg Miss Hazeltine Potter Selects February 28 For Wedding Date



Bruton Parish Church, Williamsburg, was the setting Wednesday at 2:30 p. m., for the marriage of Miss Sallie Eleanor Thomas, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J. Lewis Thomas, to Michael Martin Kirk, son of Mrs. Francis Kirk and the late Mr. Kirk, all of Portsmouth. The ceremony was performed by the Rev. F. H. Craighill, rector, in the presence of relatives and friends. Wedding music was played by the church organist.

The bride, given in marriage by her father, wore a wedding gown of lustrous white satin, fashioned with sweetheart neckline, long tight sleeves puffed at the shoulders, and the full skirt which extended from a shirred bodice formed a circular train. Her veil of imported illusion fell from a coronet of orange blossoms, and she carried a prayerbook covered with a white orchid, and showered with orange blossoms. Miss Fleet Carney, of Portsmouth, was maid of honor and only attendant.

Aaron Lanier was best man and the ushers were Collie Owens and John Cornelius Thomas, brother of the bride.

Later in the afternoon Mr. and Mrs. Kirk left for a trip to New York, and upon their return will reside in the Colonial Manor apartments, Portsmouth. The bride wore for traveling a suit of dark brown wool with brown accessories, and a corsage of white orchids.

The guests from out of town included Mr. and Mrs. J. Lewis Thomas, Cornelius Thomas, Dr. and Mrs. J. W. Abbitt, Mrs. Cornelius Thomas, Miss Fleet Carney, Miss Ann Moore, Mrs. S. Gaston Foote, Mr. and Mrs. Linwood E. Turlington, Mrs. R. L. Hutchins, Miss Dorothy Broughton, Collie Stevens, Mr. and Mrs. Charles W. Johnston, Dr. and Mrs. R. L. Corbell, Mrs. Hugh F. Armstrong, Mr. and Mrs. Peter C. Clapp, Mrs. Allan B. Morton, Mrs. Glenn Sharp, Mrs. Lou Hancock, Aaron Lanier, all of Portsmouth; Mr. and Mrs. J. Russell Kirk, of Suffolk; Mrs. Stokes Kirk, John and Lynn Kirk, off Smithfield; Mrs. William Musser, of Abingdon; Lemuel Thomas, of Washington; Miss Willie Martin, Mrs. Felix Holt, Mrs. Granger, of Norfolk; Mrs.

Since it was raining Wednesday Dad went with us to Nell's wedding. Margaret and the children went also. Nell really did look her prettiest – her dress, veil and flowers were lovely. One would think there would have been only a few people who would go to Williamsburg for a wedding, but there must have been forty or fifty friends and relatives on hand. Lemuel came down and took them away with him. I am wondering if he got them in Richmond or Washington in time to take their train to New York – he is such a slow driver and time has never meant a thing to him. I got four tea spoons to them as a gift from you which will cost about \$8.50. I have not learned the price, but will go in Brewer's to pay for them soon.

I have had a cold and slight fever for two days so secured some sulfa tablets from Dr. Eley and to-night the fever is gone and to-morrow I expect to be off the shelf again.

Dad is really taking his work on the Draft Board seriously. It takes about two half days a week. Next Friday will be his birthday – 59 – and I want to give him a trip to a show and supper. He says he can't do it; too busy.

I am glad you are just a bit nearer home and hope the next move brings you nearer. We are looking forward to the expected visit; it has been nearly six months since you were here.

Love

Mamma

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Feb. 13 Sunday

New Guinea

Notice the new APO number→ APO 503

Dear Margaret,

It has been quite a time since I talked or heard from you. I don't have any reason to worry like you have but it would really be nice if I could just get a hold of a letter. There will probably be quite a time before I hear from you so I must be content but still that doesn't help any.

I think I have done everything possible to let you know that I am O.K. up to the present time. I have mailed three V mail letters, and wrote my third and last Air mail letter on Friday, Feb. 4 (I think that was the date.) I have been pretty busy since then and today I had a chance to send a cablegram telegram. They state that it will take 3 to 10 days to reach you. I hope it takes the minimum because I practically know that up to now you haven't heard for 26 days and I know that is a long time in any language.

Everything here is just as quiet and peaceful as if I were on the front porch at home. It is about 9:00 P.M. here and at home I guess you are just getting this A.M. If you can figure out what I mean I am now writing this letter tonight and if you could get it right now you would receive it this morning. I am now writing in circles and I started it - so lets drop the matter it is just a difference of time change.

Believe I am going to like my work here. Everything points to a pretty good task. I believe that is about all I can say about it. If I find out differently, I will go the limit in letting you know how I am making out.

We can send certain messages by cablegram telegram and it was funny when Taylor came in and said that three messages of a long list could be sent for 40c and he found one that was appropriate and could find no more so his text was "Safe and sound - girl born, boy born". I hope Mrs. Taylor doesn't get worried about Taylor because he didn't want to be cheated out of sending two more messages.

Well, darling, I love you as much as ever and I am looking to the day when I can make up



any that I am losing now. I can never do that I know. Keep a stiff upper chin because I am convinced now that I will be all right over here.

All my love to my darling,

Stokes

**Merle A. Kirk to Arthur Kirk**

Feb. 16

Dear Son:

We are having a nice little visit from Margaret, Lynn, John, Bessie [*Bessie Kirk Brady*] and Lawrence [*grandson*]. When the three little ones were put to bed we just sat around and talked. Josh came out and you know Bessie and Margaret just love to talk. Finally Josh and Bessie left for bed and when we go every bed in the house will be occupied – Lawrence sleeps in yours and Bessie said she wanted to try the bed over the kitchen as she might have to stay there some day.

Dad has had nine hogs brought to the smoke house to-day. Lawrence and John stood around with their eyes popped and mouths open - they had never seen such a sight before. We will now have all the pork we want for weeks and more than I'll want. It does not take me long to tire of it. We have invited the gang to come over Saturday night to eat tenderloin. Bob and his bride will be along also. Wouldn't it be just fine if you should drop in too!



Everets John, Lynn & Merle Kirk

Paul called his mother up to-day. He is in Suffolk for eight days and then will be sent from Camp Lee. Bessie told him not to tell her good-by nor to come to see her – she did not think she could stand to see him leave.

I went to the Eley's last night to our club meeting and won the prize – a heart shaped box of candy. Dad gave me one also. I feel real swell with two valentines.

You are now a little nearer, Son, do hope you can stay there a long time.

Love to my boy,

Mamma

**Chassie Thomas to Arthur Kirk**

Feb. 17

Portsmouth, VA. to  
Camp Edwards, Mass.

Dear Arthur,

I haven't heard form you for so long thought you were coming home is why you did not write. Hope you will come, we want to see you. Wish you could have been here to Nell's marriage. It was a beautiful wedding. Nell did look so pretty & happy. She did not have very many people at her wedding. She said she did not want a crowd there.

Lemuel came down to the marriage & took them in his car as far as Washington & then they went to New York. As fast as I get a present for one bride I have to get another. Fred

Clardie, the young man that has been with me so long, the one that has two children, expects to be married next month. Mrs. Jervett's granddaughter Marion will be married the 4<sup>th</sup> of next month to a man that lived in Portsmouth. He is now in Florida, she will go down there to be married.

I reckon Merle wrote you that Miss Jule Ball's brother (George) died. He lived with her. Jack Thomas trying very hard to get in the Army, if he goes Lewis & Eleanor will be alone like John & Merle. I wish it was so we could have all of our boy's home again so we could be happy. I hope you got to see Mr. A. Edisful he talked as if he would like very much to have you to visit him at his home. He has two very pretty girls & all of them are very nice. Write to me sometime. Will close with much love,

Your Grandmother C.

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Feb. 18, Friday night

Somewhere in New Guinea

Dear Margaret,

I got my first letter from you yesterday and it was quite a thrill to hear from you fairly recently. The letter was dated Jan. 29 and you had come from somebody's party over at the Eberwine's. Lynn must have really been cute from your description. I would really like to see her now and give her a big hug and you also.

I heard from Mamma also, yesterday. Her letter was written Feb. 1, and from what I gathered Lynn and John must have had their pictures taken. Mamma also raved about how precious Lynn was at the party a couple of days before.

The first letter I received was the first one that my battalion received. Guess who it was from. It was from Grandma and had been written Jan. 14 and I expect it just missed me while I was on the west coast and has been on my track ever since. I was glad to get it not only because it was from Grandma and from home, but because I knew more mail (and from you) was bound to be close behind. Mail call for today hasn't been sounded yet but I guess it will be forthcoming before long and I should have several back letters from you and maybe a few more recent ones.

I like where I am and my work is fine so far. It is going to keep me really on the run but that is what's needed to make the time go faster. However it is pretty nice here and I only have to step out in my yard to pick bananas (very, very green) and coconuts. The coconuts are right above my tent and I guess I will have to wait until one crashes on my tent before I eat one because I won't climb that tree for all of them. There are no limbs on it except at the top where the coconuts are.

Taylor just came in and said that a big lot of mail just came in. I just got to get down there and my share of it so lots of love, etc will have to wait until next letter because I've got to read a letter from my one and only.

All my love,

Stokes

**Merle A. Kirk to Arthur Kirk**

Feb. 21

Dear Son:

It has been over a week since we received your last letter and more than a month since hearing from Stokes. I hope and believe it can't be much longer before hearing from you both. Mrs. Gill had a letter from Robert written on the 18<sup>th</sup> of February - he is in Northern Africa. It took only 18 days for his letter to arrive - he left on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of January.

Paul has been home on a furlough, and left to-day for Penn. taking Elizabeth, his wife, with him. They will take a little trip and then he reports to camp in Penn. I can't remember the name of his camp – and Elizabeth will come back alone. I believe she will join St. John's Church next service when the Bishop comes. That will be March 5<sup>th</sup>. I am hoping you will be here then. We really looked for you this week end – asked Josh when he came down to breakfast Sunday morning if he had looked in the other bed for you.

I took Mr. Willoughby home to-night – Dad and Josh were busy and inquired after Marion. She wrote that she went to an officer's dance and was surprised to see English girls dancing with negro officers. She said she was glad she was a Rebel.

I see signs of spring here. Paul gave me a nice bunch of jonquils Sunday. This made me desirous to know if mine were showing through the ground. They are showing up well, but no blossoms yet. Those who live near the water are always weeks ahead of us in producing flowers. Lucille says her flowers bloom ahead of those in Driver.

The crowd was here again Saturday night. We had tenderloin, muffins, creamed potatoes, celery, carrots, fried apples, preserves and coffee. That mess, Jim Edwards, wanted to know what I had for desert. There was no desert other than the preserves.

Bob Williams and his wife joined them. All like her; even Mag. says she is pretty and nice. Jack Thomas says she is nice, but he has not seen one yet that he would marry. He must feel that his time is next for he likes to repeat that phrase.

Margaret helped me entertain Dad on his birthday, 18<sup>th</sup>. She bought him a box of candy and a tie, then stayed a day longer with us that she might go to the movies and supper that night with us. We had supper at the Peanut Inn. Besides us were five tables placed to-gether with a bowl of flowers and candles. We knew somebody was having a dinner party. Later we found out who it was. The family of Mr. & Mrs. Josh West were celebrating their wedding anniversary.

Love,

Mamma

*Robert Gill, Paul & Elizabeth Brady. Lucille Eberwine and Jim Edwards were part of the "Gang," good friends who often gathered to play cards or eat meals. Others: Bruce Eberwine, Fannie Mae Edwards, Ed and Flossie Ames.*

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Feb. 25, Saturday night

Dear Margaret,

I think I have gotten most of your letters so far that you wrote previous to Jan. 28. I've gotten letters #6 then 17, #24, 25 & 30 which (last one) was written on Feb. 8<sup>th</sup>. I got #30 on the 22<sup>nd</sup> which made it exactly two weeks in transit to here. I don't know what happened to the letters in between but I think I got all of the first five letters that you wrote before leaving the states. I have received a couple of letters from Mamma, one mailed on Feb. 1<sup>st</sup> and a V mail letter written on Feb. 6 which I received on Feb. 20<sup>th</sup>. That makes two weeks for the V-mail also but I guess air mail is much faster in the long run.

We are gradually getting settled down now and I am beginning to really like my work. I can't say anything about it but I think I had an idea what it would be.

I ran into a name the other day that could be a boy from Smithfield. It was Captain J.T. Robbins and I have been wondering if it was the same as J.T. Robbins of Smithfield. I thought that at one time you said he was in the Air Corps, somewhere in Africa, but he may be the same and I think I will look him up. Write and let me know.

I went to a show night before last and it was pretty good. Most of them are fairly new ones now and everybody seems to enjoy them.

I haven't treated you right during the past week. I wrote last about a week ago and I think I finished with something about going to see if I had any mail. Well I did about five letters and I have been pretty busy and haven't written my second letter for this week. I think I have done pretty good so far. The weeks before this one I have averaged two a week as I promised. Anyhow I will make up for it.

Guess I will quit this and next time I guess it will have to be a love letter to my sweet wife.

All my love,  
Stokes

**Merle A. Kirk to Arthur Kirk**

Feb. 26

Dear Son:

Daddy met the mail-man on his way to Suffolk yesterday and phoned that he had received your letter. How glad I was, for I had been wondering. From Sunday to Friday was a long time for a letter to be in transit from N.J. to Suffolk. Margaret says it takes only nine days for Robert's letters to reach Smithfield from North Africa. He writes twice a week. Your letter had more to say than any I have had for a long time.

I know those tents can't be comfortable - makes you feel like a boy scout with more hardships added. W. G. has taken charge of the Chuckatuck scouts since Josh gave them up, and from what he tells me I believe he is doing pretty well with them - those whom he has to speak to more than twice he expects to send home.

All the office force at the selective service office and members of the draft board were given tickets to the launching of the Shangra-la - Dad also found a ticket for me. He took the car loaded with ladies to see the launching, then took the crowd to Norfolk for lunch and movies. We really had a nice time. There was a nice box of candy, too. I am saving the admission sticker which was on our car to send to Stokes, just to let him see what is going on. Dad says it won't pass the censor.

Hattie Willis and Dean are moving to Erie, Penn. Dean has a job with more pay offered him. They kept the long distance wires between Youngstown & Portsmouth hot for a few days while the family discussed the question.

Nell and Mike are housekeeping - that is Nell is for Mike is sick in bed with the flu. It may be that Mike is doing the actual housekeeping for Nell was in Port Norfolk when I left. Mamma has a house full of boarders, so full that I had to sleep at Sisters. She has room for company now that all are married but Jack. It seems now that Jack is not to be released from the Navy Yard. One time I hear that he is and the next that he isn't.

You answered all questions, but the one about your picture. Mr. Hamblin does splendid ones, perhaps you had better have it done here. But if you do hear that you are leaving, get it done before you go - anywhere.

Love,  
Mamma

**Merle A. Kirk to Arthur Kirk**

Feb. 29

Postcard

Several letters came in from Stokes today written while at sea- none written later than Feb. 4<sup>th</sup>. Later today a cablegram came saying they had landed and they were O.K. Did not say where they had landed. He censored his own letters.

Mamma

**Lucille Eberwine to Russell Kirk**  
Hotel Richmond, Richmond, VA

Mar. 1, Monday night

Dearest "Rusty" and Merle,

When cups run over like mine is tonight, I want to tell someone who is so true all about it. Your telegram helped to make the day brighter! Bruce and I both appreciated it, and thank you. I can't even tell you how much brighter my head is tonight. Even Dr. Bigger told me it was a surprise to him that it was like he found it.

Arthur came by this morning and again this afternoon. He has certainly been a wonderful help to us, and people up here speak so kindly of him. Bruce always asks them if they know Arthur. One of the doctors he sees most was Arthur's roommate.

We will be home to play some more Canasta before long. When Bruce was still "groggy" he kept saying he wanted to go on home now. They had him in the bathroom twice this afternoon. He got up reluctantly but made it out. Thank you for your message, and most of all for just being you. You mean a lot to us.

Love,

Lucille

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**  
New Guinea

Mar. 1, Wednesday night

Dear Margaret,

I received your letter #37 mailed on Feb. 16, day before yesterday. That is pretty good time I think - less than two weeks. I have received all letters thru #25 except #21. I also have yet to receive #22 to 28, #30 and #32 to 36. Today I received #25 so I haven't given up hope for the balance of them yet.

Barney Belote and I are living in the same hut together again and he has his radio. We have just been listening to it and found out that Manus island in the Admiralty Islands, Alaska has just been invaded. It helps out a lot and with finding out news fresh from the front makes everything seem that it will be better or that we will be coming home someday. Each new advance helps to bring that day closer.

I am glad that John & Lynn are getting along alright. From your letters they are always busy doing one thing or another. I hope they don't keep you as busy as they did at Alexandria. I believe that they might have eventually partially ruined your health, but I hope that is all past and that your strength has returned by now.

I have received a couple of V-mail letters from Mamma and four air mail letters. Tell her that they are all very much appreciated and not to worry about me as I am in the best of health and like my work fine. I guess that is the best anyone could hope for under the conditions.

I hope that you have heard from me long before this writing. I figured that you would hear from me between the days Feb. 16 to Feb. 26 at the latest. I am real anxious to receive a letter in which you say you have heard from me. I expect it will be coming in the next 7 or 8 days.

All my love my sweet,

Stokes

**Lucille Eberwine to Russell Kirk**

Mar. 2, Tuesday night

Dear "Rusty,"

The red roses are the prettiest I most ever have seen. They are in the most unusual container I've ever seen. It is a round fish bowl type container filled with a fibrous material and three red roses are down in the bowl with the white material as a back ground. They created quite a sensation on the floor. Bruce roused and I showed them to him, and he said you shouldn't have done that for him. The roses are beautiful and we appreciate them so much, but your son is wonderful. He came in twice yesterday and once today. He tells me things that no one else takes time to do, and relieves my mind a lot. Today Bruce has been uncomfortable because of fluid in his right lung. It gave him a fit all night and most of today until they gave him enough to really knock him out.

Arthur told me it was to be expected. They xrayed it this afternoon. I am sure everything is O.K. Dr. Bigger says he couldn't be doing any better. You really have been so wonderful to us. May be now my mind will be unblocked and I can beat you at Canasta. I want to beat you three nights and then I'll be satisfied.

Thanks a million for everything.

Love,

Lucille

**Mae Menger to Arthur Kirk**

Mar. 2

3302 N. Second Street Harrisburg, PA

Dear Arthur,

You don't know how sorry I was to hear you couldn't reach us the Saturday you were in Harrisburg – Jack's room was all ready and we'd have been so glad to have had you stay with us. Do hope that you'll be coming back soon and will be able to let us know ahead of time. Since dad is gone we spend a great deal of time over at mother's so if you should come in unexpectedly and can't reach us – please call there and they will be able to tell where we are. There telephone listing is Dr. H. F. Gross – 3300 N. Second St phone 3-6956 – write it down in your little black book.

I never had your address to tell you how much we enjoyed the ham. It was delicious and you should have seen Jack go into it. A ham requires so many points that I know he had given up hope having a real Smithfield for the duration. So you see it was a real treat. I didn't know your folks address, so I sent them a note in a letter to Elleanor [*Eleanor Thomas*].

Hope all is going well with you and that we will see you soon.

As ever,

Mae Menger

**Merle A. Kirk to Arthur Kirk**

Mar. 3

Dear Son:

I guess you have gotten my cards telling you we had heard from Stokes. The first letters were written on board ship and mailed before reaching his destination – then the cablegram, and then a letter from his landing place or camp. He is in New Guinea – a bad place to be, considering the heat, Japs and tropical diseases. He says he is as safe as we who are at home and not to worry. Also says there are coconuts and bananas right outside his tent, but the bananas are

green and the coconuts too high. His A.P.O. is changed, 503 is now right. Write to him, son! He wants letters now more than ever before.

Dad is getting ready to go after the money bag and I am expecting to fill my day with getting St. Johns Church clean for the bishop, getting things to eat for my guests Sunday and collecting for the Red Cross.

Elizabeth, Paul's wife will be confirmed and Stokes' children will be baptized. Brother and Hattie will be godfather and godmother for John & Lynn, respectively. Mamma, Sister and Lewis will come up with them, have dinner with us and attend the services.

I saw Bessie [*Bessie Kirk Brady*] Wednesday and she is indignant. She says, "What do you think they have Paul doing at Camp Reynolds? They have an officers club, and he waits on the table." Margaretta [*Margaretta Brady Smith*] is at home; has gained five pounds, took the boy from Bessie that she might visit Paul and have a rest for one week. She left W.T.A.R radio work and will begin Red Cross office work soon. I hope it pleases her better.

Lewis is at home again. He has been at Trinidad. He says the boys down there are having it easy.

Best of love,

Mamma

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Mar. 10, Friday night

Dear Margaret,

I guess I attended one of the big social events in New Guinea tonight. I went to a dance or party that the regiment was having. A bunch of Australian and U.S. nurses were there, but I got tired of it and thought I would rather come home and write you. It is only 10:30 P.M. but I would rather talk to you than stay down there. So that shows I think a lot of you darling and if I only had you here (or at home) it would make all the difference in the world. I guess I feel blue tonight though, and just want to be with you awfully bad. If I could be with you everything would be all right again.

I received ten letters yesterday, one the day before and two today. The latest ones I received were the V-mail letters #42 (written on Feb. 20) and #45 (written on Feb. 23). The latest Air mail (#41) I have received was written on Feb. 19. I was really disappointed when you said in all three that you hadn't heard from me yet. I really hate to worry you like this but I think I did everything possible to have you hear from me.

In the ten letters I got yesterday six were from you, two from Mamma, one from Daddy and a Techgram. They were all very much appreciated. I also received four of the pictures of John & Lynn and I think they were excellent. I would really like to hug the little mischief makers good and hard.

Tell John & Lynn that Daddy sees a lot of "Polly Parrots" down here and they are all white in color. They "Awk" and all that and fly around raising "Sam Hill." They don't have any rabbit or squirrels but have a lot of peculiar birds, some alligators and kangaroo but no pine trees. You might also tell Daddy that and that there are all kinds of trees here but none that I have ever seen before. Some trees look exactly alike but when they are sawn, one will make red lumber and the other white.

All my love to my darling,

Stokes

**Ida E. Comly to Arthur Kirk**  
124 South Easton Rd, Glenside, PA

Mar. 10

Captain Arthur Kirk,

My dear cousin Arthur, certainly did appreciate thy coming to call on us the other evening. We do want thee to come over for dinner some day next week. Could thee phone by noon the day thee could come the day thee is coming or if thee knows on a head thee could write. Thee did not give me thy address. I do hope this will reach thee all right.

Certainly do congratulate thee on thy progress in the army. I do hope thee will not have to go across. Hoping to hear thee can come.

Thy sincere cousin,

Ida E. Comly\*

*\*Ida E. Comly –Daughter of Amanda Kirk, who is daughter of Elias Kirk. 1<sup>st</sup> cousin to J. Russell Kirk*

**Marie Linge Kirk to Arthur Kirk**  
1803 Market St. Harrisburg, PA to Camp Pickett, VA

Mar. 13, Monday

Dearest Kirk:

I hope this letter reaches you. You didn't give me any other address and if I wait to hear from you I might never find out. I want to ask you a few questions. If you want me to get your license where do you want to be living in Pa. The address on your owner's card is Walnut St., Carlisle. What do you want now? The same. If you are going to give your car to your father why don't you get a Virginia license?

By information in your glove compartment did you mean the owner's card and is that all? That is the only thing I could find.

The way it is snowing now I probably won't be able to find the car until summer comes.

This weekend I went shopping and bought a new dress and a red hat. The hat is to help raise my morale in case you decide to start breaking it down again, but I know you won't.

Yesterday I gave Mike, the dog, a bath and he looked just like a teddy bear. Then I started to get a cold and my mother gave me some medicine to take. She said Mike started to get sick and she gave him some and he got better so she didn't see why it wouldn't help me. It really was some stuff she got from the doctor and not the dog doctor either, but it sure did sound funny.

Please write and send me some information about that license. I'll have to rob a bank to pay for all the work you want done but anything for you, dear.

The silliest program is on the radio now. Well, I must go to bed because it's getting late – see you soon, maybe.

All my love,

Marie

**Chassie Thomas to Arthur Kirk**

Mar. 13

Dear Arthur,

When are you coming to see me? We miss seeing you so much. Stokes has gone quite a long ways from us. Wish you could have been here when the children were christened. They behaved so sweet. I keep busy getting presents & going to marriages. I never hear of so many marriages in all of my life. When will be your time? I think it will be a long time before Lemuel will step off. He is too much in love with his work.



Fred Clardy, the young man that has been here for a long time expects to be married next month, you know him. He has two children.

Nell is very happy in her home. She & her husband have been sick with a cold.

Hattie Willis & husband are going to move about 60 miles beyond Buffalo. Hattie said she was going up to help her move, she will be gone a month.

Jack is crazy to get in the war. He is doing all he can to get in. I think they will get him in a short time as he is so anxious to go. Lewis is here now can't tell how long he will be here. He had six of his men friends to dinner with his people last night. He is very happy to be home.

I want to go to see Lemuel but there is such a crowd in Washington. Lemuel said he thought best for me to let him come. I want to take the trip. Will have to close. Hope to see you soon.

Much love, Your grandmother,  
Chassie

**Merle A. Kirk to Arthur Kirk**

Mar. 15

Dear Son:

Your Feb. bond has arrived, looks as though you are putting away each month, just as Dad is. Margaret has been receiving the ones Stokes bought while in British Columbia. They had begun to believe they would never get them and Stokes wrote before leaving the States. He wanted to know why & when. He was notified they would be attended to in due time, and so six have been received this month.

I heard over the radio Sunday night that the Mars\* had just flown in from Hawaii with about 800,000 letters from the Pacific area and that those who had been expecting mail from there could now expect to get it this week. That made us feel a bit better and we are still looking for a letter. Perhaps something will be here Saturday post marked or dated later than Feb. 18<sup>th</sup>.

Dad seems to be through with his income tax report – thank goodness! There have been papers all around him for weeks, and we should not talk to him, for he has been an active adding machine. He found that his income estimate had been too high. Due to shortage of labor it was less than that of last year. Now the government owes him! Perhaps it is \$90!

Bessie writes that Dr. Corbell advised her to leave home for a week and expects to come up here as soon as she can get someone to care for Lawrence. He says she has nervous indigestion. Don't think it would help her by leaving home if she still had the little boy around to care for. She wants the room over the kitchen. Mag has been trying to get it to look inhabitable. There are so many boxes, etc.

Due to a cold I did not get to any of our week-end diversions; Eberwine's on Saturday; Abbitt's on Sunday; card party on Monday, but went to see a movie yesterday. Went with Dad and saw the show while he was busy with the draft work.

It gets harder and harder for them to make decisions now. So many of the men coming before them are needed at home, yet the army needs them, too.

Take care of yourself my son. Will let you know when we hear from Stokes.

Love

Mamma

\* Mars – large, four engine cargo transport seaplane originally built for the U.S. Navy during WWII.

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Mar. 17, Friday night

Dear Margaret,

I have received letters thru #47 except for #30 & #40. About every other day one or two have been coming in until now all are about caught up. #47 was written on February 25. I hope letter #48 will arrive soon and say that you had heard from me. I figure that my letters & cable had 13 days & to get to you by February 25. It certainly should have gotten there before that date.

I am sorry Lynn has been sick but I am really glad that she is much better now.

I have been to a meeting with the Colonel and then went out for a ride and just got back. It is still pretty hot and is now 10 P.M. or 2200 hours time that you never could understand. Guess I will be going to bed before long though as the lights will go out at 11 P.M. We are really blessed with the comforts now - fully screened huts to live in (no windows), lights every night until 11 P.M. and again before daybreak, running water and showers, mess hall complete with officers' mess, but the climate is always the same warm but not too much so.

Barney just came in and started a bull session so I guess I will have to quit in two ways - using his paper and writing.

I love you just as much as ever,

Your loving rascal,

Stokes

**Merle A. Kirk to Arthur Kirk**

Mar. 19

Dear Son:

I think it was real thoughtful of you to visit Cousin Ida - I have never seen the brother. Did you like him? Ray was the other sister who made her home with Cousin Ida and died a few years ago. Lydie was the other sister and is also dead - she was married and made her home elsewhere.\* I know Will will be glad to have you visit, also Ben and Louise\*\*. Cousin Ida wrote Bessie about your having been to see her and was proud that you did, I am glad you saw the brother also.

Bessie is here now and says she feels much better already. Margaretta has a friend and her husband living there while Bessie is away.

And, so, Margaret had a letter from Stokes written on the 1<sup>st</sup> of March, and I gather that he is nowhere near the front, for he told her they had a radio and heard the news about Manns Island, and he was so glad to know the boys were doing so well at the front. Again he said he was okay and liked his work. I do hope they are not in the marshes.

Dad bought a piece of land yesterday, back of Magnolia, about 400 acres for \$2,310. He was afraid to do his bidding, got Mr. Lancaster to do his talking. It seems a real estate man can bid things in for less than a businessman.

The governor\*\*\* and Mrs. Darden are expected to be in Smithfield Tuesday to a Ruritan supper and dance. Preacher Newman gave Dad and me an invitation to the supper and Josh and girl were invited to the dance. Dad is going to pass his invitation to the supper to Josh and Betty as we expect to be in Norfolk that evening attending a Little Theater performance. Guess that will be about the biggest thing that has happened to Smithfield. Young George Whitley has been drafted. I don't think his mother thought that would ever happen.

We had a nice time at the Eberwine's last night, and they want us again next Saturday. Last night it was fried fish, think it will be fried chicken next time.

With the radio going full blast I really don't know just what I am writing; perhaps you can read it.

Love to my boy,

Mamma

*\* Ida's siblings: Emma P., Eliza L., T. Ellwood, Joshua K., Ray K*

*\*\* Benjamin Kirk & Louise Tyson Kirk*

*\*\*\* Governor Colgate Darden, Jr, first cousin to Josh; Josh's father, Thomas Butler Pretlow was brother to Gov. Darden's mother, Katherine.*

**Arthur Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**

Mar. 19

Elkins, WV

Dear Mom,

Today it is snowing up here in the mountains and it sure does look pretty but it is also pretty wet, cold and sloppy. Today the jeep dropped down in the mud so low that the fan caught the mud and threw it all over the engine, so that the motor went dead and one of the large trucks with six wheel drive chains and double wheels on the front today. Because it was so mushy I had to have some of the boys go out and dig some ditches to drain off the water. At the present time they have given my company a small hospital to take over for a short time. It isn't a true hospital but it sure does sound good to say that I am Commanding Officer of a hospital. Even though it isn't true, it is just that we have taken over the buildings that the hospitals had a few months ago and we are running a clearing company here at Elkins, West Virginia, or at least 7 miles away. This place is right in the middle or right between two big mountain ranges so that you can only see the sun from 11:00 A.M. until 1:00 P.M. for the rest of the day it is dark, or at least shady. It is no wonder that Virginia didn't put up much kick when West Va pulled away during the civil war. If the rest of the state is like this they can give it back to the Indians.

There is one thing that I would like for you to do and that is to send me a large red cross on a white background so that the square is nine feet square. I would like to have four of them.

Love,

Arthur

**Marie Linge Kirk to Arthur Kirk**

Mar. 20, Monday

My Dearest Kirk,

Gene and I just came back from a little trip – to be exact out to Paxtang and back and the car is still all intact. Tomorrow I am going to take it to the garage to be inspected – if I get a chance before they close.

Today was a lovely day – almost like spring, but we were so busy we couldn't appreciate it. Tonight we ate at the Hill Café and I saw Brad Moring. He was with about seven other medical officers and we sat in a booth right near them. As they left they all gave us the eye, but I kept watching my plate – being shy as you know – when all of a sudden one of them stopped and I thought “oh-oh!”, but it was Brad and it was very nice to see him.

Tom said he could get us some gas and Gene and I thought it would be fun if we could drive up to the cabin when you come for the car. We could go on Sunday and take our dinner provided the weather is nice. Gene would take her sgt. along and maybe I could get you a date, too. Preferably with some little dark haired girl – that's the way I am referred to down at the hospital.

I haven't got much to say as usual and besides that I have a pile of ironing to do and it is getting rather late so I must say goodnight.

My love as ever,

Marie

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Mar. 22, Wednesday night

Dearest Margaret,

It is now about 10:15 P.M. and have just finished about 2 hrs. & 15 min. of checkers. I played "Doc" Pinnell for quite a while beat him bad, then we started playing for a florin a game. I won five florins and then started playing Lt. Paschal and finally beat him two and tied two. I believe that places me at the top of the list or "champion checker player" of this unit. I think I will have to commercialize more on it from now on. So far poker, etc. has netted me almost \$100 better off than when I left the States.



I received letter #61 today, dated March 11. That is 11 days service which is not bad at all. I hope you are beginning to get some that quick but I doubt it as they all go thru the censor's office even if all are not opened. I am seriously glad that you received 6 out of the 8 bonds anyway. That was really a surprise that you had received so many. I expect that the others will be getting to you before so long.

I wrote Johnny night before last. I hope he will like it. Tell Lynn I will write her a letter before long. Her picture that I received today - of her and the little Eberwine boy is real cute and I must say that she is really a sweet looking young lady in her long dress.

Lynn Kirk and John Eberwine

My Coronet for Jan., Feb. and Reader's Digest - Esquire for Feb. came the other day. I haven't had a chance to read them over yet. The January Reader's Digest had a very interesting article in it about New Guinea. Have you read it?

Well, I am wishing more and more that I were back in the States. This business of driving on the left side of the road, Australian "coupons" or pounds one of which is worth \$3.22 is getting me down. Ah yes, I mentioned a "florin" and you probably don't have any idea what it is worth. There are 10 florins in a pound and that makes it worth 32 c.

My letters are coming very spotty. I have gotten most all of them up thru 47, then I got 54 and today 61. So that means I have a lot more to get. I also heard from Mamma and Grandma today. Mamma's letter was dated March 10 and I got all of the other home news from both of these letters plus Nell's [*Eleanor Thomas*] picture from Grandma. She must have looked very nice.

More later to my darling,

Stokes

P.S. - I know you have gotten other letters than ones written on the boat by the APO 503 you and Mamma put on the letters I received today.

**Marie Linge Kirk to Arthur Kirk**  
1803 Market St. Harrisburg, PA to Camp Pickett, VA

Mar. 23, Thursday

My Dearest Arthur:

I just got back from the movies. We went to see the Gay Nineties Radio Revue, a stage show at the State and all I have to say is it is much better over the radio.

It's starting to rain again, it never seems to stop. Gene is talking to me and telling me a few things to tell you and I am getting all mixed up.

Tonight we went out for dinner to Paxtany. We have to drive the car once in a while, you know, to keep the battery charged.

Tomorrow morning at 9:00 A.M. we are to be in New Cumberland to see about this job. It seems they are planning to make a general army hospital out of it, on a modified scale of course, this is to be started in a few weeks. They are going to bring the wounded soldiers here to fix them up so that they can go out and get hurt again.

Gene says hello and how are you. I'm terribly disappointed that I can't see you this week-end. It would have been right nice. It sort of retards things a bit doesn't it - that is if you were on the level when you talked to me this last times - and now the first thing you know you will be overseas and it will be too late to do anything. Sometimes life can be so unbeautiful.

I must go to bed now so that I will be nice and fresh for my interviews. I will write and tell you all about it.

Take care of yourself up in those hills. The license plates are extended until May 31<sup>st</sup> so don't worry about them. I miss you much.

All my love,  
Marie

**Merle A. Kirk to Arthur Kirk**

Mar. 23

Dear Son:

It is raining again and again. We think there will be sunshine for a time and then when morning comes there is rain again.

Stokes was very stingy with his mail - only two letters have come since the one written on the 18<sup>th</sup> of Feb. and both of those were to Margaret. I guess there is nothing that he can tell. Each letter is about like the last. It seems he is hearing from us with more regularity than we hear from him. One of his letters was written Feb. 25<sup>th</sup> and the other March 1<sup>st</sup>.

I took Margaret to see Brother yesterday and he says for her to go to the hospital to-night. The girl does have a hard time! She has been keeping two rooms upstairs for them to live & sleep in and has to carry wood up for the stove. About three weeks ago she fell across a basket of wood and injured herself in the abdomen. Brother says he will have to straighten her womb and clean it out, etc. I recall she was in bed six or eight months when this was done five years ago.

Your box must have arrived, but Dad has not sent for it. He said he thought it too large for the car and rain keeps the trucks at home.

Bessie [*Bessie Kirk Brady*] is still with us. She takes a nap after breakfast, after lunch, before supper, after supper and goes to bed at 9:30 P.M., gets up at 7:30 A.M. She should get well soon! Eats pretty well, too.

Dad bought that piece of land near Magnolia, almost 400 acres and paid \$2,300 - or did I tell you? Mr. Lancaster did his bidding. He thinks it better not to let anyone know he wants it. Some lumberman might think, "If Kirk wants it it is worth having, and I want it." See!

Dad is still working at Paul's [*Paul Kirk Ball*], but brought the road machine home last night. He went over after 4 P.M. to see how the men were doing, but found them way behind so he pitched in and got the trees down and the road worked before he would let any leave. Then he ate supper with Paul & Claiborne. He was so tired when he got here he went right to bed. He says he is sore in the legs this morning, but okay.

Love to my boy.

Mamma

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Mar. 25

V-Mail

Dear Margaret,

I received six letters yesterday two air mail, two V-mail and two from Mamma. Also got three today #57, #42 (dated March 11) and one from Mamma dated March 6. I enjoyed them all very much and was certainly surprised to hear about the Christening of John and Lynn. From letters 49 to 62 there are six letters that haven't reached here yet so when I got the one that you wrote Monday night postmarked Mar. 7 and the one from Marianne dated March 6, the Christening had all been done and I was certainly surprised. Really glad they were good and also that you had it done.

Not much news to write, weather is very pleasant now and I am beginning to get a lot of laughs out of the things that some of the officers are doing. Will write more about it later.

I was hoping by your letter #62 that you had heard from me again, but no luck on that one so thought I would try a V-mail this time.

All my love,

Stokes

**Merle A. Kirk to Arthur Kirk**

Mar. 29

Dear Son:

You see I have found one of my old paper pads to write on and use it out of one. Found it while looking for your book on hematology. Could not find a book which treated the subject exclusively even though I searched the whole afternoon. Hope the one I am sending is what you referred to. You folks must be really working "up thar in them thar hills."

When you wrote that you were in W. Va. I at once recalled I have a friend living in that state and on looking up the address found she must be about 80 miles north of you. She is Mrs. D.H. Rogers and they have about six sons and daughters about your age and younger. She says they are a happy family and I can believe it for the mother was a happy person. The war may have changed this. I just mentioned her being there, for since you are such a roamer I thought you might land there in your goings.

Margaret has had three letters from Stokes this week, one written in Feb. one 15<sup>th</sup> and one 17<sup>th</sup> of March. He mentioned something about the lumber cut there. We are wondering if he is again running a saw mill. Said he was okay. All three letters must have come in on the same plane.

Have a photograph of Senator Pepper's wife. I recall you thought she was so nice, and she looks the part. Can't find it!

Dad and I expect to go to Roanoke next week. He wants to look at some machinery and when he goes I say, like Lynn, "Me too."

I took the children to Smithfield to-day. We had expected to go for Margaret this afternoon, but it rained, so we will put it off until it is clear again. Her week in the hospital will be up Thursday night.

Brother had a time with his nieces-in-law Friday. He was with Margaret in the morning and Kitty that night. They have a precious black haired girl – and Lewis wanted a boy. Yet he is happy that he could see his child before leaving. He expects to go any day. There was a radio program dedicated to his ship given Monday. He could not leave so the radio was carried to Kitty that she might hear the program.

Love to my boy,  
Mamma

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk** Mar. 30  
V-Mail

Dear Margaret,

I just finished writing Lynn a letter. I hope she will like it as I tried to write something that she would understand.

I got two V-mail letters today - one from you and one from Dad both dated March 12. I am sorry that Bee died but glad that the new dog is pretty good. I have been thinking about a name for him and about the only thing that might be even appropriate as “Dobo.” That will be a peculiar name but easy to remember.

I received nine letters on March 28 with the latest one from you #67 dated March 17.



Lynn & Margaret Kirk

That is good time and makes it seem a much shorter distance from home. I also received #50 which you mailed Feb. 28. In all I received seven from you Incl. some pictures of John and Lynn and a good one of my darling and her lovely new coat and two from Mamma. I will write a letter to her before very long.

You will get a Treasury check for \$280<sup>00</sup> before so very long. I was tired of carrying these Australian coupons around and thought I had better send it to you and let you invest it, buy bonds or deposit it. Will write a letter later and ask you to send me a few things.

All my love,  
Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Lynn Kirk**  
New Guinea; V-Mail

Mar. 30

Dear Lynn,

I wrote John a letter about a week ago and Mamma said that you wanted to get a letter from your daddy and so here it is.

Your Daddy sees all kinds of funny looking birds over here where he is. There are parrots that yell and make a lot of noise all day. They say “Awk” all of the time. There are a lot of pretty



Russell Kirk house, Stokes Kirk house

From left: John, Lynn & Margaret

birds around here, but there are no rabbits or squirrels. There are some real small kangaroos, but they are not even larger than a dog. They hop along on their two long legs.

I guess John is going to kindergarten in Smithfield now. I bet you will be glad when you get to be a big girl and can go to kindergarten also.

Daddy wishes that he could hug you and John right now. I tell you what you do, you hug John and tell him that Daddy sent that hug to him. Give Mamma a great big hug and tell her that Daddy sent that one to her. You and John take good care of Mamma until Daddy comes home again.

Daddy

**Chassie Thomas to Arthur Kirk**

Apr. 1

Dear Arthur,

I was very happy to hear from you. I had just said I had not heard from Arthur for a long time, think I will write to him. I wish you could come to see us, it has been so long since you were here. Well I don't know any one where you are for a wonder. Wish I did as you could have some where to go. A Mr. Reynolds that stays here said he has been where you are and it was a very lonely place. Fred Clardy, the young man that has been with me for six years, was married last Saturday. I had a good time at the wedding. He married a Portsmouth girl.

Lewis has gone, I was very sorry he had to leave his wife while she was sick in bed. His little Eleanor is very small & has very black straight hair, "Skip" has such pretty curly hair. Frances' husband & Skip came to see me tonight. Rives is going in the navy. Frances said she was going home & sell her new home & good many things in it. It is too bad he has to go at this time as Frances expects to be sick before long, I think she will come to Portsmouth to live. Uncle Sam has got Jack at least Jack is very happy about it. Said he had been trying to get in the war for two years & at last got in. Every thing is looking so pretty. Just wish I could have all of my boys home so I could be happy again. Wish I could see you. Will close with much love.

Your Grandma

Little Lynn says great grandma & laughs. Think she is teasing me. "iteke"

**J. Russell Kirk to Arthur Kirk**

Apr. 2

My Dear Arthur;

We are going to Roanoke Tuesday night to look at some machinery and we may run up to see you Wednesday night or Thursday morning. I do not know how we can make train connections, so guess we will have to take a bus. I have our reservation to Roanoke. Mama will visit relatives while I am looking at machinery.

Margaret is improving slowly and sat up today. She is not running any temperature. I guess she will be up in a few days. The children are still with us but guess we will have to take them over tomorrow as Scarlett fever is here, and we have no desire to subject them to it. Aunt Bessie went to Aunt Paul's today after church. She was here for ten days and I reckon she will return next week if Margareta does not persuade her to go back to Port Norfolk. Elizabeth rented her an apartment in Suffolk and she is to move in April 23. I hope she does not let Margareta persuade her to give it up.

Will close now.

Love,

Dad



**Marie Linge Kirk to Arthur Kirk**

Apr. 4, Monday

Dearest Kirk,

I have just finished washing some clothes and decided to take a rest. Before I start to write to you I can think of many things I want to say, but when I begin writing I forget everything. I sure do have a bad memory.

The weather here has been grand the last few days. Some practical joker wired a lot of daisies on one of the trees in front of the court house and it sure does look funny. The tree is all bare except for the daisies.

Gene has a pain in the stomach and is expecting her appendix to burst any minute. She is always complaining about something, but this time I really think she has something. Sgt. James says it is all her imagination.

Today I had my teeth x-ray'd because I think I have a few more abscesses. This time it is on the other side and they have been aching for about 3 weeks so I decided it was about time to do something. When I went down to the x-ray room the guy who takes them said I should lie down on the table. I was a little upset about this because I didn't think it was necessary to lie down to have my teeth x-ray'd, but I had to do it anyway. He was very obliging and probably would have done every part of me if there would have been an excuse. However, he was very nice. I'll bet you think this is just an excuse to go to see my dentist again – well, perhaps.

It was very nice to hear from you last night and I'm glad you had a chance to see your Mother & Dad even if it was only for a few hours. It seems as if I haven't seen you for such a long time.

Before I start getting sentimental I guess I will close.

All my love,

Marie

P.S. I hope you miss me like the devil, you dope.

**J. Stokes Kirk to Merle A. Kirk and J. Russell Kirk**

Apr. 8, Thursday

Dear Mom & Dad,

I know this is a heck of a way to answer all of those letters you have been writing me, but I know Margaret has been giving you any news that she might get from me so I don't feel quite as bad about it.

The last letter I received (a couple of days ago) was Mamma's V-mail written on March 19<sup>th</sup>. You told me about the piece of land at Magnolia being bought in my name for \$2,300. It looks like it was a splendid buy even if there is not much timber on it. You haven't said anything about the timber except that it was cut in 1912 so there should be quite a bit on it by now.

The weather is exceedingly good here. Never too hot at night not to have a sheet on and I hardly ever get my clothes wet with perspiration during the day. It is awfully damp and all kinds of leather goods and clothes will mold and rot if not taken care of. That is about the only bad feature except for the white parrots which screech at the top of their lungs when they come around. That is a very minor nuisance, however.

There is some talk about changing us over to a construction battalion now. That means that I would probably be put into a Major's position in the battalion, whereas now I am in a Lt. Col. position. I have been in this position for over nine months now and after the 18<sup>th</sup> of May I would be eligible for promotion again. However, if we are changed I won't be eligible for the promotion and I hope that we don't change.



Easter: John, Merle and Lynn  
services at St. Johns. The Smiths and Brady's drove down for the services. All together there were about 18 presents. Later we went to Wesley Chapel and there must have been fifty people there. Grace McConnell is at home from school and sang a solo. I have never heard her sing so well. The Gilliam girls and Christensen's were there looking mighty pretty and sweet in their bright spring clothes. Dad gave me an orchid and I wore it very proudly. The day was just grand!

After lunch and a nap we went to Smithfield to see Stokes' family. They were all dressed up in their best and Shirley (Robert's wife) took pictures of them. I carried them each a basket with candy and colored eggs. They would not let me leave without them, so now they are both upstairs asleep. Margaret is getting better all the time, but is not able to get down stairs yet.

I phoned to Mamma just now and the first thing she asked was "When is Arthur coming home; how is he?" Lemuel will be home soon; Kitty is going home to-morrow and they have heard from Lewis. He was in Boston. That sounds as though he will stay in the Atlantic Ocean. I do hope so – and I want my boy to stay in the States.

Love from your  
Mamma

**Marie Linge Kirk to Arthur Kirk**

Apr. 11, Monday

My Dearest Arthur,

At the present time I'm supposed to be working, but it seems there isn't a thing to do but listen to the radio. I've just been reading in one of the magazines how they determine a person is a moron when they want to enter the navy, and from the way I couldn't answer the questions they asked the morons, I'm beginning to wonder. Can you tell me how a tree and a fly are the same and how wood and alcohol are the same and who discovered the North Pole. You know I can almost prove I am a moron. Today I went over to get a spoon out of that little cabinet, you know which one, and I cracked my nose on the ice box. I thought for a while it was fractured, but I guess not. However, it is sort of swollen and slightly discolored.

I also got back the x-rays for my teeth and I guess there is a dead tooth or an abscess, they couldn't quite decide which. By the time I go to the dentist I'll be so doped from taking aspirin that it won't make much difference.

I can't think of any other things that happened. Aren't you glad. Just one side of my nose is affected so I keep that side away from people. I hope that soon you will be able to get a week-end off and come to see me because I'm getting awful sick of seeing only the Sgt. I have next week-end off so see what you can do.

All my love,  
Marie

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**  
New Guinea

Apr. 11, Wednesday night

Dear Margaret,

I received a letter day before yesterday written Tuesday A.M. March 28<sup>th</sup> and you were in the hospital - how you got there and why, I don't know yet because your letter of Monday has not gotten here yet. I wanted to wait for this one before I wrote so that I would know how to write. So far I don't know, but I hope you will soon be out and back home again. I am glad that you didn't (when you wrote) expect to be in over one day longer. I am very glad that people were so nice to you but that is very natural, for you are very much so to them also, and I don't know why but it seems just natural for them to be nice to you. I wish I could be there to help you out, darling.

John must have been cute when he came in to see you and said that he wanted to hug his sweet Mamma. I would have liked to have been there. It must have made you feel pretty good.

I never did tell you about my flower box on the back porch here. I don't know what kind they are but I know they are very common in the States. I can't do anything better from this point as long as you are in the hospital except send you a sample and let you assume that it is a big bunch. Guess you will recognize it at sight. This one is deep red and white. Others are entirely white and some with pink streaks in them.

All my love,  
Stokes

**Merle A. Kirk to Arthur Kirk**

Apr. 14

Dear Boy:

It looks as though Dad will make another trip to Pulaski soon. After getting home he and the Mr. Moore who showed him the generators kept the phone hot until they came to terms. The owners wanted \$7,500. Dad had expected to pay \$6,000. And told them he would not increase it over \$200 or \$300, so the amount was finally set at \$6,300. Now he wants to drive up taking Alton W. with him and bringing home some small parts in the car.\* Guess I'll stay here or rather go to see my ma while he is away. I have been wanting to spend some time with her lately, but caring for the children and the trip have prevented the visit with her.

She has been asking me to bring the children down. She gets so much pleasure out of just having them around. Since I was taking them to Smithfield yesterday I decided to go via Portsmouth. The children had a grand time too. Grandma stopped all she knew just to show her "grand children." We bought them each a hat, ice cream cones and picture books. Lynn did not want to go to Mammy's house, wanted to go back to see Grand.

Margaret says she can go down stairs now and looks much better. Mrs. Gill has heard from Robert and he is in Italy. Bessie has not yet heard from Paul, Lewis is in Boston. They think the boat is in for repairs. His wife and baby have gone to Edenton to be with her parents.

Josh had a birthday party while we were away. He said he was told not to give his presents to the kids – Easter basket and bunny wagon, dust collectors.

Guess you are through with your mountain training. I am wondering if you have been sent east, haven't had a letter written since we left. It takes a long time to hear from Stokes. George Goodman says they heard from James last week and his letter was written the first of this month. Looking for a letter to-morrow.

Loads of love,

Mamma

*\*Alton Wagner and James Goodman worked at Kirk Lumber Co.*

**Marie Linge Kirk to Arthur Kirk**

Apr. 16, Monday

Dearest Kirk:

I can't understand the address very well on your letter and I haven't received any card, so I hope this is right.

The weather has been perfect here for the last few days and I really believe spring is here. Of course, I say that with my fingers crossed.

Today I worked until 3 P.M. then Dr. Wright and I went out to do a spinal tap and they gave us a rye highball after it was over. Pretty nice, don't you think.

I had an offer today for a job at New Cumberland Reception Center hospital. It pays \$2000. I think I will go over sometime this week and investigate and if the lab is nice I might take it. There is a doctor there and a lot of soldiers so it sounds real interesting. What do you think about it?

You had better send me some gas tickets or I won't be able to meet you any place but the Hbg. Station. Don't be too disappointed if your car isn't washed because my finances at the present time consist of \$1.00.

I must listen to the "Shadow" now so goodbye for the present. Write to me, you rebel.

All my love,

Marie

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Apr. 16, Sunday night

Dear Margaret,

I got your letter telling me all about your trouble yesterday. Today I received more mail, letters #79 & 80 and you seem to be getting along fine. I am really glad of that. I don't have any idea how it happened but it looks as if every time I go away you run smack into trouble. Looks like I will have to get home to stay and maybe it will be stopped. Anyhow, I would really like to be with my swell, sweet wife and help you along. It looks as if I am not able to help her along now very much except by writing. I know you have had a lot of suffering, but I certainly hope that you are well and getting around as you used to. I feel pretty bad about it but there is nothing to be done about it except to ask for your forgiveness.

We had a pretty big rain last week. It rained about 12" between about 11 o'clock and 5 o'clock one night. Consequently I have been pretty doggone busy and am now just beginning to see the light of day.

I got a letter from Mamma yesterday and one from Dad today. They were on the verge of going to Roanoke and look over some turbines and generators. Hope that if the units are bought that they are in first class condition as he will have a lot of trouble with them if they are not. Dad's was a real newsy letter and I enjoyed reading about timber, work at the mill, etc.

It is almost 11 P.M. now and the lights have already blinked that they will be out in a few minutes. Probably go out anytime as I took a minute to undress and address the envelope.

I played some checkers tonight and I won again, but not so decisively as I have been in the habit of doing up to now. I think Paschal is improving and soon will be on even terms with me. Guess I will turn in as the lights are about to go out.

All my love,

Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Apr. 19, Wednesday A.M.

Dear Margaret,

I received four letters yesterday with the latest one dated April 6<sup>th</sup>. Wasn't bad time was it? I really had a big laugh about my promising two letters a week, a letter every other day and "Pappy" Gordon writing every day. I know how "Pappy" does it though. He writes during the day while at his office and normally during the morning. So I thought I would try it for awhile and maybe you would like it better.

I want you to hurry up and get back on your feet again. I hope you are by now, but of course, I am usually about two weeks late on the news from home. You must have really been worried during the time you were sick and while at the hospital. I know I would have been if I had known it but when I did get a letter you were at the hospital and getting along fine.

Well, we had a real social party last night. The staff of a destroyer close by visited F Co. upon Lt. Woodman's invitation. There were a total of three naval officers there and the Col. Barney, Pelt, Woodman and myself were also there. They brought something to drink and after about an hour at the Officers Club, we went down to Goodman's Company and ate supper. We stayed there and talked until about 8:30 P.M. when they had to leave. Everybody enjoyed it immensely and Goodman really did have a blowout of a feast. Iced grapefruit juice, lamb chops, pickles, cabbage, a couple of other foods, and he ended up with peach pie. It was a delicious meal and I know that the Company will be suffering on bully beef for the next month. A little exaggeration, of course. Anyhow the Army really treated the navy.

Guess I will quit and try to write again tomorrow.

All my love,

Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Apr. 20, Thursday night

Dear Margaret,

I had a bunch of envelopes so I bought some Air Mail stamps and tried your method of addressing a bunch at a time. I had my sergeant major type them up. It used to be that it took about as long to address the letter as it did to write it.

We get a pretty good little newspaper over here everyday with all of the latest news in it. It is called "Guinea Gold" and is really first class. It has all of the war news in it and a daily running account of the Charlie Chaplin scandal. Of course, all of the G.I.'s eat that up.

Talking about eating, we have been getting plenty of fresh meat lately. Most of it has been lamb, but it is considered good just the same after almost steady diet of “bully beef” for several weeks.

I have the radio on and just heard the news from San Francisco on short wave. The announcer said that it was 2 A.M. and here it is only 7 P.M. That makes us about 17 hours ahead of you. This reminds me of a previous crazy letter I wrote you.

I am enclosing my “Shellback Certificate” which I received while on the transport after passing the equator. I was one of about twenty-five selected to undergo the “inspection.” I wrote a whole page about it while on the transport but it was then against regulations and I had to take out the whole page. Anyhow I was dressed in a pair of shorts and shoes and was brought before the King, Queen and the Royal Baby (and everybody else aboard ship). I had to kiss the King’s leg (calf) and the Baby’s butt. Both had mustard on them and I had a egg and flour broken and poured on my head each time. Then I had to go before the ‘doctor’ to find out what was the matter with me. Anyhow he said I had halitosis and used a fly sprayer with quinine water in it to spray my throat. You know how it must have tasted. Then I was thrown in a big pool of water. It was quite exciting. More later,

All my love,

Stokes

**Merle A. Kirk to Arthur Kirk**

Apr. 21

Dear Son:

Bessie says it surely is upsetting to keep writing and get no answer – Paul has been gone a month and she has not received a letter, however his wife received one last Sunday and it was posted in England.

Now I feel as Bessie does for I have not received a word from my son Arthur since we saw him over two weeks ago, and he is not supposed to be in England.

We had a letter from Stokes to-day written on the 8<sup>th</sup> of April. He said he sleeps under a sheet every night and seldom gets hot enough to wet his shirt. The atmosphere is very damp and they have to take good care of leather and clothes to keep them from molding. There is some talk of changing them to a construction battalion and that would mean Stokes would not continue as an acting Lt. Col. his year would be up in May 18<sup>th</sup> and so would lose his chance of a promotion. So he does not want the change made.

I was surprised to learn that Lewis has been transferred and is now at Newport R. I. He is helping to condition his new cruiser and will be there about as long as he was in Newport News. This makes his family quite happy. He hurried home to see them and Jack drove him to Edenton to get Kitty and the baby. He is going to have them follow him to Newport just as soon he can get an apartment.

Sunday Dad begins another trip to Pulaski. This time he expects to drive and will take Alton. He wants to see how things are taken apart on the generators so that he will know how to rebuild. And he wants all delicate parts properly handled and put in his car for safe passage. Think I’ll go stay with my Ma; Lemuel may be there. Josh says he may have another party.

Alton is the proud papa of an eleven lb. boy, three weeks over due. He says it is fat and I can well believe it.

I went to Esther Christensen’s wedding Wednesday night. She married James Moody Brasfield. Guess you know him. Ester did not look as pretty as usual, but the groom was very

nice looking and the church looked lovely. Mrs. Godwin and Mrs. Fronfelter had put baskets of white flowers and white candles all over the front. It really was lovely.

Margaret is getting around the house, but is still having from 2/5 to 4/5 of temp. above normal. She has written Brother about it. He went up to Youngstown to see his young folks and to bring Hattie back. She spent most of her time while there in bed with a cold. Mamma says she will go with them when Hattie Willis moves to Erie. Then she will go on to Buffalo to visit an old friend – Mrs. Blue.

Tell me more about yourself, Son. I want to know more about your camp life, your trip back, etc.

Love to my boy,

Mamma

We have your bonds – Jan. 1943 Came this month – March 1944

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Apr. 23, Sunday night

Dear Margaret,

Been at it again - playing checkers. I just finished beating Paschal about six out of eight games with one a draw and another won by him. So I guess I am still undisputed champion of the board. I enjoy playing a lot and it is now about the only form of recreation other than enjoying a shower at the end of the day. You are supposed to grin at that but tain't very funny - in more ways than one.

Well it is raining again as usual and I have the radio on listening to a British news broadcast. Everything seems to be the same as usual for the last week or so but I don't think it will be for long from what the radio commentators say.

I went riding for a while this afternoon and saw a few of the fuzzy wuzzies (natives to you). It really looks funny to see a family of them walking down the road. Most of the time there will be either one or two native women walking ahead, usually carrying a baby over her shoulders and a huge net sack filled with stuff and the sack is held up by her head, with the sack hanging down her back. There are always two or three children and the old man walks at the end of the procession with a big leaf (about a couple of feet wide and three or four feet long) over his shoulder. This shades him from the sun and is all that he carries. He really does lead a life doesn't he. Maybe the G.I.'s over here will learn a little from the natives. (That might be a little funny this time.)

It isn't usual but this is the third letter since Wednesday that I have written and haven't received one from you. I will probably get six or eight tomorrow. I received the March and April issues of Esquire Friday. (I didn't live up to my letter a day very long just Wed, Thurs. (and a jump to this one.) Anyhow it is better than what it used to be.

All my love,

Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Apr. 26, Wednesday night

Dear Margaret,

Received a couple of letters yesterday and four today with the latest one #89 mailed April 12. Also got #86 and enjoyed immensely what John & Lynn had cut out for me - your "picture" out of a magazine. The two looked real good but I prefer my wife to anyone else. I also got a big kick out of John bringing my letter to you every now and then and having you read it again. He



New Guinea natives



New Guinea grave yard

must really think a lot of it and I expect I will write another to him before long. Lynn should have her letter long before now. It was just a V-Mail but she will probably enjoy just as much.

Also received a letter from Mamma today and you might tell her that Aunt Bessie and Daddy are all wet but that she is right. Arthur must have been quite a mess when they saw him.

I went out and got a couple more bunches of bananas Sunday. That makes a total of four that I have. The first one that I got sometime ago to keep someone else from getting them is still green. The second is getting ripe and I eat three or four of them a day. The third will begin to get ripe next week and I don't know when the fourth bunch which is a red banana will get ripe.

Things look pretty good down here. Our last landings and plane attacks makes you think and hope that this business will be over a little quicker. However there are a lot more of these 500 mile jumps to be made.

Just finished another book yesterday. It was pretty good and is named "Lost Horizon" by James Hilton. Guess I will quit as the lights have already blinked.

All my love,

Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Apr. 29, Saturday night

Dear Margaret,

I bought a case of orange juice and another of grapefruit juice the other day and I have just finished a can of the orange. I got it from the P.X. and now and then after a meal that wasn't so "hot" it is really good. My bananas are getting ripe gradually and are pretty good but they are usually picked so green (to prevent anyone else from getting them) that they are not quite so good as those bought at home.

Guess I will apply for a class B allotment before long. This time it will be for a \$100 War Bond per month. I can easily afford to do it as I am now getting about 50 pounds a month or about \$160 American money. I have still got a \$100 bill and a \$10 bill besides about \$90 in Australian money. So I am pretty well off over here as far as finances go. I hope by now that you are getting on your feet again.

What made me decide to get an allotment for war bonds was the fact that all eight of my other ones have been received by you. It will be mighty nice to have a bond coming in each



month and not wondering whether you can spare the money or not. It is more or less automatic and don't seem to miss the money as much as if cash were paid for it.

Things are looking considerably better over here after the more recent landings. Can't do much discussing of it with you but from all appearances the Japs in New Guinea are on the run.

You don't seem to be getting so many letters from me lately. I know that this makes at least five during the last ten days. Guess they will come in a big bunch to you.

Well, darling, I haven't been writing a lot of love notes to you lately. I am going to do better one of these days and write about all of the loving I wish I could be doing now but am missing out on.

All my love to the sweetest girl of all,

Stokes

**Merle A. Kirk to Arthur Kirk**

Apr. 30

Dear Son,

While Dad is writing to Stokes, I'll write to this boy. You don't know how thankful I was to receive your latest letter, and to find you were still in Elkins. I had decided you were on your way elsewhere, as the letter arrived 3 weeks after we saw you in the hills of West Virginia.

Thursday your letter came, one from Stokes also, and Dad returned from Pulaski – a red letter day. All together I felt much better when the night came. Be sure to tell me what USMA stands for.

Margaret had another letter written from Stokes on the 16<sup>th</sup>. He said they had 12 inches of rain in 5 hours. The rain added to the difficulties and that they are working hard. I hope none of those scattered Japs from Hollandia arrive in their camp.

I saw Mrs. Ellis in Suffolk Friday. She says Trey is in Burma. He has been writing 2 or, 3 times a week, but she had not heard from him in about three weeks now. She is afraid he had been caught in the Jap drive there. He has charge of some of the developments for the Army.

Jessie is due with her baby. She says she will leave the little girl with mamma and have a grand visit in New York next month. She says her husband, Luke (in England), says he is working hard. He is so afraid he will not have time to teach the boys all they should know before the invasion. Jessie asked about you – wanted to know where you were and if you are fat. What do you think of that?

Now that farming has begun, I get a ride once in a while in the afternoons. This afternoon there were about 20 hogs in your fields eating or rooting up the clover. Pretty soon all the clover will be turned under and peanuts or corn will be planted. Write often, please Son.

Mamma

**J. Russell Kirk to Arthur Kirk**

Apr. 30

My Dear Arthur,

Today has been a beautiful one and we enjoyed it very much. Mag was not here today, so Mama had to cook. Josh did not eat supper but went to Suffolk. Last night we went to the Eberwine's and had fried chicken. Mr. and Mrs. Cole from Newport News shipyard were there. He has charge of the hull department and has about eight thousand men under him, so you see he must have a big job, although he is just plain people. We enjoy having him and this is the second time.

Last week I went to Pulaski and saw the loading of the turbo generators. Alton went with me and we left Sunday afternoon and got back Thursday night. We had a nice hotel with good

cooking and had a very pleasant time. On the way we went by Blacksburg and saw J.B. Jones and Redd. They both inquired about you. I reckon the generators will probably arrive tomorrow, and I will be busy unloading when they arrive. There is room in the power house for them by taking in part of the shavings room, which is not needed. I do not know whether I told you there were 250 K.W. each, and there are two of them and I paid \$6300.00 for them, with a guarantee that they were in first class shape by the owner who is a responsible firm. I hope to have them up in about thirty days.

Josh had his hands full last week while I was gone. The boiler inspector was here and we did not work Monday as we had to put in new blow off pipe in one boiler and brick up the other.

They have closed off the blow off valve in the lake and the water is rising a foot or two each week. They could not get labor to finish it. We went to Grays today and there will be lots of cherries, pears, apples and some peaches. Peper is ready to plant watermelons and cantalopes.

Margaret and the children are getting along all right. We were going to see them today, but Uncle Jack said he was coming, so we will go tomorrow. Tuesday night we are going to the Little Theater again. Wish you were to go with us. Will have to close now.

Love,

Dad

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

May 1, Monday night

Dear Margaret,

Don't know of anything much to write about tonight except that I was paid off today to tune of about \$155. It was in Australian currency and their bills look like big coupons. I also took out the \$100 war bond per month from now on starting with this month. I asked Lt. Paschall how long before you would start receiving them and he said in about three months you would get the first one. I hope they won't take as long as the first ones. Guess I will have another check (\$100) sent to you before long. I am still wondering whether you have received the \$280 check yet.

I know this letter is interesting as H\_\_, but I started out with nothing to write about and am ending the same (except that I still love you lots).

Stokes

**Merle A. Kirk to Arthur Kirk**

May 4

What does W.V.M.A.\* mean?

Dear Son:

Dad and I have just come from another ride to the farms. I was pleasantly surprised to find the clover is making a good showing on the first field of Saunders farm. Twin calves were born Monday – one died another was born today. That makes four at Gray's after one was killed for market yesterday. This calf brought in about thirty - two dollars. We expect to have the crowd here to-morrow night to eat bacon and calf liver. Mag and I have been spring cleaning all week, and have now improved the looks of the interior.

Jack brought two friends up this morning to go fishing; they came back at four p.m. with ½ bushel of herrings. They tied lines, no good, then saw a school where our stream joins the creek. The boys took off shoes and stockings, waded in and brought home all those, caught by hand. They must have had real fun. Jack says he is coming back Tuesday and stay with us. This is the first time he has been here since the City began work on the dam. He leaves on the 13<sup>th</sup>, May.

It was nice of you to advise Dad about an examination and I think he will take your advice.

Now son, don't think I'm a social climber for it "ain't so." You see if I were I would have grasped every opportunity that came my way, such as joining the D.A.R. or Colonial Dames, making up to the "top crust," etc. which I have not aspired to.

We all enjoyed your letter, even Josh. I have gathered some lovely lily-of-the-valley. This year, there must be 800 blossoms in the patch – I have gathered nearly five hundred, and expect to have a large bunch for the table to-morrow night. I showed them to Josh and told him that I wanted him and you to be married in May so that I could supply the bride's bouquet; they are so lovely. He appeared not to appreciate the suggestion, but told what I said to Betty.

Dad is working hard getting the turbines in place. The side of the brick wall had to be torn out. He says they expect to get the machinery in place Monday and begin fitting pipes Tuesday.

We have bees making honey between the garden and the garage back of Stokes' house. When it was found the log had bees, the log was rolled in place and the bees followed. That's all, the bees will do the rest.

Love to my boy –

Mamma

*\*W.V.M.A.; West Virginia Medical*

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

May 7, Sunday night

Dear Margaret,

I have been pretty busy here lately - up until last night and this is the first letter since, I believe last Monday. We have been having schools for the last several nights from 6 to 9 and that is my poor excuse for not writing. I make a good resolution every now and then to write oftener but then I fall down on the job.

I had a tooth filled last Friday and it was in pretty bad condition, but Doc Jennings took pretty good care of it and now it is O.K. I have a couple more fillings to be put in and then they will be O.K. This is the first time I have been to a dentist in about a year. I received your letter telling about the two boxes you have mailed. I am very anxious to get them and know that they will be prize packages.

Well, winter is just about here in the S.W. Pacific. June and July should be the coldest months. So far, I haven't seen the temperature below 77° F. We have just had a rain, it is about 9:30 P.M. and it has cooled off some and at present the temperature is 77°. I don't think we will suffer from the cold weather this winter. The corresponding month in British Columbia, the temperature daily was down to -20°. However, that is away in distance and temperature. During the day, the temp. hardly ever gets above 90° or 95° so you can imagine that this is fairly comfortable climate here. The dampness is the worst part of it all.

Well, the mice and rats are not so quietly beginning to play in the hut so I guess it is about time to retire and let them in peace play racing games up and down the floor.

All my love,

Stokes

**Marie Linge Kirk to Arthur Kirk**

May 8



Arthur Kirk

Dear Kirk:

I guess you are surprised, but I guess it would be nice to hear from you once in a while and don't suppose you will object if I write to you.

Tonight I am supposed to be working, but it is now only 8 o'clock and I am all finished for the present.

The weather up here has been beautiful. It is or was last week almost as warm as summer. Gene and I brought up all the old porch furniture and we painted it green. You wouldn't recognize it now. The old glider still has the stuffing coming out of the cushions, but we got a new cover for it, and as soon as we get around to putting it on it will look very nice.

The sgt. is in St. Louis on a furlough so this past week-end Gene and I went to Bethlehem and we had a very nice time. Mike had his haircut and he looks real cute. You remember the vice pres. from Beth-Steel I told you about that was always making passes. Well, we went through his estate

to see the cherry blossoms. He has a long avenue of the trees and they are really beautiful. That was the first time I had ever seen Japanese cherry blossoms. We didn't see him, however.

I'm still fueling the dentist every few days. The last time I went he took me out for lunch again, but he was away last week so I didn't have to go. It seems funny but when I call and he answers the phone he tells me to come at 12 o'clock then takes me to lunch, but if his secretary answers the phone she tells me to come at 1:30pm – after dinner.

I hope you aren't working too hard and still have a nice clean face without any growth on it. Write to me, please.

Love, Marie

P.S. Don't forget Sunday is Mother's Day.

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

May 10, Wednesday night

Dear Margaret,

Received four letters today and one V mail (201) yesterday. One letter was from Mamma and you can tell her again that Dad and Aunt Bessie are wrong and that she is right. Also received a V mail from Cecile and two were from you. I am glad that you are able to be downstairs now. You have had quite a siege of it and I know it hasn't been easy.

We'll have a little rain again in a few minutes. While I was writing I began to hear the roar of it. It sounds thru the trees like a steam boiler popping off steam and you can hear it when it is a mile off. It hasn't started here yet but it will in a few minutes.

Thought I would scribble off a few lines into a short letter tonight. Write more later.

All my love,

Stokes

P.S. Tell Dad that I am back in the business again with two sawmills.

**Merle A. Kirk to Arthur Kirk**

May 11

Dear Son,

I was surprised with five visitors this morning and they all came to lunch – Mamma, Sister, Hattie, Jack and Skippy. They stayed until after three o'clock and we had a grand time talking. Jack wanted to see the scene of his fishing success of last week. After finding there were still many herring in the creek and stream, he had all of us ladies stream down behind him to see the sight. The fish were gone when we arrived. Skippy enjoyed picking up rocks and throwing them into the creek, and Jack took in the whole place – his last look and chance, to recall of his childhood days here, before going into the service Saturday.

Hattie invited me and Dad down to Sunday dinner, since it will be Mother's Day. I must try to find something nice to take to my mother when we go – since the lilies of the valley are gone. I don't know of a thing she would like to have. She does not eat candy.

I received your lovely card to-day. I do believe it is the prettiest I have ever seen. But the thought is really all that counts – my own boy thinks of his mother! Margaret and Stokes have thought of me also.

Margaret has just received Stokes' letter telling of his initiation on crossing the Equator. It was pretty rich and concerning. I know those looking on must have laughed themselves sick. When it was over they all got dumped into the pool.

How many hospitals does the Army have at the Elkins camp? Is the one you write of the only one?

While up there Dad had a talk with a man who was president of (Davidson Elkins) College. He was surprised to find the man is an uncle of Mrs. Raines who attends St. John's Church, Chuckatuck. The gentleman is now retired and is an instructor at present. "Small world."

The children have just concluded a four day visit with us and of course I have been busy. I made Lynn a dress while they were here. Margaret and Mrs. Gill came after them yesterday. It is the first time Margaret has spent so much time away from home since leaving the hospital. She seems to be improving.

Josh says he had a grand time and a grand supper with his Suffolk friends – 25 of them at the Lee Jordan club house. Webb Pinner is leaving for camp this week and that was his farewell supper. Write soon.

Love,

Mamma

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

May 14, Sunday night

Dear Margaret,

I am listening to some very good music over Barney's radio hour. It is from a local station but seems as if it were coming from some broadcasting company in the states. Now and then we do get San Francisco on short wave early in the evening. It makes the states seem a lot closer when we can hear programs that originate there.

Guess you will have to start sending me cigarettes again. The issue has stopped and "roll your own" are being substituted. I've got six cartons left that will last a month and a half about. So begin with a couple cartons and then a couple more about every two weeks. I guess by the time that your first ones get here that I will have been out for a couple of weeks or more unless I can get hold of some in the meantime.

I got a letter today asking me for comment on several things. It was #92 written on April 14. I thought that I had told you (I know I wrote a letter in which I did) in a previous letter that I was really glad you had finally gotten your Christmas list "Fur Coat." The picture that you sent me with you in it was good in two ways the picture of the coat make it (the coat) look swell and what was in the coat I would like to hug and love a lot. I do miss you a lot. Also Lynn standing by her Momma made her look like a real lady.

Robert's marriage didn't surprise me a whole lot because I figured that it was going to happen but I didn't know when. He seemed to care a great deal for her and I also think that she is a mighty sweet girl and that he could not have made a better choice.

I also got the Easter and Valentine cards, not on the exact dates but pretty close and I was glad to get them from my sweet rascal Mamma.

I also thought that I had commented on the christening of John and Lynn. You told me all about it - how they went thru it so nicely and all of the comments of people telling you how good they were, during it. I am glad it has been done, however I would liked to have been there.

Well, we have had quite a dry spell in contrast to what I told you several letters back about the rain. I don't know which is the worst - the dust or the rain.

Been feeling pretty good lately - plenty of sleep, plenty of work, not so good meals (bully beef two meals per day) atabrine pill [*antimalarial drug*] every day and two vitamin pills per day and seem to be keeping the best of health off of it.

I am extremely sorry to hear about Langley Gatling\* being reported missing. I know it is hard on his family.

Guess I will quit for this time and write again later to my precious wife.

All my love

Stokes

*\*Gatling- relative on Madge Goodson Gill side of family*

**Merle A. Kirk to Arthur Kirk**

May 17

Dear Son:

I am sending these clippings, as perhaps you know this Gatling boy – a cousin of Margaret's – who was at V.P.I. with you and Josh. The family thought that was one of their boys who was safe as there was no fighting on Ascension Island. The other clipping was poured over by John and me. He wanted to see exactly where your tent was and wanted to see the red cross flag on top that I made for you. He wanted to know all about the "sick" men, where they were going, what for and where you looked at them. X marks the tent we decided was yours. He cut it out and asked me to send it to you.

I am indeed glad the Army has decided they have no need of you, "across," yet. Perhaps they will not need more medical units until there is a western front to cause more casualties. I hope that will never be; don't get restless for the day to come. Let us hope this great bombing offensive will finally disrupt their home front.

Josh drove us through the lumber yard to look at his improved conditions. He has piled trash lumber on top of honeysuckle and set fire to the pile. The lack of lumber anywhere has surprised me. You remember how there used to be drying racks? Well, they are no more, just a few piles and some in the dry kiln. Dad says he wants to see it that way. Josh wants to give his men old lumber just for hauling, but none want it. That disgusts him and next winter they will be yelling for wood.

I am going to a Red Cross home service class in Norfolk tomorrow – an all day session. We leave Suffolk 9 A.M. in a Red Cross wagon. I do hope it won't be hot like to-day. The heat gets my mind as well as my body – just no good.

Bessie says it is now time for her to take the mail.

Love

Mamma

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

May 18, Thursday night

Dear Margaret,

Tomorrow will make a total of four months that I have been out of the states. Don't know how much longer it will be but I know a few officers who have been here 27 months and they are leaving for home next month. So I hope you are all screwy about that "5 year" business. 27 mos. It's a heck of a long time to be away from wife, children and home and I am hoping it won't be that long.

Well the lights just went out and I had to light a candle but then they came immediately on again well they went out again and I am having to use the candle anyway, as you can see by the candle wax. Well, the radio was pretty good until the lights went out and I really miss it now.

I would like for you to look around and see if you can have a radio sent me. Someone was talking the other day that radios could be mailed from the factory to men overseas. If you can find out something about it and have one sent, fine. An electric radio with short wave is the most useful. Barney has been talking about selling his and that is my reason for trying to get a hold of one.

I bought a beautiful bunch of bananas the other day and they are ripening about six or eight a day and, boy are they good. They are as large as large bananas at home. I also bought three dozen oranges at .32c a dozen and they are really delicious, tree ripened fruit. They have so doggone many seed in them, but are really full of juice.

About time to hit the hay now so will write again in two or three days.

All my love,

Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

May 22, Monday night

Dear Margaret,

Got your letter May 8, V mail #15, yesterday. Enjoyed it quite a bit because it seems that letters are few and far between now for some reason or other. I must have at least 15 letters missing from letter 90 to letter #115. I just counted them up and there are exactly 18 missing between those numbers. So you can see I haven't been getting all of the mail due me. I am getting quite a few of the large funny paper envelopes. I think will read those you mailed Feb. 22 sometime tonight. I also received Readers Digest for April yesterday so I have a little more reading matter.

I just opened the large envelope and what do you know - there was the Post Alcan article that you said you were going to send. I will read about what I went thru after a while. It looks like it will be interesting.

A couple of letters back I wrote about cigarettes - to send two cartons every two weeks for a while. If you have already sent two cartons you can hold off on them for about two more weeks and then start sending them again. They will have to be wrapped pretty good as a lot of

stuff received over here is pretty well mashed. Ship holds are not very good places for fragile things.

Went to an Aussie show last night. It was a double feature and one was "Charlie's Aunt." I enjoyed it a lot as it was the first one in over a month. I have been having a lot of work and not much time for shows lately. However, I am still doing a lot of reading between about 9:00 and 11:00 at night. I am almost thru with the "Spanish Cape Mystery" which is pretty good.

Met a Major General today for the first time. We have been doing some work for him and he seems to be pretty nice and easy to get along with.

More later, all my love,  
Stokes

**Shirley W. Gill to Bud Gill**  
212 Pocahontas Pl. Hampton, VA

May 22

Dear Bud,

I was over Smithfield for the week-end, and I got your address. How are you? And how do you like where you are?

I had four letters from Robert Saturday the last was written May 10. You know the new offensive started in Italy the 11<sup>th</sup>, so I'm real anxious to know if we will hear from him as often as we have.

In every letter I get from my brother he wants your address, maybe by chance you all could be near. He's in the Solomon's now, if you are anywhere near him let me know in your next letter.

John [*John S. Kirk Jr.*] said yesterday that I didn't marry anything when I married Uncle Robert. I should have married Uncle Bud because if you aren't in the "a-nines" his pronunciation of Marines, you're just not anything.

I know you can't read this but I've been in bed today with a awful cold, but I think I'll live. Write whenever you have a chance, I would love to hear from you, and I promise I'll answer. Of course your brother will come first, but yours will be second.

Take care of yourself.

Love,

Shirley

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

May 23, Tuesday A.M.

Dear Margaret,

I have a little time now so I thought I would write again. I wrote last night and mailed it this A.M. so you will probably get both letters on the same mail.

My sawmill started yesterday and is fairly good so far. I don't believe that it will compare at all with the one in British Columbia as this one is much lighter. However, if we average a little over half as much as we did there I will be satisfied. The timber here is all hardwood and much of it is difficult to saw. Most of it also seems to grow very fast as it stays green 12 months a year



Back left: Margaret G. Kirk, Madge G. Gill, Shirley W. Gill Front left: Lynn & John Kirk



and that means that it grows 12 months a year. Therefore season rings are not seen in the wood. However, there are some rings made during wet and dry periods.

I think I will visit Woodman at noon today and try a little of his "bully beef." Every now and then I will get tired of the same cooking and run out for a meal somewhere else, where the cooking is different. I wish I could run out for a little while and get a hold of some of your cooking. That would really be nice to sit down with you and the children to a nice big steak. That time in Alexandria will be long remembered for several reasons. You and the children being there, a refuge from Claiborne, good cooking, a chance at recreation and entertainment now & then and best of all a wife for me to love and call my own. They were some happy nights that I spent there and I certainly wish that I were not missing out on them now. I hope it won't be so long before we will take up again where we left off.

Will write again later,  
All my love,  
Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

May 25, Thursday night

Dear Margaret,

Received #20 letter today - a V mail written May 13 - that makes 12 days which is very good. It seems to be a lot faster than Air-mail. I also received eight letters yesterday. That is quite a few and a lot of "lost time" or letters missing were made up. In the eight, six were yours, one from Daddy and one from Florence Gordon. I appreciated them all a lot.

Guess you had better not let the family read this letter because I am going to tell a dirty joke- just can't resist it. It came by the way of Barney from Georgia and goes like this. "What is a coincidence?" Answer - "When a man, a woman and an alarm clock go off at the same time." Ha Ha - funny isn't it. Well reading it over it isn't so funny but when I thought of it I just had to write it to you so jes' forget about it.

Received the May Esquire the other day and have been reading a little of that at night. I also got a new novel today so I am pretty well fixed up until more magazines come in.

Really am glad that you are getting around O.K. now - going to Suffolk, etc. That really makes me think that you are on the road to recovery.

Your letters 3 + 4 which came yesterday were very interesting to me. John had a lot of news to tell me in your letter and I think he did a god job on his letter to "Daddy." It was real cute and tell him that I enjoyed it a lot.

Well, it is about bedtime 9:00 o'clock P.M. guess I will quit.  
All my love,  
Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Merle A. Kirk and J. Russell Kirk**

May 26, Friday night

New Guinea

Dear Mom & Dad,

I received two letters from you yesterday. They were real newsy and enjoyed them a lot. In Mom's, she was in Portsmouth and Dad in the mountains and then the next one you were back at Everets again. The generators sound like a good buy and I certainly hope that they will solve all power difficulties. They must be nice machines.

I have a saw mill now but it doesn't compare with the one I had in British Columbia. We can only average about half as much-as 5 M per day as the wood is so hard. Bendora is one of

the principal types of trees we cut. Haven't run into any mahogany yet, but there are a few trees around. I wouldn't know it if I saw one though. The Bendora looks like an ash, white oak combination, fairly red in color very hard, but makes fine lumber. Other types of trees are white, yellow, orange in color. One remarkable thing that strikes me is the lack of yearly growth rings. The trees are always green and growing and the only kind of growth rings to be seen are made during a particularly dry or rainy season and they are very hard to discern. I would really like to have a good stand of spruce or pine to put the saw teeth in. We could really do business on a larger scale then.

Don't remember what type tractors you used to have. It was the tractor International and I believe one was the TD-9. I am now well acquainted with that type and with all of the caterpillar types. Believe that the Cat outshines all of the others.

I want you to get a corsage or something for Margaret and give it to her on our wedding anniversary. I guess this letter will be in time to do so and the only thing I can think of now is a corsage of pink roses. Believe it should be fitting for the occasion. Haven't been able to locate Marsh yet, I don't believe his outfit is in this area. Tell Josh and everybody hello for me.

Love to all,

Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

May 31, Wednesday night

Dear Margaret,

I hit the jack pot in mail yesterday when I received nine letters from you and one from Mamma. The latest was May 15 and in five out of the nine you said you had heard from me. I had been wondering for some time what had happened to all of my letters since in the ones I had received before yesterday you didn't mention receiving any or you wrote that you hoped another one would come soon. Anyhow you seemed to be scoring occasionally.

I have been out for about an hour and I just "picked up" a picture Reddick had. I didn't know that I had a picture taken on the island but our photographer caught a back view of me and also a front view of Reddick. At the time we had had about a 12" rain, our bridge in the background was partially washed out at the sagging place and all kinds of debris had washed down stream and jammed at the bridge. We had quite a time cleaning it all out.

On the mail yesterday, I believe I will try to answer parts of it. Tell Mamma we have no Dr. George Thornhill in our unit. I also rec'd Lynn's letter to me and I thought it real cute. I also rec'd John's four leaf clover, so tell John that I expect to have a lot of good luck from it. I know he is tickled to death with his new bed and room all by himself. Lynn's toe, you remember, the one she was going to send me gave me a big laugh, but I know she was honest about it. Tell Lynn, I don't know what she will do without a toe because they don't grow back whereas a curl or lock of hair will grow back. I know that they are cute rascals and I really hope that I will be able to get back sometime before long and really enjoy playing and laughing with them.

Guess I will stop and reply to more of your letters later.

All my love,

Stokes

**Margaret G. Kirk to Bud Gill**  
Birthday card

June 1

Dear "Bud,"

It is a good thing I gave you the five dollars for your birthday when you were home. I doubt if you have much use for money now and I wouldn't know what to buy you either. I don't guess this card will reach you by the 7<sup>th</sup>, but I decided I'd send it on any way. Do wish you could be here with us so we could have a real celebration.

Mother has gone fishing again with Vincent Joyner – I hope they will do better than they did the first time she went. They only caught four fish then. They left about ten o'clock this morning and it is four now, so they should be coming back soon. It is over 90\* here today and we have had no rain in over a month – things are really dry.

Take care of yourself.

Love,

Sister

**Merle A. Kirk to Arthur Kirk**

June 2

Dear Son:

A letter was returned to me yesterday which I had incorrectly addressed; thought I might as well send it on with this one – it lets you know I was still thinking of you.

Aunt Lizzie [*Elizabeth Davidson Barnett, Chassie's half-sister*] and Elizabeth [*Elizabeth Barnett*] came in Wednesday and after a rest Elizabeth went on to Portsmouth and her new job. We went down yesterday and the two of them and Brother went to Park View to view their new apartment. They have accepted it and will move down about the end of next week. Margaretta [*Margaretta Kirk Brady*] and Lawrence [*Lawrence Smith*] have an apartment in Suffolk – six rooms. She goes by bus to Portsmouth to help Elizabeth [*Elizabeth Brady Smith*] get the work at the Red Cross office in shape. Don't think she will have to do this more than two or three days. I suppose the Bradys are happy, now that they are all back in Suffolk.

An invitation to Claiborne's [*Claiborne M. Ball*] graduation has come with your name and Josh's included. It is to be June 7<sup>th</sup>.

Mamma says you went from here to see her Monday and that she was able to get you enough gas to complete your trip. I was happy to know that; also that Dad says he can give Margaret gas to replace that which she gave you tickets for, as her car is in his name. I thanked her for helping you; she did not know Dad would replace the value, so I think it was fine of her and don't want her to be the loser.

How are the girl friends? Hope you had a nice trip up.

Love,

Mamma

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

June 3, Saturday night

Dear Margaret,

Not in much of a mood to write tonight - been pretty busy all day. However, the radio is now playing and that makes things a lot better.

I received two more letters the other day in which you talked about Bud being over here. I have a pretty good idea where he is but that is quite a distance from me. I believe that he must be on the island.

Taylor got into a little trouble the other day which to me was funnier than being in so much trouble. It seems that he had been having a lot of work for someone and as his own personal "payment" he took three steel beds and one mattress. Some 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. saw him and the M.P.'s were on his tail at once. Well, I had mine erected as soon as it got here, Pilt got one and Taylor kept the third plus the mattress. We slept on them one night before the M.P.'s located the beds.

So Taylor had to go see all kinds of Colonels, etc. to explain why he stole the beds. Anyhow, we sent the beds back but the one he was doing the work for sent them back to us. So finally we returned them a second time and finally "persuaded" them to keep the beds. Now Taylor is subject to disciplinary action - nothing unusual will happen probably. The one night sleep on a spring bed was thoroughly enjoyed. I hope Taylor enjoyed his as much.

There is too much noise, talk, etc. going on in here so I'll stop.  
All my love,  
Stokes

**Merle A. Kirk to Arthur Kirk**

June 7

Dear Son:

This is the day after D Day, the day when the whole world is excited. Guess you heard the news early, but we did not hear until breakfast time. The sixth is Reeve's (Jr.) birthday and the day of my graduation 30 yrs. ago. And speaking of dates; you are twenty eight; I was twenty eight when you were born; Mamma was twenty-eight when I was born, so I am twice as old as you; Mamma is three times as old as you. How is that?

Have you had the red fountain pen? We can't find it and I must go on a general hunt for it if you can not tell me where it is.

Aunt Lizzie left yesterday on the 2 P.M. through train to Roanoke and will get her things together. Mamma and Elizabeth go up in Elizabeth's car Friday morning. Mamma is going to stay in Bedford while they pack in Roanoke and all three come back Sunday.

Stokes wants a radio shipped to him. He said he heard they could be sent from the factory to the service men. I tried to get one to ship but was told there were none to get. Wish I could do this for him - I would like to find one on which he could get short wave programs from the states.

You did not tell us a thing of your trip back. Where did you stop; did you see Lemuel; what "was cooking"; etc.?

Margaret sent you this picture of John. He has such a cute smile in it.

At last Alex is painting the front porch and he is making a real neat job. I'll have that clean looking when the company comes next week. Write soon.

Love

Mamma

**Madge G. Gill to Bud Gill**

June 7, Wednesday

Dearest Bud,

Well today is my baby's birthday and how I wish I could have you home with me. I got your letter this a.m. written May 26, with the money order in it and I sure do appreciate my part of it. I also had two letters from Robert, one written May 27, and the other 28, he was safe then and said he was fine.

Wallace Stump is home and so is John David and they all said tell you hello.

Sister had two letters from Stokes and he was fine the last one written May 18, he is running a saw mill. I am going to give Shirley \$10. of your money to get she and Robert something from you. The children are fine and into everything.

Dick sends his love. I hope you get the box I sent O.K. and be sure to thank Dick for the things he sent you in it. Don't forget to let me know if you need any thing. I do hope you have gotten some mail by now.

Do take good care of your self and write as often as you can. I do miss you so much.  
With a heart full of love

Your

Mother

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

June 8, Thursday night

Dear Margaret,

Got a date for tomorrow night - Barney and I play poker for some small stakes. It will be the second time for me in New Guinea. The first time I lost about 5£ and I hope to get it back this time.

The biggest news around here is the long awaited invasion. I just stopped for a few minutes to listen to the news broadcast from London. It all sounds very encouraging. The Italian front, the invasion front, Russian front and also the progress that is being made here in the S.W. Pacific. It all points to finishing the war in as big a hurry as possible which doesn't make me mad at all.

Guess I will answer a few more of those letters I received on my next letter Sunday. This is a very short one this time.

All my love,

Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

June 11, Sunday afternoon

Dear Margaret,

It has been a beautiful day here in the S.W. Pacific. Sun shining, no rain so far and not too hot. You might not think it but it is pretty dusty around although it doesn't sound like the jungle ought to be dusty. Any of the clearings after a few hot days will get that way. I thought maybe I would go swimming this afternoon, but no one seemed to have energy enough so here I am writing you. We have some really fancy sandy beaches around here, but I haven't had a taste of that salty water for over three months now.

Well tomorrow will make four complete months that I have been in New Guinea. After being here for six months, I will be eligible to go to Australia on leave. I thought quite a bit about leave to begin with over here but it hasn't crossed my mind lately except for this afternoon. Only two more months and eligibility begins. However only a very few officers can be away at any one time so it will probably be about 12 months before I get a chance to leave.

I had an interesting experience last night. I went out to try to buy some bananas from some Australians and after making the deal I started back. Barney and Woodman were with me and we heard some drums beating. We got out of the car and very cautiously made our way down the path towards the beat-beat---beat-beat. We could hear the natives chanting and beating their drums very clearly. It was pitch dark and the only light was the reflection of a camp fire on the leaves of the trees. Barney was ready to go back to our car but the curiosity got the better of

us and we walked up a little hill and there were the natives (all men) dancing before a big camp fire chanting and beating their drums.

It was all very eerie but what got us was the fact that a large group of G.I.'s were sitting around on one side of the fire and the natives were on the other and electric bulbs were burning in huts close by. We approached the camp expecting to see a real tribal war dance in a savage setting and we were all more or less crestfallen, when the unexpected happened. We watched the dancing for quite a while though and it was fascinating and very interesting. It is one of the few things that can be seen which is native to New Guinea and I am glad that we didn't turn away when we hesitated and get the heck out of there. Woodman beforehand pictured somebody being burned at the stake.

I expect that you will be getting this sometime around our marriage anniversary. Wish I could be with you a few hours and enjoy the occasion with you and having a lot of loving on the side. That is a splendid idea how about it? I miss you a lot and hope that our next one will be together.

All my love,  
Stokes



**Merle A. Kirk to Arthur Kirk**  
June 12

Dear Son:

We have at last had a rain, yet not enough to soak our badly needed earth. We drove over to Saunders' farm yesterday to look and found that wherever the land was heavy the seeds did not sprout through, but were showing well in the sandy soil. Dad says the roots go deep for moisture where there is sand but the shoots cannot break through the

clay. There were still a few cherries and after much searching, we brought back enough for one half of a roll or pie. Dad is crazy about the cherry rolls – we have had about six this season of about ten days.

Dad is very proud of the log I am sending you a picture of; it is his \$65 dollar log. He did not try to get it sawed here, but sent it to Norfolk. Jeff said people would stop to stare while he went through the streets.

Yes, the invasion is on and you are still here; I would like better to have a living boy here rather than a dead one over there. Ed and Florence are very anxious about Ben [*their son*]; they have not heard from him in a month. Paul's mail was held up, but came in the last of the week. No recent news from him, nor Stokes. Stokes' latest was written on the 18<sup>th</sup> of May. John still wants to know about Uncle Sam who takes all the men away.

Paul, Claiborne Sr. and Claiborne Jr., came over Thursday night and brought a Labrador retriever for Dad to try. He looks like a bear and plays like a kitten – no good as a retriever. Dad is sending him back, thanks! The boy was delighted with his graduation presents. Dad gave him money and when he came over also gave him the T square, ruler and drawing set. He was

delighted; would look at them put them away and at once pick them up and start fingering them all over again.

Love to my son.

Momma

I had a nice letter from Jack [*Jack Thomas*]; sent yours and his on to Stokes.

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

June 16, Friday afternoon

Dear Margaret,

I just received four air mail from you with the last one written June 2 and the others after May 23<sup>rd</sup>. I enjoyed the pictures of John and Lynn (five in all) and certainly wish I could play with the rascals a little. John's two four leaf clovers came also and it looks like he wishes me a lot of luck. It hasn't been bad at all lately. I also received my third envelope of funnies and I have just finished reading some of them. Don't stop sending them as I enjoy them and Barney besides several others also read them.

The sergeant just came in with six more letters - five from you and one from Dad - all mailed between May 11 and May 22. So you see my letters are coming in reverse, too. I know the more recent news so I will keep your five until tonight and read them then. That is what I call hearing from you in a big way.

Well, Sunday afternoon I think I will go do a little surf wading and try to get a little sunburn. I have just decided that I need more exercise and I know of no other better way to get it. There are several good officer beaches around but I haven't taken so much advantage of them lately.

I haven't seen anything of Bud or ever heard of his outfit around here anywhere. He is probably not so far away though.

Will write again Sunday,

All my love,

Stokes

**Merle A. Kirk to Arthur Kirk**

June 18

Dear Son:

I received the pen and am using it to-night. Thanks!

We have had a rather exciting 13<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>. First came my birthday and I was much surprised and delighted at so many thoughtful gifts. Margaret and Stokes gave me a pair of hose each, a box of candy from the grandchildren, another box from Josh and even Betty had to send me a package - sugar. Mamma gave me \$4 and my old man took me to dinner at the Elliot and then presented me with a lovely gold pen. Now you know I had an exciting day.

To-day was Dad's big day, when Margaret brought over a tie a piece from her and Stokes and candy from the children. He looks quite pleased, and puffed up. The puff is partly from drinking so much water and ginger ale. This was not a birthday for him, but father's day.

Margaretta, Norfleet and Lawrence came out to see us to-day. Norfleet's mother has given him a Ford car so now he can get around. He gets home twice a week and expects to continue doing so. Margaretta says his examinations showed too much the matter with him, for him to be sent across. None of Paul's letters have been written since the 6<sup>th</sup>. Jesse Willoughby says her husband, Luke, was in the 29<sup>th</sup> Division.

Mag has begun her summer vacation. It began Friday night and her father died that same night. I don't suppose she will feel it a vacation. I would not be surprised if she married this week and stopped work soon.

We went down to Portsmouth to-day and found it just as hot there as here. Hattie had a nice dinner for us. Frances is home from the hospital. Her baby is real nice but thin. Reeves is doing all he can to take care of the two children and Frances, yet Sister finds the work pretty hard. He leaves on the 27<sup>th</sup>.

Mike told Nell he had been no where, since he has lived in Portsmouth that gave him such enjoyment as his visit up here. He wants to know if I need some electric work done so he can come again.

Margaret had a letter from Stokes written on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of June. He enclosed a Kodak picture of some men in which he was included. It did me lots of good to look at it. Though only his back was showing, I could see he was looking well. New Guinea is an awful long way off!

Dad is doing pretty well with installing the turbines. The condenser and exhaust pipe are going up now. It must be quite a job to get the sections built up. Each is bolted to the next and there are many sections.

Be good and write soon; I like to hear from my boy.

Love,

Mamma

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

June 18, Sunday night

Dear Margaret,

Well, I took my swim this afternoon and enjoyed it immensely. The shore is real sandy and the beach itself is just as good as any at home. The breakers weren't as good or as high as those at Va. Beach but in other ways the place is its equal of course without the amusements and hot dog stands. In fact that was the biggest part that I missed. Taylor went with me and he carried along a one man life raft which we had a lot of fun with. It was just a non G.I. afternoon which will happen fairly often in the future as far as I am concerned. I have been getting fairly soft except for my butt which gets a workout every day in my jeep. 60 miles a day is the average and you know what part gets tough from that many jolts.

The most interesting part of today however was a box and three letters from you. The box was pretty well beat up but the contents were in good shape. The cherry marmalade had leaked just a little but didn't hurt anything. Although I can buy socks now, the eight pairs you sent will come in handy as it makes me have about fifteen pairs now. I only had two when I wrote for some. Barney insists that I don't like lobster and wants me to give that to him - slim chance but he has been letting me have ham spread so we will probably share alike.

I also received John and Lynn's father's day card with Lynn & John printed on it by John evidently - it was real good. Your June 2<sup>nd</sup> "Why don't you write?" card also came I don't know why but you should be hearing regularly as I have been writing at least twice a week. Georgia Belote also wanted to know the same thing from Barney in a letter she wrote June 2<sup>nd</sup>. Maybe the mail has been held up due to bad flying weather or something.

In one of your letters you asked who were the King, Queen and Royal Baby in the Shellback initiation. Well, they were all rather chubby or muscular and hoary looking seamen. They all had crowns and the Queen was painted up like an Indian. Barney didn't get initiated but Reddick got the works as I did. I received another of John's 4 leaf clovers in a letter. John and Lynn must be quite proud of their "gardens." Their picture holding the flower pots were real



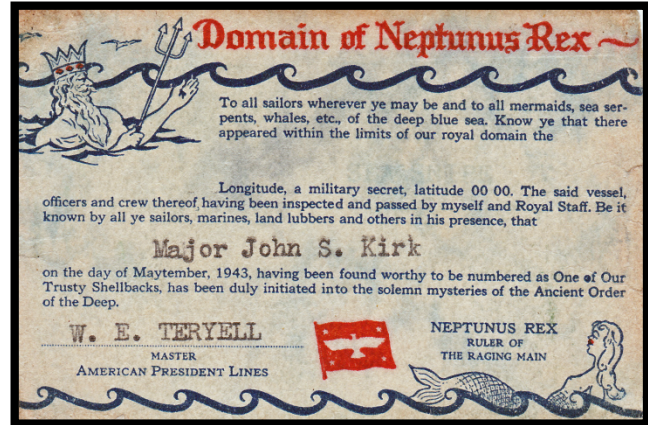
cute. Talking about pictures, I just looked back and saw that I didn't say anything about the pictures that came in the box today. They are excellent and I am real proud of them. My, but they grow fast. It looks like John has "lengthened out" at least 3 inches since I have been gone. He is quite a little man now, especially his graduation from Kindergarten which was probably a high point in his life so far. My little girl is a real lady, too.

Will write again on Thursday night.

All my love,  
Stokes



John, Margaret and Lynn Kirk



Crossing the Equator

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk** June 22, Thursday night

Dear Margaret,

I expect that you will receive this letter along about your birthday and I want to wish you many happy returns and lots of love from your hussy bean. Also this is mighty late to be writing about our anniversary but I hope that the next one will find us together. The way things are looking now I feel that great strides will be taken in defeating Japan during the next 12 months. If the naval battle now in progress turns out to be a win for us the result will be a finale for Japan - and the sooner the better. I imagine the Japs are having a pretty tough time of it.

I was up to the sawmill until 8:00 o'clock tonight. They had been having some trouble all day and I managed to fix it up for them in about 20 minutes. I also straightened them out on the rip saw which had also been a source of trouble here lately. They don't seem to exactly understand machinery except when "It runs" or "It don't run." That is the best answer I can get most of the time.

Well you asked me to write and tell you what we are doing now. It is very near the same thing I did on the Alcan, but more varied - roads, construction, etc. I don't know whether I can say that or not but I know that it is not a military secret, as all G.S. Regiments do that same kind of work.

I expect to see "Lucky" Lee, Jenny, and Anderson before very long. You remember them as they were all in the 95<sup>th</sup>. I hear that they are camped a few miles away now.

Don't guess this letter is so interesting, but it will have to do as I have no more paper handy.

All my love,  
Stokes



Marie Linge

**Marie Linge Kirk to Arthur Kirk** June 24, Friday

Dearest Arthur:

Once again it is trying to storm but I don't think it can possibly be as bad as the one on Sunday. It has been cold here all week, and I have a bad cold too. It is better now, except that a cough has developed.

I received the pictures and they are very good as far as clearness is concerned. When I look at myself I can understand why you have a hard time getting a good picture. In my opinion, I'm not very pretty.

Your house is beautiful. Here was I feeling sorry for you because you lived in a broken down old house and you devil it was perfectly lovely. Perhaps I had better call you "your majesty," from now on you play boy. Your mother looks like a very nice person. I would like to meet her sometime! The kids are real cute – they certainly don't take after their uncle, do they, dear. But, perhaps you were a pretty baby, too. Gene and her Sgt. are out driving in her car. It

Marie Linge  
when you never get a chance to ride in it. I am taking shots for my hay fever or whatever it is. The stuff is called "Hajasvin" [*Haspivin*]. Before using it 0.05 cc is injected intravenously, to see if there is a reaction - well it looks as if the only thing I am allergic to is this stuff I am taking to cure the allergy. Understand? There certainly was a violent reaction just like a very positive P.P.D.

Must stop here, as I have a date with a brand new captain. Why don't you come to see me some time?

Write soon -

Lots of love,

Marie

certainly is nice to have a car in the family especially

**J. Russell Kirk to Arthur Kirk & J. Stokes Kirk**

June 25

My Dear Sons:

As you both are interested in a letter from me, I hope, I am writing you both a letter at one time. This afternoon Grandma, Aunt Lizzie, and Elizabeth came up and paid us a visit. Margaret and the kids came a little later so we had a nice bit of company. They are all very well and Margaret is looking much better. Mama had made Lynn a dress and she had to try it on. John is certainly growing, and is so big I could not swing him like I used to. He, Lynn and Mama went to the garden and got a lot of apples and peaches for Grandma and Margaret, and had a big time picking up apples. There is a quantity of fruit: apples, pears, plums, peaches, berries, and everything else. We went to Saunders and got some plums and picked nearly a gallon of blackberries. There will be a lot in a few days if we have a rain. Corn at Saunders is from six inches to three feet tall, and this will make it bad cultivating.

Soja beans are coming up good and we ought to have a nice crop of hay. Mr. Richardson is combining rye and we will have a big crop, probably four hundred bushels. This will be more than ever before. I am glad to get so much as I hope to buy a corn harvester and get the corn crop in early and sow rye on the whole farms. We will have about eighty acres of soja beans to drill.



Smithfield: J. Russell, Lynn & John Kirk

The drill works fine sowing soja beans.

Last week was the tops so far for fires. At one o'clock Tuesday morning the whistle blew so I went out and found the mill had burned in two places: one in the filing room and one beside the carriage track. Monday about seven o'clock we had a heavy wind and I think sparks were blown in the mill, and it smoldered till John discovered it. There was no wind to make it blaze, and this was fortunate. Wed. afternoon there was more wind and sparks caught in sawdust on the wall in the shavings house. This was put out we thought, but sparks fell in the shavings and were covered over. It burned till about eleven when it blazed up. We were at Eberwine's and got back about eleven thirty and saw cars parked. Upon investigation we found the shavings house was on fire, John blew the whistle and men came in a hurry. Alton jumped in his car and started the fire pump as soon as he arrived. It certainly proved its worth in short time. The boiler room was so hot they could not get inside, so they turned the hose on the shavings house through a hole in the wall. It did not take

long to put it out. It was a hot fire though as Josh dressed some dry pine late that afternoon and these shavings were on top. We kept water playing on the dust for about ten minutes to make sure it would not blaze again. A ladder on top of the boiler house caught, so we speeded the engine and threw water over the house to put it out. This is one valuable piece of equipment, and is good insurance.

I bought another piece of property last week near Longview about a hundred acres with about twenty cleared and about 150,000 ft. mostly hardwood for twenty one hundred dollars. Has very pretty red oak. There is about 150 acres adjoining that is all timbered that I am working on now. This belongs to the Delk estate, and has a lot of timber.

Guess I will have to close now.

Lots of love from all.

Dad

P.S. The pictures are fine, Son. Margaret and I want the proofs. We would like to have more made. Her house looks picturesque. You are pretty good at photography.

Ma

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

June 26, Monday night

Dear Margaret,

I received a letter from Mamma today and a couple from you yesterday. One of your letters was mailed on June 16 and so was Mamma's. Yours took 9 days to get here and the other 10 days. I think that must be a record. That figures an average of 50 miles hr. for each hour of 9 days from the time it was stamped at the P.O. in Smithfield until I received it. That's traveling.

I hope you have had an enjoyable anniversary. I don't know whether you received the flowers or not but hope so. At war about the only thing I could think of. I haven't done a thing to celebrate but we did have a holiday yesterday - the first anniversary of our regiment. Everybody had the day (Sunday) off and I proceeded to go in swimming during the morning and loaf around during the afternoon and get into a little poker game last night. I dropped 5 pounds but will get it back before long. I think that is about all I have lost during the past six months which is not bad considering that I have had an unlucky streak for the last month. The tide will turn before long though. Be'lote (as we now call him) had an unlucky streak at first and is now just about even.

Guess I will quit and hope you have a happy birthday next month.

All my love,

Stokes

P.S. - Don't send any more cigarettes you can send some more toasted almonds.

**Merle A. Kirk to Arthur Kirk**

June 30

Dear Son:

Dad is again taking time off to look at timbered land. It seems that Mr. Adams is planning to sell all of his land and buy property in Norfolk – apartments. I am afraid he is going to want a lot for it as apartments in Norfolk cost a plenty.

I wish you were here to help us enjoy the plums, peaches, apples and blackberries. Those vines Arnold left on the edge of the stream are bearing well. I went down after breakfast this morning and in a little while brought back three quarts of berries. In an hour I had ten jars of blackberry jam ready for winter use.

The birds quarreled with me all the time – I bothered them while getting breakfast for their young. I could hear partridges, cat birds, mocking birds, cardinals and warblers.

Paul came over yesterday and filled her baskets and buckets with fruit. There is a nice tree of striped June apples at Saunders and young peaches and plums here and at Grays. Claiborne leaves for V.P.I. Sunday. Paul says she thinks both she and Claiborne Sr. are getting sick thinking about his leaving.

Josh is at home to-night – the other fellow is in town. He says when the boy leaves to-morrow night he is going over for a late date. He wants to make sure Betty puts out their joint book where it can be seen. The fellow put money in it before and Josh hopes he will do it again. Josh would just love to spend the other suitor's cash.

They are making big plans for their vacation at Nag's Head. They want Euphania to cook, but she expects \$25.00 a week. I told Josh to try Olivia. He's afraid Olivia might get sick and come home.

I am expecting the children over to-morrow, and will be looking for a letter from you.

Love to my boy,

Mamma

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

June 30, Friday night

Dear Margaret,

This is the letter I should have written this past Wednesday night but I missed out on it until tonight. I am now trying to write Sundays and Wednesdays or sometime close to those days.

Boy, I had a rough night last night; as Capt. Larsh says "It was rug-ged". I had to work until about 330 A.M. and got in bed at 430 A.M. and then got up at 6 30 A.M. You know how I

like my sleep and those two measly hours were not enough. Anyhow I managed to make a good job of it and I think I had a pretty successful night of it. At least that is what several of the officers who were looking on said. I won £24, 1s before I quit playing at 0330 hours (A.M.) (also was paid off today and got £24, 7s, 3d for month work.) That is equivalent to \$80, so is not bad. (Ha. Ha. I bet you really felt sorry for me from the first sentences - but not now.) I told you my poker luck was going to revive, so now I am only down about \$80 for the last three weeks. It sounds bad but you must remember that I am way ahead when you count back to the day I left the states. Guess I will send about \$200 to you before long - buy War Bonds as usual unless you need it.

Margaret, the letters that you wrote in the long Air mail envelopes (tissue) take a lot shorter time to get here - for some reason. One took nine days, and the other 11 days whereas all of the others usually take 15 to 20 days - sometimes more. You might try them out again and see if it still works.

Not much else to tell you tonight as I am pretty sleepy.

All my love,  
Stokes



Poker night Stokes Kirk second from the left

**Mary Gamble to Arthur Kirk**

July 1

Dear Arthur,

I was very surprised on my return here Thursday to receive your card and to realize that you were gone. I had thought that it was just a rumor – else I might have stayed home this last week, as I really wasn't essential at camp. Also when you told me to have a good time, I thought you thought I was going; I didn't know you would call so soon and be surprised that I was gone.

The paper from Clarksburg carried a short account of the Evacuation Hospital Unit's being in the tornado stricken area, so I decided you were probably one of the five doctors along, and I discarded from my mind the idea that you might get away in less than a week. Also as we drove into Elkins on Thursday afternoon and I saw so many trucks and soldiers, I was again sure that you were still here.

Today, Saturday, all the mules, or donkeys, from out in the maneuvers area were driven past our house and over across the river near the high school and Mother's farm. They are still there this evening, but I presume they will be loaded and shipped soon. Colonel Holman had a nice letter in the Elkins Inter-Mountain last night addressed to the Mayor and Council of Elkins. Everything is being wound up concerning the closing of the W.V.M.A.

Monday night, July 3<sup>rd</sup>, my brother Ben will arrive. His wife and two small daughters are here now. They expected to leave Tuesday morning, but a telegram this evening gives him two days' leave. Probably they will leave Friday morning for Charlottesville, Virginia and on to Ft. Bragg, N.C., where he will rejoin his outfit after three months absence. Perhaps, I will go with them for a Virginia visit, as my camps do not begin again until July 17<sup>th</sup>. If I knew where Camp Pickett was and thought I could see you I might look you up. I think it is near Farmville. Write me and tell me if you'd be hard to find.

My Dad says he took your medicine and found it made him very comfortable as to sleeping, but he doesn't like the necessity of extra mineral oil. I don't know whether he will continue to take it or not, but I reminded him that you thought he should take it for one month longer than he felt any discomfort.

My sister, Peggy, arrived here Tuesday evening with her three daughters from Philadelphia. Incidentally, all those little girls loved the mules!

Thank you so much for sending me the card about your activities. You were most thoughtful. And I have enjoyed very much our acquaintance. I am sorry we have both been away so much during the latter part of May and in June.

I will go by, probably tomorrow, to see if Phyllis Goode and Patty Ransom are still here.

Be good, and perhaps you will get to see your family now that you are fairly close.

Sincerely,

Mary Gamble

**Chassie Thomas to Arthur Kirk**

July 2

Dear Arthur,

Your card received, I am glad you are nearer us than you were. Hope you will come to see me now. Eleanor will leave for Boston soon will stay with Lewis until his ship will leave. His wife & baby are up there. We had a party here last Saturday for our preacher that was married last week. We had plenty music & a good time. You ought to have been here. Lemuel called & said he was so busy he could not come to see us until the last of July.

Miss Cofield was married last week. She lives a block from here. When is your time?

Frances was to see me yesterday. She looks quite weak yet. Her little girl is very little. Her husband left for the Navy Monday. Well the war have all of you now. I will be so glad when the war is over so all of you can come home.

Much love,

Grandma

**Marie Linge to Arthur Kirk**

July 3, Monday

183 Market St, Harrisburg, PA to Camp Pickett, VA

My dearest Arthur,

I hope that you haven't moved again before you receive this letter. There won't be any thing exciting in it, but it sure seems like a waste of time to write if you have to be chased all over the country.

How does Camp Pickett suit you? Are you near your home? The next time you tell me you don't know where you will be the next month I might believe you.

I went home this past weekend – my brother and his wife were there – he has eleven days leave before he gets his orders. This time we had a swell time and everything was O.K. On Saturday we went shopping and I bought a blue suit and a bright green dress. Now all I have to do is pay for it. That check you sent me is all spent, that is what happens when I take money out of the bank. I never can seem to get near enough to the bank to put it back in again even though I pass it every day.

Gene is having trouble with her mother again. Mrs. L. is throwing a few tantrums because she wants to come here and live with Gene and Gene declares she will not have her. It certainly is a mess.

Tomorrow is the 4<sup>th</sup> and I have a holiday. Isn't that wonderful. I guess I'll do some washing and ironing.

How in the heck do you expect to keep up my morale if you don't write to me? Once a month isn't enough, you know.

I'm taking a week of my vacation beginning August 1<sup>st</sup> and I guess we will go up to Pine Grove – at least we hope we can. The second week is in September. At the rate you are going I don't suppose you will be anywhere around by that time.

I'm really outdoing myself this time so I guess I will have to close. Write soon.

Lot of love,

Marie

P.S. Gene says hello.

**Jack Thomas to Merle A. Kirk**  
Fort McClellan, Al

July 3

Hi Folks:

I got your letter and got a good kick out of what you said about Uncle Russell making carbon copies of his letters. I kind of wish that I could do the same thing as I don't have much time to write and I have so many letters to write.

All this past week we've been working real hard and as a result everyone is just laying around resting all day. I averaged around four hours sleep a night and so I've been asleep nearly all day. We fired hand grenades off our riffles and I was kicked flat on my back, but was lucky as it didn't bruise my shoulder. Most of the fellows here can't move their right arm because it kicked them so hard.

Well we had a lot of excitement here last night as one of the fellows got married. I was his best man and had a real good time. As you know Ala. is a dry state so after the wedding we went into Anniston and ate watermelon and then came on back and went to bed.

Well I guess you think that this letter is short like Arthur's, but time has slipped up on me and it is nearly time for lights to go out so I guess I'll have to close. If you get a chance ask Mother to show you the clipping that I sent her.

I sure am glad to hear that Stokes is alright and hope that Arthur won't have to go over.

Just me

Jack

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

July 4, Tuesday night

Dear Margaret,

Here it is July 4<sup>th</sup> and it never occurred to me until this afternoon when Redick & I were riding around. He asked what day it was and we finally decided that it was Tuesday and after checking found out it was the Fourth. We were quite surprised and Redick immediately wanted to have a little fireworks - toss a few grenades, etc. But I calmed him down a little.

Been receiving letters very erratically here lately. I will receive one mailed June 16 and then one on the 10<sup>th</sup> and then back and forth again. I always look at them when I get more than one though and line them up by dates and read the oldest first. I believe that the long tissue envelopes get here quicker than any as the two that you have sent made the best time of all.

Haven't received the second box yet. I still have most of the canned stuff - lobster and cherry marmalade that you sent first. I am saving it for a special occasion or least sometime in the future. It will be a relief from "bully beef" and "meat and beans." However, we are occasionally getting fresh meat and enough eggs to let everybody have a couple for breakfast.

There are a couple of pictures included which show a couple of "poses" of me. One is fairly good I think and the other shows a few of our tractors. Daddy will be interested I know. I received a picture of you and the kids the other day (one of the many I am getting but I am not complaining) and I now consider it as one of my most precious possessions. My wife and my two children in as cute a pose as could be possible and I feel as if you are looking straight at me and thinking of me as you look in the camera. This family of mine is really a precious possession and the picture of it makes me realize it even more and makes me want to get back to it as soon as possible. I hope that day will soon come. I have been here only five months, but I know it won't be over a total of 30 months before I can see my family again.

All my love,

Stokes

P.S. Also had a treasury check made out for \$200 which you should receive from somewhere in the states by the end of this month. Buy more War Bonds.

**Merle A. Kirk to Arthur Kirk**

July 8

Dear Son:

Thanks for the pictures, think I shall send them to Stokes. I know of no one who would like more to see them. I have already sent two which you took; the backs of this house and his. Some pictures came here for you from Elkins, W.V. - the C.O.D. order. Do you want them to stay here?

I saw when you left you had Claiborne in tow. Guess there was not much else either of you could do but sleep until getting off time. Paul said yesterday that she had not heard from him.

I went down to Portsmouth yesterday and found everyone gone but Hattie. She had invited Lucille, Ida, Paul and me to play cards. Sister has gone to Boston to stay until Lewis goes out which will be in about two weeks. Frances, Lewis and the baby were left at home, but I can never find her in. Mamma was in town - that is a change for her.

Come to see us soon,

Love,

Mamma

P.S. Do you think you will get any of the injured soldiers at your camp? Do you have a hospital there? -Me



**Marie Linge to Arthur Kirk**

July 9, Monday

Dearest Arthur,

This Yankee land sure is hot as the devil. I don't see how you stand it down there if it's any worse than here.

I really can't think of a thing to say – my mind is just pleasantly befuddled and more or less blank. Perhaps it is the natural state as you are probably thinking.

I hope that sewing kit is the one you wanted. I had to practically beat them over the head before they would sell it to me. That's your birthday present. A little late – but you know – better late than never – or something.

The cats just went tumbling down the back steps again. It happens every night about the same time. It seems they start fooling around in the upstairs porch then one gets mad and shoves the other one down the steps and they almost scare us out of our units. I don't like cats anyway – they're so sneaky.

This looks about like some of your letters, but I really must go out and get a breath of air. I'll try to do better the next time. Write to me soon, please.

Love,

Marie

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

July 9

Dear Margaret,

I just dropped my pen and it landed on the point and I thought for a minute I would have to get the one you gave me out but managed to partially bend the point back.

I received the second box on Thursday. It was mailed on April 18 and took over 2 ½ mos. to get here. The Smithfield ham & spread, chewing gum,

cheese, candy and electrolite were in good condition. Also got the socks and wash rags. The crackers were pretty bad off and the pecans were molded. Guess it is best to send any more pecans in bottles with tops. Certainly glad to get a hold of this choice eating material, though.

Went swimming again this afternoon with Taylor. We used his one man rubber life raft and enjoyed the swim. I use Sunday afternoon to get exercise now since during the week it is all supervising or riding around and no physical exertion. I am already feeling more fit and better physically than I have since I have been over here.

I received a letter from Dad today - several from you yesterday. Dad told me about the mill and I am glad it wasn't any worse. I also received a picture of our house, which was evidently taken from the water tower. It is a good picture and looking at it makes me realize more what I left at home. It is a nice house and to look at it makes me homesick as the devil. When I get home again we are going to move into it regardless whether it is finished or furnished. I know this suits you. I know John had a big time on his fire engine ride to the fire house. He probably had nothing to talk about for several days.



J. Stokes house at center, Josh's house in background;  
photo taken from Kirk Lumber water tower

I received the typewritten jokes the other day. They are good and I enjoyed them. Barney is reading them now and getting a big laugh out of them. Well, I guess you might as well forget about the radio as I don't need it anymore. Barney has been kidding all along about selling it.

Johnny's picture that he made in school is enclosed, it is not too good of him but I guess that he prizes it as a present.

Well the lights went out just a minute ago and I am writing this by candlelight now. It is after eleven now and guess I will call it off. I thought I would make a three page letter of it.

All my love,

Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

July 14, Friday night

Dear Margaret,

Guess you will be having a birthday party tomorrow - or at least John and Lynn will insist that you do so that they may enjoy the cake etc. that goes along with it. Boy I would like to see you and the rascals tomorrow but guess it will be quite a while yet.

Been busy as the devil lately. Things are quite lively and they are leading me a chase. Guess I will catch up after a while.

I received a letter today and a V mail from Mamma yesterday I also received a box on Tuesday. This one had the powder, chewing gum, candy, crackers, etc. in it. It is all very much welcome, however the mice have taken a liking to the plastic container of the Yardley's Tale. They have chewed quite a hunk out of the container in two places but haven't gotten all of the way there yet. The only way I could save the cheese was put it in a tin box and the crackers, chewing gum and candy are in my field bag hanging at the end of a wire which wire is hanging from a nail in a rafter. Guess the next thing you will have to send will be a mouse trap. Guess you will have to stop sending crackers. We can buy them pretty easily and then too they don't make the trip so well. Either the box is broken or they are pretty stale and soggy when they get here. Any more nuts would travel better in a glass jar.

I heard about the fires that Dad had. He was lucky that John discovered them and got them under control before they did any real damage. He will have to keep a night watchman at all costs.

Saw "Lucky Lee" and "Jenny" yesterday. I don't know whether I told you or not before but their outfit landed here too.

Read an article in Barney's paper - Richmond news Leader. May 24, 1944 page 7. The last paragraph really struck the spot - that is what I am looking forward to.

All my love,

Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

July 16, Sunday night

Dear Margaret,

Managed to go swimming for a couple of hours this afternoon. I borrowed Woodman's rubber boat and had quite a time swimming around in it. The surf was quite high and I was spilled out of the boat several times. There is a real good sandy beach at this place and it is always crowded with G.I.s on Sundays.

Been listening to the Java news broadcast (enemy). It is a propaganda station and does nothing but talk about Japanese successes. I don't know how they make most of their stories up. However most of them seem to be very minor skirmishes in which they possibly have had a

slight edge. The music is pretty good and that is the big reason we listen to it. The enemy has quite a store of name band records and I enjoy listening to them.

I just sent off another check to you the other day. This one is for \$120<sup>00</sup>. This one with the others, \$280 & \$200, makes a total of \$600<sup>00</sup>. I still have over \$200<sup>00</sup> left from my pay of January thru June besides buying a \$100 War Bond for each of May and June. That makes a saving of about \$1000 for the six months. That is not bad at all. I did leave San Francisco with about \$75. That with my pay will make a total of \$900<sup>00</sup> cash that I have had since being over here. Your \$600 & my \$200 makes \$800 which means that I have spent only \$100<sup>00</sup> since being here. £8 or about \$25 was spent for orderly fees, about \$9.5 for 3 cases of juice, about \$15 for candy & chewing gum and about \$25 for clothes besides about \$25 or \$30 for odds and ends and I have about \$20 in change. That makes a little more than \$900 but a pound here and a pound there in poker games swells the total a little bit.

I am enclosing a request for more canned food. That is the best way to send anything. Anything else doesn't arrive in such good condition. However a small box of chocolate (your homemade) candy I hope will probably arrive alright.

Guess I will quit for the present.

All my love,

Stokes

**Merle A. Kirk to Arthur Kirk**

July 17

Dear Son:

I was very disappointed that you did not get here Saturday; we had planned a big day and really had a good time. I thought surely you would make it and even killed one of my few hens for consumption and had peach ice cream. The party consisted of a hay ride to get honey then back for supper and a hayride again to Grays for plums. We invited the gang and Betty, Ray & Alma. I never saw anyone have a better time than Alma. Dad had found this large tree with honey in it way up near the top, so had to take two men along to saw the tree down. Seeing the tree fall was a treat. Then Alma walked out on the trunk in her bare feet. Others took off shoes and went into the field for apples. The ground was wet & "gooey." Well, as I said everyone had a good time, we got lots of honey, apples & plums.

Margaret had letters from Stokes written the 4<sup>th</sup> of July & 30<sup>th</sup> of June. He is counting the months of his stay there; he says it won't be over 30. Sent two pictures which are pretty good.

Dad and I are planning a trip to N.Y. on the 31<sup>st</sup> to stay until August 3<sup>rd</sup>. That won't be long but will be a change for us both. Ed Ames invited us to go with them.

Grandma says to tell you she wants to see you.

Love,

Mamma

P.S. Josh says Betty is his girl now. He has won!

**Marie Linge to Arthur Kirk**

July 21, Friday

My dearest Arthur,

Why in the heck don't you mail your letters as soon as you write them instead of waiting a week when the news is all stale (What news).

We are having quite a bit of excitement here in Hbg. An air show called "Shot From the Sky" is here. It is really an exhibit of air planes, etc., from Germany & Japan and is taking up the

whole square. No traffic except buses can pass thru the square. There are just loads of WACS – I'm sure you would appreciate it.

Gene and I are driving to Lewistown to visit the Stuckenroth's tomorrow. I chiseled five gal. of gas from Dr. Wright. He asked me if I had the Captain's car and I said yes, and he wanted to know if I was two-timing you and I said I wouldn't do it in your own car if I were.

I had so much to say to you but we had a little trouble tonight with Gene's mother and now I can't think of anything.

If you are coming up to Pine Grove on the 5<sup>th</sup> of August I hope you will write to tell me this week because I am going home this coming week-end until Tuesday since we aren't going up there until the 2<sup>nd</sup> of Aug. Otherwise I won't know what you are going to do, which of course isn't unusual. I really must go to bed now so I will say good-night, dear.

All my love,

Marie

P.S. I would very much like to see your farm if I would be invited.

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

July 21, Friday night

Dear Margaret,

I just came from the show a few minutes ago. It was "As Thousands Cheer" and really good. I believe that you and I saw it before somewhere. I don't remember exactly where now. That makes three shows this week which is more than I have seen before during the last three months. We have a officers section and getting a seat and a place to see has improved.

Received two letters today and both had pictures of John & Lynn in them. There was a picture of you at the beach which I thought was especially good. When I first saw it, I thought how I would like to be there with you and just hold you in my arms. That would be my pressing business for quite a while and I know I would love it. Today makes 6 mos. 2 days out of the states, and about 6 mos. 16 days away from you. I know that this trip will be quite a lot longer than my last one of 11 months. Anyway that day is approaching and I am looking forward to it.

I tried some of the cherry marmalade and a jar of the Smithfield spread to fill an empty spot after looking over dinner today. It came in handy and was a real treat.

I haven't heard anything about a step up in grade as yet. I guess I will be a Major at the end of the war, with things going as they are. Nothing is wrong but it seems that Bn. Cmdrs. in G.S. Regts. don't get any higher than Major. At least I haven't heard of any with a higher rank than Major. I am only about 11 mos. in grade now and as Lt. I was 18 mos. and as Captain 12 mos. so this is still early to be calling on the "Old Man", for a raise in pay. Bailey has gotten his raise and is a Capt. now. Duloc is a 1<sup>st</sup> and I believe "Old Man" Woodman will be a Capt. before long also Pelt is a Captain and I don't like it.

Guess I will quit for a while.

All my love,

Stokes

P.S. Don't send any more cigarettes. We can buy them for 40¢/ carton.

**Merle A. Kirk to Arthur Kirk**

July 22

Dear Son:

We are now getting ready to go to Lucille's for a Sat. night supper again. She called up and said, "If Arthur comes be sure to tell him we want him also". Sorry, I had to say he would not be here again soon. Hope you can get off for your trip next week.

We are not making much preparation but are thinking about our trip next week. Guess Ed will have more to tell of his plans to-night.

Margaret had two letters from Stokes, one written on the 9<sup>th</sup> and one 14<sup>th</sup>. He spoke of being so very busy and Margaret thinks he must be referring to the presence of Japs in his territory. I hope not! I believe he is too far east.

We went to your farm yesterday to finish gathering those large peaches on the tree next to the wire fence. Dad took Margaret & John and drove down to the wharf. The crazy thing said his car nearly turned over in one of those dugouts. When we looked at it Claiborne said, "she is really gone now." Then Claiborne had trouble by turning around in tall grass and catching a root under his car. It bent something to his axil. We should have stayed away from Saunders – the peaches were green anyway.

Dad is ready to go now. Do hope we hear from you before we leave.

Love,

Mamma

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

July 23, Sunday night

Dear Margaret,

I received four letters from you today and one from Mamma. They were all interesting and I enjoyed reading them. I know the children and you are really enjoying the water at Burwell's Bay now. With all of these hot days it must be somewhat of a relief to go in swimming occasionally. When Lynn cut her toe and became so helpless she must have been cute. Guess she will be quite an actress when she grows up. When I get back I guess that will be your problem and John will be mine. Both are your problem now but that will have to be changed in the future, when we are back to normal again.

Talking about swimming I took my usual Sunday afternoon dip today. The surf was really rough and I took a real beating from it, but liked it. You should have seen me struggle and stumble out of it after about two hours. I was exhausted and just had to come in and rest up for a half hour before supper. Just finished getting all of the water out of my ears and I feel fine now. I find out that the salt water helps to ward off the chiggers which are very plentiful here, mainly in the kunai grass. Now, I can go a week without them bothering me. Don't know why but it seems to cure the places up and run them off. Even at home I noticed it after swimming in salt water.

Special Service has just had a jam session next door. They have a phonograph and loud speaker and their hut is only about ten feet away. You can imagine the fuss that was being created. It was good modern music though.

Expert to catch up on my correspondence a little this week. Hope to write to Mom and Grandma.

All my love,

Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

July 28, Friday afternoon

Dear Margaret,

I have been receiving boxes and packages of funnies right along now, also a couple of letters today. The last box had about 8 bars of candy, chewing gum, and cigarettes plus a can of shrimp. The box before that one had cigarettes, chewing gum, one can of sea food and I also received 4 flat fifties [*metal cigarette boxes*]. I have enough cigarettes now to last three months so don't send any more. I just finished drawing my supply and Lt. Taylor's for next month - 8

cartons. They only cost 40¢ a carton and the whole 8 cartons cost only one pound \$3<sup>22</sup>. I made 6 pounds in a poker game last night so I don't miss the one pound at all. Your husband has been doing pretty good with his spare time here lately. Makes his spending money and a little beside. I hope you don't mind too much - just so I stay ahead. That is one of the things that can be done for recreation here in New Guinea. There are not too many amusements to be found here so I know you don't mind.

Talking about amusements though Jack Benny + Carole Landis are supposed to be here over the week-end and I hope I will be able to see them tomorrow night. They will make several appearances at different places close by.

You told me about sending a ham to Uncle Jack. You know that is all right with me. He has been very good to you.

I just had an excellent dinner over at E Co. Lt. Bancroft and I got in late and we found that "bully beef" and green peas made the menu. He added some shrimp his wife sent him and we fared pretty doggone good.

Guess this will be all for now. Will write again soon.

All my love,  
Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

July 30, Sunday night

Dear Margaret,

I didn't get in my weekly swim this afternoon. I was pretty tired by noon and after dinner I went to sleep thinking it would be only for a few minutes but finally got up about five o'clock. I am sorry I didn't go as I am slowly developing a little tan and I will probably lose it all in two weeks.

For about three months now we have been waiting for Tuesday, August 1<sup>st</sup> to come. It is now only two days off and our first issue of beer is due on that date. Everyone who wants it may buy 24 bottles per month from now on. Several of the officers went down and drew for their companies so it looks like a sure thing now. A large quantity of ice or a lot of refrigerators would come in handy now. Hot beer is not so good, but we have a few gas refrigerators in each company which will cool some of them off.

Belote also had a nap this afternoon and is now looking (money glitter in his eyes) for a poker game. I think he has about talked several into playing. I guess I will have to but I want to finish this letter first.

Last night I went down to see Jack Benny and Carole Landis. They were really good and I enjoyed the U.S.O. show a lot. Carole Landis put up the biggest front of all of them though. I think that all eyes stayed between her waist and neck. Everyone seemed to be fascinated by them. I heard a description of how she got off the plane when she first came yesterday A.M. She had on a short skirt, half-length sweater with bare midriff and just stood for a minute in the door before getting off. Quite a few almost had a fit.

Guess I will join Barney for a while.

All my love,  
Stokes

P.S. Made out allright & 50 smackers. Guess I will send another check before long.

**Frances L. Edwards to Bud Gill**  
Box 102 Mason St. Smithfield, VA

July 31, Monday

Hi Buddie,

How is everything with you these days? I hope you and your Buddies are swell. Mrs. Gill tells me they have you aboard an aircraft carrier and of course they couldn't do with out you Marines. The guts of the Armed Forces!

There are several lucky stiffs here at home this week. Joe Mac for instance has thirty days and Rick Chapman is home also. Boat was home over the week-end and Gale gets home from Kansas tomorrow. Albert was home a couple of week-ends ago. He is still in Mass. Oh yes, Peter Murphy is home, he didn't get injured after all.

I have a good program on the radio- Popular Love songs such as "I'll Get By," etc. Say, do you guys ever get a chance to listen to the radio much or do you spend your off hours on sleep. You know when Al goes out he will be on a carrier too only he will work on the planes.

Well I guess some of your other "Pen Pals" beat me to the draw in telling you about Ruth and Collier. Some shock for the whole town and I sure hope they make a go of it. They haven't come from their Honeymoon yet. I sure hope the war doesn't last much longer because I would like to venture into that myself, or maybe we won't wait for the war who knows.

Charlie Martin (Goonie) is in Miss. He ran into "Mollie Mouth" and Wally Batten on his first liberty. Elmo Batten is only 20 miles from him.

I haven't heard from "Hinks" in about three weeks. I sure hope that he, Paul, and Booker are holding down Italy. Will you ever forget how "Chief Woo-Woo Thelson" looked on our week-end party and how upset we were when Harne, Brobrand and Remick were missing – some memories!

I am working in the Bank of Smithfield. Not bad! Anyway I have good hours.

See you, Bud, keep your chin up, it prevents drooling!

Puddles of passion,

Big S

**Marie Linge to Arthur Kirk**  
325 E. Laurel St., Bethlehem, PA

Aug. 1, Tuesday

Dearest Arthur,

I don't know what your plans are because as yet I haven't read your letter, but our vacation is all off.

I am staying in Bethlehem until Sat., but if you can come up. I will leave Friday night and you can come to Harrisburg. I will know, I hope, when I read your letter whether or not you are coming and will act according to that.

Gene's vacation was cancelled and I told her to tell you our plans were changed when you called last night, but evidently you didn't call. I'm discouraged about the whole thing but there is nothing that can be done about the army – however, I hope you can come.

You can call me here if anything out of the way happens.

Gene will forward the letter and I should get it Thurs. then things will be a trifle clearer than they are now.

Love,

Marie

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Aug. 3, Thursday night

Dear Margaret,

I sat down here about 1 ½ hrs. ago to write and just started. Taylor and I started talking about everything and it ran on & on.

Guess what! I am sending another \$200 to you today. I made out the slip at the Finance Office this P.M. and paid the money £61 - 19s - 3d. That makes \$800 to you of which you should have \$600 by now. I want you to put the \$200 in bank as a little nest egg in case I get back before I expect to. I wouldn't want to be financially embarrassed. You should also start getting the \$100 War Bond before long. There should be one coming each month starting with the May one. I am glad that I took it out as I don't miss the money at all. That also goes for your allotment. However, you can't spend any money over here to amount to anything so there is no need for it.

Guess you better find me a pair of pyjamas somewhere and send me in the next box. I have two pairs that I brought with me over here and they are still in fair condition but don't know how long they will last. Send lightweight summer pyjamas. I also need the other pair of low quarter shoes I bought at Claiborne. The ones I brought are wearing out. We usually dress up every evening for supper with leggins and C.O.D. so my shoes have seen hard wear so far. They are much more comfortable than the heavy G.I.

Received a couple of letters today - both #81 written on July 18 & 17. Pretty good time. There were pictures of the children and also Anne Priest "thank you" letter. Glad you gave something to her.

All my love,

Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Aug. 7, Monday night

Dear Margaret,

I hit a bonanza in letters yesterday and today. Four today and twelve yesterday. All were from you except three from Mom & Dad. In the four today I got three long envelopes written on July 29, 30 & 28<sup>th</sup>. That shows the difference in time between the long and the short. I believe that the secret of getting mail quick over here is the long envelope. In one of the letters, P.S. of the 27, you are way wrong. You can't blame me for that.

Went in swimming again yesterday afternoon and got quite a nice little red from it. I am getting a little tinge of brown but I bet I can't vie with the children or you as you probably look like Indians by now. Can't tell much from the numerous pictures of you and the children I have been getting though. Some of the pictures are real good and I enjoy looking them over every now and then.

You seem to be much worried about me but I see no reason to worry at all. I think that if anything happens it will be from old age only and, finally had to "kick the bucket." So far in New Guinea, I know that will be the reason if any. So don't worry and stop getting those white hairs from it.

Haven't had a chance to catch up on my reading - newspapers and funnies. Lately, I start reading them now and then usually in bed and you know I can't do that without going to sleep. Guess I will have to continue as is until I catch up. I am not complaining about you sending them. Far from that.

Will write again during the middle of the week.

All my love, Stokes



**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Aug. 10, Thursday night

Dear Margaret,

Well, tomorrow A.M. will make six months that I have been in New Guinea. It hasn't been a particularly tough six months and it has been very short - mainly because I have been busy. But looking back on it and the time away from the States, it seems to have been a mighty long time away from you, the kids and home. Hope it won't be so many more 365- before I am back again. In return for this time I get the Asiatic - Pacific medal with a star on it and a new service stripe for each 6 mos. out of the state. Not as much is it.

Got another box the other day, a carton of cigarettes, some peanuts in a hand grenade carton and several cans of assorted meat. All were very much welcome except the cigarettes. They are not so now as I have about 20 cartons and know not what to do with them anymore. That is enough for about seven months so don't send any more as I don't need them.

I picked a few oranges the other day and saw a tall bush, with what I thought was cotton. In examining it, it was cotton but grew on a bust entirely different from the one in the states. I am putting a small piece in the letter for Daddy to examine to staple\* if he wants to.

My pen just went on the blink again and guess I will have to work on it a little. I believe that it will write a little better now.

Guess I will write a few other letters before long. To Robert, Bud, Mom, Arthur, etc. Got to catch up on it.

All my love,

Stokes

P.S. Don't send any more cigarettes

*\*Staple- the length of the individual fibers*

**Marie Linge to Arthur Kirk**

Aug. 13, Monday

Hi Sweetheart:

It just occurred to me that it might be a good idea to write to you instead of just sit and think of it - so here I am.

The first week of Sept. will be O.K. by me. I can come down Friday night or Saturday or whenever you wish - but you had better tell me how to get there & what time, etc., because I'll never get there otherwise. I think it will be fun.

I don't think you had better come up in the meantime because I have to work the next two weekends since I am paying back my past debts and I can't possibly get out of it - and anyway its only three weeks until Sept.

The heat here is terrible. It rained a little tonight but it didn't seem to help any.

It's too late to think anymore so I will have to close.

All my love,

Marie

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Aug. 13, Sunday night

Dear Margaret,

I went in swimming again this afternoon and hit the water a little earlier today. It was at 1:00 o'clock and boy did I get a nice burn. I stayed in for three hours and when I got out I was as red as fire. It won't blister but now my skin is just as hot as it can be and seems to be drawing up,

particularly on my legs. Guess I will use a little discretion next time and not stay in it for three hours at a time.

Guess I will have to send a little more money to you soon. My time over here, over six months, has not cost me anything yet and I am still on the upgrade. After my next pay I think I will send another \$200 which will make an even \$1000 to you. The value of our War Bond holding should be on the upgrade each month now. I don't miss the money for the \$100 bond that I am now getting mailed to you. However, I would like for Dad to use some of our cash for any good buy in land that he might happen to find. I would also like for you to keep a little reserve in bank for an emergency such as my getting home, etc.

So Mom & Dad have made a trip to New York. I am glad that they went because it will be an opportune vacation for them. Josh must have had an exciting vacation at Nag's Head or wherever he went. I knew women were plentiful in the states now but didn't know one poor male had to take care of so many. Josh had his hands full as I know he was worried with so many at a time. I imagine he was a wreck after it was over and ready to go to work in order to rest up.

Have written to Robert and expect to write to the folks soon.

All my love,  
Stokes

**Eleanor "Nell" Thomas Kirk to Arthur Kirk**  
206 Fauquier St, Apt. 3 Portsmouth, VA to Camp Pickett, VA

Aug. 14

Dear Arthur,

How are things with you these days? Through Granna we keep up with what you are doing. She says you like it fine where you are and it's nice you aren't so far from home for a change.

It looks like Mike and I can't both be well at the same time. He has had a tough time of it ever since we've been married and I've been quite worried about him. The first week we were home after we were married he was in bed with what he thought was just a bad cold so he wouldn't let me call Uncle Jack. He went back to work before he should have and until the last few weeks he has just been dragging along. Now that he is feeling better my hay-fever has started up and that ruins my disposition.

We're planning to leave here Saturday night for a two weeks vacation near Ashville, North Carolina. The change and rest should do us both good, particularly him because he hasn't had a real vacation for a number of years.

Arthur, I don't know how we could have gotten along without the spoons you sent us because whenever we have company I have to use all I have. I don't know of anyone that likes and appreciates silver more than I do and now that it is so scarce I think all the more of mine.

Mike is a wonderful cook and we've been planning for a long time to take a day off and fix some things to send to you, Jack, and his brother. Our kitchen is so tiny and right next to the living room so on hot days it makes the apartment unbearable to do much cooking but when a cool Sunday comes along after we get back we're going to try to fix up something for you all.

Lewis was home last week-end and we were a little surprised to see him. It was the first time he'd been home in several months but Mother had spent about three weeks with him in Boston. Did Aunt Merle write that Mother came home from Boston by plane? You should hear her tell of her trip – you know how she tells things. It's rare to hear her tell of her experiences.

Hope you'll find time to write to me.

Best of luck,  
Nell

Just after I finished this heard the news of your promotion – Congratulations!

**Arthur Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**  
Camp Pickett, Blackstone, VA

Aug. 14

Dear Mom,

It was hot here today and will probably be the same for the next few days. Today most of the boys went swimming but I was pretty busy and didn't go with them. Last night I went out for a short ride with a friend and found it to be very nice with a slight breeze blowing. Since someone sat on my little chess box I spent most of the day yesterday making a new one out of wood so that it wouldn't break so easily. Next week Lt. Gish is taking off to go to a school up at Walter Reed which will leave me to teach most of the classes to the men, but I guess that it is about time for me to start back again and get in the swing of teaching them. Tomorrow I'll get a couple of new Lt.'s in the company and expect to put them to work immediately upon arrival.

I expect that I'll be able to be home this weekend for a short visit, and expect to arrive there on Sat. evening on the 4:30 train, or whatever time that the train arrives. As yet there has been little time that I could get up to see Bessy Martin, but there may be more time later on in my stay here at Camp Pickett. I wonder how that request for gas came out at the ration board. There is a slim chance that it may have been approved, but I guess not. This typewriter is beginning to smoke from this fast typing that I am doing so I had better quit and let it cool off. How are things at home?

Love,

Arthur

**J. Stokes Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**  
New Guinea

Aug. 15

Dear Mom & Dad,

I just received a letter from you written in N.Y. I know you both are having a swell time there and are really enjoying your vacation. I am certainly glad you had time and were able to make the trip. I just read over a letter from Mamma took only ten days to get here. I would really like to see the new tractor that you just bought. I know it is a nice machine and will prove a valuable piece of equipment. It looks like you are getting along pretty well – a more or less new generator and a new tractor. I guess the trucks are taking a beating though as I haven't heard about any new ones lately. If you take a picture of the new tractor send me one.

Talking about pictures, I really prize the ones you sent me taken from the water tower. They are good and my house has been admired by several officers to whom I have shown the picture. It is a beautiful location and a nice looking house and I really long to be in it. Hope it won't be long.

Josh must have had a time with six women on his hands at Nag's Head [*beach in N.C.*]. Looks like he is taking good care of them. Most everybody over here would go crazy at a chance like that.

There is no exciting news around here other than the usual everyday happenings. It looks like the Japs are on the run now. Last Saturday I visited a long past battleground with the Japs and it was really a sight to behold. From all appearances the Japs really caught H\_\_ in that battle. It is just a few miles from here.

I went swimming last Sunday and did I get burned. I wrote Margaret about it. Fortunately I didn't blister but I still am conscious of several places.

Love to all,  
Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Aug. 18, Friday night

Dear Margaret,

It is now 8:30 P.M. and I have just finished supper a very good one. I came in about 5:00 P.M. and thought I would rest until supper, but I slept thru it and finally awoke about 6:45. I then thought that I would use some of your food for supper. Went to the mess hall, they happened to have some ice, so I brought a cup of it back and I had ice cold Coca Cola. Barney and I "managed" a case of it the other day. Then I ate a can of your tongue spread with crisp Ritz Crackers and finished up with about 4 bananas. I also have a nice looking coconut but will take that on some other day. Writing about Coca Cola made me want another so I am now sipping another ice cold one. Not bad - this life in New Guinea. I believe that your husband is making out all right here. Imagine, however, how I keep my crackers fresh! I keep them in the pocket of my jeep and during the day it is just like an oven and they stay crisp. I bought these at a P.X. about a couple of weeks ago.

The other night for supper we had what is called "Millionaire's Salad." If you don't know what it is, it is the tip top of a coconut tree, cut up and made in the form of a salad. It was very good and we had enough out of one tree to serve a whole company. Of course you have to cut a tree down to get it and they are valued at about \$150 each here and I guess that is where it gets its name.

I had a couple of interesting things happen today. I got stuck in the jeep and had to cut a small tree down to get a pole to lift one side up. Sap came all out of it and got on our hands and imagine our surprise later in trying to get the sap off that we had rubber on our hands and in trying to pull it off it just stretched. Later on, we stopped on this jungle trail and visited one of the first battlefields in New Guinea. It was a very hot spot about 20 months ago and from all appearances, the Japs were "in it" at the time. The place has been pretty well stripped by souvenir hunters but I found a Jap skeleton almost intact and came away with a Jap canteen I found close by. All in all today has been quite an exciting one.

Guess I will quit for a while and write again later.

All my love,  
Stokes

P.S. - Made another deposit of \$200<sup>00</sup> today to be sent to you. This makes \$1000<sup>00</sup> even. It is \$5 more than what I have drawn plus what I came over with.

**Marie Linge to Arthur Kirk**

Aug. 19, Sunday

Dearest Arthur: (I'll have to get used to calling you that.)

It was very nice of you to ask me to come down to visit you and I would like to very much. However, I hope that your Dad isn't too prejudiced against me because I am a damn Yankee because in that case, I'm not too sure I should come. After all there is one thing worse than a Yankee and that is a rebel.

I have the second week in Sept. off so that might be the best time as far as I am concerned. If you thought it was hot here last week-end you should be here this week, and this lab is just like an oven.

I just went down to eat and what a supper. Two little slices of cold meat and a warm pineapple salad. And good thing, however, was a nice big juicy peach. I hope at your house you don't eat grits because although I've never eaten it I've heard a lot about it and it must be terrible.

I must go now and do a coag. on a woman who is getting heparin for a clot in the leg. She has the coags. [*coagulation procedure*] done every three hours and they run about 25 mins. Be seeing you soon.

Love,

Marie



Marie Linge

the kids and that is fine because they agree with me. They are two swell youngsters and I am really proud of them.

Guess John is O.K. by now. His arm must have been pretty bad off and I know that now he doesn't want any more vaccinations like Daddy's. He must think by now to have anything like his Daddy must be pretty terrible. Glad he is better. Glad you have bought your second bond. You have gotten according to the letter today \$600 and that leaves two \$200 checks on the way. Guess one of these can be deposited in the bank in my name or yours and saved for a rainy day. The other one - you might have enough to make up another \$375 for a third \$500 bond. First, I would like for you to ask Dad if there are any land prospects for around \$400 or \$500 and if it is a fairly good buy to get it. I have more confidence in land and I would rather have it. You can see so much more for your money than when you are looking at a piece of paper.

Hope Bud is getting along alright and that you have heard from him before now. I know he must be on your Mother's mind and yours constantly, but he will get along alright so don't worry.

**Arthur Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**

Aug. 20, Sunday

..... told you so that makes it ok & one will ever know the difference. I am sending you her [*Marie Linge*] picture so that you can see for yourself that she doesn't look like a Chinaman or even a Chinawoman. In fact, at times I think she is quite attractive in spite of her slant eyes, buck teeth, long fingernails, flat feet & nasty disposition & a nose like Dads.

Did you get the dolls she sent to Lynn for me? If you like you can use them for decorations until Lynn grows a little older. Things are improving up here.

Love,

Arthur

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk** Aug. 21, Monday

Dear Margaret,

Just got a letter from you mailed on the 10<sup>th</sup>.

Pretty good time I call it and it seemed as if the news was really fresh. You sent Mr. Koontz's\* letter in it and it was a very nice letter. It seems as if everybody thinks a lot of

Glad Arthur got his majority. I think he has been expecting it for sometime. Your Major Stokes doesn't have a whole lot of chance of outdistancing him now, however there is a good chance.

All my love,  
Stokes

*\*Mr. Koontz- Margaret Kirk's boss at V. W. Joyner & Co.*

**Marie Linge to Arthur Kirk**

Aug. 22, Sunday

Dearest Arthur:

I have just received your letter and I must admit that it is slightly confusing.

For one thing the second week in Sept. doesn't start on the 6<sup>th</sup> (Wed.) and we have our vacation week from one Sat. to the following week-end. In other words, we don't start them in the middle of the week. If I have the week off beginning Sept. 2<sup>nd</sup> it also includes Labor Day – therefore, since the head of the lab is also taking that week she has decided that we will have Mon. the 11<sup>th</sup> off to compensate for Labor Day and since I don't work until 3 P.M. on Tuesday that will give me until then (the 12<sup>th</sup>) free. I think that would be the best time then – from Sat., Sept. 2<sup>nd</sup>, until Mon. Sept. 11, or rather Tuesday at 3 P.M.

If you can't meet me until Sat. afternoon there isn't much point in leaving on Fri. night. Why couldn't I leave on Sat. and you meet me in Suffolk on Sat. evening. You know the time I can get off now so it just depends on what you can have.

If I take the second week it will start on Sat. the 9<sup>th</sup> and continue until the following Sunday. However, the other way I have more time off. Just as long as you have a bathroom the rest won't bother me.

All my love,  
Marie

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Aug. 22, Tuesday A.M.

Dear Margaret,

I went out into jungle yesterday and followed a path thru a lot of hills. At the time I was looking for a new supply of timber for my sawmill and boy did I find it. It is really beautiful and I wish Dad could see it. The prettiest was what is called New Guinea mahogany. It ranged in size from about 18" to 5' on the butt, was perfectly straight, no limbs except at the tip top and most of it well over 100' tall. The tree really stands out as it has maroon red papery bark - like toilet paper. It would be worth a fortune back in the states and it is a pity to cut it up into framing - but we will really have high class floors and huts.

Wed. P.M.

Thought I would be able to finish the letter yesterday but I had a lot of things to take care of and didn't have time. No excitement over here except the rejoicing over the news from France. I think that this past week is the most exciting period for the allies during the whole war. There doesn't seem to be so much activity in the S.W. PA but the news from France more than makes up for it.

I have a couple of friends over here who expect to go home before so long. They have been in this area for 30 months came over here in March of 1942. That is some stretch when you think that they were here before the 95<sup>th</sup> went up on the Alaskan Highway. The 95<sup>th</sup> missed by the skin of its teeth from coming down here during March 1942. We were pretty lucky then but now I would like to be eligible to go home for a while. I miss my family a lot and would like to see them.

John will have a birthday soon. Hope you got something for him from me. There is not much I could send him from here.

More later,  
All my love,  
Stokes

**Marie Linge to Arthur Kirk**

Aug. 23, Wednesday

Hi Sweetheart:

How's my little man with all the grass on his face? I'm sorry that you missed my letters but you didn't write to me so I was just giving you a dose of your own medicine.

I think that is a good idea if I can come down on Tuesday but for Pete's sake please tell your Mother because I sure would hate to get down there and be an uninvited guest. It will be bad enough being a Yankee among all you rebels. Should I come prepared to fight the Civil War again? I'll probably be so excited by the time I get there that I will be sick the whole time. I don't think my stomach ever will grow up.

My Dad says my letters are like short notes and they know what will be in them before they are even opened. I guess that is the way you feel too so I can't ruin my reputation by writing a nice long letter so I will have to close. Write to me soon.

All my love,  
Marie

P.S. The war news is wonderful, isn't it. Perhaps it will soon be over. My brother really isn't a first Lt. yet – I was only teasing you.

**Bessie Greever\* to Arthur Kirk**

Aug. 23

210 High St., Farmville, VA to Camp Pickett, VA

Dear Arthur:

Aunt Chassie wrote me that you were now stationed at Camp Pickett. Hope you can come up to see me sometime. Capt. Vernon Turner, a doctor there, has his family living in Farmville, and drives up two or three times a week, so I thought you might get a ride up with him. But you had better let me know ahead, if possible, for I am away from home occasionally. Next week I expect to be in Richmond.

Am glad you are still in the States and I hope the war will be over before it is your time to be sent overseas.

With love, and best wishes always for you,

Bessie Crute Greever

*\*Elizabeth "Bessie" R. Martin Crute Greever, daughter of John Robertson Martin, brother to Chassie Martin Abbott Thomas.*

**Merle A. Kirk to Arthur Kirk**

Aug. 26

Dear Son:

I enjoyed your letter. Your description of the young lady is unique. Dad said, "A Damn Yankee." Don't forget he is half one and that is what he forgets.

We have company to-night. Bessie and Lawrence are out here to stay while Margaretta is in Phil. Son, she says you did not answer her letter. She is really hurt about your indifference. You know she is fond of you and I did not want you to hurt her. At least answer and let her know whether you could see her or not. Just plain decency!

Address to –  
912 Childs Ave.  
Drexel Hill, Pa  
C/O Mrs. B. K. Kirk

Your check is enclosed. I opened it as I thought it might be a bond you wanted me to keep for you.

Here is Mae's letter. Thought you might enjoy it. As Josh is going to mail letters will close – right away.

Love,

Mamma

P.S. Dr. Gwathney says Bessie will not need an operation. Her mind is at rest on that issue. Stokes hopes to be home for Christmas.

**Marie Linge to Arthur Kirk**

Aug. 26, Saturday

Dearest Kirk:

I received your letter as you probably know and find that I have to make reservations from Phila. to Richmond. I will make them for Tuesday if possible, since that was our last agreement as to the date and if you have any objections to this please let me know.

I hope the weather will be warm enough to go swimming, but it has been quite cold up here all week and I suppose Virginia weather is not much different. Anyway you can show me around the country and I am anxious to see it all especially your broken down old farm and of course, it will be nice to see you again, too, because I like you even though you are a rebel and your folks hate the damn yankees. I don't think they really do at all but I think you are just being mean. Maybe Josh will be nice to me anyway even if you aren't.

All my love,

Marie

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Aug. 26, Saturday night

Dear Margaret,

It is now about 6:15 P.M. and think I will dash off a letter. We have a game tonight and I think I am about one or two letters behind anyway so I expect to write again tomorrow.

I received four letters today and a box yesterday. The box had nuts (Walnuts & Pecans), some chewing gum, a Milky Way (badly mashed) and I believe a can of lobster. It was all really appreciated. For dinner today I tried some of the Smithfield spread. I got in late from a plane recovery job and missed dinner so I got a few slices of bread, spread it over with the ham and had a feast. After that I had a Coca-Cola we managed to get a case sometime ago.

Your letters were real interesting. I know that you enjoyed Mr. Ellison's visit. I bet the kids had a time with him. I would like to see him again, but you can tell him to do all he can to destroy or sabotage the bully beef "effort." Somebody's effort on that question is too successful for everybody over here. We are getting some lamb now and I am beginning to get a little disgusted with it. Once a week is entirely too often for Australia's favorite product.

Am listening to some good music now. There is a G.I. radio station over here with all of the latest song hits, best orchestra music, latest news and Jap. We enjoy the programs a lot. I saw Maj. Jacobson today for the first time in a couple months. He is no longer with us and has been transferred to higher headquarters because of his sawmill experience. He is going to let me have a couple of new 48" circular saws. The ones we have are not in very good shape and need a good



hammering job. The mill is running fairly good now - hope it continues to do so. This New Guinea hard wood is not like that in British Columbia.

Well, the gang is all here now so I guess I will quit.

All my love,

Stokes

**Bob Gish to Arthur Kirk**

Aug. 27

Letterhead: Army Services Forces, Army Medical Center, Washington 12, D.C.

Dear Kirk;

Had intended this letter long before now but wanted to wait so as to be able to give you the full particulars about the course, and type of instruction. This is known as the Refresher Course of four weeks duration and is divided among six subjects, two to four days each including: anaesthesia, gen. surgery, Amputations, neurosurgery, gen. medicine and psychiatry. Anaesthesia and surgery were not too well organized and we spent most of our time in the operating room observing. Just enough to make you want to wash up and get in, but not a scrub. Today we began Neuro-surgery with ward rounds and general discussion then went to the operating room to watch several very good operations. Capt. McCune is in charge and he is a very good demonstrator in Neuro. On the whole, the school has been very poorly organized, just as you said, but it does offer a chance to see a lot and to read up on a few things. In the addition, we attend all conferences, post and special meetings.

There are eight of us in the class, one Major, three Capt.'s and the rest 1<sup>st</sup> Lt.'s. Five of them from Camp McCall, the Airborne Inf., all seem to be pretty nice fellows. There are only two of us from Pickett. We are all living in the BOQ which is, as you know, only one block from the hospital and very very snazy.

The social life, of which I have little interest, in Washington goes along at a rapid pace. Have made a few unimportant contacts, but nothing to brag about.

Will write from time to time as the course progresses to let you know how things are getting along, etc. My best regards to all.

Bob Gish

**Marie Linge to Arthur Kirk**

Aug. 28, Tuesday

Dearest Arthur:

I certainly did enjoy your last letter. You are so very encouraging. I can't get reservations at the train you suggested so I am coming on another through train which leaves Phila. at (11:39 and arrives in Richmond at 5:55 P.M.) at the Main St. station and boy you had better be there.

I certainly hate to think of the stories you told your Mother about me, but she has better sense than I have - she doesn't believe you - I hope.

I must get to work so I'll see you on Tuesday at 6 P.M.

Love,

Marie

**Merle A. Kirk to Arthur Kirk**

Aug. 28

Saint John's Memorial Association Old Saint John's Church, Chuckatuck, VA  
J. R. Kirk, Treasurer

Dear Son:

Josh says you had better reserve your rooms at Va. Beach and suggest the Spotswood Arms. He thinks you can get single rooms with meals at \$6.each per day. That's not bad if meals are served. After looking at the map I judge you will meet Marie in Petersburg. Let me know all the latest arrangements so that I can have my meals arranged to suit.

We missed you this week-end. All went to Eberwine's and had good beefsteak. Bob Williams, Mrs. Bob, Betty, Josh and Martha Edwards were the added guests. It was a going away party for Bob, he leaves for the army to-morrow.

Love to my boy,

Mamma

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Aug. 30, Wednesday

Dear Margaret,

I received three letters from home today - two from you and one from Mom. I can't understand why you haven't received any letters. I think I missed one week on my two letters and am only one behind now. In my letter last Saturday I said I would write again Sunday, but I missed and had a chance again today. So here it is.

I saw Lt. Col. E.L. Griggs the Company Commander of A. Co 95<sup>th</sup> Engrs. in 1941. You might remember him as he was at a Xmas dance at Belvoir. He looked pretty good, has been in the S. W. PA for 20 months, and wanted to know about all of the rest of the officers that were in the 95<sup>th</sup> when he was. It was good to see him and talk about a few of the old times.

Glad to hear of all of the recent promotions in the 95<sup>th</sup> - McCay, McCord and Van Dyck. They all deserve it as all three were good officers and pretty darn good friends of mine. I think I might like to be with them where something real is going on. This is a heck of a war over here - all the Japs I ever see are dead ones or in captivity. Guess our unit will be good enough some day to move forward and see at least one Jap plane come over on a bombing raid. I have yet to experience that - we are so far behind now. When we came here we were fairly close to the front but now we are thousands of miles behind.

Thought I was going to get another sawmill to operate, but it looks as if it might fall thru. At the present we are operating it and will do so for several days yet. By the time we get it going good it will have to be turned over to someone else. This one is a much better and larger mill than my other one and I would like to keep it. More later.

All my love,

Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Aug. 31, Thursday A.M.

Dear Margaret,

This is a request letter this time and not quite personal. I need some saw files badly and can't get any over here so I thought I would request them regardless of the cost to me as they mean much more than the cost.

1 doz. 5 ½ inch Slim Taper Files made by Diston, Simonds or any other reputable firm.

Dad can get these if you can't and I wish you would send them as soon as possible. Two dozen would not be too many if that many come in a box. You can see that they are urgently needed if I choose to buy them.

All my love,  
Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Sept. 1, Friday A.M.

Dear Margaret,

Yesterday was the usual pay off day of the month end I got the usual £25 or about \$80. I don't need it and guess I will send another \$100 home sometime soon. So far I have sent \$1000 and four \$100 War Bonds. One each month for May, June, July, and August. I have an allotment for a War Bond each month, so from May on you should get a \$100 War Bond. I don't miss it at all and I believe that it swells our account at home a little each month. Guess I can indulge in a poker session now and then - everybody has a little money and we will have enough players. Usually a week after pay-day marks the end of the poker sessions here as the money is in the pockets of a few players and there are not enough to get up a game. I did win a few shillings last month. Guess I will play over here until I leave New Guinea and I hope by then that I will have enough excess to buy a jeep after the war is over. That would be a rather profitable stay and an "excellent gesture from the boys." How about it? As long as I win. Guess I am counting too many chickens.

According to all reports, the war won't last very much longer in Europe. I am glad of that because it means that more emphasis can be put on this one down here and it will be over sooner. Things are not going badly in the Pacific but I want to get home as soon as possible. I've got a wife and children there which I want to see and love badly. This long distance business is not so "hot" as it could be.

I got a few pictures of some of our work the other day and thought you would be interested, also Dad & Mamma. I am not in the pictures but they are typical examples of work being carried on. Will try to write again Sunday.

All my love,  
Stokes

**Herbert Maluch to Arthur Kirk**

Sept. 4

Lawson General Hospital, Atlanta, GA to Camp Pickett, VA

Sir: Our third week at Lawson finds us deeply engrossed in study and in work. We have been receiving examinations – in fact we have had about 6 of them. The results have been very gratifying. The group of us from the 640 have obtained excellent and superior grades. It was compensation for the study and efforts we put forth.

Going to school from 3 P.M. to 10 P.M. gives us very little time for correspondence. We generally have a couple of hours to work out Company requirements, details pop up, and so at the end of each day we find that at the best we have had an hour or two for our own use, and that we put forth in study.

At present our four main subjects are Anatomy & Physiology, Ward Procedure, Maternal Medical, and Emergency Medical Treatment. They are all interesting. We have 12 more days on the night shift and then hope to go to day classes which allow a more regulated schedule.

The boys all join me in repeating their thanks for the privilege of going to this school – it would be fine if every enlisted man could have the chance to go.

Due to the lack of time – I thought I would more or less make this letter a joint one and explain the activities and results for all of the five men of the 640. They all join me in send their regards and best wishes to the entire personnel of the 640<sup>th</sup>.

Sincerely, T/3 Herbert Maluch

**Abner F. to Arthur Kirk**

Sept. 5, Tuesday P.M.

Dear Kirk,

Just a line to let you know we are working our asses off, doing a company's work with just a platoon. What with all are men at school and supplying CQ's, barracks CQ's, a motor pool CQ, 2 guards & fatigue details we have about 40 men in the field. An ordinance outfit sent us 8 men and 2 more are due, but they are not medics & even the chaplain says they appear Snafu. I haven't the heart to look. We'll be sending our men to school in a few days and that leaves us nothing.

Even so, we're doing very well – so far. Priddy gave us an 84 this A.M.; we lost most of our points on security as we ran out of guards and Priddy pulled in just as we were changing.

Tante and I looked the area over and decided it wouldn't do for a permanent bivouac site as it had no provisions for a 12 vehicle motor pool. So we got a new site, which is rather good. Our problem will have to be modified as we cannot fix up 3 areas a week as it should be. The CP and kitchen are dug in, fox holes for all, etc. We have to stop the processing to get digging details. But we'll try to keep our heads above water.

Had to clamp down on Schister. He had a heavy weekend and was not on the ball Mon. A. M. Boy you must have been in one hell of a hurry to leave – and I don't blame you. Forgot about my red points didn't you?

Don't know why I wrote this, except perhaps I get pissed off at the details we have to pull and as Tante is attending to a Court Marshall case I had to sound off to someone.

If you get married I'll get Moody to grant you a 10 day extension. He might even wish you luck, the blimp.

As ever,

[Lt.] A. F.

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Sept. 6, Wednesday

Dear Margaret,

I haven't any transportation today so I am strictly around the camp area today. My jeep is having a 6000 mile check made and required a little work. It is a pretty good one though and I haven't had much trouble to date. So far, I have driven it about 12,000 miles here during the past seven months. That is quite a distance, but it is all necessary to keep up with the work.

I pulled out the Eversharp pen you gave me sometime ago and am using it now. It writes good and does not scratch like my old one. There seems to be a little difference in the writing - not better, but a little coarser.

Don't have but one sawmill now. Arrangements were made for some other outfit to run it and now it is off of my hands. I am glad because it couldn't put out a whole lot more lumber with the two mills. I was running the one with two shifts and when I got the new one I had to put one of the crews on the new mill as there weren't any more sawmill men to make up new shifts. James Goodman\*\* is working on one shift and is a ratchett setter. The way he rides the carriage and works reminds me of the way Mason\* used to do. I believe he tries his best to imitate Mason. He is making out alright and is doing good work.

I met a Major Bacher several months ago and came to be a good friend of his. We did a lot of work for him and just the other day we were talking and we found out that we both went to V.P.I. He finished in 1930. It was a big surprise as we had known each other for four months and just discovered that we were from the same school. Will write more later,

All my love,

Stokes

*\*Mason Newby- worked at Kirk Lumber Co. \*\*James Goodman- from Chuckatuck, Suffolk*

**James F. Donald to Arthur Kirk**

Sept. 8

Office of the Chaplain, Camp Pickett, VA

My dear Major Kirk,

You would have been most delighted with your company, if you had been present in the bivouac site this morning when Major [?] (from the 5<sup>th</sup> Hqr.) a career soldier of experience in France in War I, and in 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Force in desert and field, and in Attu. etc. in War II, accompanied by Major Moody inspected us.

Everything was in perfect order (except for some scraps of paper etc.) with CP and kitchen dug in and Walking and Litter Wounded immaculate (just moved to a new spot, re-established with everything in perfect array) and S/Sgt. Fissell lecturing to the non-coms on the next phase of the training schedule.

The inspecting Major who had himself seen field service, was very favorably impressed also when he saw the shower which the men had improvised. I told him that it was Kirk's Medical Engineers who had done this job. Major Moody fell for the job too, though he did not think it was necessary to have a galvanized sheet-iron shower floor. The inspecting Major from 5<sup>th</sup> Hqr. said that like Gen. Harrison, he was not interested in book work and administration, but wanted to know how the unit would conduct itself in the field. He saw how the 640<sup>th</sup> does and liked it well enough to tell us so.

We are missing you a great deal, but we are hoping that your leave is a most pleasant one. Nothing new or drastic has happened in your absence: we have the nine or ten new men for ordinance (some are related to Yank's "Sad Sack" but not all), our boys are off to school. Pieropan leaves Sunday, an enquiry has come from "Personnel" Lt. Slevac for a Surgical Technician of Pvt. or Pfc. rating (maybe Gunnoe).

Had a well attended song service in the bivouac site Tuesday evening, 22 were present, Register strummed on his Spanish Guitar and Melvin Loper played organ. Everyone seemed to enjoy himself very much.

We expect you back next week,

Chaplain James F. Donald

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Sept. 11, Monday A.M.

Dear Margaret,

I enjoyed the day yesterday quite a bit. After work at 12 noon I went down to the ocean and had a pretty good swim. I got a little burned on the back of my legs, but it doesn't bother me any today. After the swim, I went down to see our first football game and also the first in New Guinea. It was between the 132<sup>th</sup> and the 29<sup>th</sup> Q.M. and we won 6 to 0. I didn't expect to see such a good game, but it was an excellent one and well played by both sides. There was a large crowd there, too. It must be the first one I have seen since 1940.

I would like to know how much you have received from me so far. To date I have sent \$1190 with the last one being \$190. You have mentioned receiving \$20 checks several times, but don't know how much it totals to. So far I have sent you \$115 more than what I have drawn since being over here. Not bad, is it?

My taste is changing now and I crave some stuffed green olives and mayonnaise or salad dressing. Barney has received a little of both and they are really good for a change. I have enough ham to last for a while yet. I haven't received any boxes lately, but I think I have gotten all you have sent so far - excepting those that I haven't had time to get here haven't received any from Mamma so far.

Well, I burned my first 100 letters Sat. I think I got all of the pictures out of them beforehand, but I almost left the proofs of John and Lynn in one of them. I think I received all but one of the letters and I am not sure about not receiving that one as I received two with the same number and I believe on one occasion you were mixed up on the number.

All my love,

Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Sept. 16, Saturday

Dear Margaret,

I have received several letters from you and one from Dad during the last several days. All of them were very interesting and I was tickled about John and his calf. I know he is sorry that his calf is grown and that he "butts," but there is nothing he can do about it but get another calf - trade for a cow or something. I guess he must have been distressed about his "pet." He must have had an exciting birthday party. I am glad you decided to have it as he had wanted one for so long. In the same letter you said you had heard from Bud and that he was on Guam. He was in a hot spot allright. I know everyone was really worried until you heard.

You didn't think so much of the pictures you sent me of yourself, but I didn't think they were so bad. You are still my pin-up girl and I treasure the "pin up" pictures very much. I don't mind pulling them out and saying "That's my best girl" - and being proud of it. So you can take all of that back - poor pictures - ashamed of them, etc., - pooh.

I received a couple of boxes yesterday. One mailed July 24 with Sardines, candy, chewing gum, almonds & Pineapple juice. There was chewing gum, Lobster, pears, mints, shrimp, crab meat, etc in the other, but I don't remember the date mailed sometime around - I have it now mailed Aug 8. I have been enjoying the pecans and almonds a lot. However the rats got in the Milky Way bars of July 24 and ate the candy up. They are pesky rascals.

Another thing I just thought of you might send me a few tomato, watermelon & cantelope seed for planting in our garden. So far in the garden we have tomatoes, radishes, potatoes and okra. I don't believe I told you about it but Barney and I started a garden about a month ago and the crops are doing nicely.

Could also use a little Christmas "cheer" properly boxed and marked. Still have 2 of the original quarts.

All my love,

Stokes

**Marie Linge to Arthur Kirk**

Sept. 19, Wednesday

Hi Honey:

I guess I shouldn't be calling you seeing as I am going to be getting married, but the truth is I am just going to be a bridesmaid, and what a mix up the whole thing is. My dress hasn't as yet arrived and the wedding is on Saturday – so I guess I'll just have to wear my bathing suit.

It has been so gloomy all week that my spirits have been practically dragging on the ground, but it looks as if the sun might shine tomorrow.

Gene's sgt. is in the hospital at Indiantown and had his tonsils taken out today. On Sunday we went down on the bus to see him. I went because I was curious to see the place, but after that terrible bus ride I don't think I will go again. There were so many colored people on it that I almost thought I was on the train going to Richmond, and I sure wish I had been.

I have lots of ironing to do so I must close. Please write to me and make it oftener than once a week.

I'll try to write some nice cheerful letters as soon as I can shake myself out of this depressed stage of mind so be patient, please.

Love,

Marie

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Sept. 19, Tuesday A.M.

Dear Margaret,

I had my usual swim Sunday afternoon and got a right good red out of it. However, it hasn't bothered me at all so far. The red color has gone and I guess if I go in enough that sometime in the far future I might get a little brown. So far I have a lot of freckles. At present I have a decidedly yellow tinge to my skin which is characteristic of all G.I.s who have been in the S. W. PA for any length of time. It is caused by the yellow pill "Atabrin" which we take one of each day. It is just about as bitter as quinine and serves the same purpose. When you take the atabrin malaria won't affect you and it acts as a suppressor. If you do have malaria, you don't know it at all. It is a wonderful drug and this war down here could not get along without it.

I thought you might like to know the routine which we have fallen into here lately.

5:00 A.M. Daylight

5:15 To breakfast - don't know how I do it.

6:00 To work - clean up things to do at the office.

7:00 to 11:00 On the job

11:10 to 12:00 Dinner

12:00 to 16:00 (or 4:00 P.M.) On the job

16:00 (or 4:00 P.M.) Shower

17:00 (or 5:00 P.M.) Supper

18:00 (or 6:00 P.M.) Sometimes a show or work

Not bad, as it is practically the same as we did in training or in garrison.

Guess I will quit as it is close to 11:00 (or dinner time).

All my love,

Stokes

**Merle A. Kirk to Arthur Kirk**

Sept. 20

Dear Son:

Your letter came today - when I thought it was past time for us to hear from you. I had a nice letter from Marie written on the 13<sup>th</sup>.

I have had a cold since Thursday so I have to cancel my date with the hospital for tomorrow. I hate to put it off, but can't take ether while I also have a cold.

Now that grapes are ripe, we are having more company than usual; the crowd from Driver came Sunday also Eleanor Scott Sr., Sarah Frances and her husband, Sidney. Eleanor was taking them together with Josh, Betty, Dick Burk (from Appomattox) and Miss Harvey who is teaching in Holland – Dick's girl friend. He is just back from Italy having been overseas for more than two years. Josh says he looks dreadful. Dick is Jane's brother.

Virginia Martin Harper has been to see Mamma again. Drove down and intended to stay a day with Mamma but found the house full. Guess she is back in Farmville now. Virginia Davidson and her mother are still at Maurice's. Virginia is getting well of her strep - throat.

Our latest word from Stokes was written on the 26<sup>th</sup>. His letters surely take a long time to reach here – over two weeks, yet he has gotten mail from us in nine days. I sent him a box of canned shrimp, lobster, chicken, crab and jelly. I am anxious to find some canned nuts, any kind, but have seen none yet, and the time for mailing Christmas packages overseas will be up Oct. 15. Can you find canned nuts? Mamma is going to send fruit cake to him. It takes almost three months for a package to reach him. It will take longer now with so many in the mails. I had thought of sending a Planters box but I am told they are not packed for the Pacific trip.

Hope you are out of the woods now. It has been raining here since Saturday. Dad expects each day that he will work the next and awakens to find no sunshine.

Love to my boy.

Mamma

**Marie Linge to Arthur Kirk**

Sept. 21, Thursday

Camp Pickett, VA

Hi spoiled child:

I haven't heard anything from you all week and if the wedding announcement had anything to do with it I sure am sorry but I expected a different response or I wouldn't have carried it so far.

Of course you know my luck would be that the day would be here and I wouldn't have a dress. It sounds like a bad novel, but that is the way it is, so I guess I will be just an innocent spectator. Life is such a problem most of the time.

Gene is trying to find a little space to store a few purses, so she is hanging shoes all over the bedroom in order to clear the top of the closet. It really looks lovely. If you know anyone who wants a pair of shoes they can buy them here without a stamp.

Things have been dull here – we aren't even busy at the hospital. Today we had a storm and it hailed stones – at least it sounded like stones – it was really something, but it is still cloudy and unpleasant.

I just washed my blonde tresses and haven't as yet combed the mop but even so it doesn't look as bad as it did at Virginia Beach. I shudder every time I think of how awful it looked.

I guess this is enough nonsense for tonight so goodnight my dear Arthur.

Love, Marie



**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Sept. 22, Friday afternoon

Dear Margaret,

I just received a package mailed August 1 and some funnies mailed July 31<sup>st</sup>. I don't think I shall open them right away so I have quite a "larder" built up now. We, Barney & I have been using some of it along with his, but it has been coming in faster than we have been taking care of it. That is alright though - we can catch up in the matter of a few days. However, don't send any more shrimp we have quite a stock. I was able to buy a little candy today. Peppermint patties and chocolate bars also a few packs of chewing gum. It helps out a lot to be able to buy things at times and to receive good things to eat from home. As far as receiving boxes is concerned I know that my little wife really takes care of me. I expect just as well if not better than anyone else in the S. W. PA.

Guess I might be able to send another \$200 home before long. Will let you know when. Boy just came to give me a haircut so will stop.

All my love,

Stokes

**Marie Linge to Arthur Kirk**

Sept. 27, Wednesday

Dearest Arthur:

You know how terrible looking this lab is. Well they are finally going to paint it. The painter said we could have it any color we wanted but I have a feeling they already have the same sad tan and brown combination to put on. But anything will look better than the way it is now.

This is also the last weekend we work from 3 to 11 P.M. which is much to everyone's satisfaction. However, the second week in October, I am again going to take over the secretary's job in addition to my other duties, but this time it is only for one week and not several months.

I was thinking of coming down to see you this weekend as one of the girls in here is going to Norfolk to see her husband and I would have had company a great part of the way, but I haven't heard from you in so long that I thought perhaps you wouldn't want me to come. I hope that nothing is the matter with you.

Gene's sgt. is still in the hospital. He had a tonsillectomy last week and has had quite a time ever since. There was much bleeding at the time of the operation and he still can't eat or talk very well. You would think he was ready to die from the way Gene acts. People sure are silly, aren't they? It is time for me to go home now, so please write to me, and darn it you better make it soon.

Lots of love,

Marie

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Sept. 27, Wednesday night

Dear Margaret,

I had another check started on the way to you on Monday. This one is for \$110<sup>00</sup> to bring the total sent up to \$1300<sup>00</sup>. The last that I have heard, I believe, that you had received about \$800. By now you should have more than that or about to get a couple more. I am not short of any cash at present and will get paid for this month on Sat. so it looks like our financial position is in pretty good shape. However, I hate to think about our income tax when I do eventually get

home - 1943, 1944 etc. You can bet your bottom dollar that I will take advantage of any and all possible deductions.

Well, we have a new C.O. now. Col. Harris left about 6 weeks ago and Col. Lane took over. Col. Lane was on the highway in charge of the 341<sup>st</sup> - just ahead of the 95<sup>th</sup> and I knew him personally while on the highway. Now Col. Lane has left us and Lt. Col. Wade has taken over. I have known Col Wade ever since I have been on the island and I think he will be a splendid C.O. Both Barney and I are bucking for that Lt. Col. vacancy which each of us have been holding down for about 15 months and I guess we will really be on the ball from now on.

You asked me a question in a letter sometime ago (I believe when you were at Va. Beach) but I can't locate it.

Will write again later,

All my love,

Stokes

**Merle A. Kirk to Arthur Kirk**

Sept. 28

Did you take your moving picture camera, I have been looking for it. me

Dear Son:

Dad and I have just returned from Petersburg where Dad went to look at some machinery. I told him since we were so near I wished we could go a bit farther to Camp Pickett. I might have persuaded him if it had not been late in the day, 6 P.M., but he said we would not be likely to see you.

Yesterday we went to Richmond to have the car worked on – it took the hills so slowly we thought we would have to be towed in. After having a new gas tank and other changes it runs like a dream. We picked up a Marine near Petersburg to-night and he remarked about how nice it ran.

I got seven Planters Boxes to-day. Expect to send one each to Paul, Stokes, Bud Gill, Robert Gill, Lewis, Jack and Richard Marsh. We found some jars of things Stokes likes for spreads at Miller and Rhoads and some nice toasted almonds at another nice store. Bruce and Russell did not give Lucille, Margaret and me much time in the stores as we had to meet them and treat them to lunch. Then we met them again and they treated us to a movie again we shopped and they took us to dinner, and then a nice trip home. All was pleasant except the picture, "Since You Went Away." I could live a lifetime and never wish to see a picture like that – too sad and too real. We came out before it was over.

What are you busy doing? I should like to know!

Someone told me a Miss Johnson of Bacon's Castle wanted to know where you were, said you used to come to see her. Margaret says she is an attractive girl.

Love to my boy,

Mamma

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Oct. 1, Sunday noon

New Guinea

Dear Margaret,

I just hit the jackpot, a few minutes ago with four letter, three from you and one from Mom. Yours dated Sep. 19, 20 & 22 and Mom's Sept 20. I think I will try a new way of answering them - open them and write you as I read them. Now for the first one. Well, it has

some very good work of John's and several interesting news items. John has really improved over the first work that he did. I don't think there is really anything wrong with his eyes. I am glad that he likes his teacher and school better now.

The second letter has a picture of your Mother, John, Lynn and Parke. It is pretty good. There is also a letter from Elizabeth and a clipping about the hurricane you had. That must have been a terrific thing from all accounts you have given me so far. I heard it over the radio when the storm was first reported and wondered how people at home were making out and how much damage it did, but later the radio didn't mention Virginia so I didn't think anymore about it. However, I did hear over the radio about the Virginia floods on the James River which washed out several hundred bridges. You tell me about being a member of P.T.A. and that they have had a meeting. Would really like to attend the meeting for once. It would really be nice to be with you for a while, but don't think I could exactly make it. Also your pear preserves - bet they will be good this winter.

Your third letter tells me that you also hit the "jackpot" - three letters. I see you wonder if I have become a "nut" or not (wanting to be close to the activity, well not exactly) but I would like a better answer when my grandchildren ask me "How many Japs did you kill during the Great War", than "I didn't kill any, see any, or even see an enemy plane." That wouldn't be very exciting, would it? However, a very good friend of mine (a Lt.) been over here for 30 months is now in the "nut" ward of one of the hospitals. He has seen plenty of Jap but for me, I would rather have it on a smaller scale. Boy, in your first paragraph I got quite a lecture - on the receiving end.

Yes, I will write John a letter about why he has to go to school. He is much like his Dad, as I didn't like school either. Glad you are doing something about the files.

Got a box yesterday and a couple of packages of funnies. The box had 4 ham spread and three Smithfield spread. It is surely welcomed and I guess I have a plenteous supply for quite a while yet. Glad you are hearing regularly from Robert and Bud now.

All my love,

Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**

New Guinea

Oct. 1, Sunday noon

Dear Mom,

I just finished writing Margaret a letter as I had just received four letters-one from you and three from her. Just as I finished writing I got another with all of the letters written between Sept 19<sup>th</sup> and September 22<sup>nd</sup>. The latest one was only 9 days on the way.

"Maj." Arthur must be quite a sight since he has stoutened up. I would like to see him again as it has been so long. I can't imagine that he has gotten fat though. May have a chance to see him sometime if he goes over seas. Possibly he will come to the S.W. PA, however that won't be good. No civilization except for the army. Plenty of "fuzzy-wuzzies" with their spears, packs and loin cloths and drums. They are a familiar sight but are dumb as H\_\_.

You must be having quite a time with your fingers. If you have to do all you say to keep rheumatism out I believe I would rather have the rheumatism. I bet the grapes are good this year and there must be plenty of them from the list of season visitors you have had.

The grape vine is really a drawing card on the Kirk plantation. I would like to be drawn there, sudden like and spend a few hours under the vine. Hope you have succeeded in starting

other vines at the corners of the arbor. The last time I saw it the size was only about a third of what it was at one time.

Sorry you are having so much rain. I know it must be setting back everything. I wonder how your power saw is working now. They are nice machines, if properly taken care of. We have three in the Battalion and they are used on various projects when needed. Will write again soon,

Love to all,

Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Oct. 5, Wednesday

Dear Margaret,

I have a few minutes before lunch so I will drop a line. I have been particularly busy with investigations here lately. The companies are always losing something, having accidents that I have to investigate so therefore my time is taken up. Been receiving letters regularly here lately. Yesterday, I received one from Robert written Sept. 15. It made fairly good time having been sent over half way around the world. He must really be seeing the sights of the world.

Guess I will give poker up. At present, it seems as if no one wants to play. I am just about as far ahead as I have been yet. Guess I will send my "operating overhead" home soon. Guess this ought to put in bank for a good buy, if possible, or you could buy War Bonds.

Glad John likes school better now. The work you have been sending me and telling me about is real smart. Momma's and Daddy's big man seems to be doing real good at school. Tell John Daddy is real proud of him.

We got a case of beer per individual month before last. It was cut down to a half case last month and now the supply has run out. It was too good to last, however. I hardly ever drink it anyway. I know I gave about 50% of mine away and have about 10 bottles left. It was a lot of trouble for the Co. C.Os. as they had to furnish guards all of the time and then some of it got away. It is after dinner now so I guess I will have to get back to work.

All my love,

Stokes

**Doc Anderson to J. Stokes Kirk**

Oct. 9

San Fernando, Cal to New Guinea

Dear Kirk,

Received your letter of Sept 19<sup>th</sup> a few days ago. Was glad to learn that you are about out of the Army because then I feel there is some hope then for me to get out someday.

Sorry, old man, but so far only one box of clothing has showed up & that was the one containing the files & the bathing suit. I passed out the files & I still have the bathing suit & clothes waiting for word from you. Guess you wanted to give it to Aquino. I will watch for the other box & if or when it arrives I will return it to you right away. I had the Personnel Officer check on your June voucher & it was marked "spoiled" for some reason or other & they (the finance office) said it was O.K. to go ahead & sign another one for June. I also gave Aquino his letter & he seemed quite tickled that you had thought of him.

Bob Larsh, Mrs. Lovall & a Capt. Gage left for Manila today on the way home & that's the only ones that have gotten out of 1312 since you left.

We are hoping now that things will begin to pop. Medical & dental officers must have 80 points you know & Tim was 79 & I have a measly 55. Tim will probably get away pretty soon, but I don't know when I will ever get away.

Here is the saddest news of all old Paschal died in a hospital in Leyte on 24 Sept. from some rare 100% fatal disease involving skin & muscle. He got sick in Oro Bay & evacuated to French & from there to Leyte. On the 24<sup>th</sup> Sept. we received a wire here that he was seriously ill & was asking for me (that was the 1<sup>st</sup> we knew that he was even sick) I caught a plane down the next day & of course by the time I arrived he had died & was buried 36 hours before.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Bn. finally arrived on the 1<sup>st</sup> of Oct. (& they didn't know Paschal had died). We put them up in the area reserved for them & hadn't done a damn thing except put a half-assed road through the area. Then it started to rain & rained like it never did before for about 5 days; so you can imagine what their area looked like. Hoped to let them get set up yesterday. A Co. went to work on the docks and tomorrow C Co. sends down a platoon. We are working more now than we did before the war ended & 1312 is finally in the big time.

We are building an air strip between 360<sup>th</sup> Station the point started on it yesterday. Ed Taylor is the boss of the job we have or will have all the heavy equipment on the base working down there. It's a big job & a good one & if it doesn't rain too much I believe we will make it O.K. We have in about 25 new 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt's. fresh from the states, about 1/3 of which are infantry, coast artillery, etc. So you wouldn't even recognize it as 1312 now. We have a huge officer's mess now with a very nice building, dishes, table cloths, etc. & feeding 60 to 70 officers & you can walk in there at meal time & not see hardly a familiar face.

Pequette transferred to 42nd Engrs. In Mania & Kuehl took his company, Wimberly transferred to Major Jake's outfit & I think possibly that Bancroft will get his company. Pretty soon they will have 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt's. in as staff & company commanders, etc. Hickam, George, Whitt, Aden, Bowne and a few more of the old gang could be on their way home in a very few weeks.

The new C.O. is rough as hell & what most people would call a S.O.B., but is very competent & efficient & gets things done. He's got us all hopping & I guess it's what we needed because Jones really had 1312 on the skids. Ross & Hopkins were the ones that messed Jones up & "no better for him". The new C.O. brought in a couple of good men with him & we accidentally got one from the 864<sup>th</sup> who is now S-3. So if we don't mess up on this strip job I believe old 1312 will end up its part of the war as a damned good outfit & with a good reputation. Col. Chapman is X.O. & C.O. of 1<sup>st</sup> Bn., but is unhappy I think. He doesn't like the new C.O. I'm afraid.

That's about all the news I guess. I didn't intend to write so much but got started & couldn't stop. Give Belote my regards & write if you get the chance.

As ever,

Doc

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Oct. 10, Tuesday

Dear Margaret,

Nothing to write about that's the least exciting. I am doing the same thing in about the same way and nothing is unusual. However, Barney's tomatos are doing pretty good. They are of good size and have quite a few blooms. Hope we will have fresh ones before long. His radishes are also doing pretty good.

I know of one other thing you might send sometime. A little whole grain popcorn. I could make a popper and have quite a time with it. Bailey had some and tried to pop it in a mess kit. It popped all right, but all over the floor. We enjoyed it though.

You told me the other day that you had received \$1190. On Sept. 25 I sent \$110<sup>00</sup> and on Oct. 5, I sent \$200. I guess you will get the \$110 by the time you receive this letter and maybe

the \$200 soon thereafter. It will make a total of \$1500 sent to date which I don't think is so bad. I have about reached the bottom of the larder for the present as I only have about \$300 left. I have drawn a total of \$1155. 16 since being here and now have quite a surplus \$300 plus \$345 over and above the drawn amount which I have sent you. That makes \$645 & expenses that I am ahead. Don't worry, I keep books on it. Maybe we can afford a jeep or new car after the war. It points that way now.

I just had to stop for a minute and use the fly spray bomb. They were bothering me but the fly spray took care of them. They are just ordinary house flies and just as pesky. You might not know what the fly spray bomb is, but Mr. Ellison might know so ask him about it the next time you see him. I am very enthusiastic about it. I don't know how much they cost but are very efficient. Some mail just came so guess I will stop and read for awhile instead of writing.

All my love

Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Merle A. Kirk and J. Russell Kirk**

Oct. 12, Thursday A.M.

New Guinea

Dear Mom & Dad

Thinking of what it is like at home now, leaves falling, hunting season coming in and probably quite a bit cooler. Wish I were there where things change a little. Here, it is green trees all of the time, no change in temperature as it ranges between about 70\* at night to a maximum of 95\* during the middle of the day and there is no actual game hunting.

October 13, 1944 Friday

I didn't have time to finish yesterday so I am beginning again. Since I started writing yesterday I managed to get an edger for our saw mill. It is a nice little machine and I finished having it installed this afternoon. We tried it out and it works fine. It is made by the Corinth Machinery Co. as are most of the saw mills over here. The heavier mills, however, are much better than mine. It is only a 40 H.P. unit with a small mandrel and husk frame driven by an 8" belt. The heavier ones are driven by a 90 H.P. engine like the one I had in British Columbia. However, the one we have averages about 35,000 ft. during a 7 day week whereas the B.C. one averaged 50,000 for a 6 day week, 7 hour day on frozen logs. The timber here is very poor grade on the average as it springs so badly. A few of the kinds such as mahogany, walnut, Ohahu and bendora don't spring but they are awfully hard and most of them are too large to handle. They make excellent lumber though. There is plenty of timber here and I would like for you to have several tracts of it at home as it would be worth a small fortune there. However, the value of it is not much here. Guess I will stop.

Love to all,

Stokes

**Marie Linge to Arthur Kirk**

Oct. 12, Thursday

Dear Sweetheart:

I am in bed and ready to go to sleep and I hope it doesn't happen before I finish this letter. I think this double job business is a little too much but it is almost over. This pen is so bad now that it will hardly write so please hurry & send me the new one.

The Sgt. just came back from a furlough in St. Louis and Gene has a few days off so she is very happy for the time being.

Tonight I saw the picture "Since you went away" and it certainly was a sob picture. It sounded like a funeral the way the people were weeping. This isn't a very inspiring letter but perhaps I can do better tomorrow.

All my love,

Marie

P.S. Are you sure she was little & fat and homely?

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Oct. 13, Friday night

New Guinea

Dear Margaret,

The insects in my office here tonight are awful. It just rained yesterday and last night and it seemed to drive them out of their hiding places. The office is entirely screened with a concrete floor, metal roof, but the bugs get in anyhow. I just used bug bomb spray which seems to have helped things a little.

I started a letter to Mom yesterday and just finished it up. Guess you will see it so I won't say what was in it except that it was mostly sawmill business. I received a box today postmarked Aug. 22. I am ready to open it now and get a surprise. I really did get one - tomato soup, 2 crabmeat, one lobster, one shrimp, one sardines, 4 chewing gum and one N L D dated Aug. 21. It is all very welcome and I know I will enjoy them all. Better hold up on the seafood though as I believe I can eat a can of it each day for the next thirty days and not run out. And from what you say is coming (according to your last letter), I must have at least 10 boxes in the mail. Whew, by the time I get all of those and then if I were back in the States, I would probably be guilty of hoarding. I love you for every box, but guess you had best put a little less effort in it.

Officers who have been over here for 30 months and over are leaving for the States off and on. I have been on Foreign Service this time since Jan. 20<sup>th</sup> so I have almost 9 months to my credit now. It is not as bad as it has been, but 21 more months is a long time to wait. I hope however that the war will be over much sooner than the end of that period. Germany is in a pretty bad way now and the end there will release quite a big force to get this one over here over with. I am hoping for a quick end.

Christmas is really coming fast now. Hope the kids will have a big one and I wish I could be with all three of you.

We have a show after awhile so I will quit now.

All my love,

Stokes

P.S. N L D. means Not in Line of Duty or Norfolk Ledger Dispatch in case you wondered.

**Merle A. Kirk to Arthur Kirk**

Oct. 15

Dear Son:

Josh wanted to know what you are doing; he says your letters don't tell much, but he liked the last I received better. I did, too. I am so sorry George and Alison have left, since they seem to have been your closest companions. Have you not made any contacts with civilians in Carlisle? I should think you might meet some nice girls, they are not all in the army as are most of the local boys.

Sister says she had a hurry up letter from Mary (Jack Menger's wife) while they were away. She wanted to know how to reach you as they want you to come again. I gave sister your address, but don't know that she has sent it yet. I believe she said she wrote Mary to call at

Carlisle Barracks. News has been received that Tidewater Virginia now has many boys in England. Fred Barrow and one of the Yerby boys, who lived across the street from Sister, are in the group. Jesse Davidson is in St. Petersburg. He wrote Aunt Laura that everything was O.K. there but the heat.

On looking at the map last night I found that Stokes is just as far north as the southern tip of Greenland and farther north than the Aleutians.

Last Thursday week (8<sup>th</sup>) while I was listening to the radio the Carnation Milk program came on. Was I surprised when I heard them say the Carnation Bouquet of Honor would be presented to Miss Marina Diez of Richmond, Va for her act of heroism. They then told of her gallant operation on the railroad workman. Before, I had heard them announce presentations to such as Mrs. Douglas MacArthur, Miss Mc K. King and plane pilots. I know she must have been excited.

Dad seems entirely well again. Brother does not think the back ache was caused by any stomach trouble. Any way I dread the possibility of another attack.

Brother and Hattie were excited over having had such a nice trip. They came up Sunday and visited for over an hour. I was real proud of my brother's visit, they are so rare. He told Russell that he had hoped to have you help him when you graduated. I don't believe you nor I knew that.

Best of love to my boy.

Mamma

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Oct. 17, Tuesday A.M.

Dear Margaret,

Received a letter you wrote two weeks ago tonight telling me about John's lessons (dancing). I guess he does enjoy that immensely as anything with activity in it is his pie. Guess by now that he and Lynn are really "cutting a rug" around the house jitterbug style.

Guess the big reason that so many of my letters have been opened lately is the security one. I can't discuss the whys and wherefores of that reason as I don't want to give away any military secrets. However, none of your 25 letters (whew - a lot of letters) have been opened. When I was in British Columbia quite a few of yours were opened but none while here.

I guess John would have been heartbroken if he had to do his numbers, 1 to 50 over again. An hour is a mighty long time for the little fellow to sit down and write, then when he finishes accidentally tear the paper in two - and after that have to do it over. I know you did right to mend it for him.

Went to the show last night and saw "Mr. Winkle goes to War." I enjoyed it a lot. "Dragon Seed" is coming soon and from what I have heard it would be a fine show. Also in the line of amusement, I went swimming Sunday afternoon and got just as red as a beet. The sun was very hot and as I had lost about all of my tan, I got a pretty good burn. It hasn't bothered me any though.

I wrote to the folks a couple of days ago and soon afterwards I received a very interesting letter from Dad. I also got one from Grandma yesterday besides a couple from you. Mail has been coming in pretty good. It seems as if the short envelope mail is coming in at the same time as other longer envelope mail. Date marks for mailing are the same on both and they both get here at the same time so I guess you might as well go back to the shorter envelopes.

I have received my first and second Christmas package. I haven't opened either one, but one mailed on Sept. 13 is quite a surprise - a fruit cake. Barney is about to die he wants to find



out what is in them so bad. Guess I will open them today - sometime after I find something to put it in - to keep out the rats.

All my love,  
Stokes

**Merle A. Kirk to Arthur Kirk**

Oct. 19

Dear Son:

I went to Portsmouth with Josh & Betty. They dropped me at Sister's where I spent the night. The next day, Tuesday, Margaret brought Lynn down and we fitted her to a pretty coat and hat. She looks "fitten."

Jack called up from Camp Meade asking his dad to send some money as he expected to take a trip to Washington. He says they are being fitted with new things. That sounds as though they are being readied to go across. I hope not!

When I got home I found the folks eating chocolate. After much inquiry I found you had sent them to me. You were pretty quick on filling a request and I thank you, Son. If they don't eat all, as is, I shall use them in cooking.

Lewis writes he has been through the Panama Canal, went the way opposite from that which he wanted to make the trip. Guess he is far away now.

Love to my son,  
Mamma

**Merle A. Kirk to Arthur Kirk**

Oct. 22

Dear Son:

I was so pleased to get your lengthy letter and the pin enclosed. I am delighted with the nice gift and wore it to-day with yours and Stokes' insignia. Now I want you to get something else to bring home when you come - we can't find any Nescafé' - how about a large jar.

The Christopher's came to see us this afternoon and helped us eat the last of the grapes. They are really good now but rotting fast - the grapes, I mean. Dad says it is hard to get Cutie anywhere and harder still to make him go home. They stayed from about 5:30 to 7:30. I told them I would serve toast if they would stay longer.

I can't understand why everything comes at one time. Dad and I have tickets for a concert in Norfolk to-morrow night, the Ames have invited us to have supper with them and our card club meets with Evelyn, and of course I can take in only one, the concert. We will leave here early in the morning so that Dad can attend the Selective Service quarterly meeting in Norfolk. I may go out to see my Mom.

I wonder if Stokes could have been taken to the Philippines? Engineers were taken from New Guinea. If conditions were normal I am sure he would like the place and climate better.

When will you be coming home?

Love,  
Mamma

**Luigi to Arthur Kirk**  
France

Oct. 23

Dear Major Kirk;

A little time on my hands so I thought I would drop you fellas a line plus a little request.

First a little news. I imagine that you already know of our where abouts as Abbott & Tom wrote as a while back. We're still all by our lonesome and haven't accomplished anything as yet. We have been living under canvas all the time and have just started getting warm meals. Up until then it was a very modified "B" ration, corned beef, spam, bread & jam and that's all. We had "C" rations for a spell and they were highly welcome. Steinlieb, Giddings & Zurdan are about a stone's throw away, but no connections as yet.

Have travelled over quite a bit of the country around us and have seen many places that bear many marks of the fighting that took place around them. One fairly large town that lies in a valley is bad that they might just as well fill in the valley and start from there.

As yet our bedrolls and footlockers haven't caught up with us. If you come this way or the other, my advice is to box everything, yes even your footlockers, tool sets, etc. They receive plenty of rough treatment and the amount of pilfering is terrific. Don't depend too much on this "you'll get it over seas" stuff. Bring along all you can get away with. That symbol "TAT" didn't mean a thing in our case, believe me. Am stretching the bounds of security now, but wish I could tell you more.

Just heard from Burpee & company and was mighty glad to get word from them. They have been here from July and were in the drive across the Brest Peninsula, all the way back to Nancy and are now in Belgium. Fred, Bolbock and Mac all received battlefield promotions on the same day. Was especially glad to hear of that but in writing back to Burpee I quickly set him straight that those railroad tracks didn't mean a shit to me. Also heard from my old unit and they have seen plenty too. Burpee was asking about the old gang, namely you fellows.

Tom is going great guns as usual. He located that nurse, Balfour, whom he knew in Edwards and has been knocking himself out bumming to see her. That isn't too often though. They have both filed applications for marriage.

There is nothing to do around here. They just put all cafes & the like off limits. Also installed a 10 P.M. curfew to all troops. However, all reports indicate that Paris is still a great place. Hope to be able to get there in the near future.

Make out a big allotment is also my advice.

Now my request is that we would like copies of the orders moving us from Edwards to Dix & Dix to Elkins. Would like one copy or two copy of each if possible. We packed all ours and learned later that we are entitled to travel pay on those moves. The same goes for you and your officers. Would appreciate this favor very much.

Well Major, guess that's about enough for now. Lets hear from you and give my regards to all.

As ever,

Luigi

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Oct. 24, Tuesday A.M.

Dear Margaret,

I just received a letter from you written Oct. 9<sup>th</sup> and you had just received one written about Sept. 25<sup>th</sup>. Regarding the question about Isabelle and the preacher I was hoping you would

read between the lines. I know it is hard to do sometimes - but I never heard of the place before. I must be in the dark - write me where it is. Well, there goes the dinner bugle, so will finish afterwards.

Thursday night

Didn't have a chance to finish Tuesday so I wrote last night telling you about it. We have quite a few tomatoes on the vines in the garden. The garden is just outside of our hut - about 15 ft. away from where I am writing. The "track" is really growing in the black soil of New Guinea, but at first our tomatoes just would pop out from the blooms. So I had our "gardener" (also orderly) take a piece of cotton and daub each of the blossoms in order to fertilize them. It seems that bees are not very prolific over here, however that is the only kind that is not very prolific. There are all kinds and plenty of them (other kinds) as far as insects are concerned thousands of kinds I have never seen before.

Radio seems very encouraging tonight with the terrific Jap losses in the sea battles during the last few days. Every action like these means that we will get back sooner and the sooner the better. Going on eleven months from the time we left San Francisco on Jan. 20<sup>th</sup>. That will be as long as I spent on the entire Alaskan Highway project, but it doesn't seem near as long maybe because it is more comfortable here - not as cold and unpleasant.

Will write again in a couple of days.

All my love,

Stokes

**Pauline Anna Preston to Bud Gill**

Oct. 24

Crittenden, VA

Dear Bud,

I received your letter today and was I glad to hear from you! I'm so glad you're all right. Now I hope you write more often. Me too, I guess, I haven't hurt myself writing either. I know they keep you pretty busy.

I see your mother about every time I go to Smithfield. She always tells me when she hears from you. Charlie is in Gulfport, Miss. He's about ready to leave there now though. I hate to think of him leaving because he knows or is almost certain that he'll be sent to the West Coast.

Say, you're really getting up in the world, aren't you? Congratulations "Sgt."

Charlie is studying electricity - I may have told you before. He sent me a large, tinted picture of him. It's really swell, I wish you could see it. I had mine made for him. I have to send it tomorrow.

Since I wrote you last, I mean since that letter of Aug. 9, Ted has been home twice. He's still on convoy duty. Was in New York the last time we heard from him. We heard from Jack about a month ago. I hope he's all right. I wish he could come home.

I like my work quite well - the only hard thing is getting up in the morning. It's beginning to get cold here now. There's not much excitement here now. In fact, there hasn't been any for a long time. Everyone I know is either working or going to school.

Phyllis is down here now. She's been here ever since Thursday nite. She went to school today but came back because she forgot a book. She's lots of fun. There's a new girl around here now. She's 16 and is she rugged!

I did pretty good today. I got four letters. I'm glad one of them was from you. Write as often as you can Bud please and you're forgiven for not writing sooner.

I'll close now, take good care of yourself Bud. I pray for you every nite. Write often if you can. Write to your Mother anyway and she can tell me how you are. I think about you a lot and wish those good days were back again.

Good bye until next time.

Love,

Polly

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Oct. 25, Wednesday night

Dear Margaret,

Guess that this has been the longest time that I haven't written - about a week. I will make up for it in the next two or three days. I have started letters twice in the last two or three days and haven't completed one yet. I expect to do so on this one.

Well, we have gotten in the Philippines now which sounds pretty good. Guess that is the reason the censor opened all of my letters up thru about three weeks ago. I think I said in my last letter that the reason was security.

I celebrated the news by going to a dance last Friday night. It was different from the last dance I went to last February (I think I wrote you about it). I was in a pretty good mood and enjoyed the occasion a lot. I would have liked it a lot better if you could have been there.

Just came from the show a while ago. I have been going to see about three or four a week here lately - have seen more during the last three months than during the previous three years I guess. They have all been excellent and we have an officer's section which is really tops. Canvas chairs on a raised platform with no one's big head in front. We have been here in New Guinea for over 8 months (longer in one place than anywhere else during my army career) and have had a chance to really get a good setup which we have taken advantage of. Most of the time heretofore, when we get partially built up we have to leave - such as - A.P. Hill, Fort Nelson and Dawson Creek. They were moving days.

Guess I will quit and finish one of my previous letters tomorrow,

All my love,

Stokes

**Marie Linge to Arthur Kirk**

Oct. 26, Tuesday

Darling:

Don't you think that is a sweet way to start a letter. Every once in a while I want to call you this but then again you make me so mad that I forget any endearing names I ever knew. Besides it sounds so strange coming from me even though I would like to say it. I guess I'm just not used to it.

If I were you, I would not talk about the length of anyone else's letters. Yours aren't very long either. It would be very nice to get a long sweet letter from you sometime you know.

Everything is in a stew again. The roof is leaking upstairs all over the new wallpaper, the spouting is broken and the rain is dripping through the skylight. It has been raining here for three days now and it looks like maybe we might have a flood if it keeps up. That would be exciting but not very sanitary. And besides it is getting a little cold to be swimming in the street.

You remember the girl I told you had septisemia and was getting penicillin. Well she is now much better. Her blood cultures are negative and the colony count shows only 2 colonies. In the beginning there were 21. It should be negative now, but they think something else is causing the delay in a complete recovery. That stuff must be pretty powerful.

It is nice to know you are up there with so many “southern gentlemen” although, my dear, I never did think the two words went very well together. It is something like “officer and gentleman.” They sound nice but don’t mean much. Personally I don’t think there is much difference between a southern gentleman and a Yankee. Basically they both operate the same way.

After I work this Sunday I will leave a whole day coming so perhaps sometime I can take a long weekend and come up to see you. However, there wouldn’t be much point to it if you would have to work all the time that is unless you could furnish a nice substitute.

You have gotten in kind of a rut starting your letters “dearest Marie!” That was nicest part of them before.

All my love,  
Marie

**Merle A. Kirk to Arthur Kirk**

Oct. 27

Dear Son:

It seems the men folk here are going to a ball game on Saturday, also. They expect to see N.C. State and W. & Mary. I hope the wind will not be blowing as it is tonight. I’ll spend the afternoon with my Ma and then we will eat supper at the Eberwine’s home.

I went to Crittenden Wednesday to see Vernon Eberwine, Jr and Alice Barcalow married. It was a lovely wedding, lovely flowers and lovely dresses. The preacher told the bride she looked lovely, while they were still standing before the altar, I had never known that done before.

I like the pictures, Son, and sent two to Stokes. You boys really moved around too fast for the camera. Margaret and the children are spending the night with us. Dad wanted to go to the Masonic meeting and asked Margaret to stay with me. I have finished Lynn’s fourth dress and she looks quite nice in them. I think I’ll have my operation next Wednesday. We have made plans for the operation and if I don’t get another cold to keep me at home I shall go down. That big fire in the new hospital in Portsmouth is likely to change the date of their opening. It is a pity so much of the equipment was lost.

Guess Nell had an exciting time. Nell and Mike had us down to dinner at their apartment. She is a real nice hostess and Dad says she is a good cook. After dinner all four of us went to a Little Theatre. They gave the best performance I have seen there. We will be looking for you at home again soon.

Love,  
Mamma

P.S. Can you get me some canned sliced pineapple and cans of fruit cocktail? The stores do not carry any now. I’ll pay you for it.

**Merle A. Kirk to Arthur Kirk**

Oct. 28

Dear Son:

It just rains and rains! As soon as the men start to work they have to stop to keep from getting soaked. Dad got most of the hay under cover, but he was disappointed at not being able to house it all. The rain will get the clover and rye, which was planted, on its way toward growing.

The minstrel will be to-morrow night and I have looked in the old trunks for things to wear. Found my large black hat Found my large black hat and two willow ostrich feathers to trim it with. This, May Bell Edwards will wear while she sings some classy negro song from the

movie, "Stormy Weather." She is pretty good at that type of song. I was to have sung one verse, but persuaded Cutie to do it for me – my voice is too apt to break in the midst of singing and I would feel bad.

Dad is going to take Arnold Ricks back to the hospital to-day. He cut his foot with an axe - it must have been before you were home in Sept. - and it appeared to be healing but soon got worse and is still in a bad way. His doctor – Gibson – says it has him puzzled but thinks a piece of bone will have to come out. Dad says he wishes he had asked you to look at it while you were here.

The boy who went A.W.O.L. could not have gone home or his wife would not have been so ready to condemn him. I don't suppose you have much trouble with their indifference or rebellion. Stokes has some trouble. He is often at court martial trial. Negroes don't bear responsibility when there is a way out.

The children seemed to have a wonderful time with the things the Oct. Santa Claus brought them, but the one for whom the occasion was made was away most of the day. Margaret said Stokes had to leave at 7 A.M. and returned at 5 P.M. but he got the children up before he left. I sent John some paper things to construct. He and Stokes had fun with these - several types of boats.

I am glad the people where you are, are doing things to entertain the boys. Margaret said they went to the Officers' dance on the 16<sup>th</sup>. Have you seen the old Eustis home at Scraggy Neck yet? You know the Eustis's are twin brothers who own the West Norfolk smelter and who stop at Mamma's when in Portsmouth- you have met them, or one of them.

Love to my boy,

Mamma

**Marie Linge to Arthur Kirk**  
Harrisburg, PA to Camp Pickett, VA

Nov. 2, Thursday

Dearest Arthur,

I am sending the \$15 back by return mail as I said I would. There is only one thing I really want and it cost a lot more than \$15.00 so you may as well keep this. Use it when you go to Richmond and have fun.

Love,

Marie

**J. Stokes Kirk to Arthur Kirk**  
New Guinea to W.V.

Nov. 2, Thursday P.M.

Dear Arthur,

I never caught so much "Hell" in two sentences before as I did in the note you wrote. However, it amused me a lot and thought I would "make up" a return letter while I am waiting for my jeep. My orderly just went up to the sawmill after some strips to make a few tomato frames. Barney (Maj. Belote) and I have a small garden just outside of the hut with some tomatoes. We have quite a few and if we hang around long enough, we will have ripe fresh tomatoes.

Been pretty busy since midnight this morning. It rained pretty hard and consequently we are repairing bridges, etc. today. Just had another emergency call so guess I will cut short for now.

Nov. 7

It seems to be a long time between lines and I have about forgotten what I was to say going almost a week ago until I read the first part of the letter again. Anyhow my bridge troubles are over for now. Today is election day back in the states. Guess there are the usual arguments and the same number of fights as there were during peace times. Glad to be in New Guinea where it is safe from feuding mountaineers, etc. Mom sent me a couple of shots showing what fast workers you are. The poor patient must be getting a lot done in a short time. Anyhow here are the shots after traveling to New Guinea. The pictures seem to get around. Glad to have heard from you and write again sometime.

Stokes

**Marie Linge to Arthur Kirk**

Nov. 5, Thursday

My dearest Kirk:

Please forgive me for not writing before but for some reason or other I just couldn't get around to it. Just because I don't write doesn't mean that I'm not thinking of you. That is the trouble, I think of you too much. Well that's enough of that.

Next week "Porgy and Bess" are coming to the State and Jane Davidson and I have tickets. I don't know who is in the cast but it should be good. I wish you were here to see it for I am sure you would enjoy it. It seems to me it has something to do with the South, hasn't it.

Do they accept morons (excluding you) or near morons in the army? The other night when I worked some soldier came in for a premarital. He was with his brother-in-law, I think, and was a pale, chinless looking person. After I took the blood, he stood up and then fainted by bending in the middle and falling right smack on his head. He broke his glasses and had a bump as big as an egg on his forehead. I think he had to marry the girl and we all agreed we would rather not have the husband than have something as simple as he was.

I'd like to write you a nice long letter but my mind seems to be rather cloudy so I'll do that some other time.

My love as ever,

Marie

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Nov. 6, Monday night

Dear Margaret,

Just came in from the show a few minutes ago. It was pretty good and I enjoyed it. It was "Hail! The Conquering Hero." The sound was bad towards the last, but that is to be expected in open air theatre with bugs and insects flying around the projector.

I received a lot of letters today, there must have been twelve, most of them from you. I haven't finished reading all of them as I am saving three for tomorrow. They were very newsy and I enjoyed them. Guess I will write "Pappy" Gordon a letter sometime soon. I know he is glad to finally make it to France. From what you say Robert is getting along alright and I am glad of it. Bud must be getting along O.K. also. Actually he is farther west than I am. However the sooner we get a strangle hold on those Japs the better.

I received the box of seed yesterday, but am very undecided whether to plant them or not. I would like to be sure of reaping or eating the crop so guess I will put it off for a while. Also received a box which went to the 1311<sup>th</sup> instead of to the 1312<sup>th</sup>. Haven't opened it yet, but know it will be a surprise. I opened the fruitcake and it is really good. Not a bit crushed, just as moist

as it should be and not a bit moldy. I eat a slice about everyday and am actually pretty stingy about it as I have given only Barney some of it.

The news comes on in a few minutes so I will take a breather. It really sounds encouraging on all fronts. Now the radio is full of new in all languages, Spanish, Filipino, etc. I was trying to get "Madame Tojo," a Jap propaganda broadcast in English. They are plenty good sometimes when they play the 1942 recordings. They are now giving Australia and America "Hell" as usual.

Guess I will quit for a while.

All my love,  
Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Nov. 6, Monday A.M.

Dear Margaret,

Went in swimming again yesterday. The waves were pretty high and rough as possible. However, I am getting so I can swim a little better each time in and now I really enjoy paddling around. New Guinea beaches are not as dangerous as those in Virginia as there is no undertow and I have yet to see or hear of any sharks, barracuda, or octopus bothering anyone here. All in all, the beaches are ideal for swimming.

Stokes

**Marie Linge to Arthur Kirk**

Nov. 8, Wednesday

Dearest Arthur,

This is the third letter I have started since Sunday but each time I fell asleep or was too tired to think of anything to write. I still haven't got much to say that, but that threat in your last letter has me scared, so I decided I had better write. I suppose you aren't too happy about the election since you are such a staunch republican or were you just a Dewey ham and really a damn democrat underneath just like all the other rebels. It is too bad that you became a little bored with the opera but perhaps you didn't have the right company with you. Was she blonde or brunette or were you true to me? I have the next few week-ends free, thank goodness, and I am going home this week-end, I think. I haven't been in Bethlehem for ages it seems. The elephants are at it again upstairs. It sounds as if the ceiling is going to fall through. I am still knitting on those gloves. I finished the ones I was making, but it is much too big. The pattern was a 6 ½ size, but the glove part without the fingers is almost big enough for the whole hand so I am starting all over again. I can't think of any more to tell you but at least your mail clerk won't be able to say I don't treat you right.

All my love,  
Marie

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Nov. 10, Friday noon

Dear Margaret,

Have a little time on my hands so I thought I would write. I just received two boxes - one from Grandma and one from Mamma with Mamma's dated Sept. 16. almost two months getting here, but appreciated them just the same. Mamma's has raspberry (or blackberry jam), boned chicken, lobster, etc. Grandma sent a box of candy. The hot weather had just about taken it but



it is still in condition to be eaten so my "office force" will enjoy it this afternoon. We have already started and it is pretty good.

We had fresh meat today and night before last. Capt. Woodman had three pretty steaks cut off and we fried them to taste. Taylor was along also. Mine was medium rare and it was the best meal I have had since being over here. These two times have been the first times for fresh meat for almost two months. It reminded me of some of your steaks.

I sent \$150 home about a week ago and I guess you should receive it pretty quick. That makes a total of \$1650<sup>00</sup> so far. I am also enclosing a check for \$64<sup>40</sup> made out to you. Capt Spencer (who used to be with the 95<sup>th</sup>) paid me back in check for some cash I loaned him (£20). Might as well do with both sums as you see fit - if we can't get a good buy War Bonds will be all right.

I received the "joke" you sent. It was pretty good and I have had quite a few laughs over it so far.

Also enclosed are a few pictures. I will have more to send later on. I just mailed a Christmas souvenir to both John and Lynn. They are the same thing so there should be no fussing over them.

Guess I will quit and write more later.

All my love,

Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Nov. 11, Saturday P.M.

Dear Margaret,

Received a package (mailed Oct. 6) today with a cake of soap, a towel, a package of chew. gum and another cake - one of your Mother's fruit cakes. Tell Mrs. Gill I really appreciate it and I know it will be good. I won't open it up until I finish the other one. It seems to be in excellent condition and wasn't crushed by the trip.

Also received a letter today #80. In your letter #78 you asked about the candy. When I got it I put it up on the shelf thinking it was bath powder. Well, about a week later I discovered it was candy. I opened it and ate most of it. The condition wasn't too good - the hot weather made it run together and was a little moldy around the edges, but I dug out spoonful's, chewed it and then spit out the wax paper you had between layers. I enjoyed it as much as if it were perfect in all respects.

I also received the shoes and the pyjamas you mailed so it looks like all boxes are accounted for. I thought I wrote about them but evidently I didn't.

John wants something from New Guinea, does he? Well tell the rascal that his Daddy has mailed him two letters - one just for him and one with some New Guinea (Xmas present) money that he has never seen before. Also tell him to pull the edge of the pound note back on the left hand side and look thru the oval window, holding the note up to the light and he will see a man in the window.

I also mailed the other rascal some New Guinea money - the same thing as John's so there won't be any fuss. Lynn's also has a man in the window.

I understand that we feast for supper tonight. Steaks have been held over in the refrigerator for two days to await ice cream which was being frozen. So it looks like we will really eat tonight. My office is only about 40 ft. from the mess hall and the smells issuing forth are really delish. Doing a little better on my letter writing now, I think.

All my love, Stokes

**Merle A. Kirk to Arthur Kirk**

Nov. 13

Dear Son,

Have you been up to Richmond again? This seems to be a full theatre schedule for this week. Who went with you and what did you see? Miss Hawthorne said she saw you. Josh told her to hush talking and go, play the piano. (They are rehearsing for the ministerial to be given the latter part of this month) Those meetings are causing Josh some annoyance. He was invited to dinner each evening and had to “eat and run” so that he could get to Chuckatuck for rehearsals.

I went down to see my doctor yesterday and he says I am getting on splendidly. He makes me feel that I am just about “Tops.” Frances [*Frances Thomas Sledge*] is back from out west where she spent four weeks with her husband. I am sure she hardly knew her baby, Betsy [*Betsy Sledge*], as she has gained so much weight. She looks like a real live baby now no hollows. Mamma, Sister, Nell and the baby came up to see me Thursday. We had a real family meeting.

Hosier [*Hosier Whitfield*] is down with pneumonia and Grace [*Grace Outland*] has been called to John Outland’s bedside in Baltimore. News from Kirktown! Dad has bought all of Mrs. Adam’s timberland for \$15,000 and had to make a loan from the bank to do it. He is quite proud of his acquisition. That makes \$29,000 he now owes the bank and it makes Mr. Jones very happy. Dad made some notations on a scratch pad while in the bank, Mr. Jones found it later, and called up telling Dad he would have someone ride out and give it to him. That is real consideration. Dad went to see Eunice [*Eunice Minton Whitley*] about buying the hill for Josh. At first she was struck with horror to think of such a thing, but later said she would let him know.

Love,

Mamma

**Marie Linge to Arthur Kirk**

Nov. 14, Monday

Hi Darling,

This week I feel real rich. I have a car to drive around in and about two thimblefuls of gas. I drove back from Bethlehem and it certainly was a relief from that train. My Dad wants to sell his car and he said I could have everything over \$1000 if I could sell it down here. The only trouble is I can only get \$955 since that is the ceiling price. He won’t sell it for that, however he wants at least \$1200 for it. Would you like a good car cheap? The pen is still working fine as you can see even though you probably can’t understand the writing. The Sgt. is restricted until a prisoner is found who escaped from over there and she has been calling him all night. Any day I would chase after any guy like that. I can’t think of much more to write so I will wait to hear from you.

Lots of love,

Marie

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Nov. 14, Tuesday

Dear Margaret,

Just a short note this time as I am enclosing a map of the S.W. P.A. which will probably prove interesting to you and the folks. I want to save it as it gives all of the important happenings and dates of them in the Southwest Pacific.

Received two boxes today, one from Grandma (the same thing as the one I received before from her) sent to “APO 394” containing candy and sweets of all kinds. I told you about

the other box in a previous letter (not being in good condition but still good tasting) and this one was in much better condition.

You are a rascal - I opened my "shaving kit" and was I surprised. A tin toy but I got a good laugh out of it. I am showing it to everybody now, but I guess I will give it to Barney as a Xmas present. I also received the "Dad puzzler" (which I have already tried to solve as yet unsuccessful), candy, pyjama's, crab meat, chicken, almonds, and something else wrapped in a poinsettia package - box mailed Sept. 22.

All my love,  
Stokes

**Marie Linge to Arthur Kirk**

Nov. 15, Wednesday

Dearest Arthur,

Enclosed you will find a picture in which there is a 30 lb. tumor and me. Can you tell which is which? When are you coming up? I can picture you sitting on your front porch just like you were when I was down there and it still reminds me of a heap big Indian Chief. Please don't make any remarks about my dog, you're just jealous. Dr. Wright says this picture is indecent because I look as if I have a tumor and it is really only my pocket which is jammed full of stuff as usual. I hope you don't think the same. Have to go to lunch hour.

All my love,  
Marie

**J. Stokes Kirk to Chassie Thomas**

Nov. 16

Dear Grandma,

I have received two letters and two boxes from you since I have written and I feel pretty guilty about it. However, as a means for compensation for it, I hope Margaret has been giving you the news as I have been writing it to her.

One of the most interesting things that I have done lately was to go to a native tribal dance this past Sunday afternoon. Grandma, you should have seen it it was really awe inspiring. The setting was at a native village about ten miles from here. Capt. Molvie, a friend of mine, and I rode eight miles and had to walk the last two to get to the village. The village consisted of about 50 grass huts about the size of the Army's pyramidal tent. But the first thing we saw were the natives dancing. There were several hundred of them with about ten dancing groups. It was a mixed dance with the men wearing fancy headdress, faces smeared or painted, bodies painted and beating drums of this shape [><] 3'x 8" and the women all painted up, naked down to the waist and each one of them waving a woven native mat about 4' long.

Capt. Bailey, another friend of mine, was there and he took a color picture of me with a native chief who was once a cannibal. I think this chief was the gaudiest of all and it should turn out to be a good picture. I could go on several more pages with this but guess you have had enough of New Guinea natives for a while.

I want to thank you for the boxes you sent me, Grandma. I really appreciated them and think it was mighty nice of you to send them.

Love,  
Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Nov. 22, Wednesday night

Dear Margaret,

I have just finished a meeting with the Bn. Officers. It was the first for quite a while. I enjoyed it and guess I will have to have more.

Have another check enclosed for \$64.44. I am still doing allright in my pastime and am wondering how long my luck will continue to hold out. Anyhow it makes a total of \$1778.84 which I have sent you so far. I know by the time I get back we will have quite a little nest egg saved up for a rainy day. It really sounds good to have a bank account (or bond account same thing) for a few dollars.

Day before yesterday made 10 complete months overseas and now starting on the eleventh. That is as long as I was in British Columbia however it doesn't seem as long over here since we are not fighting weather conditions as much as we did up there. Right now it is 7 o'clock, drizzling, not too hot (I have a little perspiration on me now) hardly any mosquitos or bugs about and all in all fairly comfortable. However I will gladly exchange for Virginia, at any time.

Received a letter today, bawling me out about not writing. I didn't know I had gone 8 days without writing. I must have slipped on that occasion.

I have received a lot of boxes here lately. I have gotten two boxes of files one mailed Sept. 26, rec'd Nov. 12<sup>th</sup> and the other I don't remember when I got that one. I also received three other boxes. One mailed Sept. 29 with candy, canned chicken, lobster, almonds and sardines in it. Another mailed Sept. 30 with olives, mayonnaise, turkey paste, (We eat real turkey tomorrow Thanksgiving Day) and a wash rag. And the last mailed Oct. 12 with Spanish olives, lobster paste, tongue spread, candy and two wrapped Christmas packages. These were evidently sent by Mom but you wrapped and addressed the packages. That must have been while she was in the hospital you must have sent it for her. I am glad she is out now. I will write her in a few days.

All my love,

Stokes

P.S. Excuse such a rambling letter.

**J. Stokes Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**

Nov. 26

Dear Mom,

I received a letter from Dad yesterday and he said that you seemed to be coming along pretty good now. I was surprised when you wrote and said that you were in the hospital. However, I hope you are getting along O.K. now. I received a box from you mailed Oct. 4<sup>th</sup> about two weeks ago. It had a Planters box and nuts in a round red tin. So far the Planters box has been long gone and we are working on the nuts. Both arrived in fine condition and were as fresh and crisp as possible. The Planters box is an ideal gift for overseas. We were loaded with peanuts when we first came over, but no candy. Now we have candy and no peanuts. It seems as if they will send a shipload of one item at a time over here and you get sick of it before it is all gone. When finally that is gone a ship load of something else will arrive. Now it seems that everybody is having Coca Cola. They must have sent quite a bit of syrup as everybody seems to have it. We mix it 5 to 1 with water and it makes a pretty good drink, especially when we have ice. So you see we get a lot of things from home that we are used to even if it is in bulk.

Also received a box with wrapped up cans of lobster, jelly, preserves, etc. Haven't tried that yet as I have so much to call on. Barney Belote and I really have enough food to go into business and open up a store. However, a few Sunday night feasts with the rest of the officers will about clean us out. Another box of candy I believe Margaret mailed it on October 13, had some wrapped up packages a present from you to me, some Spanish olives, lobster paste, tongue spread and I believe a pair of pajamas from Josh. I don't know what is in some of the packages as I am saving a few for Christmas, the wrapped up kind. At the rate I have been getting them there wouldn't be any left for Xmas. I am enclosing a picture of the C.O.s in the battalion in front of Bn. Hqtrs.

Love to all,  
Stokes

**Margaret G. Kirk to J. Stokes Kirk**

Nov. 27

Fruit cake 3#	Sept. 13	butterscotch patties	Sept. 22 <sup>nd</sup>
lemon drops		chicken - lobster	29 <sup>th</sup>
candy sticks	Sept 15 <sup>th</sup>	sardines - puzzle	
pecans		shaving set (joke)	
Bob Hope's book		mouse traps	Sept 29 <sup>th</sup>
chocolate miniatures		gum drops	
pajamas - Jordon almonds		salted almonds	22 <sup>nd</sup>
chicken - crab			

Dearest Stokes,

I am still excited over getting three letters from you yesterday and have read them many times. It has been pouring rain all day and would really have been a "Blue Monday" if I had not heard from you. I read over the three letters I got yesterday though, and the day didn't seem half bad. I didn't get any more letters today, but I did get the \$150 check you mentioned in one of your letters. I was glad to see it for I had just checked out \$750 for a \$1000 War Bond this morning and my account looked "sick" compared the way it has looked recently with all your money in it. Will get a \$25 bond each for John and Lynn tomorrow - I carried the money up to school today to buy the stamps to finish their books, so it would count for John's room. Guess I might as well present a little financial statement now, showing what happened to the money you have sent home so far. I have told you all along I believe, but thought you'd like it all together.

\$320 + \$55 2 added= \$500 bond in June.

280 + \$95 " " = \$500 " " August

200 deposited to your account in Suffolk (nest egg).

700 + \$50 2 added = \$1000 bond in November

\_\_\_\_\_ (was holding this for timber but Daddy Kirk advised me to get a bond now.)

\$1,500

150 deposited today - will hold awhile maybe something will turn up we can buy.

1650.00

64.00 Spencer check

I Cashed the Spencer check today rather than deposit it and write another of my own, but put it down and will add that amount to the \$150 to get something a little later. Also haven't accounted for the surplus for November - have bought some winter clothes and some Christmas

things so it doesn't seem like I'll have much but I'll make it up later. To date the extra hundred went as follows -

Jan. - trip home

Feb. )

March > fur coat and \$25 bond each for John and Lynn in February.

April )

May \ added \$196.25 to the \$500 Daddy Kirk had of yours plus rent to get \$ 1000 bond.

June /

July - hospital bill + doctor bill – medicine, etc

(This was actually paid in April but I had to borrow from Daddy Kirk as I was ahead of myself on account of the fur coat and bond.)

Aug ) \$55 on June bond

Sept > 95 on Aug. bond plus two \$25 bonds each for John and Lynn July + Nov.

Oct ) 50 on Nov. bond

I'll do something for this month later.

We now have the following bonds -

\$4,525 you and I

175 Lynn

375 John

75 In my name alone (from Daddy)

\$5,150

I now have \$442.52 in bank, but that includes \$25 of Robert, and the \$150 I got from you today, and of course \$64.40 as I used the check instead of depositing it. I have \$42.15 in my checkbook and I only owe \$7.00 so believe you have a complete financial statement! I think I have done pretty good keeping up with our finances any comments from you will be appreciated be they good or bad. Guess this is pretty dull reading but thought you'd like to know the situation all together. To change the subject your son is very proud of the fact that he can "beat up" all the boys in the first grade. Whatever shall I do with the rascal? He also says he wants to grow and get big enough to fight the Japs and Germans. I told him he was supposed to look after Lynn and me while you were away and he said "Well, I'll wait until Daddy comes home to look after you then I'm going to be a marine and fight the Japs and Germans."

By the way, how about sending us a few coconuts? Not a one to be had here, guess folks will miss their ambrosia, pies and cakes this year. I should worry though for that, such a small thing to do without compared to having to be separated from you that fact makes all of the complaints seems silly. Saw in the paper that all the dates were going to be armed forces so, send me some and I'll stuff them and send them back to you, Ha! Ha!

All my love,

Margaret

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Nov. 30, Thursday noon

Dear Margaret,

Well, another payday has come around and I am glad of it. I only have about \$100 on hand and will be glad to draw my \$75 today. That \$100 before the war would have been a lot of money but over here and with it being in pounds it doesn't seem so much. At that however my finances are not in such bad shape. Guess you should have received all checks from me by now- it should all total \$1778.84. Have averaged almost \$300 per month since June which is not so

bad. I don't think I will be able to keep up with this rate. From now on if I only send \$75 per month I will be satisfied, as at that rate my stay here will not be costing anything.

I received several letters day before yesterday and among them was # 93 (the latest news) Nov. 17, with John's letter in it. I thought it was real cute for him to write his Dad a letter. I have it enclosed as I would like to save it as one of his first letters. John's letter is also a nice letter for a little rascal like him. We are beginning to carry on quite a correspondence between us so guess I will write him again before long.

The rains around here have been keeping us busy with roads, bridges, etc. We must have had a cloud burst Tuesday night as several bridges were carried away and in spots all you could see was water where roads used to be. It was rugged for two days and now things are about normal again. Well dinner is about ready so I will quit for a while.

All my love,  
Stokes

**Merle A. Kirk to Arthur Kirk**

Dec. 01

Dear Son:

Dad took me to dinner at Peanut Inn last night and then to a movie. That is how we celebrated our 34<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. It rained so much we were unable to get to Norfolk. Son, I really don't cater much for any of your proofs. I checked the two Dad and I liked best. Your hat is too far over on the head, and there is only a piece of a smile in the whole lot. Do you especially want them for Christmas? If not and if you have another chance to get home I would really like for Mr. Hamblin to try again. I also got your cards and am sending them a Christmas gift from Grandma. She gave me some money to divide on gifts and since I know of nothing you could take with you, I did not know how to decide on a little thing for you, until the cards presented themselves. So, they are "Grandma's gift". How about the sheets, if you run across any I want 81x99 or 81x108. The key & papers came to-day. Let me hear from my boy.

Mamma

**Marie Linge to Arthur Kirk**

Dec. 1, Wednesday

Dearest Arthur,

I received your package last night and it was quite a surprise. It is a wonder they weren't stolen on the way since they are so hard to get. Thank you very much it is nice to get a surprise once in a while. I have been trying to do some Christmas shopping and the only time I have is lunch time. I have covered more territory in the last week a half hour at a time than I have all year. That pertains to Harrisburg however.

This morning I saw a car in the square that had four deer tied on it and I thought of all the deer that we saw. I can see more going to work than I can when I really go deer hunting. Maybe if you would have kept quiet we might have seen one at least. It's getting late so I will make this shorter than usual. Write to me soon.

All my love,  
Marie

P.S. Hope to see you soon. Do you think you can come up for Christmas.

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Dec. 1, Friday noon

Dear Margaret,

I received the works from you yesterday in a couple of letters which stated that I had waited for three periods of 8 days each between letters to you. I know you are right for one period of 8 days but think that I am accused unjustly for the other two. I have written quite a few letters during the past 30 to 40 days and I thought I was doing pretty good. It must be that I am losing a few enroute to you. I certainly don't want you to worry about me and guess I will have to write more and more. I am making out all right and there is no need of worrying about me. If it hadn't been for the shows here I guess you might have had an additional letter or two. As far as the WACs are concerned there are quite a few here but they are left strictly alone and have not interrupted any letter writing by me to you. Poker might have interfered a little but now, I only engage in about one game a week, as all of the old players are gone and it is a hard job to get up a game.

Well, I haven't seen Maynard Berryman\* yet. Quite a few Navy come by here and stop off but now it is getting to be a little out of the way.

In your letter of Nov. 17, the dates are not far enough back. The earliest one is about a year late. So hope you know what I mean. It was about the time of the fire at the sawmill in B.C. December 1942.

It is now about 4:30 in the afternoon and I have just finished supper. I didn't have a chance to finish before dinner today. I went over to the strip after dinner and managed to wrangle a ride in the new fighter P-61 or Black Widow as it is better known. It was really an exciting trip and I enjoyed it immensely. We were up for about an hour and the pilot carried us all over these parts. It is a truly remarkable airplane. It is the first time I have been up in a combat plane as my plane rides have been confined to cubs over here. In comparison to the cub there is as much difference in riding as there is between the Packard and the jeep. They should make a name for themselves against the Japs.

Don't know whether I told you about the Australian money I sent each to John & Lynn. It is a little folder the size of an air mail envelope and has a pound note (\$3.22) a florin (32 c) a shilling (16 c) a six pence (8 c) a tuppence (4 c) and a pence (1 1/3 c). My sergeant (S. Sgt. Watson) made them up and sold quite a few.

I also have a present in the mail for your Xmas. Don't know when you will get it but hope it will arrive by Xmas. It was mailed about a week ago.

Guess it will be soon when I receive another box. Haven't gotten one for over a week now.

All my love,

Stokes

*\*Maynard Berryman- Surry, Va friend*

**Marie Linge to Arthur Kirk**

Dec. 2, Thursday

Hello Sweetheart,

If you find water spots in this letter I'm not crying, honest, but I just washed my hair and it is dripping all over the place. It seems like ages since I have written to you and I guess it has been, but it is so much nicer to see you than to write to you. Just about this time last week I was finding out that I had to change in Richmond to get to Petersburg and I wish it were then instead of now because we did have fun I did anyway. When I told people I went deer hunting they



thought it was very funny, but if they could have seen the way I looked it would have been twice as funny.

I rode back on the train with a private who looked as if he might have come from the back woods some place, but he was nice and not too friendly. I didn't have any better luck than your usually have. Dr. Wright asked me why I didn't get back sooner and I told him I just couldn't make it. He said it was too bad as he wanted me to go to Phila. with them today but since I had so much time off I couldn't go. I must put my hair up now so write to me soon and lots of love,

Marie

P.S. There is a pen & pencil set in Caplain's just like mine and it is worth \$42.50 so I guess I did get a good bargain.

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Dec. 4, Monday noon

Dear Margaret,

I didn't get a chance to go swimming yesterday as it was cloudy all afternoon. I kind of missed it as it is usually my one chance to get a little recreation or exercise. It also gets rid of red bugs or mites and when I get in salt water once a week they don't seem to bother me any at all.

I expect you will get this letter right around Christmas, what with the Christmas rush of mail and delays enroute. Hope it will be as happy as possible under the circumstances. I believe I could make it much happier for you and for me if I could only be there. That is impossible but it is one thing that I would love to be able to do. I don't think you will have a lot of new things or good toys for the children but I know they will really have a time with what they do get. Wish I could be there to enjoy it with them. Guess we will celebrate here with a few bottles of beer and probably a turkey dinner as we did on Thanksgiving day.

We are getting a better brand of beer now, during the first three months of issue I don't think I had over about eight bottles but now with the Ruppert beer, I can drink a couple at a time. I believe it helps as you have always said that beer is fattening and it is a change in the routine diet that we have.

I know that when I get back I am not going to pass up anymore steaks than I can help or fresh vegetables. That kind of food is tops in my opinion and we really enjoy it when it comes. Yesterday we had fresh meat for dinner and it was really good.

It is about time for "chow" now so will write again in a couple days. Hope your mail is coming more regular now.

All my love,

Stokes

**Merle A. Kirk to Arthur Kirk**

Dec. 5

Dear Son:

So glad you are still there and am hoping you can be with us for Christmas. Your two bonds of \$100 each came for Nov. The films and chewing gum also. We now can take lots of pictures and hand out lots of gum. Dad chews every night and Josh sometimes. Thanks lots, boy.

Dad says he is going to take the movie camera the next time he goes to Hog Island instead of a gun. A crowd of eight men and eight dogs went last Saturday. They think they saw as many as nine deer, mostly does. No one killed a deer but stayed from 6 A.M. to 7:30 P.M. The woman folks at home were frantic as all expected their men home for lunch. Dad was so excited about getting off that he forgot his gun. Had to come back from Chuckatuck for it after Ed.

wanted to know if he was going to take one. I cooked some venison yesterday and Josh said it was good.

Come to see us.

Mamma

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Dec. 5, Tuesday night

Dear Margaret,

Received a letter from you today dated Nov. 20. Enclosed was John's "news" and Kenneth Eley's letter. John's letters and news are getting better and better. Glad to see that he is improving. I know he is as smart as a briar however he is a playful rascal and I know you are having a time to make him really sit down and work. Guess he takes after his Dad because I never was crazy about school.

So Lynn wants me to come home so she can "love me" and then "hang me" on her "Christmas tree." I really had to laugh about the last part. The little rascal doesn't want me there anymore than I want to be there though.

I have a lot of John's work enclosed so will quit here.

All my love,

Stokes

**Mac to J. Stokes Kirk**

Dec. 6

Belgium to New Guinea

My worthy colleagues,

I hope that this finds at least one of you young men and that it will inspire a few lines from you to me; often wonder about you and how it is going. The 95<sup>th</sup> is not the same anymore. I am afraid- Thompson, Gavan, Holmes, Lafratta are all gone in fact, McVay and myself are all that remain of the crew that were on hand when we started our original training program 9 June 1941. Martin and Powers are still on deck. Martin and McVay command battalions and yours truly is Exec. Off. so you see to what depths we have sunk. We are also on our second C.O. since M.H.T. So far on the continent I've run into Col. Shilling, Depp, Sullivan and Doctrow of the old 95<sup>th</sup>.

We are at present located some where in Belgium and all in all are rocking along in the usual custom. After a couple months at Claiborne, a year in England and Wales and six months in France and Belgium, it is my studied opinion that the best place for us was the woods of British Columbia and the Yukon.

Two years ago, as I recall, Barney was up around n-84, Kirk at n-10 and I was at n-0 and points on the Simpson Road personally that's where I'd like to be again. Do write me a half a dozen lines and remember me to any of the boys over there. I believe Molvie, Paquette and Pelt went along with you.

Sincerely,

Mac

**Pauline Anna Preston to Bud Gill**  
Carrollton, VA

Dec. 10

Dear Bud,

Hope you get this on time, but have a feeling you won't. But the best everything to you always.

Charlie is still here, we're hoping he'll be here for Christmas. Wish you could be here. I'll write soon. Have some good news to tell you.

Love,

Polly

**Merle A. Kirk to Arthur Kirk**

Dec. 11

Dear Son:

I was surely glad to hear you Friday night. I really was afraid you were going to say you were leaving. Maybe since you are not ready to leave you can be here for Christmas. I hope so!

It was nice for you to see about the bag for Margaret but it was too late, I already had it here. I hope she will like it. Stokes wanted her to have flowers also so I expect I shall get roses.

We have not heard from that boy for some time; his last letter was written on the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nov.! Margaret and I are standing on our heads, hoping each day will bring a few words. You don't know how it is. I have been expecting that he would be moved to the Philippines and that may be the reason of no mail.

Dad had a two page letter from Joe Pinner who says he is having a hard time, has not seen his babies since June and months since his wife was there. He is in Miami and expecting to leave soon. He said when he went into the Navy he could not sign his name. It is hard to believe as he wrote real well. He said he would like to go hunting again and declared he would never forget Dad. Poor Joe! I sent the letter to Stokes.

Webster Bradshaw sent a German medal and money taken from a body. He said he was sure he got one. It sounds awful to me. His Dad was proud and wanted to know how much they are worth. The few words you write are interesting make it a few more. What is Marie doing? Will she go to Bethlehem for the holidays?

Love to my boy,

Mamma

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Dec. 11, Monday A.M.

Dear Margaret,

Got a letter yesterday and you said that you had received three from me that day (Nov. 26<sup>th</sup>) and I feel relieved. I have been receiving letters, about one every other day and you say in each one that you hope a letter will come tomorrow. It was beginning to look like your tomorrows would never come. I think I have written a few more than usual during the last month or more so I figure that the mails are holding them up. So little girl the only thing I can say do is to stop worrying as I know they will get to you as soon as possible and not before.

We have had plenty of tropical rains here lately. It has rained each night for the past three weeks except two and we are having our troubles with roads and bridges. Last night it started about 4:00 in the afternoon and rained steady until about 8:00 this morning. This country is now just one big drip after another.

On the package situation, I don't believe I have received any for over two weeks now so expect I will get some for Christmas. I have received the ones you sent Sept. 30 (olives, mayonnaise, etc.) Oct. 13 (pajamas from Josh, etc.). The others are probably on the way yet.

In case you have any trouble with the Spencer checks just hold on to them until I let you know when to put them in again. He told me later that he wished I would hold them for a while until he could get a bank statement and know they were all right. You see he made an allotment to his bank several months ago and did not know whether the allotment checks had gotten to the bank or not.

Well, guess I will go out to the bridges and see how they are coming.

All my love,

Stokes

P.S. That was some letter John wrote me and is so cute I thought I would return it. Evidently he has gotten the present of Aussie money.

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Dec. 15, Friday A.M.

Dear Margaret,

Received a box mailed Nov. 7 yesterday the first in quite a while. I don't think I will open it right away as Xmas is close by now and it should be saved for Xmas A.M. I don't know what is in it but thanks just the same.

I have been thinking that leaves and furloughs are about due around here now. We have all been here around 11 months now and none have been granted so far. They were supposed to begin after 6 months but Australia has been cut off of the leave area. I was hoping to get down there and see what it was like but expect leaves will be granted to Manila quicker than anywhere else.

Would certainly like to have some more of our family life again. When I do get home you are going to have a hard time getting away from me. I know that we will go straight to our own house finished or not and begin again where we left off in Alexandria. I believe the kids will be better off there and I know we will be better off being together there. I expect you would get quite a bit of heavy petting. I would love to have some now and think you would too.

Would like to have a little of your cold weather now. It is approaching summer again here or rather we are in the middle of it. There seems to be no temperature change at all between the tropical summer and winter. I believe I will take the temperate zone any time. It is allright to have a little warm weather but for a steady diet it is not too good. Just pants and shirt for clothing everyday, no underwear. Would like to have to put the latter on for warmth once again.

More later, all my love,

Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Dec. 19, Tuesday evening

Dear Margaret,

I got a letter yesterday written Nov. 27 (#302) and one today written Dec. 6 (#310). I wonder what happened to the ones in between. Guess there must be eight letters in between somewhere. Anyhow in the first you are very joyful over receiving three letters and in the last you haven't heard from me since the Nov. 26 or the day before you wrote the first (#302). I don't understand the mail situation at all. Christmas may have something to do with it however between the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nov. and now there should be at least eleven letters in the mail for you.

I think you have done a splendid job of accounting of your finances. Looks like you have control of money end of our family and doing pretty well with it. However I was under the impression that together we had a few more bonds that you show \$ 4,525. As I remember it we should have the following.

While in Canada	8-	\$100-	\$800
While in New Guinea	7-	\$100-	\$700
(Through Nov)			500
August			500
June			500
Nov.			1000
June			1000

The total adds up to about \$4,500 and I guess you haven't received the Nov. \$100 bond so that makes it \$4,400. So I believe we had more than \$125 in bonds other than the above. I am probably wrong but that is the way it seems to me. Straigten me out a little.

So John is the tough boy in the first grade now. He is a rascal and I don't know what you are going to do with him. So he also wants to fight the Japs and Germans both. Hope he will not have to but know he is real cute when he talks about it.

All for now, all my love,

Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Dec. 22, Friday afternoon

Dear Margaret,

I received your Christmas card and three letters from you and also a letter from Mom a little while ago. The latest were written Dec. 9 (yours and Mom's) which is still not too bad during the Christmas rush. I thought the picture of you and the kids on the front porch was especially good. Guess it is the best of you so far. Am proud of the family formation.

Tonight we are going to have quite a party. The Colonel has invited all of the officers to a Xmas party in the E.M.'s club. Everybody is supposed to bring their own beer as there are no other drinks to be had. However, we may have ice cream served in paw paw (a native fruit which grows in a cluster around a small tree, something like a cantaloupe). We will also have hard boiled eggs and quite a few other eats so it should be a gala occasion.

We had steaks for dinner today and ice cream. It was the first time in quite a while for real steaks and everybody enjoyed them.

Think I will go swimming this afternoon. Nothing really important to do right now, so think I can take off.

Our troops seem to be doing right good in the Philippines right now. Hope they continue to do so. However, the Germans seem to be threatening quite a bit in Belgium. The 95<sup>th</sup> is evidently there and Paul is also there. I know there are some worried wives, etc., but I hope it turns out allright.

Guess I will quit for a while.

All my love,

Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Dec. 25, Monday noon

Dear Margaret,

Well here it is Christmas Day and contrary to all my hopes I am not home. I do wish I could be there with you and the children today more so than any other day during the year. I

hope I will be able to make it by next Christmas. It is a long time to wait but by then I will have 23 months overseas and thinking seriously of rotation or leave back in the states. I have over 11 months overseas credit for this trip so far and the sooner there are 18 months or more the better I like it as you do have a chance then. However, I might trip in playing ping pong and break a leg like Bonaparte (you remember him) did and get back to the states. Or go “psycho” like Maj. Pinnell did and get back. Anyhow between the several ways there is still a good chance to get there before next Christmas. However you can’t bank on it too much until the time comes and I know more about it.

Taylor and Molvie took a trip over Christmas to several places here in New Guinea. Woodman also got a week end leave to go to Australia and be back tomorrow. He flew down and I guess he made Sidney by Sat. night. I had a ride with him but finally decided all of the “brass” couldn’t leave. He wanted me to go along pretty badly and it was mutual. To see Australia is an ambition but guess it will be next to impossible now.

Opened up the balance of my Xmas presents this morning. Thank Josh for the pyjamas. They were what I needed as I had only about 1 ½ sets left. Now I have three good ones that will last a long time. I also opened the package containing the seed, popcorn, olives and your candy. The candy was a little moldy but otherwise fine.

I hope you received your cribbage board present from New Guinea by now. The wood that it is made out of is Black Palm, a very hard, black wood which is both scarce and expensive. When properly finished up it has a beautiful black color and really shines. I put a lot of time on it and it required quite a bit of patience in sanding down. Hope you also got the other present the bag that Mama bought and the flowers. By the way, the natives here use the Black Palm for making spears, bow and arrows.

Finished my Christmas dinner a little while ago and it was delicious. I had a big slab of white meat (turkey), dressing, gravy, green peas, rolls, a banana salad and finished with pumpkin pie. It was really good.

I also went to a dance last night. I managed to get an invitation and I enjoyed it a lot. Girls weren’t plentiful but they were all American nurses, Red Cross workers and a few of your WACs that I hear so much from you about and see so little of. Darling, you have nothing to be jealous of over here.

All my love,  
Stokes

**Jackie White to Bud Gill**  
Richmond, VA

Dec. 27

Dearest Bud,

Since you say I don’t write to you but every two months I thought I would break the record and make myself get in the mood. I don’t have to get in a mood to write you, I stay in that mood, but it’s just that sometimes I’m so blue & down hearted if I wrote I might say something I shouldn’t. So I think when you get in a mood like that it is best not to write at all.

Bud, if you don’t mind I’ll make this letter a little personal. Is that all right? It makes me feel better to let you know how I feel. So let’s talk about us. Can’t think of a more important subject to me.

Bud, I never thought I could miss anyone the way I miss you. It seems like years since I last saw you. Remember when you were home last time we went to the movie with Newton Goodrich and his girl and I had to leave, it made me so mad to have to leave you in there with

that girl. But I guess you were glad when I left. Maybe I shouldn't be telling you all of this but it's all the truth.

This has been an awful sad Christmas for me. It just made me so sad to go to Smithfield and not see any of the boys there. I did see J.A. Beale Monday night. He looks real well. Wallace Hines is also home. Billy Ramsey is home for two weeks. He looks so good in his uniform. Not as good as you though.

By the way Jack Ramsey told me something Sunday night that you told him. Remember? Hope you got your packages for Christmas and in good shape. Don't you worry about sending me anything. I know there is a war on, you just write me real often, that's all I want. I got a lot of real nice presents. Don't guess it would be very interesting to you to know what I got.

I saw Mrs. Gill Saturday afternoon and talked to her a long time. She sure was in a cheerful mood, so don't you worry about her. I'll encourage her along all I can everytime I see her. She said she was a little worried about Robert which is quite natural.

Collier Pittman died Saturday noon. It wasn't such a shock because we have been expecting it. I went around to see Ruth Saturday afternoon but the doctor had given her some dope and she was asleep so I didn't go up to see her. He was buried Sunday afternoon. Guess your Mother told you, didn't she.

You should feel honored you got the first letter on my new stationary that I got for Christmas. It's a little small but I am so tired of the large onion skin sheets, anything for a change.

This will soon be a book if I don't stop and I know it will bore you to death but you know I love you, that's what it all sums up to, I just had to ramble around a little instead of coming right out & telling you.

Hurry and write and I hope you have a wonderful New Year which will bring you safely home.

Love always,

Jack

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Dec. 27, Wednesday noon

Dear Margaret,

We had a pretty good feast last night. The supper at the mess hall wasn't so hot so we all (five of us) went up to Taylor's hut with some sliced bread and opened up some food. "Doc" Anderson had some noodle soup dehydrated, and it was really delicious. Wish you would send some. I wrote a request on the back of the enclosed label which I tore off and told the other fellows I was going to mail home. We also had some chicken, cheese, toast buttered and some of your chopped olives. The olives were very good, and I have enough left for another meal.

After supper I listened to the radio news which seems to be pretty good for our side. The broadcast usually comes from Australia at 600 P.M. and also a Philippine broadcast from San Francisco comes on so we can manage to get straight news each night. I received three weeks supply of funnies from you about a week ago and consequently had quite a bit of reading matter ahead of me. I still have one more package to go. They help out a lot keep sending them.

We are now setting up another sawmill in a different location closer to the timber supply. We have stopped operating the old one and expect the new one to be going full blast sometime tomorrow. However red hill fill clay and rain mix too well and logging is difficult.

Will write more in a couple of days as I have to go out to work now.

All my love, Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Dec. 29, Friday noon

Dear Margaret,

I just got a letter from you with the "Kirk Newsletter" in it and enjoyed reading it over. Looks like you people at home (especially Dad) really have the dope on me. Glad you know. Don't know what is holding up the mail to you now unless it is the Christmas rush. I know I have been writing faithfully to you at least twice or more per week for the last two months.

Also got a letter and box from Arthur and a Christmas card from Mrs. Holmes, a real nice "Friends in the service" book from Uzzie and a Xmas package from Wesley Chapel M.E. Church. Arthur sent nuts and I just finished a letter to him. I am going to write Uzzie for sending such a nice present. I also owe her a letter anyhow. I think I will also write to Wesley Chapel and thank them. I also got a present "Best cartoons of the year 1944" from Lemuel. It is real good and would like his address so I could write him. Send it when you write sometime. Every time I think it looks as if somebody else has been nice to me and sent a present. Nell (Mrs. M. M. Kirk, didn't know who it was for a minute) sent me a nice box with a lot of canned meat in it – chicken, ham, tongue, sardines, etc. Think I will write her tomorrow.

Finally hit on a way of catching up on my mail. I have listed people all the way from yesterday thru Jan. 22 and I am going to write a letter per day to them. However, your name is liberally interspersed with the others. So as I write the letter I mark it off the list. Not a bad idea as I can look at it and tell exactly how I stand. Will let you know how it is working out.

Am enclosing two or three interesting pictures – nature pictures. These are everyday sights around here and believe me I will be glad to get back where women wear clothes. Guess you can easily see the reason.

All my love,  
Stokes





Robert M. Gill in Europe





Bud Gill in Guam

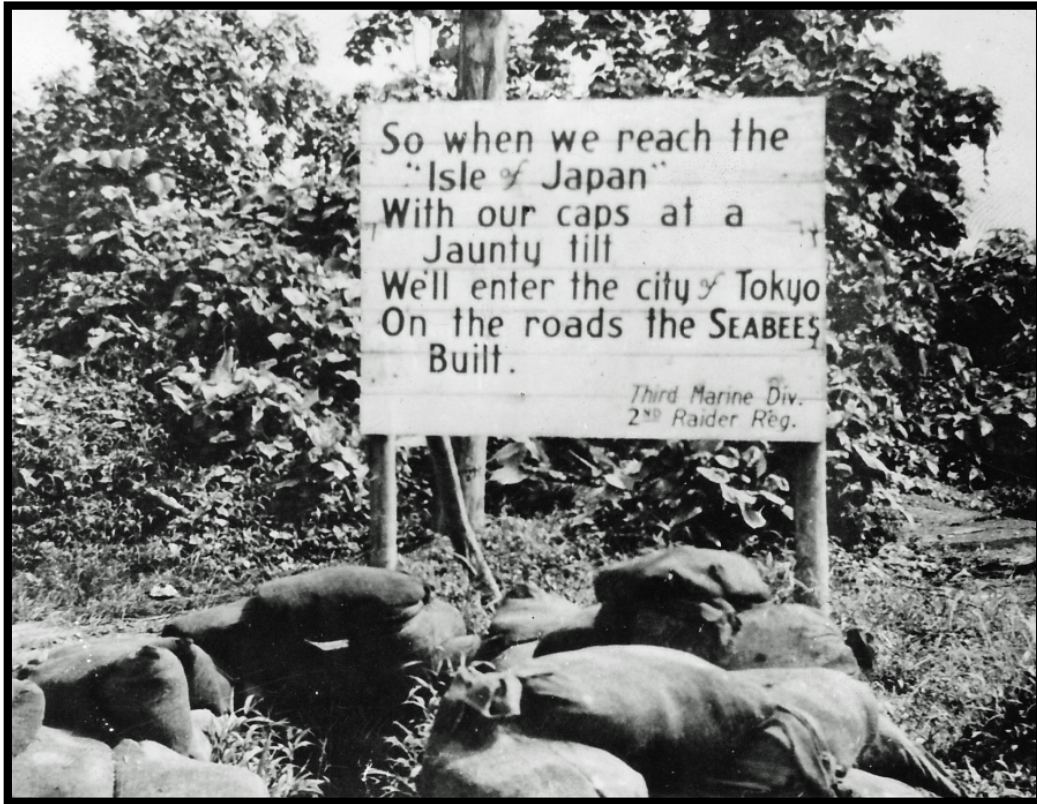


Guam Marine Night Fighter # 534 Marine Aviation Ordnance & Ground Defense



Bud Gill in  
Guam





Japanese currency



Europe 751th Field Artillery Battalion



Paul K. Brady



## J. Stokes Kirk in New Guinea



Top left: Camp Sudest E. Co. tent camp on ocean. Japanese were driven into ocean along here.

Top right: Clearing ground

Bottom: New Guinea U. S. Army 1312<sup>th</sup> Engineers: 2<sup>nd</sup> from left J. Stokes Kirk



Above: Oro Bay, J. Stokes Kirk sitting on mud bank second from left with Lt. Dulac. This is a stuck D-8 Cat with four more Cat's hooked to it. It came out thirty minutes after photo taken.  
Below: E Company clearing road





Tearing down old bridge in New Guinea



1944-45 Europe 104th Infantry Division, Timberwolves; Jack Thomas wearing helmet lying down





1951; Corner of Kirk Road & Everets; Russell Kirk house on right, Kirk Lumber behind

# 1945

Rumors that the war was nearing an end circulated around the world. Excitement and hope grew with each news update. Those in Everets and Smithfield cheered when they learned the soldiers would return to hearth and home. In April, the Italian dictator Mussolini was captured and killed as he fled Italy. Upon hearing of Mussolini's death, Hitler realized the end of the war had finally come. Hitler committed suicide, and within the week the German army surrendered unconditionally. May 8<sup>th</sup> was Victory Day or Victory in Europe [V-E] and celebrated around the world.

In the Pacific, Allied losses were great. It was well known that the Japanese prison camps were inhumane and the Allies decided to use a bomb that would bring the war to an end. They were determined to bring the fight to the Japanese, on their own soil to end the war. American bombers dropped the first Atomic bomb on Hiroshima on August 6<sup>th</sup>, and another three days later on Nagasaki. Allied nations celebrated the unconditional Japanese surrender on September 2, and they called it Victory over Japan [VJ Day]. Six weeks later the United Nations was born.

## Merle A. Kirk diary 1924-1955:

February 23, 1945: *Stokes has been taken from New Guinea and we do not know where he is. His latest letter was written on the 3rd aboard ship. Arthur is in Holland where he says he can hear cannon and rifle shot. Lord, please bring our boys home to us. Lord, please bring this tumult to an end soon, soon!*

With heavy fighting the Japanese have taken several islands around the Philippines. **Stokes** was moved to the Philippines and sent to build a medical compound. With many injured soldiers flooding into the island this emergency was met with all hands on deck. In a letter dated February 6<sup>th</sup>, Stokes writes home to Margaret, "*You and I are missing out on a lot of things and good times that could be ours except for the war. I was just counting up and during the last four years we have lived less than ten months together.*"

**Arthur** was finally assigned duty overseas, attached to the 5<sup>th</sup> Infantry, which supported the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne. In January, they were at sea on a transport to Europe where Arthur was in charge of setting up medical units and hospitals in France and Belgium. As they occupied Germany he was in charge of fifteen hospitals.

At the end of the war, the 8<sup>th</sup> Infantry liberated Ludlutz prisoner of war concentration camp in Ludwigslust, Germany.<sup>8</sup> With 960 starving prisoners to treat the medical team worked to

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<sup>8</sup>On May 2, 1945, the 8<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division and the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division encountered Wöbbelin. Living conditions in the camp were deplorable. There was little food or water and some prisoners had resorted to cannibalism. When the units arrived they found about 1,000 inmates dead in the camp. In the aftermath, the U.S. Army ordered the townspeople in Ludwigslust to visit the camp and bury the dead. The Wöbbelin camp, near the city of Ludwigslust, was a subcamp of the Neuengamme concentration camp. The SS had established Wöbbelin to house concentration camp prisoners whom the SS had evacuated from other camps to prevent their liberation by the Allies. At its height, Wöbbelin held some 5,000 inmates, most of whom were suffering from starvation and disease. The camp was freed on May 2, 1945. On May 7, 1945, the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division conducted funeral services for 200 inmates in the town of Ludwigslust. Attending the ceremony were citizens of Ludwigslust, captured German officers, and several hundred members of the airborne division. The U.S. Army chaplain at the service delivered a eulogy stating, "*The crimes here committed in the name of the German people and by their acquiescence were minor compared to those to be found in concentration camps elsewhere in Germany. Here there were no gas chambers, no crematoria; these*

keep them alive. But, in the first day, thirty-six died of malnutrition and diarrhea. The second day twenty-four died, and on the third day eighteen more died. It was on the fourth day that they succeeded in keeping all the prisoners alive, having realized the starving men were unable to eat large amounts of food without it overwhelming their systems.

A January 25<sup>th</sup> letter to Everets reassures the family that **Jack** is recuperating well from his battlefield injuries. *You asked if I was coming home well the answer is yes but after the war is over. My wounds weren't serious and I am as good as new now. I got a letter from Arthur the other day and he told me that he was coming over here and that he'd try to get to see me. If it is possible I'm going to try to find out where he is and get to see him or get stationed near to him.*

Uncle **Lemuel Thomas** wrote to Margaret in March, giving more details of Jack's injuries: *Mike, Nell's husband, passed through yesterday. He told me Jack had been able to write and tell the facts about his leg injury. Shrapnel hit him in the knee and twice below it, but he can already bend his knee, so it looks as though he is going to be close to all right. He was very cheerful in a letter I got from him recently as he always seems to be.*

As the European war wound down **Jack's** unit, the Timberwolves, was redeployed to California for training in preparation to invade Japan. But upon arrival in California, V.J. Day was announced. He was then sent [in 1946] to McGuire Army Hospital and later to Walter Reed Hospital where they planned to amputate his leg due to his injuries. He refused to have his leg amputated and was mustered out of the service with shrapnel in one leg.

After Germany's surrender in May, **Paul's** unit was moved. They were encamped in several German towns as well as in Austria, and then later were moved south into Marseilles, France where they boarded a transport ship to the U.S. They passed the Rock of Gibraltar as they sailed west, until finally docking in New York harbor where they viewed the Statue of Liberty. It was unclear to the unit whether they would be transferred to the Japanese war theater in the Pacific. Paul returned to Virginia on a troop ship from Baltimore, which docked in Newport News, and he was honorably discharged in December 1945.

While deployed on Guam and the surrounding islands held by the Allied forces, **Bud Gill** received word from his mother, Madge, giving the location of his high school friends fighting in the Pacific. His friends Gus Barlow, Ronald Wilson, and Buck Latimer were deployed nearby on different islands, which made it possible to seek and find one another. With the capture of the island completed, the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion was sent back to the States in 1945. In California, Bud waited tables for three weeks in the Officers' bar while waiting orders directing him back to Guam for the invasion of Japan. But Japan surrendered before he was shipped west so his orders were changed to Maryland to begin his discharge from the military.

While European forces returned home, including Robert Gill's unit, Bud was still on the island of Guam. As the commanders moved the battalions back to the U.S.A. to resupply and reorganize depleted units into larger fighting forces, Bud redeployed to Goleta, California. After the bombs were dropped on Japan and the subsequent surrender, Bud and his units worked on the marine air base at Goleta, waiting tables in the Officer mess hall until receiving their long anticipated discharge orders early in 1946.

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*men of Holland, Russia, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and France were simply allowed to starve to death. Within four miles of your comfortable homes 4,000 men were forced to live like animals, deprived even of the food you would give to your dogs. In three weeks 1,000 of these men were starved to death; 800 of them were buried in pits in the nearby woods. These 200 who lie before us in these graves were found piled four and five feet high in one building and lying with the sick and dying in other buildings."*



Margaret G. Kirk



March 31<sup>st</sup>, 1945; Suffolk, VA: Betty Cross & Joshua Pretlow

1945 Paul Kirk Brady  
Europe



**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Jan. 1, Monday A.M. 1945

Dear Margaret,

Well, here it is the beginning of a new year. The last one wasn't so happy as we have been separated for most of it. I hope this one will end up in being a happy one as I do hope we will be back together again before it is over with. We were only together for 6 days of 1944 and if I could be with you that long this year, it will end up happy. If that happens '46 will start out right and goodness knows, that won't be any too early.

I have gotten a half dozen letters here lately. I am glad that you have received the 3 letters and then the two as I always eagerly open and read your letters to see if you have heard and when I read thru the first paragraph and see that you haven't heard I am very disappointed and kind of feel depressed. Actually when I read the first two or three letters I know whether you have heard or not. I also know that you love me a lot and I am going to stick to the working schedule I have set up, the best that I can. Then I will know that I am writing regularly and you should hear at regular intervals. Before I would write and not remember the exact day I had done so, therefore the writing was very irregular. It is a good New Year's resolution don't you think?

I received John's report card and think it is very good. You are really doing a good job in teaching the rascal and helping him out. Also the several pictures on the front door step at Everetts are splendid of you and the children. It makes me want to get back and enjoy the family all the more.

Barney is in the hospital now and has been there almost a week. He has a common ailment over here - "Jungle Rot" which is similar to poison ivy but there seems to be no cure for it except a return to temperate climates. So, it is possible that he may return to the states before long. I have had it once on my hands but for some reason I was cured of it in about a week. On some people it dries up and on others, medical care seems to irritate and make it spread. Guess I am fortunate in one respect but unfortunate that I don't get it so bad that I have to be evacuated. It is a funny disease as it disappears as soon as a person gets to the states. That means reassignment to a cold climate and I know that will almost be the finish of Belote.

Have ambled on enough for now and will write again in a couple of days.

All my love,

Stokes

**Jackie White to Bud Gill**

Jan. 1

Ivor, VA

Dear Bud,

Happy New Year! Well, you get the first letter from me in the new year. I don't know why everytime I sit down to write a letter you're the one I always write to.

I am at home, have been since Saturday. We certainly have had a lot of holidays recently. All of this rest is going to spoil me. I have to go back tonight. The weather here is awful. It is just raining, nearly hailing. Mama just left to go to Surry to get Smith, so Charlotte and I are here by ourselves. I am enjoying this quietness though. This is really the life, sitting by the radio listening to the boogie woogie and writing to you. Isn't that a combination.

Charlotte just asked me why didn't I send you a little snap shot I had taken at school. I told her I knew you didn't want an old ugly girl's picture like me. Ha! But if you do want me & if it will keep your morale to have a picture of somebody at home I will send it to you. I know how much a picture of you would mean to me but I know this is war. I did have two pictures of

you, one of you & J A. and one of you and Jack Gayle & Hardy Lee. But I lost them somewhere I don't know where but I'm going to try to find the negatives & have some more made.

Bud I wish you could have been with us last night. I couldn't have as good a time as some others but it was fun. A crowd of us boys & girls went to Waverly to the midnight show. We really had fun. The show started about 11:30 & at 12:00 the previews stopped and of all the hollering you have heard in your life it was there and pop corn was just flying everywhere. We sang and hollered all we wanted to. I hope this new year will be much different from the past year. Maybe next new year's we'll be together, that is if that is the way you want it. I can't think of more to look forward to in the coming year. At times especially this Christmas, I just felt like I couldn't go on as sometimes with everybody I even thought anything of gone but I just stopped and thought of next Christmas, how I hoped it would be & I felt like going on. I wish you would write me more often and it would make me feel much better.

Ridley Reid (guess that's right) came home Saturday. Billy Woolman has been home quite a while. Bax. Cox came home Dec. 24, he leaves this week sometime.

Did you know Katharine Johnson and Joe Roeder got married the first of December in N. C. She is going to be with him this week. He is in Mississippi.

I saw Mrs. Gill Saturday but I was in such a hurry I didn't have time to talk to her. But she was running to the post office as usual. She goes to the post office several times a day and she seemed to be feeling real good, in a better mood than usual.

Jackie Lee is home now. I think he is getting a medical discharge. Ruth is getting along fine, I heard she was dating again but I guess it is just hearsay.

Must stop now because I am so sleepy I can hardly stay awake long enough to write this after all I didn't get to bed last nite until after 3 o'clock. So you hurry and write, I will as often as I can. This is the second long letter I have written you in the past week. Hurry and write soon.

I love you,

Jack

**J. Stokes Kirk to Chassie Thomas**  
New Guinea

Jan. 2, Tuesday P.M.

Dear Grandma,

I thought I would start the year off right with a letter to you. I wrote Nell the other day and started catching up on my correspondence a little. Also received a v-mail from Jack Thomas in Europe somewhere. Evidently he is making out all right now.

I don't know whether I told you or not in my last letter but I received both boxes of candy O.K. I opened them up as soon as they came and treated the headquarters force. It didn't last too long either and everyone appreciated it- especially me. Thank you ever so much for sending them, Grandma.

It is raining again here in this New Guinea jungle as usual. We had several months of dry weather and now we are on our second one of rainy weather. I don't like it a bit as it means a lot of extra work on roads and bridges. Besides it is damp enough in the tropics without it raining all of the time. I know we will soon have our share.

I received your letter of Nov. 16, O.K. You asked about my garden, but now it is growing up in grass. The tomatoes were over with about two weeks ago and now we have deserted it. We did get some nice fresh vegetables from it. Grandma, I am glad you are feeling pretty good these days. I hope it won't be too long before I can get back and see you and the rest of the family. It is

over a year now and that is too long. I hope that the end of this year will find me at home for a few days anyway.

I received a nice book from Lemuel Thomas for Christmas. It was "The best cartoons of 1944" and I had a lot of laughs out of it. It is now being read by the other officers and everybody is enjoying it. So long for now,

Your loving grandson,  
Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Jan. 3, Wednesday afternoon

Dear Margaret,

I received a box mailed Oct. 20 today - scuppernong jelly, sardines, Campbell's soup, candy, chewing gum, tongue and lobster paste. All in good condition, except the candy and chewing gum which was mashed. Guess you had better hold off on those two items as I can probably get more and fresher than you can from the stores. I have just finished what I could of the candy and feel pretty sticky but it tasted good just the same.

I also received letters 324, 5 & 6 with the last one written Dec. 22<sup>nd</sup>. There are a lot of them, in between those and the last ones I received. I enjoyed them all and also the letters from Marvell [*Marvell Thompson*] & Elizabeth.

Sorry I didn't tell you about Major Redick leaving. Didn't know you were interested so much in him - Ha. Anyhow he left about two months ago - and I haven't missed him a bit. Pinnell, of course hasn't been with us for about 7 or 8 months now. He had a knee injury and as far as I know may be back in the states by now. "Old Lady" Belote is still in the hospital with the jungle rot and doesn't seem to be getting any better. Bailey is still there too but I believe he will soon be out, however I think Belote may be evacuated in order to have that skin fungus infection cleared up.

Well, it is raining again and believe the bridges will get another pounding before the night is over. It has been raining to be H\_ up in the mountains all afternoon and I know what that means, a lot more bridge work than what we already have. Also received a letter from Dad today. Enjoyed it a lot and think I will write him soon. Guess Arthur is on his way by now. I wonder which way he is going. Maybe he will end up over here. Keep me informed of his address.

All my love,  
Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Jan. 4, Thursday night

Dear Margaret,

Been going thru your letters from 101 to 300 tonight and think I have received all except about two. Those two could have been a mistake in numbering as I got a couple written on successive days that had the same number. None have been opened by the censor so far.

Also enclosing a lot of things you might like to keep. Mostly about John.

I just finished working your "Dad's Puzzler." I finally worked it with just an "ittie bittie" help from the solution. Your shaving kit gave me and all of the hq. soldiers quite a laugh. Both help to pass away time when you don't feel like doing anything else.

Glad you got the flowers on time and that you liked them. Hope next time I give you flowers it will be in person.

All my love,  
Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Jan. 9, Tuesday night

Dear Margaret,

Well the news has finally been announced of the landings on Luzon. I have been waiting to hear it for quite a while now. It looks like the war is really being carried to Japan now. As usual I can only say that it will be a happy day when it is all over.

I got December's issue of Esquire about a week ago and think it is the best issue in months. Think I will have to cut out the pin up girls and place them around in the hut. Not a bad idea to have a few pretty girls to look at.

I am glad that you got the roses O.K. and also the handbag. I know from your letters that they have made you feel a lot better and happier and it really repays me too much for the little that I had to do with it. I am glad that you like the Christmas presents. I also appreciate the ones that I got. You must have put a lot of time and effort in trying to find something, getting it wrapped and off in the mails.

I sent a check for \$150 home to you yesterday. That makes a total of \$1,928.84 counting the two Spencer checks. However I have received 6, the one the bank returned and mailed it in a letter with a note to Spencer asking for a new check or money order. I hate to have \$64.40 slip thru my fingers but I know he will make it up if the letter catches up with him.

Things are quieting down now as it hasn't rained in about a week. The extensive repairs have about all been made as far as roads & bridges are concerned and regular routine is beginning again.

I just finished my last envelope the other day so will have to wait until tomorrow to buy some more. Think I will get 50 or 75 this time.

All my love,  
Stokes

**Arthur Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**

Jan. 10

Dear Mom,

The boys are playing cards tonight & are having a pretty good time. What I want you to do is to send me a small box of food each week & I'll write for anything else I need. The sea has been rather smooth all day but even at that a few of the boys have been sick. Our quarters are fairly crowded but the enlisted men's are even worse & I feel sorry for them. I have been lying down reading & walking around the deck most of the day.

Love,  
Arthur

**Arthur Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**

Jan. 11

Dear Mom,

Today the sea was a beautiful blue green when the waves broke and air was mixed in. The day started cloudy & cold later we hit the Gulf Stream & it turned warmer later it snowed & the fog could be seen rising from the water so that it was hard to see the other ships. The convoy is going at a slightly faster rate than I expected. This afternoon it was below freezing. The trip thus far has been smooth but we don't expect it to keep up because of the time of year. Today I found a nail clipper aboard. I had looked all over before but couldn't find one. The news sounds good on both fronts.

Love, Arthur



**Arthur Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**

Jan. 12

Dear Mom,

The bloody boat has a beastly roll tonight & we expect to be even worse by morning. The boys are falling against what ever comes handy. I would say that the waves have reached a height of about 20 feet. Some of the smaller ships are sticking their prows in the water every now & then. Some of the boys sitting near the prow got soaked when a wave hit the side. Today they gave out Red Cross gift bags; mine was from Middleton, Conn. Since the weather is rougher none of the men are staying in bed.

Best of love,

Arthur

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Jan. 12, Friday A.M.

Dear Margaret,

Just received letter "333" written Dec. 29. You were at Everetts and it was snowing. I wish to heck I could see some snow down here. Today is especially hot and sultry and to see some good old cold weather would really be nice. Then I know I would be back home again. Also wearing the same amount of clothes day and night for almost a year with the only addition an occasional raincoat makes for monotony. Around here you never have to think about what and how much to wear. My complete uniform consists of seven pieces- 2 shoes, 2 socks, pants, shirt and cap and I am dressed. That is not much compared to the heavy 16 pieces I wore in British Columbia.

Guess I will have to be satisfied with the tropics for quite a while yet. The latest dope on rotation or leave back to the States is that people leave being considered only after 30 months overseas. That is strictly rumor however.

I am enclosing a clipping of S.W. PA of quite a little interest to me. I would like for you save these clippings for me.

Well it is about time for dinner so I will cut very short this time.

All my love,

Stokes

**Arthur Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**

Jan. 13

Dear Mom,

Today is so hot but it surely doesn't look like it. I can't tell if from yesterday it has been exceptionally rough today with a strong side wind blowing & each time the boat changes course it begins to list badly. Today there has been a little rain & it is still above freezing. I went to the chapel service tonight where we had singing with a little extra service which was informal but good. Many of the boys are sick so I hope we hit calmer weather soon.

Best of love,

Arthur

**Arthur Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**

Jan. 14

Dear Mom,

We were wakened this A.M. with the information that there would be a drill in 15 mins. We got all the boys up on deck & I believe it made many feel better. The sky was rather bright today with a few clouds & the wind has shifted to the south many of us were on deck (top side)

with only our shirts & life jackets on. This afternoon we had a good movie with Charles Laughton and it was good. Tonight we are going along as usual with the ship rocking & rolling, a few dishes being broken & a few men falling about. The news of a Russian break through sounds good to me.

Love,

Arthur

**Arthur Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**

Jan. 15

Dear Mom,

Today is a bright sun shinny day & it is warm. We had a fire & boat drill & the boys cleared the hold out very rapidly. Today I got the news again & again it sounds good but not as good as day before yesterday. I am reading a novel, the first I've read in many a day. It is an Irish novel called "Hangman's House" but it is like all other novels. The name is misleading. The days are rather long on board & time hangs heavy on your hands. This is the first time in a quite a while this has happened to me. In fact it is the first time since I left Carlisle. The officers on board are congenial & mix well. One of the boys who sleeps next to me had his father killed in France & his mother killed in England by a big bomb. The biggest trouble is keeping clean on board because of the limited amount of fresh water.

Love,

Arthur

**Arthur Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**

Jan. 16

Dear Mom,

Today was a usual day we had an inspection this A.M. followed by a boat drill & the gun crew fired a few practice rounds. The mess on board is not as good as it should be & a lot of the boys are talking about it but I think it will get better. Wonder how Josh & Betty are making out on their project? Did you ever send that picture of me to Marie or are you ashamed of it. I'm sorry I couldn't do a better job for you but you know how it is (just as I used to say) if you don't have anything to work with - I certainly hope Dad will be able to get enough even to do his work & I don't know about the money situation but I think he can give a bonus to the men for good work & I also think he can give automatic raises for length of service.

Love,

Arthur

**Arthur Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**

Jan. 17

Dear Mom,

Today was another quiet day. They gave us German and French handbooks which may come in handy. I never thought when I was taking that German & French in school that I would have use for it. I doubt if I'll be able to see Jack now judging from what they told us today but I have his address & will have to wait. The trip so far has been relatively smooth & this evening the sky was lovely with green, blue, pink & violet shades in the East & red grey silver & golden shades in the west. Today was so nice that almost all the boys came up on deck. Every now & then you can see a rain far off on the other side.

Love,

Arthur

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Jan. 17, Wednesday A.M.

Dear Margaret,

I received a package the other day from the Thomas's and also one from Grandma – a fruit cake. Hope I will be able to get off a letter to both in a few days. I also got the bond list you made and mailed Jan. 1. It seems O.K. and don't see anything wrong. Also received the rose petals. They smell real good and I know they were beautiful. I am sending the petals back to you - tried to autograph them but ink won't show on them.

Been pretty busy for the last few days – a lot of rush jobs but none caused by rains – thank goodness. Guess you know there has been a change in my time by the slackening of letters here lately. Will write more later.

All my love,  
Stokes

**Arthur Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**

Jan. 18

Dear Mom,

Today the sea has been rougher & again the chairs, dishes & men slide about, but fewer of them are sick for they have begun to get used to it & the meals have been a little better. I haven't been on deck much today but there is some wind & with the wind always comes higher waves. It's not sure but they told us what our port is. Just to make us feel good the announcement over the boat loud speaker system today said that the submarine warfare is not yet over, but so far we have had no trouble. Since they handed out our foreign language books most of the fellow have been talking from their books frequently.

Love  
Arthur

**J. Stokes Kirk to Merle A. Kirk and J. Russell Kirk**

Jan. 18, Thursday night

Dear Mom & Dad,

I received two letters from you today - one V-mail mailed Jan. 1 and an air mail mailed Jan. 6 so people are wrong when they say that V-mail is faster than air mail or at least to the S.W. PA they are wrong. I also received V-mail from Jack today telling how he was getting along with his leg and asking about my garden. I am glad his leg is healing nicely but I am afraid our garden is about grown over with grass. There is nothing left to it now. The tropics is rough on practically everything and unless good care is taken the hunai grass will grow to heights of 6 or 8 feet in a couple of months. I wonder if Dad remembers the magazine article in the Saturday Evening Post he asked me to read when I got back from Alaskan Highway? I know about it now from first hand experience.

I received the Xmas package from Wesley Chapel Sunday School and I wish you would express to the people how pleased I was with the Planter's box. It arrived in good condition and have been eating quite a few peanuts and cashew nuts lately. I also received another Planters box, cigarettes (they should have saved them for someone who really needs them at home) and raw peanuts in the shell from the Chamber of Commerce and people of Suffolk. I don't know who is responsible but in case you know, thank them for it for me. I will try to write a letter to them in appreciation.

Sorry to hear that Frank Spady and Parke Griffin\* are missing. I do hope that they will turn up sooner or later. I hope that your transaction for Josh's piece of land on the point is about

complete now. I know he is anxious to get his hands on it and begin his house. It sounds like a good deal.

Margaret was tickled to death over her flowers and bag that you bought for her. I am glad you were able to take care of her and thanks so much. I am well repaid for what I had to do with it. Evidently Grandma [*Chassie Thomas*] liked her corsage and I am also glad you got that for her. The picture you sent of Marie [*Marie Linge*] was very good and she seems to be a very nice looking girl. And talking of Marie makes me think of the other Major in the family. Guess by now you know he is well on his way to the E.T.O. Hope he makes out alright and I am sure he will. However, I have high hopes that in about 3 months I will leave him as far as “rank” is concerned. If things go well maybe you can address the letters to Lt. Col. J. S. I have to wait until Maj. Belote gets his as now he is 2<sup>nd</sup> in command of the regiment and it wouldn't be good if I were put thru ahead of him.

How is the Adam's timber coming along now? Guess you are getting some good lumber out of it? Also how is the mill going these days? Believe I will have to have a small mill of my own when I get out of the army, with all of the tinkering around them that I have done since 1942. However they are a lot of trouble and guess I will be cured before exit from New Guinea.

Guess this is enough for one letter so will close.

Love to all,

Stokes

*\*Frank Spady- from Chuckatuck and Parke Griffin- family friend from Smithfield, VA*

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Jan. 18, Thursday night

Dear Margaret,

Just finished a letter to Mom and Dad and will write a short one to you before turning in. It is only 7:30 now but we are pretty “early to bed” people around here. Barney is back from the hospital now and is already in bed. He was partially cured of the “Jungle rot” but I am afraid he will have to go back again as it is breaking out for a second time.

We had a good supper tonight – chicken chowmein complete with the chop seoy and noodles. It was very delicious and I acted as chef but I have been thirsty ever since and can't drink enough water. Will have to go to bed to stop being thirsty and drinking more water.

Been taking a little sorely needed exercise here lately. I played volleyball this afternoon and it acts as a wonderful pick up. As far as feeling in good physical shape is concerned, I have about abandoned the swimming now and am losing all of the brown I once had. This afternoon it started raining while we were playing and boy did that water feel good. We were all hot and sweaty and it was as good as a bath.

I have a new jeep now. The one I got when I first arrived here carried me over 18,000 miles in 11 months and was still a good jeep but I had a chance at a new one so I grabbed at it – It is a sporty looking model - you know - maximum vision - open air - 4 wheel brakes etc.

Can't get over how happy you were with your presents from me and I am not “much too good to you.” You are much too good to me and I know it. However, I am glad of the small part I had in giving you the presents and have been well repaid for it.

Got a couple of letters today and tell that “Rascal” John that the war won't let me go right now but if it does I am going to wear him out playing with him. John will be so tired he will want his Daddy to leave him alone for a while.

I started out writing just one page but now I am about through with the second I have rambled on so. Will just call it quits now.

All my love, Stokes

**Arthur J. Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**

Jan. 19

Dear Mom,

It is good to hear that Warsaw is captured. Those Russians are doing their share. Today it has been a little rough again & at times the waves are up to about 30 ft. high. Today I went down & saw Bob Hope & Bing Crosby again in "Road to Singapore." We still haven't seen any land yet but have...are of these days before long. The meal tonight was much better than they have been & the boys seem pleased. Now most of the men seem to want to get off the ship & start something else. I guess they will always want a change. It is part of human nature. Most of the men have been comfortable & well except for seasickness almost all the way. They are becoming more cautious about subs after Churchill's announcement yesterday.

Love,

Arthur

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Jan. 19, Tuesday night

Dear Margaret,

I received one letter from you yesterday dated June 6<sup>th</sup> and one from Mom dated June 4<sup>th</sup>. They are coming in a little slower on this end now too. Guess the reason is that we are fast becoming a rear area around here now. Mom keeps on asking how far are we from the fighting - from here we can drive there in about 3 hours. I haven't been up there, but the Colonel took a crack at them with 47 mm (Jap) gun. He saved the shell case and is carrying it home as a souvenir. Don't know whether I told you or not - I am strictly a ground man now - somebody stole my jeep early Sunday morning and haven't recovered it yet. Guess it must be on Iwo or Okinawa by now. Think maybe naval personnel hooked it and loaded it on a LST\* or something as it has disappeared completely.

Just stopped for about two hours, visited Taylor and politely excused myself since I had to finish this letter. There were a couple of naval officers there that knew Lewis to be on the Phoenix. That may be right - I don't know as they were about two sheets in the wind and just about ready to go up in "Guerilla Country" as they called it. "Doc" Anderson was there and so was Capt. Ross who took my place as Bn. C.O. Ross is having a run for his money as he is too "G.I." and not so popular with the officers under him.

Well, we just had a first class rain - the first we have had since last Friday. The meantime has given us a chance to do a little work with dry dirt instead of mud and coral. Managed to sand our area along with other work and while out a while ago I saw that the rain had washed most of the sand away- but partially stabilized the surface so we won't have as much mud.

Received another letter from "just me" Jack Thomas the other day. Must write him before long.

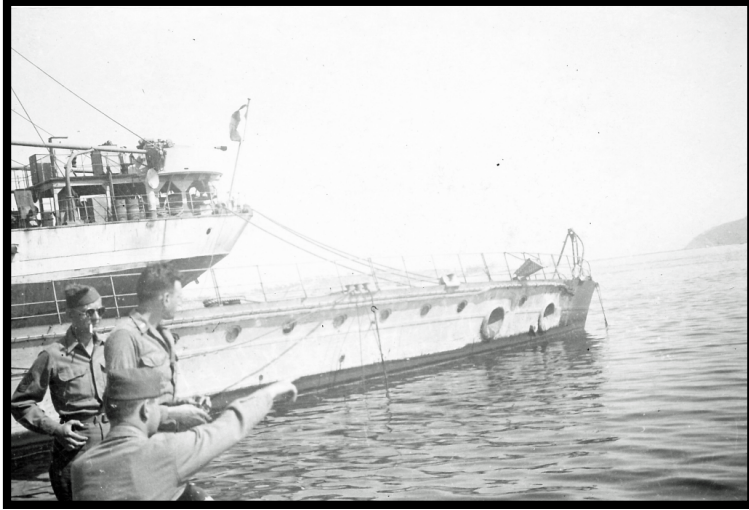
Well honey, must quit now and hope to get home to you before long.

All my love, and I do mean it,

Stokes

P.S. Enclosed is a flower I picked in Manila - I intended sending it before now but just opened my notebook and smelled it - so here it is. It is first white in color then gets red. It must be of the gardenia family - which you don't like.

*\*LST - Naval designation for landing vessels, Landing Ship Tanks*



1945 Arthur Kirk landing in Europe  
saw when we left the U.S. Hope you are all well.

Love,

Arthur

**Arthur Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**

Jan. 20

France V-Mail

Dear Mom,

We are getting closer & closer to our destination. One of the men yesterday said that it took his father 20 days to get over in the last war. I hope it doesn't take us that long & I don't think it will. It seems strange how seagulls can fly, but they have been with us for almost every day at sea with the exception of 1 or 2 days. I find that the gulls I see now are smaller & cleaner than those we

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Jan. 20, Saturday noon

Dear Margaret,

Today begins the second year of overseas duty for us. We left San Francisco and were going under the Golden Gate Bridge just about this time of day Jan. 20 of last year. I hope that this year will be my last on overseas service and that I can spend the rest of my army days back home in the states. However the latest leave and furlough plan (30 days plus travel time) sounds pretty good and maybe I can get back for a while before the end of this year. I hope so. So far I have about 23 mos. foreign service and that means in about a month I can put a total of four overseas stripes on - one for each six months and when I am entitled to six stripes I hope I won't get anymore.

Barney is out of the hospital now and I hope he will stay out this time. I missed my "old lady" while he was in the hospital. It seems as if they were going to make an example of him and cure him instead of sending him back. Anyhow we all want to leave this rear area and get to the Philippines some day so he just had to get well. Molvie is out of the hospital now. He had the "jungle itch" too. Bailey has been in for almost a month now, but expect him back out in a few days. I am feeling fine and don't expect I will get a chance to lie around the hospital.

Been playing a lot of volleyball lately. The officers have been trying to get in trim a little and it has been great sport to get out and bat the ball around a little. It makes me feel a lot better.

There goes the chow call so will close.

All my love,

Stokes

**Arthur Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**  
France V-Mail

Jan. 21

Dear Mom,

I am now somewhere in France. There is a medium sized city here with middle class houses on the bluff behind it with snow covering the ground on all sides. Most of the men are anxious to get on shore & stretch their legs but I doubt if they will be able to do that yet because there are other ships in the convoy & we have to wait for our turn. From our ship you can see barbed wire & gun deployments on the waterfront. The city looks as though it had some battle experience as I expect all or most of the cities & towns here have had.

Love,

Arthur

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**  
New Guinea

Jan. 23, Tuesday noon

Dear Margaret,

I have a new address now which is as follows:

APO 70 a/o P.M.

San Francisco, Cal.

And a new code cable address: "AMONROY" so address all letters to the new address.

Went to see a pretty good show last night. It was "This is the Army" with a cast of about 170 soldiers and Irving Berlin in person. It was the best one I have seen since Jack Benny was here a long while ago.

I received V mail letters 339 and 343 yesterday but am rather lacking on longer letters. I can't kick though as I hear at least every three or four days. Haven't got time now to write a long letter so will stop here.

All my love,

Stokes

**Jackie White to Bud Gill**  
Richmond, VA

Jan. 23

Dear Bud,

Well, today is Sunday! I've been to church as usual and now for a gloomy afternoon. It is raining, sleeting, and a little bit of everything outdoors. This is a nice day to think, but I don't like to because it always leaves me in such an awful mood, one that I don't like to get in. So much for that, the first thing you know I'll be sobbing.

Guess you wish you could be in my place right now? There are about six of us in my room and you should hear what we are talking about right now.

I didn't go home this week-end because I have been sick all week and I didn't feel like riding on a crowded bus. I have been feeling awful all week, had a good case of "grip" or "flu." I didn't let Mama know because I knew she would just worry and everybody around here waits on you wonderfully. Mama wrote me yesterday that she never did get around to sending you a Christmas box and she said she wanted to send you something. She wanted to know if you had to have a request. I think your Mother told me you didn't have to. Write and let me know. I think it would be real nice and sweet of you to write her. She sure would appreciate it because she thinks so much of you and everytime I hear from you she always asks how you are.

Bud, we were just talking about our Senior class. One of the girls said after the war they were going to have a reunion. I was talking to Charlie, Polly, Albert & Frances not very long ago about us having a reunion after the war. Don't you think it is a good idea? Guess most of our class will be married by then, some of them will even have kids. I saw Roland Spady & "Ida Biscuit" (remember her) the other day. You know they have a little boy now. Wonder where Betty Parker is now? I don't know why I thought about her. I think Charlie & Polly will be getting married soon.

Park Griffin is missing. Reckon you know more about that than I do. All I know is he is missing and Mildred is taking it terribly.

Bud, I must stop now and write some more letters. I think it is about time for you to write me a letter. This is about the third one since I've heard from you.

I don't know whether what I am getting ready to say is all in vain or not but Bud I never knew I could think as much of you as I do, especially since you are away and I don't see you so much. When you were home I thought a little of you but you didn't think anything of me. Then I could see you every time now since you are away everything has changed and my love (I guess you'd call it that) for you has also changed. It seems to be growing and growing. Well, in short, I love you, Bud. Hope you don't think I'm getting to be like a flirt or a wolfers. Write and let me know what you think of me now! I am enclosing a letter from the girls.

Love always,  
Jack

Hi Bud!

I'm Jackie's roommate! I've heard Jackie spoke so nicely of you & feel as if I know you. You hurry up and finish what you are doing over there and come back and all of us will have a big party. Be good stay sweet and above all have fun.

Bye now,  
Edith

Dear Bud,

You didn't know Jackie had a new Mother (Mama), did you? Well, I'm keeping an eye on her until you come home and take over. Hurry and come home because I want to meet you. From all reports, you're a swell fellow. With love and the best of everything,

I am Jackie's pal,  
Blanche

**Arthur Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**  
France

Jan. 25

Dear Mom,

We have moved again & are now living in tents. It is kind of crowded but not too bad. Last night the temp. must have been 0 or it might have been a little more but it didn't feel like it. The men said they were just as cold as I. Here are the gas coupons. I had to use a few of them to get me east while I was still in the states. Here are the other coupons that I couldn't use. Hope they are not out of date yet.

Love,  
Arthur



**Jack Thomas to Merle A. Kirk**  
Europe V-Mail

Jan. 25

Hi Folks,

Your letter came yesterday and I'm glad to hear that Josh is about to hitch up. You asked if I was coming home well the answer is yes but after the war is over. My wounds weren't serious and I am as good as new now.

Last night several of us went out on pass and I went for the first time in my life into an English Pub. They are quite funny compared to our beer halls.

I got a letter from Arthur the other day and he told me that he was coming over here and that he'd try to get to see me. If it is possible I'm going to try to find out where he is and get to see him or get stationed near to him.

I'm glad that you are all alright and don't worry about me over here.

Just me

Jack

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Jan. 26, Friday A. M.

Dear Margaret,

I am starting on a big sheet of paper with nothing in particular to write about. However your frequent topic is the cold weather. I do wish I could see some of it now. Snow, ice, etc. would really be a welcome change. At present it is the same temperature as allways. Rather hot and sultry and it has been this way for twelve months - no wide change in temperature for twelve months. I guess the lowest it has been is 70° and the highest (in the shade) 95°. It makes for good sleeping at night though. I know of no night that I was uncomfortably warm with pajamas and a sheet over me. So being able to sleep helps out a lot. I would also like to trade with you for some of your cold weather.

Bailey is out of the hospital now and in better shape but not exactly well yet. He was in for just about 30 days. Belote is about completely cured of his jungle rot and in fairly good condition. I thought I had some just starting but guess it was my imagination. Little bumps started appeared on my hands but soon went away.

Will make this one short.

All my love,

Stokes

**Arthur Kirk to J. Russell Kirk**  
V-Mail

Jan. 26

Dear Pop,

Things are still pretty cold here but we are gradually making ourselves more comfortable. At present we have taken care of the major problems & are getting to the lesser ones. Something that we need is light, so I hope you can send me some carbide for mine is just about to run out - I would also like to have 3 or 4 of those miners' lights if you can get them which I rather doubt. A pound of caramels from the dime store & a few cookies & some Vienna sausages would also go good. Best of luck.

Love,

Arthur

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Jan. 28, Sunday afternoon

Dear Margaret,

I received three letters today - one from Mom, a valentine (I am thinking a lot of you too) from you and a letter from you written in Everetts. Enjoyed them all and am certainly glad you are hearing more often than before. I guess you have been receiving about two per week for the last couple of weeks. It seems I got back to the old rut - and writing only one page at a time then. But I do love you and I know I will have to do better than that. I know you like to hear as often as possible and I hope you won't have any long waits anymore. I understand there is a promise of better mail service so maybe before long you will be getting letters a little more prompt and fresher news and I will be doing the same. The last letters (today) were mailed on the 13<sup>th</sup> that makes 15 days to get here.

I am glad everyone liked the pictures - they are what I am used to seeing at native villages when I go thru one.

Being Sunday afternoon I have just finished resting for a couple of hours. It has been cloudy all day and not too hot so I enjoyed the nap quite a bit. Usually when sun is out it bears down on our tarpaper top hut and it is so hot that you can't sleep. Originally our hut was well shaded but wood deteriorates so rapidly here that a little bark knocked off of it a tree will result in it beginning to rot and it will fall over in a couple of months. Therefore we don't have much shade now.

Have stopped operating the sawmill now and don't expect to start it up again. Lumber demand has slowed quite a bit and it is not needed anymore.

So Lynn wants to climb all over her Daddy? Tell her that I bet she is a big girl by now and Daddy won't be able to even lift her by the time he gets back. John and Lynn were getting pretty heavy when I left and I know from the pictures that they are quite a bit larger now.

Will quit now and write again later.

All my love,

Stokes

**Jackie White to Bud Gill**

Jan. 29

*Hope you don't get mixed up reading this, I am!*

Dearest Bud,

Oh, I don't know whether this is going to make any sense or not because I'm listening to a story on the radio. It is "Lady in the Dark." Wish you could hear it.

I went home this week-end. I decided 10 min. before it was time for me to go to work Saturday morning that I wanted to go home so I had to pack then but I got to work on time. We left here 35 late, got to Petersburg and the bus broke down so we stayed there over an hour. We got to Smithfield about an hour late.

Where does your Mother keep herself now? I don't even see her anymore! I haven't seen her since Christmas. I haven't seen her to talk about you in so long I don't know what we will do the next time we see each other. I don't even see Margaret, her children, Robert's wife or any of them anymore.

Smith saw Mr. Gatling last week and he told them that one of the twins was on the east coast and the other the west coast, that's further than I guess they have ever been apart.

Lt. John I. Cofer is engaged to a "Moore girl" in Dinwiddie County. What do you think of that? Ethel Boswell is engaged since Christmas, she is getting married in March I think.

Margie, one of my ex-roommates got a long distance call Friday night from the boy she is engaged to from New York. She hasn't seen him in a year. So you can imagine how excited she must have been. I told her I didn't believe I couldn't be as happy even if you were to come home! (You don't mind me using you for an example, do you? Of course, I was just kidding!) I'm not telling anybody what I'm going to do when any of you all come back because I don't know what I might do!

Did you get the letter with the notes from the girls (2)? I thought you might like a little side line for amusement after reading my boring scribbling. You know how I use to hate to write compositions and how poor I was at it. Well you are getting a fair example of it.

Remember how you use to tease me about Charlie Morris? Well, you won't be able to anymore because it is all over! You believe me, don't you, don't get me wrong this time, it's really quits this time, although no one else believes me.

Bud, guess what Guy Lombardo is playing now? My favorite song "Sweet Dreams Sweetheart." Have you ever heard it. If you do think of me when you do because I love it so much.

Do you realize that I write you just about every week, can you say that? If you do, which I wish you would, I'm not getting your mail. Bud, I don't care how many boys I go with up here I'm not satisfied, I wonder why. They don't give me a thrill like they used to. Guess it's my fault and maybe a little yours too, when you were here we didn't take advantage of it. We did go to the movies with Newton Goodrich and his girl the last time you were here, didn't we? Although I did have to go and leave you with her. Remember that or do you like to think of old times. Remember the night we double dated with Goonie & Polly. We went to Suffolk and to some beach, remember. Then the nite with F. G. & Polly, it was wonderful while it lasted but it ended to soon.

Please excuse the stationery. I don't like it long ways so I just folded it, you don't mind too much, do you?

Hurry and write me a nice sweet long letter or don't you like them? You must have changed a lot, I know how sweet and loving you used to be. Maybe it's because you don't see many girls. You haven't told me about the girls there, I'm interested to know what kind of competition I'm up against. You don't have any.

This letter certainly is getting lengthy. What say we stop for tonight, aren't you tired of it?

Take care of yourself, write to me real often and I think of you more than you think I do and more than I thought I could.

Love always, Jack



**Arthur Kirk to Merle A. Kirk** Jan. 30  
France

Dear Mom,

I am now back in France after visiting friends. We had a wonderful time & learned a great number of things that will be of advantage to us. It seems that over here about all the roads are lined, at one place or another with trees on both sides, large cathedrals are in all the towns & cities. Almost all the

bridges are wrecked, but temporary ones have been built. All the telephone poles are smaller than those in the states & every other one has a house against it about the same size & the cross pieces carry one wire above & one wire below they look like this, but have more cross pieces & more wires running around it. One of the sections has huge coal mines with large slate & ground deposits outside it. I'll try to write you more next time.

Love,

Arthur

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Jan. 31, Wednesday night

Somewhere at sea

Dear Margaret,

Guess from the heading that you know we are at sea again. I know you suspected a move when I changed the APO to '70'. Anyhow it is very welcome as we were getting stale as the devil at the old place. Being there for a year made it mighty tiresome seeing and doing the same things everyday and trying to beat the jungle which can't be done.

Barney, Bailey, Molvie and Pelt are with me but Paquette didn't come along. Guess he will be with us before so long though. Bailey, of course is out of the hospital and feeling pretty good now.

There being nothing much to do we are playing a lot of poker using American money instead of pounds. So far I am only \$13 ahead but it still sounds like about 13 pounds. Our regard for a pound was the same as for an American dollar both seeming to be worth the same. I usually kept about 70 to 100 lbs. on hand but in getting it exchanged I now have over \$220 and am amazed to have and carry around so much so guess I will send about \$150 home before long. I haven't heard from Capt. Spencer yet so guess I will include his last check with this letter. Might as well deposit it when you get it.

Thursday night

Didn't finish this letter last night so will continue. I was writing in the Steward's room as I am now and we had a few beers so afterwards I went straight to bed. We had quite a talk and I enjoyed the night quite a bit. Just heard the late news from Germany and Luzon. It all sounds pretty good. I guess that the better it sounds the sooner we will be together again back home. I hope that the war will loosen up and be over pretty soon in Europe and then all the efforts applied to beating these damn japs.

Hope I will be able to mail this letter before long as I don't want there to be too long between letters as I know you worry like the devil when you don't hear - and your worrying bothers me like everything.

Will write again later,

All my love,

Stokes

P.S. Am now \$38 ahead for the trip. How am I doing?

**Jack Thomas to Merle A. Kirk**

Feb. 3

Europe V-MAIL

Hi Folks,

The first letter that you wrote me came yesterday. I'm beginning to get most of my back mail now and it's fun to read them and see the things that were going on then and then read my

new mail and all what is happening now. I'm glad that you like the picture of me and only would that I could have been there to give them out.

I'm glad to hear that Arthur has gotten Marie a ring and I hope that they will be happy. I'm sorry he has to come over here but I'm glad he could come over here and stay as long as he has. Don't worry about him as he won't have to go up to the front line.

Just me,

Jack

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Feb. 3, Saturday night

Dear Margaret,

Just waiting around now and have actually forgotten the date so therefore the question mark. We are just sitting around and not doing anything but loafing. Sitting around the ship is a tiresome job when you are not sailing or doing anything.

The game we have been playing has slowed down considerably today. I think everyone is about played out and I know I am. Today, I didn't have much luck but still am about \$80 ahead for the time on ship which is not bad me thinks. How about it? Maybe I will be able to really get that jeep after the war and an outboard motor and boat in addition. I have always desired to have an outboard ever since I was a kid. Guess you know that as I was building on one for several years previous to our courtship.

Talking about courtship I would really like to be with you now and try my hand at it again. I think you would really have a loving husband on your hands and I don't think you would really object any. I know it is one of my ambitions now to get back and do a little give and take close in loving. This far away type doesn't appeal to me any at all and I don't like it. Think we will have to spend a little of our winnings on about a two week cruise or trip somewhere and make it a second honeymoon. I don't want to go by auto this time as it is too tiring maybe and I don't want to be that way. O.K.? I know it is and bet you will take me up on it.

That picture of the long lounge chair or couch appeals to me quite a lot and we will have to have one after the war as I know of a good use for it as well as you do and I think your use will include me as mine does you. Maybe I am talking in circles but guess you understand.

Have a perfect place for writing letters - in the officer's galley lights, electric fan, cool ocean breezes, bathing suit trunks on and a radio playing. Just heard the news and it sounds pretty good from Luzon. Hope it continues.

All my love,

Stokes

**Arthur Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**

Feb. 4

France V-MAIL

Dear Mom,

I have been busy so didn't write when I should have. If I were you I wouldn't worry too much about me for so far it is just like being in the states except there are a lot of foreigners here that can't even speak English. Today we went about 50 miles looking around the countryside and seeing what the place is like. They have nicely cultivated fields & really there is a big chateau of brick or stone with smaller brick or stone houses around. The mail service is very poor. We have had only one mail since we came. How about sending me a box of dime store candy.

Love,

Arthur

**Jackie White to Bud Gill**

Feb. 4

Dearest Bud,

This is my second attempt to try to write to you, maybe I'll succeed this time.

I didn't go home this week end. I went last week and had to come back by myself so I won't try that again.

Received your letter Friday. Five full pages too! What happened to you? I enjoyed hearing from you so much. I'm glad you're getting your mail regularly. John said he hadn't heard from his Mother in two months, so the mail must be held up going to England. Have you heard from Polly recently? I haven't seen any of them in a long time.

The male situation is getting critical at home. Of course it isn't here because service men are always on the loose. But at home it's awful. Thirty boys from Surry were examined last week and everyone of them passed. Quite a few boys have been examined at home. So you won't have any trouble when you come home. One of your old gals is married though. Frances Edwards. I wish "Cubbie" was! Aren't they two of your ole flames?

Bud, remember how you use to take your class ring on a chain in your pocket & I fussed with you? Do you have it with you. I was wondering if you left it at home or wore it now?

Hope you find Gus. If you do please let me know. I think that it would be wonderful if you could? I heard that Wallace Stump was on his way home! I don't want anything to happen to you but I do wish you were on your way in coming home.

I don't have any snap shots here but the next time I go home I will send you some snapshots of a lot of ones I think you would go to see if you were here. Not me. You said you were hoping some of the boys would be home when you come home but if they were not you would see me! I don't like that at all. In other words after them and everybody else I come, huh? I wouldn't treat you like that!

Edith said she didn't know a way to have fun unless we divided the race up a little. Send some of you all back here and some of us over there. What about that!

Hurry and write me another long letter like the other one & I'll try and do better next time.

Love always,

Jack

**J. Stokes Kirk to Merle A. Kirk and J. Russell Kirk**

Feb. 4, Saturday night

At Sea

Dear Mom & Dad,

Just a note tonight to let you know I am fine and making out O.K. Guess Margaret has told you we are on ship again and no longer at 503 as you can tell from the address on the letter.

Listening to the ship radio and the news is very good from Luzon. There was just an interruption in the music and now they are reading off the names of about 500 men who have been released from Jap prison camps. I know that today is a red letter day in their lives after spending 3 years in Jap hands.

Guess Josh must be ready by now to start building his home over on the point. He must be excited and really anxious to get started. I know it will mean a lot to him. I expect to eat dinner tomorrow with the ship captain. He has invited our C.O. Col. Wade, Maj. Belote and me to eat fried chicken and ice cream with him. It really sounds like it will be a treat and I know we will enjoy it. Only have this one sheet of paper so will write more later.

Love to all, Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**  
Somewhere at sea

Feb. 6, Tuesday night

Dear Margaret,

I haven't heard from you for about ten days now and guess it will be quite a while yet before I do hear. I hope you hear regularly from me as I am doing my best. We stopped long enough last Friday for me to get one off and then I wrote another Sunday and hope that will get to you O.K. Those two letters will probably get to you before the last ones I wrote before leaving. Also, this one should make pretty good time when I get a chance to mail it. So, you shouldn't be too long without mail on this trip.

Boy it has been hot today. We must have passed over the equator today. Right now I have only shoes and my blue bathing suit on and am sweating like a horse. It is night and I am writing in the steward's room with a nice disk electric fan and indirect lighting, but it is still hot. Blackout makes for poor ventilation in one of these cabins.

The Steward, Steve Kanakas from Utah has a bunch of pictures on his desk of some of his girl friends. There are five in all, each one autographs to him and are really some good looking girls. I had quite a chat with him the other night and he told me about each of them. They range in age from 17 to about 28 so he hasn't done bad for himself. His stories are rare and I will have to tell you some of them when I get back. Guess he could teach a trick or two to most anybody.

I had breakfast with the ship's officers this morning. The Col. and Barney were there too and it was a swell meal. We had pineapple juice, rolls, two eggs and potatoes along with coffee. It was the second breakfast and the third meal I have had in the ship's mess since being on board and I have really enjoyed all three. I had one dinner meal of fried chicken and that was excellent too. The ship has quite a large refrigerator room and plenty of fresh meat in it.

Well the poker games are beginning again and now I am \$110 to the good. In fact there is one going on now with some of the ship officers and our colored officers. I don't play with the colored officers so guess I will not play tonight. I know you agree and I know I will never play with them and if one enters the game that is the time I get out.

I am also getting a pretty good tan again. Running around on top deck with only a pair of trunks on will soon get you that way. Guess when we reach our destination I will look somewhat like one of the civilians. All of the others officers are getting quite a tan too.

I don't know whether you ever did know or suspect where I was for the first year over here but I think you did. From the photographs of jungle, cemetery, etc. there is only one place it could be. Anyhow I will let you know definitely when I find out we can. I don't see any reason why we can't when we reach our new station or destination. Anyhow I think the place was the most interesting of all New Guinea.

The news from Luzon is certainly encouraging now. With our troops in Manila it almost seems that the whole island is ours. Guess there will be quite a little more fighting there but hope it will all be over before long. From the news report Germany is still in a bad way and I hope by the time this letter gets to you it will all be over in Europe.

Boy, these pretty girls in front of me makes me want to be home with you a heck of a lot. You and I are missing out on a lot of things and good times that could be ours except for the war. I was just counting up and during the last four years we have lived less than ten months together. That is not much time together I know but I hope most of the next four years will be with you. This is a poor start but maybe it will be finished with a bang.

Well, Woodman just came in and I guess the Steward will be in in a minute to begin the bull session so I will stop now.

All my love,  
Stokes

**Arthur Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**  
France V-MAIL

Feb. 7

Dear Mom,

Tonight there is light. It was a hard thing to do without it we put it in the same day we got our new generator. The little radio is in & it works like a charm, getting stations that even your radio can't get. I heard Bob Hope tonight & Bill Bendix. It was a good program & we all enjoyed it. We are gradually getting this place home like. Today we had 2 tables built for the mess. We have to eat standing but it is still better than eating out of our laps. It is a lot harder for medical units to build things than engineering units but we will take care of our needs. Next we will build seats. Our tool kit is sad.

Love,  
Arthur

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**  
Somewhere at sea

Feb. 8, Thursday night

Dear Margaret,

Hope that by Sunday I will be able to mail this letter and the lengthy one I wrote last night on green paper. There is a chance that I may be able to mail it and I will try to get another written by then. I am still writing at the same desk with the photographs of the pretty girls.

Couldn't hear the radio news very well at 6 o'clock tonight so I will try to get in on a later broadcast. The fellows are in there in a poker game but I don't think I will try my luck tonight. I have had about enough for one trip.

I went in the galley at 6 o'clock for the news and about that time the ship's officers were finishing their supper and I was invited to have some ice cream. I got a big saucerfull and it was really good. It was the first "store bought" ice cream I have had in about 13 months. The steward bought it in Sydney Australia (about 300 gallons) and put in the ship refrigerator so they have ice cream twice a week while at sea. They also have all kinds of fresh meats each day - roast duck for dinner today, pork steaks for supper etc. I think when the next war comes I will join the merchant marine instead of being in the army. I know what you are thinking when you read the last sentence ha.

We are reading a lot of books while on board now. I have finished about three and am waiting on a good one Barney is now reading "The life of Captain John Smith" He says it is pretty good.

I don't remember who sent it but the green cigarette case I got for Christmas is really a pal now. I carry it all of the time and like it fine. At first it came with soap I thought it was a soap dish and while packing I tried to save space by sticking a cake of soap in it. Well it didn't fit and it came to me like a flash that it was a cigarette case and I have been using it ever since. It is a good way to carry a cigarette pack, I have found. More later,

All my love,  
Stokes



**Arthur Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**  
Holland

Feb. 11

Dear Mom,

Today I am somewhere in Holland. There are many officers that I haven't seen for some time & find that they are doing very well. Today I had my first coca cola since leaving the states. This afternoon I heard rifle fire & tonight there is a little cannon fire. As yet there have been no big bombs. You need not worry about where I am for I'll be here for only a very short time. A few of those towns are torn to pieces. Others are hardly touched. Large numbers of Civs are still living here.

Love,

Arthur

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**  
Somewhere at Sea

Feb. 11, Sunday night

Dear Margaret,

We have had a very quiet voyage so far and has really been restful. Nothing to do but read, eat and sleep. No duties of any consequence to perform. It is just like a leave from duty and is a rest sorely needed by most everyone. A year working at the same things day in and day out will make a bunch of men just plain tired, especially a long ways from home and loved ones.

I finished the novel (correct name) "The Great Smith" and thought it very good. I told you about Barney reading it and saying it was good. Hope you can get hold of it and read it sometime when you have a chance.

Today makes our 13<sup>th</sup> day at sea on this voyage and it is still quite a few days short of the one from San Francisco to New Guinea which took a total of 21 days. Guess by the time we get off there will be no difference to speak of as far as length of time is concerned. We have a chance to mail this letter sometime tomorrow so will try to get this one and two more of yours off tomorrow, also one to Mom, one to Maj. Marshall McCord (who wrote to me), one to Wesley Chapel and one to the junior Chamber of Commerce of Suffolk.

Will quit now,

All my love,

Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**  
Philippines

Feb. 11

Margaret-

Please send some of this or something similar.

Stokes.

**0006**

In the Field

15 Feb 1945

8:00 A.M.

Subject: Regmt.

To: C.O. "K" Co.

1. The two platoons have again advanced to a kilometer.

2. Then and now displayed only hill first occupied.
3. So far there's no enemy seen ... sight and no engagements yet.
4. Other information will follow.

D. C. Oghays  
2nd Lt. 121st Infantry

0007

Please send immediately coffee!

**Robert M. Gill to Bud Gill**

Feb. 13

V-Mail

Dear Bud,

Received your letter today and I was so awful glad to hear from you. I am sorry that I haven't written to you sooner, but I will try to do better from now on. I have really done a lot of moving around over here. I am now taking training which will last about two more months.

The weather over here's been awful cold, but it has turned warmer in the past month. I sure hope it will continue like this for sometime.

Take good care of yourself and always be careful. Write again soon.

As ever,

Robert

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Feb. 15, Thursday

Somewhere at Sea

Dear Margaret,

It is almost noon now and we are still on the high seas. This has been some voyage and we have seen a lot of interesting things and places during the trip. Nothing exciting at all though.  
Sunday Feb. 18

A long time between lines but haven't had any chances to mail letters so it doesn't make much difference as you wouldn't have heard any earlier than this letter. I mailed letters on Feb. 2, Feb. 12 and I think we will be on a dry ground today so I will mail this soon. It has been a very interesting voyage - much more than the original trip over here as then we saw only water and this time we have seen a lot of land of the world.

I have read a lot of good books since being on board. The last was "Congo Song" by Stuart Cloete. It was fairly good but don't think you would enjoy it a lot.

Will have a lot to do today so will cut short and write again as soon as I can.

All my love,

Stokes

**Arthur Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**

Feb. 20

France V-MAIL

Dear Mom,

Today I wrote a letter to Margaret telling her about where I had been & sending the kids something French. I don't know Paul's [*Paul Brady*] address & therefore haven't written to him, will you send it to me. I also asked Margaret to send it & in that way it will get here by the quickest route. Some of your letters have taken as little as seven days to get here. Others have taken much longer. It is good that Josh & Betty are getting along so wonderfully.

Love, Arthur

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**  
Philippines

Feb. 20

Dear Margaret,

Here we are on land again after a very successful voyage and I have already received about seven letters - four from you, one from Grandma, one from Mamma and one from Nell. I was really surprised as I went after the Regimental mail myself yesterday and there was quite a bit of it. Mail service is really remarkable - you get mail before getting on ship and there is mail waiting on ship and there is mail waiting when you land several thousand miles away. I was really glad to hear as it was about three weeks that I didn't get any. When the letters were mailed you hadn't gotten the New A.P.O as it was all addressed to "503" but guess it was forwarded to us here.

We are now camped in a palm grove with short grass and good shade. So far we haven't been able to get any tents put up, but hope to before long. This is a far cry from the huts and conveniences we had at APO 503. However, now we are closer to where something is going on, civilization and some towns. People also wear clothes which makes a big difference from the Guinea savages. Looking back at them now, that is (savages) what you know they were.

It is very dry here. Some officers say that during the last 40 days it has rained only twice. I know that is a fact however guess we will really have it when the rainy season begins some months from now.

I also got a V-mail from Maj. Floyd Trent who went up on the Alcan with the 95<sup>th</sup>. He was transferred to the N.W.S.C. and was still there on Jan. 1, 1945. Almost three years and he says there have been quite a few changes since we were there. I believe I would rather be back there too as you could get an occasional leave to the states and then too I wouldn't be so far from you and home.

This place is too darn far from the states and home. Guess if we're allowed to do so I could get back in five or six days to Virginia - by using returning Air transport and proper authority. But it is still too far.

I believe it is even noisier here then it was when I first landed in New Guinea. Planes are roaring around all day. Well, the officers are walking down to pick up dinner so guess I will stop. We are using mess kits now as no officer's mess is set up yet. We will have to set it up before long though.

All my love,

Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**  
Philippines

Feb. 22, Thursday

Dear Margaret,

I received three letters yesterday and was really glad to get them. I read them by flashlight last night and enjoyed them a lot.

So far I like the Philippines a lot better than New Guinea. Taylor managed to get my jeep unloaded yesterday and this A.M. have been riding around. It is very thickly populated here and civilians are all around the roads, towns and even in the country areas, they are roaming all over. There is even a railroad about a mile from us so you see it is fairly well civilized. Most all of the Filipinos talk English but what they use mostly among themselves is Spanish. They all have something to sell at enormous price; eggs at 50 centavos apiece (about 25 cents), chickens, straw

hats, candy, bottled drinks (some intoxicating and some not) and woven mats. However, they will trade anything for clothing. Yesterday, I had a very nice looking Filipino girl take my laundry to be cleaned up. She charges \$.30¢ to fix up a suit of cotton khaki and \$.50 for one sheet. A little out of line to say the least. However, the Japs ruined them as the Jap money (Peso & Centavo which we are now using too) wasn't worth the paper it was written on. It is floating all around and the civilians will give it to you. I will enclose a couple of bills for John & Lynn. One peso (U.S.) is worth \$.50.

The roads are much better here than what we built in New Guinea. However these roads have been here for years & years whereas those in New Guinea around Burma were built during the last two years. There are quite a few concrete bridges, culverts and good drainage here. Also about every ¼ mile along the roads there are artesian wells with a large volume of good clean water flowing out of them, so water supply is no problem.

Now to answer a few of your questions. Yes, Bonaparte got his promotion back in March of 44. No, mine hasn't gone in yet but the Colonel was waiting until we got set up here in the Philippines before sending it in, so in a few months your husband may be a Lt. Col. We have a fine lot of Med. Officers. I know they are as good as Pinnell was.

Bailey finally got his pictures back and I am enclosing one of me. You have to send it to Eastman Kodak Co. at Rochester N.Y. for printing and each print cost \$.70 as I understand it. I hope it turns out good. This picture was taken about Nov. 15, 1944.

I sent \$200 to you today thru the Finance officer. I had over \$300 so figured that was too much to carry around here. I haven't heard from Capt. Spencer yet, but understand he is around here somewhere so will look him up and drum him for my \$64.

Tell John I thought it was real nice of him to write me those two letters and that I will write him later.

All my love,  
Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**  
On ship in Philippines

Feb. 24, Saturday

Dear Margaret,

I am back out on the ship now as we are busy unloading and I have a decent place to write a letter in instead of writing on my knee. Hope I can bum a good meal off of the steward before long as it is almost noon now. I would much rather eat on ship as they have table cloths, good service and good food.

Like it fine here. I have a last seen some Japs and Jap planes, not too many of either though. Yesterday I saw about a dozen Jap prisoners and a couple of nights ago Jap planes came over. Other than that you wouldn't know that there was any enemy around.

Expect to get to work before long. Haven't been doing a lot or been too busy but the next few days will result in a change. Hope so because moving on ship results in a lot of idle time which is not good.

I like the Filipino civilian pretty well. Most speak English, are pretty intelligent, and try to dress like Americans when they can get the clothes. However, clothes are pretty scarce and they will trade most anything they have - coconuts, chickens, eggs, do laundry for a shirt or pair of pants. Very few of them are over 5' tall tho so the clothes don't fit them too well. The Japs didn't treat them too well while under their rule. I have a Filipino newspaper I picked up dated

June 1944 that I will send home. It might be interesting and is a fair souvenir. I also have several more Japanese banknotes I will send.

The battle for Iwo must be really tough. I hope that is one landing that Bud [*Bud Gill*] is not in on. I have been doing a lot of thinking about it and hope he missed out on it.

Well, darling, guess I will quit and write again later.

All my love,  
Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Mar. 1, Thursday

Dear Margaret,

Well, we are finally getting settled down now, mail is fast catching up with us and almost back to normal. I got seven or eight letters yesterday mailed from the 4<sup>th</sup> of Feb. to the 13<sup>th</sup>. You had just received my new A.P.O. and were worried about the change. But everything went off smoothly and there is nothing to worry about as far as I am concerned. We have rented a house and about eight officers are living in it. Belote, the Colonel and most of the staff are here with me and it appears that most everyone will like it much better than New Guinea. It is not quite as hot here, better roads, the men and women dress as civilized people do (to the best of their ability with what little clothes they have) and boy, there is some real activity around here. Will discuss it all sometime when I get home. Hope it won't be so long though as I think 14 months is entirely

long enough. However, rotation is not even considered for less than 18 months. By then I guess I will be on the priority list for leaving but know the priority will be pretty low. 1<sup>st</sup> priority is 30 months or more.

Molvie is back in the hospital now and hear that he will be evacuated in a couple of days. He never did fully recover from the jungle rot and it has gotten worse here so he is being sent back.

A lot of company has just come in so I will stop and write again in a few days.

All my love,  
Stokes

**Lemuel Thomas to Margaret G. Kirk**

Mar. 1, Wednesday

Greetings Margaret,

It was thoughtful of you to write and let me know Stokes got his book. It was a collection of cartoons, the type of thing he always seemed to enjoy. I sent Lewis one like it at the same time and he got his also. It looks like I buy all my



1945 Easter drawing by Lemuel Thomas for John & Lynn Kirk

presents in a book-store I expect, in that the children's gifts came from there also. "Hansel and Gretel" must have been printed on very sturdy paper if the animated illustrations still work.

Mike, Nell's husband, passed through yesterday [*Mike & Nell Thomas Kirk*]. He told me Jack [*Jack Thomas*] had been able to write and tell the facts about his leg injury. Shrapnel hit him in the knee and twice below it, but he can already bend his knee, so it looks as though he is going to be close to all right. He was very cheerful in a letter I got from him recently as he always seems to be.

Enjoyed seeing you looking so well. Those extra pounds are very becoming and I know Stokes will be pleased when he returns.

Hope you and the children will get down to see mama [*Chassie Thomas*] whenever you can, as it is always a real event for her.

Hear Arthur got himself engaged before he left for over - seas duty. And now I'll end up with a sketch for the children.

All my best to all of you,

Lemuel

**Arthur Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**

Mar. 2

France V-Mail

Dear Mom,

It is certainly time that I start writing you again for it has been neglected for some little time. I had a trip to Paris & had a good time & saw the sights. That is a beautiful city & spread out with a highway around it. The Notre Dame is on an island in the middle of the city. It is old, but must have been made out of good material for the inside is in an excellent state of preservation & in this way is a lot different from most other churches here.

Best Love,

Arthur

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Mar. 2

Dear Margaret,

Guess I will begin this letter by asking for things. No not food as I have a pretty good stock from New Guinea and we are buying fresh foods daily for the officer's mess. The first thing I need are some more files - about a dozen of the same 6" that you mailed before and the second bathing suit size 32 or 33 that you suggested. When first arriving here we set up several miles from the ocean but now we are on the edge of it. My old bathing suit is serviceable but very droopy since Jones boiled it. I bought it, I believe during the summer of 1938 so it has done its job. It was a MacGregor and rayon but don't guess you can get that now.

Enclosing a clipping from the Dec. New Yorker which I thought was good and reminded me instantly of New Guinea. Only those who have lived in New Guinea can really appreciate this.

Been under the weather for the last couple of days. It was just an upset stomach but stayed in all day yesterday upon doctor's orders. I have felt fine all day today. That and our move a few days ago interrupted my letter writing so this one is about the first in almost a week. Hope you don't worry too much as here it is no more dangerous than New Guinea.

I received a letter from Lewis today and finished answering it a while ago. I still have no idea where he is except that he is with the 7<sup>th</sup> fleet. He will have to look me up when he gets to 70.

I am using my old green Coleman lantern now and the bugs are about to drive me out so will write again later.

All my love,  
Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Mar. 3, Saturday A.M.

Dear Margaret,

I really did hit the jackpot yesterday after finishing a letter to you a total of nine letters with the last one mailed on the 18 of Feb. Fairly good time but will expect better time as things settle down. I got one from Dad, one from Mom and seven from you so I spent well over an hour reading what you, John and Lynn were doing and what was going on around home. I enjoyed them all very much. John must really be busy with all of his school work. Poor fellow, I guess he must have thought he was being persecuted to have to write five words under each letter of the alphabet.

Glad you enjoyed the show in Norfolk. From the write up Evalyn must have been the hit of the show. I didn't know she was that good before. Pretty smart woman- maybe I should have looked after her better during my courting days Ha. No, I am well satisfied and hope as much as you do that I will make it home before so much longer.

Molvie is leaving today and going possibly back to the states. He has a rare case of jungle disease and will have to have X-ray treatment to cure it. It is not catching, however, and don't think I have a chance of getting it. He has it pretty bad on his hands, feet and another place that I don't need to describe. So far I have had a touch of the jungle rot twice but managed to cure it pretty easily. It is very similar to poison ivy at first, spreads just as fast but seems to come up in bumps under the skin. It is not really dangerous but very uncomfortable.

We had a few Japanese planes to come over last night and the most beautiful fireworks display I have ever seen. It lasted for quite a while and we all had to get out and watch it. I enjoyed it a lot.

We have a separate officer's mess now for all officers and had our first real meal at noon today. It was really good and was as different as night and day from the company messes which cater to the men with a lot of grease in foods. It will really be a big help to have something that appeals to our tastes and it looks we will have that in the future.

I have just been trying to open some envelopes and usually make a mess of them before I get them unglued. In New Guinea they always had to stick together and it was next to impossible to separate them without tearing but now I am soaking them in water and getting the flap open.

I am sending one of John's letters back in this letter. He is doing pretty good for a six year old I think. Tell Lynn Daddy will really roll and tumble with her when he does come home. Also tell John that Daddy kicks when he sleeps and is liable to kick him right out of bed so he better not sleep with him when he comes home.

Guess I will quit now.

All my love,  
Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**  
Somewhere in the Philippines

Mar. 4

Dear Margaret,

It is a beautiful Sunday day. Been riding around a bit this morning and guess I will go out for awhile this afternoon to see how everything is progressing. Before I go out however I am going to get a haircut. I haven't had one since about Feb. 1<sup>st</sup> so I am just like a shaggy dog now.

I hope by now that you have heard that I was on land again. I know from your letters that you were worried but there is no more need of it. I like it fine here - much better than New Guinea. There is much more work but guess that will keep me much more fully occupied.

Today is the day that the Filipinos dress up. This morning I went thru a town and there were quite a few people sporting their best. Some of the women wore high heel shoes, nice looking dresses, and from the rear they looked just like American women except for the brown legs and long straight black hair - but the front it was a different pictures - flat noses, dark brown complexion and slanting eyes. The people are very much like the Jap, but just a little taller. The difference between New Guinea and here is about the same as the difference between savages and civilized people. One thing that strikes you is their cleanliness here. Everybody, it seems, goes to the artesian wells along the road and takes a bath at least once a day.

Well, it looks like I won't go out this afternoon. I started writing at 11:45 and now it is 4:00 P.M. about the longest length of time I have ever taken to write a letter - and no hair cut yet. I had a lot of interruptions, discussions, phone calls etc. and talked about everything from latrines to piling. This is a heck of a letter - disjointed and everything. Caused mostly by false starts.

I am enclosing a couple of John's letters I received lately with a note on one to him. He uses his best adjectives when writing I see.

All of my love to my darling,  
Stokes

**John S. Kirk to J. Stokes Kirk**

Mar. 4

Dear Daddy

What did you get for Christmas? Did you have a Happy Christmas? I hope you had a real Pretty happy one.

Love,

John

Dear Johnny

Daddy had a pretty nice Christmas and got a lot of boxes from Mamma and everybody. But he would have had a lot nicer and happier Christmas if he could have been with you. He hopes he can be with you next Christmas.

Take good care of Mamma and Lynn until Daddy gets back.

Love,

Daddy



DEAR DADDY

WHAT DID

YOU GET FOR CHRISTMAS?

DID YOU HAVE A HAPPY

CHRISTMAS? I HOPE YOU  
HAD A REAL PRETTY HAPPY

ONE. LOVE

JOHN

DEAR JOHN

DADDY HAD A PRETTY NICE CHRISTMAS  
AND GOT A LOT OF BOXES FROM MAMMA AND  
EVERYBODY. BUT HE WOULD HAVE HAD A LOT NICE

AND HAPPIER CHRISTMAS IF HE COULD HAVE BEEN  
WITH YOU. HE HOPES HE CAN BE WITH YOU  
NEXT CHRISTMAS.

TAKE GOOD CARE OF MAMMA AND  
LYNN UNTIL DADDY GETS BACK.

LOVE,

DADDY.

**Jackie White to Bud Gill**  
Richmond, VA

Mar. 4

Dearest Bud,

Just what were you mad about when you wrote to me last? Please don't write to me anymore when you're mad or I might find out some things I didn't know and I don't want to know. Did it make you mad because the mail came and you got another letter from me? I'll have to start writing at less frequent times then maybe you won't get mad as much. How about that?

Bud, you said I was the only girl you had written to since Christmas. Is it because you haven't heard from any? That couldn't prove much to me.

So you think a little loving could fix up everything for you right now. Well, you haven't changed very much then, have you? Well, I have, if you want that you'll have to go to see someone else.

I went home last weekend for the first time in a month. I don't know what has happened to me! I got there about 4:00, went on to Delk's and bought me a suit. Your Mother came in while I was trying it on and I was trying to talk to her. Ruth was trying to get me to try it on. So I didn't talk to her very much, just enough to tell her about you (what a sweet boy you are) and to find out what she knew. She told me something about you too! She also told me about Robt. and Cofer meeting. Isn't that wonderful. About as much as you and Gus meeting. I'm so glad you have had a chance to talk to him a lot.

Last Sunday night we got back here bout 10:30 and the bus was really crowded. So when I was getting off I looked in the front of the bus, there were Marines & Sailors by the 100's. Then at the front of the bus was Ted Preston. I almost had fits because he hadn't seen him in so long. So we talked & Dean & I missed our street-car so we had to wait about 30 min. for another.

This is an awful day here. It has been raining all day. I didn't dress until 12:00 today. It is 3:00 now. That's all I know for this time. Hurry write soon. Love always,

Jack

P.S. I got a raise this week, what do you want?

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Mar. 5, Monday

Dear Margaret,

I see that we can mail the "News" so I am sending it on to you. Wrote yesterday so you should get this and the letter at the same time.

Love,

Stokes

**Arthur Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**  
Baronsville Regt., Belgium; V-Mail

Mar. 7

Dear Mom,

We are now living in a beautiful chateau & a baron who speaks English quite well & has been extremely nice to us. Again there are many of my friends here & there is a chance to see them frequently. I hope I'll get a chance to see Paul [*Paul Brady*]. The advance is going fine.

Love,

Arthur

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Mar. 7, Wednesday P.M.

*Letter written on the back of a Japanese form.*

Dear Margaret,

It is getting pretty bad when you have to use this kind of paper but actually I don't have to. I thought I would use some of it for the novelty. I went out riding yesterday and managed to find a few Jap souvenirs along with this Jap form. I have been showing it around as the real Jap "Morning Report" and I think everyone believes it, however they can't prove I am wrong. I have quite a batch of it.

I also saw the first concrete road since leaving the states yesterday. It was pretty nice to get on one for a change and drive along it.

I received my last letter yesterday which happened to be one instead of a batch like I received a couple days before that. It had Lemuel's letter in it and the kids wanted it back so here it is. I know they must have enjoyed it. In the most recent letters I know you must be worried (your last letter written Feb. 22). However, I mailed one on Feb. 4<sup>th</sup> and again one on about the 12<sup>th</sup> and another on about the 19<sup>th</sup>. From the 19<sup>th</sup> until now they should be coming in to you fairly regularly. There were some long skips but I couldn't exactly help it any as I did mail one at every possible chance I had and the one on the 12<sup>th</sup> wasn't even a good chance – however, I guess you will get it.

Guess I will quit and write again as soon as I can.

All my love,

Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Mar. 11, Sunday P.M.

Dear Margaret,

I don't believe March in the Philippines is near as hot as March in New Guinea. We were south of the equator when we left and it was so called summer and we arrived here during the middle of February when winter was bearing down - however at either place the only thing that is bearing down is the sun. It is much more pleasant weather here though. I know you would like to get a little of this warm weather from your recent letter of temperatures in Virginia far below freezing. I know I will feel the same way when I get back. However, I would gladly take the weather as it comes just to be back. In British Columbia I got enough of cold weather and now I have a "bellyful" of tropical weather. Imagine wearing just a pair of pants and shirt or you wearing just a dress (and possible brassiere and pants) 24 hrs a day 12 months a year and not getting cold. You get hot at times but never cold - in more than one way - if I didn't have to do any imagining and had you in person. Kind of screwy letter but I hope you get what I mean. If you don't I will explain one way of hot when I can get back to you. I guess you remember I came back from the Arctic cold natured but guess I will come back from the tropics hot natured.

Darling, I guess you are wondering what has got into me to write such a screwy or different letter. I know you have never received another one like it from me but I feel particularly good and thought I would write on the spur of the moment.

Anyhow to get down to some business I am enclosing Spencer's check. I saw him the other day (he had gotten my letter) and he gave me a new check. I didn't consider it so much - only 20 lbs. but it is a lot \$64.60 or 129.20 pesos. Actually I have only about 100 pesos in money on me. I tried to keep about £100 on hand in New Guinea and it looks like 100 pesos but there is no comparison in values. Where you can't spend money 100 bills of a one denomination is about

the same as of another. I know I wouldn't mind paying £8 for a watch but would think again about paying 50 pesos for the same.

I am also enclosing three pieces Jap invasion money. Also saw some Jap - Australian and United States invasion money the other day. Now it looks like the tables are turned and the U.S. will have to print some yen for troops when we do go in Japan. Am also sending one of Lynn's colored pictures back with a note on it to her.

Guess will stop for now.

All my love,

Stokes

P.S. Hope Bud [*Bud Gill*] is making out allright on Iwo. Have you heard from him lately?

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Mar. 14, Wednesday night

Somewhere in the Philippines

Dear Margaret,

I haven't received much mail lately except no's 386 & 388 on Sunday. In letter 388 you said you had heard the day before so that must have been the letter I mailed at my last chance before arriving here. Guess you still have a week to wait and you should have heard by March 5<sup>th</sup>. Hope I get a letter soon saying that you have heard as I don't like for you to worry so much. Guess I will have to tell you like Arthur does "don't worry" as I am not any longer in a dangerous zone and expect to be settled here for quite a while to come. Everything is as quiet as a mouse around since the puny air raid quit some time ago. Think most of the Jap planes have been shot down and to see one is a rare occurrence and then it is on the ground a total wreck. Therefore, I am not in any danger, enjoying the best of health, working pretty hard, eating better food than I have been (native chickens, shrimp, fresh tomatoes, etc.) and like this island much better than the New Guinea island. So you can see, next to being home with you, the kids and everybody that this is about as good as I could expect.

Enough for one paragraph, I had better start a new one. We have a show in the area tonight and I think I will run down to it. It should be pretty good and I will finish this after the show.

Just back from the show - had seen it before but enjoyed it just the same.

I certainly hope Bud is making out O.K. on Iwo. I guess that he must be there. Let me know when you hear from him.

Will stop for now,

All my love,

Stokes

**Arthur Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**

Mar. 16

France V-Mail

Dear Mom,

It has cleared up & the weather actually sunny France. The boys have been in good spirits. We ran into some more old friends day before yesterday & spent the night with them. I have been sending home French money to the children & will try to get a supply of Belgium francs for them. The Belgium franc is a little higher in trade than the French.

I hope Dad can start getting that lumber cut with the P.W's for lumber is a scarce item over here. Another scarce item is the rubber tires, for the trucks pick up a lot of nails with all the

battered buildings & those synthetic tires don't last as long as the old rubber tires. From the looks of the news Patton & his army & the seventh army are stepping off again.

Love,

Arthur

**Baron Ytrillier to Arthur Kirk**

Mar. 16

Baronville, Belgium

Dear Major,

It was awfully nice of you to spoil my children like you did (as well as their parents) and the souvenir, the chaplain gave to Bernadette on your behalf was certainly the best thing to please her most! There is...rned and proud of it. Her letter is enclosed by them I leave it untouched. My wife joins me in sending you again our best wishes of good luck and prompt victory.

Yours very sincerely,

Baron Von .....

**Bernadette de Stronytrellioer to Arthur Kirk**

Mar. 16

Baronville, Belgium

My dear Major,

I send to you my verry best thanks for the verry nice souvenir you have given to me! I are verry proud of it! I will always remember you and your kindness to me. I hope everything will go well with you and your soldiers. Good luck. I will say a prayer for you.

Your little Belgium friend

Bernadette de Stronytrellioer

**Arthur Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**

Mar. 17

France

Dear Mom,

Things are well arrayed here & haven't seen any Germans. I have had a fine time in the past month or so. I am sending you a letter about a Baron & his daughter, about 10 years, sent to me. They apparently liked us a great deal & when we left I gave the kid one of my insignias after I had gone. We found that those people were just as they...Baron asked me to please stop back at any time & after the war he said he would entertain me well.

Love,

Arthur

You might save the letter

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Mar. 20, Tuesday P.M.

Dear Margaret,

Well finally, I received a letter stating that you had heard that I was in the Philippines. I received #396 written March 6<sup>th</sup>. You said in it that you had received two letters the day before and two that day. I guessed and told Taylor about a week ago that you would hear about the 5<sup>th</sup> of March and he told me a while ago that his wife had finally heard - on the 5<sup>th</sup> of March.

I have been so busy lately that letter writing has almost become a last thought. However, my resolve still stands to try and write more letters so I will get as many off as possible. I don't

remember if I told you or not but Col. Wade has left and Lt. Col. Jones has stepped into command. He is very nice to work with but he really keeps you stepping. At present my work seems that it is never thru - still the same as at 503 and on the Alcans. Roads & bridges and some railroad work and other construction that the Japs ruined.

By the way there are railroads here as well as concrete highways. Also (Dad might be interested). I saw a bunch of pine logs the other day which were cut up in the mountains. I haven't seen any standing trees yet but just to see a pine log for the first time in over a year is really something of an event. Everything is still quiet around here except my work. It really keeps me going but guess I will live thru it easily enough.

The people are really thick around here and so are the pony size "Carts" that are drawn by very small horses and have springs, seats and tops on them. They are very similar to the cart at home. The people and carts are a problem on the highways as you have to be continually dodging them. People here are not like the natives of New Guinea who walked in the ditches. These people walk on the road.

More later,  
All my love,  
Stokes

**Capt. Thomas W. Neero to Bud Gill**  
College Park, GA to Smithfield, VA

Mar. 20

Dear "Madge,"\*

Just a few lines tonight to let you know I still remember you. I got a letter from Mother today and she said Mrs. Gill told her she had a letter from you and that you had gotten my last letter. I'm glad you did, and hope that you may find time to answer someday.

Not much is happening in this God - forsaken county except for school and that is enough. We've got our final exams coming up in 5 more weeks, and then I'll head for home & the Navy. We get out the 28<sup>th</sup> of April and I expect to leave for the Navy about the 15<sup>th</sup> of May.

This is a good school, and they are giving us a fairly good smell of what the infantry is, and I've definitely made up my mind that it is no place for me. I'm going to try to get in the Naval Aircrewmen program, and be a gunner in a torpedo plane. I sure hope I make it. What kind of work are you doing where you are? I had a letter from Gwaltney White (Buddy) today and he said he heard you were on Iwo Jima. Is that right or can you say? I hope you are all right and that it won't be long before you and I can go duck hunting down at Gwaltney's warehouse and not bet a shot at anything much more than a blackbird. Brother they were the good times.

I was back at S.H.S when I was home Christmas and there isn't hardly anybody up there except John Barlow, Chicken Turner and a few others. They had a good basketball team though, and should have a good baseball team.

Wayne Duncan has had his wings now since just before Christmas and is home for a 20 day leave & will then be stationed at Norfolk for a while. I saw Ralph Ferroct while I was home Christmas he looks darn good. Saw Billy Jones too, just as little as ever. Saw "Buck" Batten in Atlanta about 3 or 4 weeks ago and he looked pretty good. He was wrestling for Athens Pre-flight school where he's stationed now, and won his match in 40 seconds. He's undefeated so far according to his coach.

Well, tattoo just blew so I'll have to close for a while - write when you get a chance and I'm thinking of you & wishing you all the luck in the world.

As ever, " ... "

P.S. I'm not sure about the Corp. part of the address – isn't it Sgt. now? I think I heard it was, I hope so anyway & if it isn't I'm sure it should be.

*\*'Madge' – Nickname friends bestowed on Bud.*

**Jack Thomas to Merle A. Kirk**

Mar. 2

Europe V-Mail

Hi folks,

I am trying to write to everyone now as I might not get the chance for some little time. At long last I am headed back to my old outfit and the front but don't worry as they are already across the Rhine and it won't be too bad.

If I can I'm going to try and find Arthur but I don't know if I'll be able to or not. I sure hope so. When you write use my old address: Co. I 413 Inf.A.P.O.104 as I'll get it a bit faster if you do I'll write whenever I can but that won't be that often. Don't worry as I'll be alright and this mess will soon be over.

Just me

Jack

**Arthur Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**

Mar. 24

France V-Mail

Dear Mom,

I was in Germany the other day & brought back a couple of souvenirs that the Russian traded with me. I'm sending them home for you to keep for me. A couple of Red head girls have just come by to give us some coffee & doughnuts. The fellows are having a good time with all this attention. We also picked up a lot of wine yesterday & the boys had a good time with last night. I just finished building myself a desk & it works fine. One of the Frenchmen put a drawer in it & I gave him a pair of German shoes which he was thankful for. This man is a wonderful carpenter & I had a small hand saw to work with so the desk folds up & works out fine.

Love,

Arthur

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Mar. 24, Saturday A.M.

Dear Margaret,

I have been pretty busy during the past three days and fully believe I have put at least 500 miles on my jeep during that time. Three long trips in three days and I intend to rest my jeep up a little today, not to mention my own "butt". In fact I think I must have calluses on it by now. It is really rugged riding for long trips in a jeep either over good roads or over poor ones. I haven't been down to the city yet.

Last night about 8:00 o'clock when I got in I had two letters from you waiting for me. One was written March 5<sup>th</sup> and the other March 9<sup>th</sup>. I am glad your anxiety is over with - in fact I am really on dry ground now. It hasn't rained since we have been here except two very light sprinkles which would not have wet even a shirt if you stayed in it. I have never seen anything to beat it. In New Guinea, at times it was awfully dry, but then we would have it cloud up quickly and as the natives said "Big rain, him come down fast" or in other words it would rain to beat H\_.

In your letter of March 5 and the girl washing the sheets - guess you wouldn't be worried if you could see some of them. Of course, a lot of them are as white as I am and many other

shades of brown almost to a black color. However they all have long, straight black hair approaching the glamour side. But you should see one girl picking the lice out of another's hair. You see it being done along the road, in the bamboo huts and houses and everywhere. I believe they all have lice and the closest I have ever been to one is one which an M.P. asked me to give a lift to. I don't know of any reason why you should worry about me.

Lynn is really doing fine now with her coloring. I am sending it back with this letter and also the feather. Tell her that I think the feather is cute, too.

Guess will quit for a while as it is close to noon and dinner time.

All my love,  
Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Mar. 26, Monday night

Dear Margaret,

It is now about 7:30 P.M. and I have just been holding a court martial and have a few minutes closing of court until the arrival of a witness which has his time mixed up. These things have been keeping me busy at night however I don't really mind. I have been busier during the last several weeks than for a long time and now it is going to be busier than ever. Taylor is now C.O. of D Co. and I have no adjutant. Bailey went back to the hospital yesterday and I believe he might go back to the states. Belote is now gone and the last I heard he was somewhere in the Halmaheras [*island in Indonesia*]. However, he may be back as soon as his "jungle rot" cures up. I had one letter from him about two weeks ago and he said it was curing up fast. Also, I am almost sure that Molvie is on his way back now to the states. He had a little different type of "rot" that didn't look good to me. One doctor said that he had only seen one case like it before and the patient had to be sent back for x-ray treatment. Hope he is back by now because that type can't be cured very well over here.

Well, they are all of the "casualties" so far we still have Pelt, Larsh and Paquette left out of the 95<sup>th</sup>, although Paquette hasn't left 503 yet. I think I told you that Maj. Jacobson doesn't have the 1<sup>st</sup> Bn. now (he left about 6 mo.'s ago) and a Maj. Chapman is in charge. I wish he would hurry up and come as we need him.

You and John must have had a rough and tumble ball game for John to hurt his nose. Tell him that Daddy heard all about it from Mamma and that it was the funniest thing.

I am answering John's letter in another envelope. Guess you will get both on the same mail. Also enclosing another one that he sent.

All my love,  
Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Merle A. Kirk and J. Russell Kirk**  
Philippines

Mar. 28, Wednesday night

Dear Mom & Dad,

I received your V-mail written March 7 today so it took around 21 days to get here. I received an air mail from Margaret yesterday written March 12 which took 15 days to get here therefore the air mail is still faster than the V-mail. Arthur may be able to use a lot of boxes where he is but I don't really need any. We can buy occasional chickens, eggs, shrimp, carrots, tomatoes and so forth every now and then. Fresh roasted peanuts, bananas and candy can always be bought. I don't know what the Filipinos are going to do for food if they keep selling it to the army. However, we are making out better as far as eating is concerned, staying broke and the



civilians are making a lot of money. Maybe the "Victory" Peso will be worth something after goods are shipped in. An old shirt, pair of pants or even a dress, any size evening on down will buy most anything. A pair of shoes - none of the men wear them and a very few of the women have any left from 1941 - or most any clothes in a box is the best thing to send.

I picked up four Filipinos girls today. A guerilla Capt. asked me to carry them to a nearby town. They were interpreters that have been hiding in the hills with the guerillas until the first of 1943 and for the last two years have been actually in the intelligence of the guerillas. They autographed a 2 peso note and do have civilized names - Pvt. Carmen J Flores, Pvt. Juliet Sandrey, Magdalena J. Flores and Erlinda V. Garcia. These four were well dressed and fairly good looking. A lot of Spanish blood in them.

Most of the people are very polite and appreciate most everything you do for them. These girls though had led anything but an easy life during the occupation by the Japs - hiding out in the hills, in caves anywhere to keep away from the Japs. However, they looked like high school girls and were very healthy looking not like they had been pulled thru a keyhole.

Guess it won't be long before Josh & Betty will be married. I was sorry to hear about Betty's father's death. I know they must have been undecided as to what to do. However, I know they did right and glad it is a quiet wedding. Their house from all reports will be very nice and evidentially is really progressing.

Thomas and his mule really tickled me. To have the thing lay down and die and cost him \$10. to get it buried was really a big "ha ha" for me. I am still laughing about it and several of the other officers got a big kick out of it even if they didn't know "Tom".

Will stop now - more later.

Love,

Stokes

**Arthur Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**

Mar. 29

V-mail

Dear Mom,

The boys are well across the Rhine & still going strong. I went to a small place called Heppenklein [*Heppemheim*] a few days ago & found a prison hospital. It was really an awful sight. You could tell how long a boy had been there by how emaciated he was. Some of the soldiers were in such a weakened condition that they couldn't roll over in bed. Some of them had bad feet & parts of their hands off, they still smiled when they saw us. We took a contribution from the men in the company & I sent to them yesterday.

Best Love

Arthur

**Bud Gill to William A. Thompson**

Apr. 3

Marine Service Sqdrn. 11, *Inter Island* [unmailed]

Dear Art,

Well I finally got around to writing to you and I'm sorry I haven't written sooner but I have been trying to get the pictures from Bill. I have seen him three times but he hasn't gotten them yet. He said to tell you he hoped to have them soon. I will send them as soon as I get them.

I was real glad to hear from you and am glad you got there all right. I was also glad you sent the pictures. How about sending me one of you and me? I don't have a one of you.

By the way I wrote to Janice like you asked me to and I got letter from her the other day. I also got a letter from Ferguson, you know the girl you told to write to me. I haven't written her yet, but am going to try to tonight.

We are all O.K. but are working hard. "Bo-jocks" and all the boys said to tell you, May and all the rest hello. I paid W. B.

I have gotten seven letters from Jackie and haven't written yet,  
The old-

**William A. Thompson to Bud Gill**  
Marine Service Sqdrn. 11, *Inter Island*

Apr. 3

Dear Bud,

Well I finally got around to writing to you and I'm sorry I haven't written sooner but I had a chance to get my film developed so I thought I'd just wait until now to write to you so I could send the pictures at the same time. That's killing two birds with the same stone, right?

All the pictures came out good with the exception of the two of you and your buddies. The one of you four must have been out of focus or the fellow moved the camera. When he took the picture and the other one the fellow that developed the film accidentally scratched the film. I sent you the negative of your picture because I thought maybe you'd like to have some prints made to send home. Did you get those pictures from Bill yet? I sure hope so and I hope you'll send them soon. Well how are you and Leonard and "Bo-jack" and all the rest of the fellows getting along? Earl and I are just fine and of course we run into Reid and all the other fellows. I've got an infected ear and they put me in sick bay to take shots for two days and I get the shots every three hours and believe me my butt feels like a human pin cushion. Ha Ha.

May and I are on the bull-gang but it's not bad at all. After the first couple of days they quit calling our names at muster so now we don't even work. Boy what a life, just laying around waiting to go home and I think we'll get to go home in June sometime.

Do you know when you'll get to go home? Soon I hope. Say did you pay W.D. Wright that twenty bucks I owed him. I told him I thought you would and then I'll send the money to you. This is a small island and if you stand on the highest point you can see all of it. Well Bud I must close for now and do write soon.

Your Buddy

Art

P.S. How's Jackie? Ha Ha.

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Apr. 5, Thursday evening

Dear Margaret,

I received several letters yesterday with the latest written Mar. 20. I have been getting letters all along lately, fairly well distributed, from one to three letters at a time. I haven't gotten any boxes or papers and packages since about Jan 15. Going on three months now. Maybe they will all be coming in one of these days. One thing I would certainly like to have is a camera preferably movie or any good kind plus film to use in it. I forget what happens what I have seen, etc., in a course of a few months and it would really be wonderful to have something to keep it alive. It was probably one of my biggest mistakes when I didn't buy a good one before I came over. Bulk film can be ordered from the states so that would be really no problem.

I received John's first report card and I have looked for it but can't find it. Evidently it was mixed up in the first 300 letters I had to burn before leaving 503. I am sorry I couldn't find

it. However, the report card you sent me certainly shows that he is doing excellent. It is a tribute not only to his teacher but to you who probably has more influence and teaching cares than anyone else. Hope I will be able to get home and help out before so long. As for your "ball playing" I guess Johnny does need a little better player and I could help out a little there.

Understand that all of the men in "Priority" 1 for rotation are now overseas for over 36 months. I saw a bunch the other day that were leaving who all had over 36 months overseas. Me and my poor 15 months so far looks pretty pitiful. However maybe the duration will be over before 21 more months. At least, I hope. Belote is on his way home now. I got a letter from him as he was on board ship to sail when he wrote. So it looks like he may be there before you receive this letter. Guess I will have to try that way.

All my love,  
Stokes

**Janice Van Sickle to Bud Gill**  
Washington, OH to Marine Service Sqdrn. 11

Apr. 5

Dear Gill,

I received your letter and was so glad you were so kind to write and tell not to worry about Arthur. It was very thoughtful of you, Gill. But you know that's easier said than done, Gill. Its that feeling of not knowing where he's going that worries me most.

Arthur has mentioned you in his letters quite often. He sure thinks a great deal of you. I know he must of hated to leave. No, Gill, you don't have to tell me that he's a swell guy. I agree with you when you say you know him almost if not better than I in some ways. But then that has two points of views too for I know him in quite a different way than you know him. Don't you agree? But you probably know him better than I do in a way for you've been with him for over the past year and I haven't seen him for twenty- three months. That's a long time, Gill.

That's funny its rained here for at least two days, too, but it looks as though our April showers will continue, too. Do you know Spring is here? The flowers are beginning to come out & those old winter torn trees are beginning to budd, before you know it summer will be here. Soon my little sister will be out of school for the summer vacation, and gee it's so nice to think that summer is really on its way. You see, Gill, I'm looking forward to summer because I have built my hopes on Arthur maybe getting home. It's something I've counted on so long now that when Arthur told me he might get home well I sorta thought he would get home. Bu now he's being transferred and well, tell me Gill, what are the chances of Arthur's getting to the states? He wrote & told me he thought he'd be home around the same time of year he left in. He left in June 10, 1943, 4:30 A.M. Wed. morning. I'm really on the ball when it comes to that, aren't I? But why shouldn't I be, that was the last day I saw him.

Well I enjoyed your letter very much. I do hope you write again, Gill. I'll tell Arthur you miss him. And thanks a million for your kindness.

Your friend,  
Janice

**Arthur Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**  
Postcard

Apr. 7

Dear Mom,

This is a German post card. Things are still progressing nicely. I think I could find Paul [*Paul Brady*] fairly easily but don't have the time right now, will probably be able to later.

Love,

Arthur

**Vivian Ferguson to Bud Gill**  
Olivet College Kankakee, Ill

Apr. 9

Hi Bud,

Well, fancy me sitting down and writing a letter. I'm not what one calls good but still I write them. A fellow named Arthur told my roommate to have me drop a line. So here it is.

The first question that pops into my mind is what are you like, what are you interested in, and what are you doing in the Marines? Now, these questions could easily start your first paragraph in a letter.

Now as to your civilian life. What did you do before you entered the Marines? Did you graduate from high school? When, where, and etc. How old are you and when is your birthday? Where you live, oh I know you're in barracks or such now but your home town, state and otherwise.

I don't know whether Arthur has told you any thing of me but I'll just state a few facts. I'm a junior in college studying hard. (writing letters). I room in the dorm with Loisanne Nock, who Arthur writes to. We have some pretty hilarious times together.

Since this is an introductory letter it will be short. If you care to answer this I'd be very glad to hear from you. Feel free to ask any questions about me you wish too. I'll be glad to answer them.

P.S. How tall are you? And what is your weight?

A friend, "Fergie" (*Vivian Ferguson*)

**Bud Gill to Vivian Ferguson**  
[unmailed] to Olivet College Kankakee, Ill

Apr. 9

Fergie,

Well here I am sitting down trying to write to someone who doesn't know me, when I can't write a very good letter to some one who does. So I think the best thing for me to do is to try to answer all the questions you asked me.

I am six feet tall and my weight is about 170 lbs. I have blond hair, grey green eyes, I am not what you would say good looking but I get by. I like all kinds of sports and played three years high school baseball & basketball. I finished high school in 43 and went right into the Marines. I didn't have much of a civilian life because I was in school, but I did work after school as a press operator in a small printing shop. I am from a small town in Virginia called Smithfield. It is known as the ham town of the U.S.

You wanted to know why I am in the Marines? You tell me, and we will both know. As for what I am interested in if you had been away from the states for over a year and hadn't seen a white girl, what would you be interested in? I am twenty years old and my birthday is June the 9<sup>th</sup>.

Well I couldn't write but two pages, so I will have to stop now. Write soon and try to answer some of the questions for me. Send me a picture if you have one and I will send you one if I can get one.

P.S. Tell Loisanne I said hello.

A friend

I got your letter the other day and I was real glad to hear from you. You don't know how much a letter means to a fellow out here.

**Arthur Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**

Apr. 10

Postcard

Dear Mom,

Things are still progressing nicely, a little resistance is being met, but they are progressing. I'm not going to send Josh a wedding gift until I find out that he is married. I don't know what to send but there should be something nice.

Love,

Arthur

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Apr. 10, Tuesday afternoon

Dear Margaret,

I was out riding a little ways today and ended up by going quite a distance. I got on a good concrete highway and it is about equivalent to the best two way highway back in the states. Some of the roads around here are really surprising. However, I saw quite a few steel highway bridges which were dropped by U.S. troops during the first of 1942 and put back in place by the Japs. But this time the Japs didn't have time to put them back in the condition they found them. They dropped a few but not many. Guess the guerillas were as much responsible as anybody.

We are getting mail pretty good now. I heard yesterday from you - letter written March 28. Twelve days is not too bad. I think you did O.K. on Josh and Betty's wedding present. Believe I must have forgotten to "advise" you when you first wrote. So many things were happening that I probably missed out on quite a few of your questions.

It is too hot to write more so will stop for now.

All my love,

Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Apr. 15, Sunday night

Dear Margaret,

I received another box today mailed Jan. 5 with marshmallows (I can make out faint lines where they were divided at one time) pop corn, apricots, shelled beans ("home made") and plum pudding. The other I received about 3 days ago I believe was mailed Jan. 6<sup>th</sup>. Haven't opened it yet as I have been so busy.

Received several letters day before yesterday. Enjoyed particularly the one about Lynn. I think she is as cute as can be and it is sweet of her to think of me occasionally and to color a picture to send me. Guess I will have to keep the picture and bring it back to her and tell Lynn that I think she is real sweet and that Daddy will see the "whole gang" as soon as he can. If ever get to San Francisco again it won't be long before I see the family even if I have to go AWOL.

I also received yesterday, the first package of funnies since New Guinea. It was postdated Dec. 25, so that is almost four months in coming. Better late than never because all of the kind that you send are new to me.

Am enclosing Base M Times. We get fairly recent news every day. This is today's "newspaper" and we got it this A.M. Pretty good service on that.

I checked my "books" again today which had been missing since New Guinea and I just found it in a pair of coveralls. It is just a sheet of paper scribbled all over. If I am correct the following should have been received by you.

Hope you have received all of those listed which is a complete list. You probably wrote about receiving them all but I probably failed to jot them down.

I did O.K. from July to Dec., not so hot in December and fairly good during Jan. and February and not so good during March and so far of April. However, I have on hand about 360 pesos (\$180) and haven't indulged in a single game of poker since Feb. 16 - about two months so guess I am pretty rusty on the game. All of the old poker players, Belote, Pelt and Molvie are gone and there are not enough to get up a game. Figure, I have spent about \$400 during the past year or since Jan. 20, 1944. I have no idea where it went but have paid orderly fees of about \$100, bought a watch \$25 candy, razor blades, cokes, a little beer, clothing, and so forth so guess it will add up. Am still about \$700 not counting what I have spent ahead of what I have drawn & what I came overseas with so you can figure out how your husband has been making out. I have been kidded a lot that my Major's salary was only incidental to what I have won.

Guess will quit now - more later.

All my love,  
Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

Apr. 19, Thursday night

Dear Margaret,

Nothing much to write about tonight except tonight completes 15 mos. overseas and I am starting on number 16. Guess I will be lucky though - most of the men here that are leaving have been over 36 mos. or more and I hope that before the next twelve are over that Japan will call it quits. Then it will mean that we get back regardless of time limit overseas.

The European situation looks good and hope it will be over soon. It looks like Germany is about to fold up soon and around here Japs are fighting to the last ditch, however it is getting farther away and now I can't hear the artillery anymore. They are being wiped out gradually.

Received a box today mailed Feb. 14 olives, meat, chicken, Planters nuts, a cake of soap, wash rag, sardines and loose assorted candies. Also a can of Viennas. The candy in the tin lost its top and the almonds got out of the cellophane bag so candy was stuck over everything, however the contents are still good. Arthur likes Vienna sausage, so send it all to him if you can in the future. It is a daily dish around here as it was in New Guinea, as it was on the Alcan. I don't know what in hell the army would do if it didn't have spam and Vienna sausage. Guess I could write a book about Vienna sausage. I am just kidding so don't take it to heart because I do like most everything you sent and glad to have it. However, I don't need any more soap as we get a gratuitous supply and there is plenty in the P.X. You might send a jar of sliced beef sometime. The Colonel opened a small jar tonight and it was really good.

Saw a good picture about a month ago and had to see it again the other night. It was "To Have and Not Have" with Bogart and Lauren Bacall. Enjoyed it a lot both times. Hope you have a chance to see it when it comes around.

Am sending another "Base M Times" to you that you might like or save for me. They are always pretty interesting. Josh's wedding to Betty must have been lovely. I see by the papers that I was there and you weren't, but they just forgot or left out the Mrs. I guess.

Am sending the picture of the cart back. I haven't seen any WACs yet (still looking - ha) but have seen I guess millions of those carts. They are everywhere on the roads and invariably they create a traffic jam by balking in the middle of a street or on a bridge somewhere. The Filipinos start them off usually like you would a bicycle run along beside them until they get up speed and then hop on. Normally eight people can ride in them but if the back end gets overloaded the horse swings up in the air.

Will cut the scribbling for a while.

All my love,

Stokes

**Arthur Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**  
Germany

Apr. 24

Dear Mom,

Don't be frightened by the letter edged in black it is just some Major's stationary I ran into & I'll use until it runs out. The bride and groom must be very happy. Perhaps the house will soon be ready for them. Things over here haven't been too difficult over here as yet & from the looks they won't become too bad. Hitler is probably in fear convulsions by now & he will probably try anything to escape. These German kids are just like the others. This morning they were throwing bullets into a fire. Shells are all over the place & anyone who wants them can get them. There is a striking difference in cities over here in the amount of destruction. Some are heaps of rubble & others have not been touched. Some factories have been built in the side of hills & in all cities & villages there are tunnels into the hills for air raid shelters. At the prison stockyard where they have several thousand Majors of the noncom, were telling the others to act like soldiers ... like a bunch of rabble. The officers and E.M. prisoners are kept separated. The vaz think that our M.P.'s are American storm troopers (G.S.) & are very much afraid of them. They have children of 12 & 14 & old men of 70 years in uniform. There are so many that they don't have trucks to take them away & have difficulty getting food up to them that will soon be straightened up.

Love,

Arthur

**Arthur Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**  
Germany

Apr. 30

Dear Mom,

Yesterday I went up to Gardelegen where the thousand allied prisoners were burned in a large brick barn & what the papers said about it is true, outside of the barn about 75 yards away are the graves. Each now single with a cross over it & decked with flowers. I was told that citizens of the town each has a grave that they have to care for, for the rest of his life. We have picked up 2 Russian boys that we are now taking around with me to work in the kitchen & they like it lots. Today I went horseback riding on a lovely white horse. Yesterday was Sunday & even our Chaplain forgot it because we had been quite busy moving. I room now with the Chaplain & Lt. Fein.

Love, Arthur

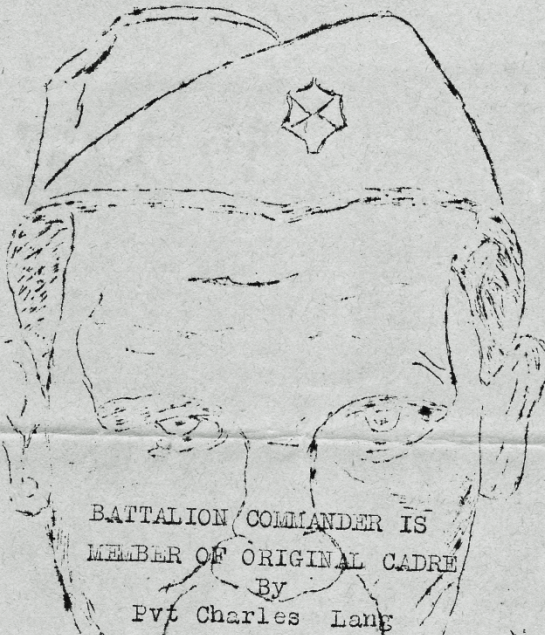
WHAT'S

MY

NAME



That's the ten peso question. Give me a name and collect the prize. Leave suggestions in contest box located in front of I & E tent. Last day to turn in names has been extended to 10 May 1945.



majored in Mechanical Engineering. Incidentally, at VPI, Mechanical Engineering is considered as one of the toughest courses at the Institute. He also was a member of the Senior ROTC unit and upon graduating, he was commissioned a Lieutenant in the Reserve Officers Corp. He was a member of the Corp of Engineers.

He then went into his father's business at Kirk's Lumber Co. In 1941, the world's situation had become so grave that the reserves were being called to active duty. He was called up as a 1st Lt. in that year and commanded a company in the 95th Engineer Regt while it was going through basic training. When the 95th Engrs. won fame on the Alcan Hiway, he was Battalion Adjutant. He later returned to states with the outfit and was assigned to the cadre organizing 1312th Engineers as Battalion Commander. This was June, 1943. He has worked hard with the 2nd Bn, training it to the present high peak of efficiency it has attained. In concluding the interview, Major Kirk stated, "Credit for the outstanding showing of this Battalion is due to the close cooperation of each member of this unit."

Commanding one of the most outstanding engineer Battalions in this theater is Major John Kirk. The C. O. of 1312th Engineer's crack 2nd Battalion is a quite unassuming officer who always manages to stay busy. It took your reporter two days to catch up with him, and then it was after hours!

I learned that the Major was born in Steward, Virginia. He attended grammar school in Steward and completed his high school education in Portsmouth, Va.

"I've noticed that there are several enlisted men in the regiment from there," the Major added.

Upon completing high school, he enrolled at V.P.I. where he

STAFF  
Editor--1st Sgt

\*\*\*\*\*  
HOSPITAL CONSTRUCTION  
(Continued from page 1)

"The willingness of the men to meet the emergency with all-out effort, as well as total disregard of established working hours, is commendatory."

\*\*\*\*\*

A PATHETIC CASE, NO?

The following incident was sent to us by our Field Correspondent down South, Cpl J. Williams. It seems that a certain private down that way upon first arriving in the Philippines immediately wrote back to his wife and told her to send him



**J. Stokes Kirk to Merle A. Kirk and J. Russell Kirk**

Apr. 30, Monday night

Dear Mom & Dad,

I just received several letters and one from Mom was in it. I am waiting for one of my C.O.s Woodman and so far he is an hour late. He has to leave 2 hours ahead of time to meet me here at 7:30 but now it is 8:30. Am a little worried but guess he will make it O.K. and is late because of so much traffic. Between these darn carts, narrow concrete and macadam roads and driving on the left (most everyone is expert at it now after 15 months) side of the road proceeding along is slow. Actually over the Suffolk, Portsmouth highway before the war is not comparable to the amount here right now.

Maybe you should show Marie the pictures of Arthur and his former girl. She knows (or should have sense enough to know) that Arthur has had other girl friends and that she is not the only one he ever went with. I would certainly show them all.

Guess Josh is happily married now, however I hope that he has been able to get started on his house again. Thanks for taking care of the Easter corsage for Margaret. I was just reading over one of your old letters - Feb. 5. Dad, and you do as you see best on all of that trading with Perry. Believe you got to watch him as he will try to get the best of it.

No, the mill on the clipping on the mill didn't happen to be mine, however it is the same type and size that I had.

Never did come in contact with John D. Abbitt. He was at another base in New Guinea. I heard from Lewis [*Lewis Thomas*] the other day and found out he is in or around Manila [*Manila Bay, Philippines*]. He knows where I am and expects to come by to see me if he ever stops by. Hope I will be able to see him as it has been a long time. I am enclosing our local "newspaper". We get it daily by about 1000 hours each day. Of more interest to us is usually the news on the back. Well, will stop and write again later.

Love to all,

Stokes

I am feeling fine, getting plenty to eat quite a bit of it native foods such as bananas, papaia, watermelon, tomatoes and fresh fish. Sounds pretty good doesn't it? Much better than that out of a can.

**Florence Gordon to Margaret G. Kirk**  
San Francisco, CA to Smithfield, VA

May 3, Thursday

Dear Margaret:

Was so glad to hear from you again and your letter really had some news. I was so sorry to hear that Barney, Bailey, and Molvie were all so ill. Do hope and pray Stokes can stay well. Know he feels badly when so many leave for home and he is left behind. He has so much to come home to. I'm sure he'll come there all right.

I had a funny experience a couple of weeks ago. Mildred, Roslyn, a friend of Mrs. Horn after 32 months in Italy and I were at the Willard Room having a few drinks when I noticed a Major, engineer officer, with the 1<sup>st</sup> Army "A," 6 overseas stripes and European campaign ribbon. He took the table behind us. I couldn't stand it very long so I went to his table and asked "Major, are you with the First Army?" He said he was so I asked "by any chance would you have met the 95<sup>th</sup> Engr. Regt." He said "Yes, I just left them." Well I nearly fainted and was ready to ask if he knew Lt. Col. Martin when the waitress tapped me on the shoulder and said I'd have to return to my table - no table - hopping is allowed. I returned but the Major took the chair across

the table where he had been sitting which was right at my elbow. He then said he knew Capt. Land. He didn't know Syd (had evidently been with the first battalion). He said he was a V.P.I. graduate so I started asking him about the boys I knew. He knew Winston Wine, Barney and Stokes. I told him I'd had a letter from you that morning and where the boys were. He knew Stan Powers. He was Major Starkey, do you know him? I told him I wasn't in the habit of talking to strangers but I couldn't pass up the 1<sup>st</sup> Army "A." He said he was so glad I had talked to him because he enjoyed hearing of the boys. He is with the 5<sup>th</sup> Engr. Guess Stokes would know him. He was a very nice looking blonde fellow.

Stanley Powers (remember him?) is back. June Bohannon called and told me. He called her as soon as he landed at Fort Meade. He is back for 45 days leave. He called June Martin that evening. His mother and father are both invalids and ill.

Your clipping sure tickled me and I do believe that Aubrey wrote it - sounds just like him. I'd sure hate to pay the price for that little cigar box. I finally got a letter after two months from Isabelle yesterday - said it (my letter) had gotten mixed up with some other papers. Said she had an incentive for fixing the house up now that it belonged to them. Said she was sick in bed with lumbago. She had a full week planned tho: Gee, I sure get catty on this subject so I'd better change it.

Jerry said he had a letter from McCord which he'll send me. When I get it and it has any news, I relay them to you.

Jerry has been transferred again. I don't know a lot about it but it is "a special assignment" and he was requested for the job. Says he'll have his own office and be his own boss. Says he has plenty to do and not enough people to do it. Also says it is very interesting work in a very interesting place. Looks to me like he'll be over there for sometime. Am very anxious to hear more from him. Have only had one letter from his new location. So I'll let you know more as I learn them.

I had a very nice birthday. Jerry sent me a beautiful bouquet of cut flowers. Mother and Dad gave me a beautiful navy blue cordè bag which Mother had made for me. Mildred gave me a red leather key container and gold earrings. Roslyn gave me a red leather cigarette case and lighter. Also got white doeskin gloves, gold earrings with aqua stones and white handkerchief. Wasn't that a lovely birth-day? Sure hope Jerry is here next year to help me celebrate. I don't like this growing older without him here to console me. Yes, I'm get-ting to the age where I need consolation!

I hadn't had anything new for so long I was really getting low - in clothes and morale. So on my birthday I bought two suits - a navy blue gabardine tailored suit and an aqua colored Palm Beach for summer. Know I'll get a lot of good out of both of them. Hope Jerry likes them too if they're not worn out when he sees them.

We have all our housecleaning done except the basement. Last Monday the carpenter came and started in a large closet for us. We never have enough storage space. Now because of all the saw-dust we have the whole up-stairs to do over. Guess we'll get thru some day this summer.

I hope to go see June May 16<sup>th</sup>. Haven't seen her since last November which is entirely too long. We are hoping to go to Virginia Beach for two weeks after the middle of July. How about coming down with me? Stay with me - not at 2403!

We went over to Baltimore Sunday to see our godchild and Jerry's namesake. He is 16 months old and a dream child. He has blonde curls and large blue eyes. He laughs all the time,

walks all around and is so sweet. Jerry will be crazy about him. Hope he gets to see him before he is too old.

War news sure sounds good from all fronts. Hope your brother with the 5<sup>th</sup> Army gets home soon. So glad they are fighting out to the finish - the Germans know what war is for their own country this time. They won't be so anxious to start another soon.

I'd sure love to see the children. Guess Johnny has grown like a weed. Does he still like trains so much? All the children are grow-ing up so fast.

Well must stop and answer some more letters. I always enjoy hearing from you.

Love,

Florence

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

May 3, Thursday evening

Dear Margaret,

Received three letters yesterday and had my first chance to read them just before the show "This is the Army" which Irving Berlin produced. The Colonel told me that he had two tickets to the show last night at the supper table and then I got the mail after supper - we arrived early at the New Base M theatre and obtained excellent seats. During the time before the show I read over your letters. Then the show began and it was excellent. It was the same as the one I saw 1 Jan in New Guinea. During the middle of the second half it began to rain and boy it poured down for about fifteen minutes before we decided to leave. We were soaking wet and I thoroughly believe that I was as wet as ever before. There were thousands there in the same fix. My pocketbook is still not dry.

By the way, wish you would send me a good leather pocketbook - the one I have is rather worn and the tropics hasn't done it any good.

Am enclosing some more Jap money. The American peso is 50¢ and the fifty centarios is 25¢.

Mom was worried about me being sick. It was just something I ate - fly control wasn't too good when we first got here and with a few Japs and Caribou laying around it wasn't a real healthy spot. However, that has long been cleaned up.

We have been having the best steaks and liver during the last few days. It seemed as if the fresh meat was unloaded and with no storage space it was immediately issued by bulk instead of piecemeal to make it run a long time. During the last four days I have had seconds on both liver and steak. Sounds good doesn't it? Almost as good as yours at Claiborne. I didn't like Claiborne but I did enjoy having you and the children and eating your meals there. Guess we were more married then than any other time. How about it, love of my life?

All my love,

Stokes

**William A. Thompson to Bud Gill**  
Marine Service Sqdrn. 11, *Inter Island*

May 7

Dear Bud,

Well I just got back from the show and I guess you know it stunk, in fact I believe it was the worse show I've ever seen, but I guess that's life for you, right? Ha! Ha! Bud I received your letter several days ago and I was so darn glad to get it (I even read it before I read Janice's Ha! Ha!) but seriously tho I was beginning to think you'd forgotten me or something. But now I know why you waited so long and everything's okay now. Thanks a lot for getting the pictures

and sending them to me. I really do appreciate it a lot. Bud I'm sorry I haven't answered your letter before this but you see we got paid the fifth of this month and I wanted to wait until then so I could send you the money I owed you. Thanks a million for paying "Survey" for me. You're really a swell buddy and I'll never forget all you've done for me. Listen Bud after this damn war's over we're going to get together and that's all there is to it right?

Say Bud I'm sorry but I sent all those pictures home and the negatives too. The one of you & me (the negative I mean) I sent to the folks and the negative of me alone I sent to Janice so you see I haven't any left but if you still want one I'll write home and get one for you. But say you've got one of me now haven't you, with the pictures you got from Bill? Thanks Buddy for writing to Janice for me. She wrote and told me about getting your letter and she was so happy you wrote and thought you were really a swell fellow for writing to her when I asked you to. My folks thought it was wonderful of you too. Well what do you think of Ferguson, from her letters now? Have you written to her yet, and did she send you a picture? Full of questions aren't I?

Well how do you like your new camp area? It's more like old times now that you're where you can be with the old gang isn't it? I'm glad to hear that everybody's okay up there and tell "Bo-Jack" and all the guys, that May, J.J. Reid & I and all the other fellows hello. Say Bud that really sounds bad when you get seven letters from Jackie and haven't answered any of them. Come on now, give the poor girl a hook and write to her. Ha! Ha! Tell Buck I said hello and I really thought it swell of him to remember me. He really seems like a swell "Joe" to me. Say tell "Tiny" for me that I got a letter from Janice today and she said that "Barb" hasn't heard from "Tiny" in a long while and she wanted him to get on the ball and write to her." Well I must close for now and take it easy.

Your Buddy,

Art

(I'll be seeing you someday and damn soon I hope.)

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

May 8, Tuesday night

Dear Margaret,

I started in to write at about 7:00 o'clock and here it is 10:00 already. Taylor came by and asked me to travel up to a nearby town to see the Mayor about some bamboo poles so I took a ride with him and met the local mayor. He was pretty nice, spoke pretty good English and like most of the other high influential people here had a rough go of it while the Japs were here. While there, I also saw his brother, who is the provincial engineer (a very high job in a province) and we were invited to a dance at his house Sat. night 6:00 to 12:00. Guess I will go and see what a Filipino dance is like. He also said there will be plenty of "Mesquistas" [*Mestizas*] (don't know if that is spelled right or not) there. He describes them as "beautiful, Spanish - Filipinos". However from what I've seen of them they have got to be a heck of a lot different from the usual.

The news of the German surrender has come in and here it is being taken very quietly. Of course, everybody is happy about it however it doesn't help solve our problem any. Everyone is hoping for help now and replacements for units. It seems a pity that most of the men who are leaving for the states have to have 38 to 40 months before seeing the states again. Hope before long there will be enough sent over to reduce the total months to 30 which will make the situation much better.

Pappy Larsh was made Maj. day before yesterday. Glad he finally got it as it has been 39 months since his last promotion.

Not much news to write except I am particularly busy, extremely healthy and it is fast approaching the rainy season and I managed to locate 6 files today. First I have seen in over 8 months besides what you sent. Funny, but previously we turned in dull saws for salvage and draw new ones when we wanted a shop saw. So you see the reason I look for files.

More later, all my love,  
Stokes

**Jackie White to Bud Gill**

May 8

Dearest Bud,

Guess I feel so much better than I did this morning. It's funny what a letter from you does for me. Even the girls have mentioned about me being so much happier since I got home. One of the girls that gets home before me always brings my mail over and puts it on my bed. This afternoon I was later than ever coming because I stopped by the store to buy some things and when I walked in and saw your letter on my bed I just hollered. By now everybody knows it and they are almost as excited as I am. Do you know that it has been two months to the day since I heard from you? But it's good even if I did have to wait a long time. Now I don't hate going home so much and seeing your Mother because I know that will be the first thing she'll ask me when I see her this week-end. As you know, this Sunday is Mother's Day and I'm going home. Now I can tell her I got a two page "sweet" letter Tuesday except it wasn't very sweet. You say you don't like what I said about giving you a little loving when you come home, well, you have to give me a little all along until you come home. You know, build me up for it so it all won't come as one time. Couldn't you write a little sweeter letter? Then I would consider the situation a little more. I can't quite understand your letters anyway because I know you better than you think I do and I don't know why you aren't a little more affectionate because you always have been. Remember the night we double dated with Goonie and Polly and how I treated you? I know you're still like that too, nothing could change you in 100 years not even "war." But with all your faults I have to admit "doggonnit" that I can't help liking you a little.

F.G. hasn't gone in the service yet so maybe we'll still have a way to go around when you come home. No, we don't want to go with him, do we? When you come home (which I hope won't be way far away) we're going to make Smith let us have his car, aren't we. Boy that will really be a day for celebration. He is awfully silly but I bet Mama could persuade him, especially, if it's for you cause she thinks so much of you. I'm getting jealous. She & Charlotte worry almost as much as I do when I don't hear from you.

Mrs. Gill had some pictures made from the negative you sent her and she gave me one, altho, you didn't tell her to give me one. So I saw her about 2 week-end's ago, the last time I was home and she had expected the prints back in time to give me mine then but they hadn't come. So the next week Charlotte sent it to me and told me that your Mother had given it to Smith to send me. It is so good, Bud. Everybody thinks it's better than the other one but they're both good to me.

It's now 11:00 and almost time for me to go to sleep. I had to stop and go to church tonight. All churches had services at 8:00. As you know to day is VE Day and some are excited while others are very solemn because of trouble that has come to them since the war. Yesterday about 10 o'clock when we first heard it I just screamed and my boss came running out to see what had happened & when we told him he just shook his head and said, "They didn't have much to surrender." It is wonderful though even though we are only half through. I would be

much happier if you were going to be one of them to come home but I realize that it won't be long before you'll be coming home and then -.

I would be much happier if I only knew where you are or if you've moved or just what. I have been listening closely to the news about Okinawa and it sounds terrible. The reporter always says something about the "Marines."

All of us from the office are having a picnic or wiener roast Thursday night at Forrest Hill Park over in South Richmond. We're planning on a big time with lots of food, men and I hope it isn't spoiled by a shower.

Bud, you know when you were home last I tried to get you to give me one of the pins off of your hat & you wouldn't. Can you get me one? I certainly would like one, I could buy one here but I want it from you. What would it mean if I bought it & stuck it up on my dress? If you want anything, Bud, please let me know. Please don't hesitate to ask me because I really don't know what you need & want. I know your Mother sends you boxes regularly and naturally you write her if you need anything but I wish you would let me do something for you. I know you always go to your Mother and confide in her but I can help her a little and I want to. So the next time you write I expect for you to tell me what you need and what you want.

How did you like the nuts I sent you Xmas? Want some more like them. There are loads more where they came from. I'm getting so tiny you probably wouldn't know me if you were to see me. I hope you don't worry like Mama is and fuss with me like Mrs. Gill does everytime I see her. I really feel wonderful though tonight, better than I've felt in over a month.

Will stop for now and try to get some sleep. I can't sleep! Please write to me more often & let yourself go and be Bud Gill, the one I know, full of "mush" and such. I'll keep that confidential! Just between us. Bud, I guess I just can't wait any longer to tell you this.

Maybe you can't truthfully say this but I can and I really mean it. Please take care of yourself and always, no matter where you are or what you are doing always remember there is someone at home that thinks about you daily and if I must say so, Bud, I like you like I never thought I would. Its not even like the way I use to love "Charlie Marconici." It's different, I guess it because you're so entirely different.

Guess you'll get mad or something when you read this & think that Jackie White's just about the biggest crazy you know but it had to come out so if you hate me for it & wont write me anymore I'll always keep in contact with you as long as your Mother doesn't change. I thought I was going to stop on the other page but here's another.

Please write to me soon.

Love,

Jackie                      Don't make me worry anymore.

**Arthur Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**  
Germany V-Mail

May 9

Dear Mom,

I visited Ludwigshurst [*Ludwigslust*] Germany & saw them bury 200 people who had died in a concentration camp. The sight was pitiful. There were many that came out of the camps that told me stories that I find hard to believe, but do believe because I know they are telling the truth. I visited the Russians the other day. They offered us drink & food & song to us. There were never people more friendly.

Love,

Arthur

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

May 11, Friday night

Dear Margaret,

Just received four letters from you with the latest dated April 30. I have read two, then had a court - martial for some man going AWOL and am starting this letter before reading the last two. Also received some Feb. funnies and about a week ago I received Nov. 20 & Nov. 27 funnies. They are almost all new to me regardless of date.

In the second letter was an account of your fish episode. It must have been exciting to catch them like that. They must have been baffled by the dam and trying to get up the cove in front of Josh's house.

Opened your letter of the 29<sup>th</sup> and enclosed was John's Locker [*Cursive writing system*] writing which I think is very good. He is really coming with his school work now. I know the kids were excited over the fishing you did.

Had quite a time yesterday. I went to a city a little ways from here and it was a crying shame to tear a beautiful city to pieces so. You don't think of the Philippines as having any modernistic cities but this one really was. It had buildings and houses the equal of anything in the states. However, the Japs left their footprint on it. Guttled blocks, thousands of caves of all sorts all around, especially on the way there. Guess the most beautiful of it all in my mind were the pine trees which were the first I had seen in 16 months. It was actually cold there (Some officers said they had to use three blankets at night) and that is the reason for the pine. Think now that I ought to be given a sawmill and start in business again - but don't guess you could touch those trees for a hundred pesos apiece. Got a few souvenirs 1000 peso notes - Jap. The place I picked these up had them scattered over a space the size of an acre. I am sending some to John and Lynn in a separate letter.

One of our officers picked up a Jap flag and a lot of other stuff in a cave, but I don't like to fool around them. Most of them smell too bad and you don't know where and when a booby trap is.

Sorry to hear about Willie. He was pretty nice to us. Will quit until next time.

All my love,

Stokes

**Jackie White to Bud Gill**

May 12

Dear Bud,

Well, it seems like I'm writing in vain because you don't even write to me anymore. What has happened? If your mother didn't hear from you I would worry, but as long as you write to her I know you're all right. It's awful discouraging and bad on anybody's morale to write and write and never get a letter and I remember when you used to answer everyone of my letters. Why don't you start now and do that, I guarantee you and faithfully promise that I will answer every letter you write me. Ever since March 8 I have been answering letters I never have gotten yet. So much for that, you know I love to hear from you and I wish you would write when you can.

Love - 2- you

Last Wednesday four of us went to a circus in the suburbs of town. It was lots of fun but I got awfully sick on the Ferris wheel, which was the last thing we went on. It was exciting plus, wish you could have been here to go with me. The last time I went on a Ferris wheel it was in Ivor with a little sailor.

I decided not to go home last week-end because I was so tired, thought I would get a little rest. Then Saturday about 1:00, I had just finished eating lunch, when Nellie Bnever called me and said she was outside of Richmond on her way through and wanted me to go to Bainbridge, Maryland with them. Charlie, Nellie's sister & two kids & me went. We drove up & had a flat tire to boot! We rode a long ways and got so tired we had to stop and get some sleep. We stopped right on this side of Baltimore and got rooms in a tourist cabin. It would be nice & secluded for newlyweds. After that we went on into Baltimore and went to a movie much against my wishes cause I wanted to sightsee a little. Sunday morning we started on to Baltimore and Bainbridge. We got there about 12:15 and they let us in at the gate at 1:00. I asked at the desk about seeing "McCauley" Hunter. She said she thought I could so in about an hour he came and stayed with us until we left about 4:10. It was fun while it lasted but it ended too soon!

We got back here about 11:30 last night. So you know what good I was today. We were about as glad to see as many men as they were to see us. We are the first girls they have seen in two months. They're as bad as you were when you were home last time except it had been 3 months, hadn't it?

Please excuse me I had to stop a while to pack my lunch, take a bath and chat a while. You were one of the topics of conversation. I told the girls that the day I get a letter from you I'm not telling anybody what I'm going to do (note the change in ink I filled my pen!)

Charlie told me last week-end that Donald Johnson was killed in action. His wife and small baby boy (he has never seen it) got a letter a piece from him written the morning he was killed telling them what he wanted them to do. Soon after the letter came the telegram came. Mr. Johnson and Mrs. Johnson are both in bed.

Park Griffin was reported missing quite a few months back. Recently Mildred Haverty has received a letter from him stating he is a prisoner but in bad shape. But that's better, at least he is alive.

Bud its getting late and I am awfully sleepy and tired so I think I'd better sign off for this time. If you get time drop me a line and I'll do the same as I have always done. Please write soon.

Love,

Jack

P.S. I love you!!!

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

May 14, Monday night

Dear Margaret,

Have just about time to write a short letter as I have a compulsory show to see tonight 9:00 P.M. "Two down and one to go." Don't know what to expect but it is probably good.

I received a box today mailed Mar 15 and on the same mail a package of funnies mailed Dec 16. It is funny how erratic the boxes come in, but the letter mail is much better now.

Business is picking up considerably now - I am getting busier each day and it looks like soon I won't have anytime for letter writing. I can't let that happen though and don't intend to.

Just put one of the Base M Times in a separate letter to you. They are very interesting occasionally as local items of interest are sometimes contained.

I went to the local town fiesta Sat. night when Miss Victory and Princess #1 + #2 were selected. There were some very nice looking Spanish - Filipinos there. I was the guest of the Provincial Engineer and of the local Mayor and sat on the stand with the big shots and had quite a talk with the ex-governor's (killed by the Japs) daughter. Her name was Dr. Purificacion



Tadriaz Florendo. She was a judge in the fiesta, talked good English, was really very beautiful, married but wouldn't dance. From the above, I guess you think I am stepping out every night, but far from it - as I said before I am really busy but think I will go occasionally to some of the local dances, & get my mind off a few of the bothers I have.

It is just short 9:00 o'clock so will sign off.

All my love,  
Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

May 16, Wednesday P. M.

Dear Margaret,

I finally received my long awaited promotion yesterday with a date of rank of May 8. Now you can talk back to Mrs. Holmes, however since you hate it so much, guess you won't. But still it sounds queer to be addressed at "Col." Kirk. I have been receiving all kinds of congratulations for the last two days, however now I am getting used to the silver leaves and don't feel so self-conscious anymore.

9:00 P.M.

Had to stop this afternoon to have a special and have just finished with 3 summary court martials. Just the usual things, AWOLs and fights. The men can get too much Nepa and base wine around here and do too much running around with Filipino women. That causes trouble anywhere.

Keep hearing music from another outfit across the road - the casual camp. They play that song "San Fernando Valley" all day and far into the night for some reason.

This new point system sounds pretty good. Don't know how it will work but who knows - I may be home by X-mas after all. I have points as follows:

Overseas -	27
Mos. in army -	50
Children -	2
Campaign stars	
2 @ 5 -	<u>10</u>
Total -	111

Over 85 is supposed to eventually get me back so I feel a heck of a lot better about the whole setup now - a promotion and possible chance of going home before so very long.

Don't understand how you do go so long without hearing. I know I have been writing twice weekly. I also know that I wrote down all of the money I have sent home but haven't received a reply so far - so maybe you didn't get it. Another letter I wrote some time ago that I didn't get any comment on so probably you didn't get that either.

Tell Arthur I beat him to it and to hurry and make his jump.

All my love,  
Stokes

**MAJ. JOHN KIRK  
NOW A LT.-COL.:**  
**Heads Battalion  
In Luzon Fight**

SUFFOLK, June 25—<sup>1945</sup> Major John F. Kirk has been promoted to the rank of Lieutenant colonel and advanced to second in command of the crack 1312th Engineer Regiment. He is now its Executive Officer. The colonel won his promotion while commanding the regiment's efficient 2nd Battalion which he activated and trained at Camp Claiborne, La., in June, 1943.

The regiment came overseas in January, 1944, where his battalion made an excellent record in New Guinea. Because of this record at Buna and Oro Bay, it was his battalion selected to participate in the Luzon campaign.

Col. Kirk has earned the Philippine Liberation ribbon for participating in this campaign and one star. He also holds the Asiatic-Pacific ribbon with one star for the New Guinea Campaign.

The Colonel is the son of Mr. and Mrs. J. R. Kirk, Suffolk, owners of the Kirk Lumber Company. His wife, Mrs. Margaret Kirk, and their two children, Lynn, and John KIRK, Jr. live in Smithfield.

1945 Virginian Pilot News

**Wallace Stump to Bud Gill**  
V-Mail

May 16

Hello you old Son of a Gun,

This is my first letter to you since we split up that 19 June 1943. First of all I want to congratulate you on your promotion. I'm still the same & I suppose I will be for I'm getting so I can't take orders.

I am now out of the infantry. When I left the hospital, they had me for limited service – non- combat. Germany was enough for me, but France & Belgium wasn't too bad but I'll take the good old States. This is just a note will write more tomorrow. Take care of yourself.

Your pal

Wallace

P.S. I have 36 points

**Arthur Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**  
Germany

May 17

Dear Mom,

Visited Paul Brady the other day (If I told you it is still O.K.) & he is fine. Visited Bremen & Hamburg today & they are beaten to a pulp. Not a building left in the center of town or on the water front. I've gotten 3 of your packages one from Margaret & one from Marie. They were all mighty good. 2 of yours broke open before they arrived but you could substitute lobster for crabmeat.

Love,

Arthur

**Arthur Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**  
Skippers, France

May 17

Dear Mom,

We are now near Rhines, France, after a 300 mile trip out of Germany. It so happened that we came out by the same wood that we went in that is in S. Bruckham. It was certainly an experience worth seeing. Especially the appearance of towns, this army surrounding & our hospital we were running. We came in front...after having to avoid, not speak to & not play with any Germans. Boy, it is hard. I am sending a German phone book home & it will help you a bit to tell the situation...what you want although one out of ten can speak a little English.

I am sending you a picture taken in Briton. The first are speckle trout caught at Biggs which is 5 miles away from Briton. Biggs is where the German prisoner Sergeant painted the coasters for me. He painted them from memory & I send a small dish to be painted for me. All of the woodwork was done by cripples. The toy I sent home is for Lynn & the parachute you can tell Margaret is for John & that will make things even.

I wish we would build 2 super big highways in Va. One from Norfolk to Suffolk to Petersburg to Lynchburg to Roanoke & West. The other from Newport News, Richmond, Lynchburg & there should actually be a third from Alexandria, Staunton, Lynchburg & Danville. There are 4 lane highways with only a few outlets & these have other highways over passing or under passing. They skirt the edges of cities & have islands between the two parts of the highways. Here is a picture of the highway.

Love, Arthur

**Wallace Stump to Bud Gill**  
V-Mail

May 20

Hello you old Son of a Gun,

I told you that I would write soon and here I am writing. Are you surprised to hear from me? I have often wanted to write to you, but I never knew your address, so when I wrote to Grandmother I told her to see your mother and get your address (Sp) for me and I just received her letter about 24 hours ago. I want to congratulate you on you being made sergeant. Keep it up and before you know it, you will be first Sergeant.

I don't know if you knew it or not, but I was in the hospital for about four and a half months, what do you think of it. The first six months overseas, about five months was spent in the hospital. They had me tagged with immersion feet (in Germany). Frost bite (in France) and trench foot (in England) and when I left the hospital, it was Trench foot, flat feet and a slight case of psychoneurosis (anxiety state), but I am over that now. But my feet still bother me, and as a result I have been put in limited service. But it wouldn't surprise me if I were to see you one of these days, for now that this war is over, there is still another son of a bitch to get. Here at this post, we have quite a few Jerry prisoners and as I type this letter, I can look out of the window and see them as they march past the window on the way to their stockade. Believe me, they are treating the prisoners too easy and I'll bet they are laughing up their sleeves at us.

When they released me from the hospital, they gave me a seven day furlough and 12 pounds 10 shillings which is must about \$50.00 some of the boys really had a good time and I didn't do too bad. For my seven days, I went to Scotland. And if I ever get the chance to go there again, I am going there as fast as I can, for you have never seen a place that is so nice and the people are really nice to the G.I.'s. When you ask the girls what they think of Americans they just sigh and say "They're wonderful." I myself went to Loch Lomond and it is just as they say it is in the stories and pictures. I even had a picture taken in one of those Scottish Kilts and believe me, I don't see how they can wear those things. They certainly aren't very comfortable. Now, I know what the girls feel like when they have to walk upstairs, for when we walked up to the studio to have the pictures taken, there were some girls under the steps and you should have seen us trying to hold that skirt down. When I left Scotland, I went to an airfield, asked if there was anything going south, and after waiting around for about six hours, I finally found a B-17 that was headed south and boy, was that fun to fly over the Irish Sea and see just what the land looked like from about 5000 feet. I could see where the Germans had dropped their bombs, for there were shell holes were filled with water and some of the houses were falling down.

Well, enough about me, what about yourself? What have you been doing? Of course I know that you don't have very far to roam about and that it is awful to be cooped up on an island and to sweat out an air-raid. Tell me all about yourself, what you do, how you made Sgt. etc. When this thing is over, we will have to see if we cain't have a graduation class re-union, for I would like to see all of the old gang together again, wouldn't you?

Take it easy and write when you can, and when you write your mother tell her hello for me.

Your Pal,  
Wallace

**Vivian Ferguson to Bud Gill**  
Olivet Nazarene College

May 21

Dear Bud,

This will be a small letter & the last one you'll receive from this place. Otherwise I'm getting ready to go home. Thought while I'm thinking of it, I'd send my picture. Hope you aren't disappointed in it.

We received our year book the other nite & it's really an O.K. book. I'm tired of writing cause I've signed so many books.

Friday is graduation & the seniors will say goodbye to these old halls. They will face life's problems of the future.

Loisanne is wanting to go to eat dinner so guess I'll have to bid adieu until I get home. Then I can crawl in my little hole & write letters as long as I want. Don't forget to address my letters to 1825 N. Ames St. Saginaw, Michigan

Write & send your picture when you have time.

Same as ever,

"Fergie"

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

May 22, Tuesday night

Dear Margaret,

I don't know whether I told you or not but I have a new job now; Executive officer to the regiment is it - the same as Belote's old job. It is a confining job with a lot of paper work which I don't really like but guess I will be content since my promotion. Guess it will last until I go home and I don't know when that will be. I have 111 points, next to the highest here, or 2<sup>nd</sup> in the regiment counting both officers and E.M. Actually I am the highest since the other (an off.) has gone to the hospital and been transferred. It sounds O.K. - that I will be the first to leave - but don't know how it will apply to the officers of field grade. I certainly hope it applies as I really do want to see my wife and children. I still love you, darling - and I still miss you.

I don't believe you had better send any boxes of any kind from now on - except a camera and film (expensive, second hand or otherwise) as we are getting pretty good food (had a couple cantaloupes the other day and some watermelon). On clothes, the civilians here are pretty well off and on food & save enough to last a long time. The ants are terrible and unless the food is in a can, they get rid of it pretty quick.

Regtl. Hq. received a new address card from Belote the other day and he is at Fort Story for a week or more and then a leave. The lucky son of a gun. And Bailey is at home now according to the grape vine. Wish I had jungle rot or something.

I may go to {censored} sometime soon on an errand for the Col. - to see the 1<sup>st</sup> Bn. I know those fellows are disgusted down there now and I feel sorry for them. Wish they could come up as I know they haven't seen a bomb crater yet or a bunch of shot up tanks and trucks shoved off of the road. We have done everything except actually fight and they are missing all of it.

A very good civilian friend of mine - Mr. Aquino - who is the provincial engineer, has invited me and about twelve officers to his father in law's home (his was burned by the Japs) for my promotion party Friday night. He says he will have food (chicken), wine and some beautiful girls also music for dancing. So I expect a rare old time Friday night. He says the girls are mesquistas (think that is spelled right) or a Spanish - Filipino mixture and are very beautiful. Bet

I am old enough to be their father as most of the women marry very young here. Don't you get jealous or worry about me as I am coming back the same as I left - just a little older.

Received two letters today with the latest May 10<sup>th</sup>. Not bad service now as it used to be. Guess will quit - more later.

All my love,  
Stokes

**Arthur Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**  
Detmold, Germany

May 23

Dear Mom,

I am now located just on the outskirts of the same town Paul is in & I went to see him last night & he showed me the town. Detmold is located directly south of Bremen about 200 miles. Last Sunday we had all the ice cream the boys could eat. We found a store in town that made this stuff & we got up the material ourselves to make it out of. We had a thousand bed hospital to organize 2 weeks ago & were mighty busy but we finally got it straightened out for the doctors we could locate, who were prisoners, to run & left after 5 days. It was mighty fast work to organize that fast but that is what they told us to do so we did it. I got the pictures from Betty & they were excellent & Betty looked pretty.

Love,  
Arthur

**Jackie White to Bud Gill**

May 26

Dear Bud,

Well, it's Saturday again and I didn't go home which is very unusual, don't you think? I am going next week though and stay over until Monday night. We have May 30, Memorial Day, as a holiday. Then on the following Sunday is Jefferson Davis Birthday, so we get Monday off. Isn't that wonderful! I'll rest up Wednesday for the week-end!

We're listening to the "Hit Parade" now and the songs are so pretty. So you get to see any movies now? How about the songs, do you hear the newest ones? You don't have to tell me if you don't want to, in fact you don't have to answer any of my questions because I know "you're a Marine." Isn't that what you told your mother? I wonder what you'll tell me!

You should see me taking down the songs in shorthand. I never thought I would be able to do it, especially take it down from a man. My boss can really talk fast.  
Sunday night

It just seems like I can't even finish a letter to you again. Last Friday afternoon I wrote you a five page letter and then went home and never finished it. So yesterday I started a letter to you and discovered the other one so I tore it up because I thought the news would be dull by the time it got to you. Another reason I haven't written to you recently is because I've been in an awfully blue mood and don't feel like doing much of anything, especially writing a letter and to someone you haven't heard from in a month.

I reread your last letter this afternoon for about the 100<sup>th</sup> time and if I remember correctly you said you were going to write more often. I have known the time when I got a letter a week from you but that's something of the past! You haven't fallen in love with one of the girls over there, have you, or is the shortage of girls over there as bad as the shortage of men here? The ones that are here, you don't feel like they are very good men! Last night a 4-F called me from Smithfield and wanted to come to see me today but he doesn't interest me anymore. I'll give you

one guess? Just a little while ago Mama called me and it sure was nice to talk to her since I haven't seen her in over a week. She thought maybe I was homesick! Can you imagine me being homesick!

I heard this week that Paul Wilson was in a hospital in Colorado where they're treating him for T.B. Also heard that Winks would be home the first of June.

Maybe if I see somebody of our gang come home it will do something for my morale. It sure is down about as low as I like for it to be. You don't realize how much I worry when I don't hear from you regularly. I know it's all on a friendly basis and that's the way I want it but you can't help from worrying about friends. I have a friend in England that I worry about a lot and you two will make me go "nuts." So how about writing me a line or two more often?

I saw Emma the last time I was home and she isn't coming to Richmond to work. She is working in Lewis Cleaners. It's where Mrs. Chapman had her Beauty Salon, next to Gray Motor Co. I told her you said hello and she returns it.

One of the girls in the room next to me had a girl friend over to day and she has a car so we had a wonderful time all afternoon. We went to a show but we had to ride all over town before we decided what we wanted to see because we had seen all the good ones, so we saw some ole thing. Then we rode for hours and ate supper and got here about 7:45.

Wednesday morning (I don't have to work) the ones of us that don't have to work are leaving here about 7:00 in the morning and going to Forest Hill Park and cook breakfast and mess around. We went to the place we're going to on our office picnic, remember. Don't you think we're going to have a good time. Miss Miller is going to take along a soft ball and bat. Gee, I can hardly wait.

I almost forgot to tell you that I had cut my hair off and gotten a permanent. I think it looks much better and so does everybody else except your mother, she didn't say much about it, one way or the other but I don't think she likes it.

Connie, one of my room mates just came in from home, and brought some home-cooked food and it was delicious because I was so hungry. I am getting an enormous appetite.

Bud, it's almost 12:00, so I must stop and go to sleep if I can. You know I went to bed last night at almost 1:00 and I don't know what time I went to sleep. Then I woke up this morning at 6:00 and put my bed lamp on and read until about 8:30 I guess you think that isn't possible but it's the truth.

Please write to me at least once a week that will satisfy me just to know you are all right because the news is so terrible I just have histrionics practically when I hear it. If you will write me once a week & promise to & don't tell me a story again, I'll promise you I'll write twice a week.

You should see the tan I have gotten all ready & I'm planning to go to the beach for a week soon.

Love,

Jack

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

May 27, Sunday A.M.

Dear Margaret,

Not a lot to write this beautiful Sunday morning except that it promises to be very hot today as it was yesterday. The rainy season hasn't really started yet as it hasn't rained during the past two weeks. We should have about 18 inches next month which is average. That will be well over a half inch a day which is a lot of rain. It is also supposed to cool off quite a little bit which

will be good for my heat rash. It is not really bad but just enough to be uncomfortable. This is the first time I have had it - a year in New Guinea without having it and then hit the Phil. and get it. Guess I will have to go swimming a little more often. I have been once since about Jan. 20. That was about a week ago.

I went to the party given for me the other (Friday) night. It was really good and I enjoyed it a lot. Those people really did go to great length to make a successful party. I went not knowing what to expect, except that there would be wine, plenty to eat, dancing, etc. It started off by Col. Jones, several other officers and me arriving and Mr. Aquino immediately starting to pour the Basi wine. It tasted pretty good. Then some Filipino women started coming in all dressed up, then the provincial Governor, the provincial Treasurer, and the provincial Superintendent of Schools (a Harvard graduate). Then there was dancing the touch me not kind in which you dance two feet away from the girl, and then the food. They had chicken, coffee, custard and a beautiful cake which had black icing and read on top in white icing "Mabuha Lt. Col. Kirk" which means "Long live" and is Tagalog one of the Filipino languages. After that there was more dancing.



From the left: Lt. Col. Benj. W. Poor, Henry G. Abbott, Stokes Kirk  
roads walking or riding in the carts. They all spoke English, some haltingly and some very good and most all were very much whiter than the average. Spanish-Filipino's, American Filipino's and one was even Chinese-American Filipino. Really a mixture.

Margaret, don't get jealous or anything as it was a good social party. However expect to go to another if I get a chance as it is something out of the ordinary and might as well get a little pleasure out of life since I have to be here anyhow. Better than being in the dumps - what do you say?

It came out yesterday that one officer would be released for every 9 E.M. and that points would be of secondary importance. It doesn't sound too good as that means all of the "8 ball" officers will probably be released first. I guess I will have to make a mess of things so that I may go soon.

Sunday night

John is a mess when he said "He is a good old Daddy." I would like to see the rascal and the rest of the family. What outfit is Johnson Griffin in. Just received and read your latest letter May 17. Not such bad time.

All my love,

Stokes

Guess there were about 18 officers there and about 30 Filipino girls average age about 18. There was also a lot of singing and then the party broke up at about 11 o'clock and I came home with the Col. and Capt. Ross. I know that everyone had an unusual time if not an exciting time. What struck me was the fact that the girls weren't the kind you usually see on the

**Margaret G. Kirk to J. Stokes Kirk**

May 27, Sunday night

Dearest Stokes,

I am enclosing a picture Lynn colored for you today. I would have waited and sent it with the funnies tomorrow but she wrote her name on it herself and I was so proud of it that I wanted to send it the quickest way. I didn't even hold her hand and she printed her name three times on the paper. It has been raining all day and I have had to do quite a bit of reading, writing, coloring and so forth to amuse the rascals. They went to Sunday school this morning and couldn't get out anymore until I put them in the car this afternoon and rode to Blount's Corner and back, just for a little airing.

I had a nice letter from you this morning written the 14<sup>th</sup>, also received the Newspaper mailed the same time. I'll save it for you - in fact I have every letter you have written and everything you have written and everything you have sent. Please don't get any busier because the letters aren't any too frequent now. Be a little late for one of those dances and write me a few lines if you can't find any other time. John said "Tell Daddy to write in the night if he doesn't have time in the day."

I called Mother Kirk about twelve - thirty and told her the news from you. I got the letter about ten o'clock but waited to call until I was sure they were home from church. She was glad to hear what you had to say but we are both anxious to have you make some comment on the chances of getting out of the Army. Lucy told Mother today that she would have to be out by July 12<sup>th</sup> instead of August 1<sup>st</sup> as she first told her - in other words 60 days from when she first mentioned it to her. So far not even a room available and Mother has been all to pieces tonight. It would just be hell here upstairs because Lucy hates children and is going to tear things up in general anyway. If I had any idea of your coming back anytime soon I'd go on to our house and Mother could stay with me until you got home - Maybe she could get a place by then. I'm getting tired of moving around - getting old I guess.

I had to cut into the funnies to send you the clipping about the Morgan boys. Thought you would be interested though and think you can still understand the funnies without that little piece. It will probably be next fall before you get the funnies anyway if you just got December ones in May. Be sweet for me.

All My Love,  
Margaret

**Margaret G. Kirk to J. Stokes Kirk**

May 28, Monday night

Dearest Stokes,

I have really been excited today - had a grand letter from you this morning written May 16<sup>th</sup> and giving me the grand news of your promotion. I am delighted, not so much because I can talk back to Isabelle, but because I really think you deserved it and should have had it a long time ago. I know it boosted your morale quite a bit.

I was also glad to have you mention the point system and the possibility of your being home by X-mas. That would really be a gorgeous X-mas present - Santa Claus wouldn't even have to look around for another thing. I am sure John and Lynn would be quite pleased just to have their Daddy to play with for a change and you know I'd be more than satisfied. I hope it won't even be that long before you can come, but I am afraid to get my hopes up too high. I'd hate to plan and then be disappointed so think I'll wait until I actually hear your voice or see you before I plan too much. Barney said you had 137 points and you only showed 111. The



difference was, he figured 28 months overseas instead of 27 and he also said you were due 25 points for efficiency. Just hope you haven't been too darn efficient so they'll want to keep you on for the duration. John Stallings, a Lt. in the Air Corps, got his release on 109 points and is on his way home from Texas, his wife's mother told me today. He doesn't have an essential industry that needs his attention like the lumber business needs yours, either.

I called Mother Kirk and she seemed pleased over the promotion also, but on second thought said she was almost sorry you got it as now they might keep you in longer. Seems like the higher in rank you are the harder it is for you to get out. Well, here's hoping I'll soon have a man at home anyway - my man I mean. Mother Kirk said she thought Daddy Kirk had about decided to wait and let you attend to having the house completed when you get here. Maybe that would be a good thing because that would just be another worry on him and he seems to have more than his share of work now. On the other hand I'd love to have it ready to start keeping house for you when you get here. Then again I feel like I'd like for someone else to have that responsibility for awhile so we can just relax and "play" some. Goodness knows we deserve that. I don't want to fix too much anyway. Something might happen to my darling.

All my love,

Margaret

P.S. Enclosing a letter from Florence I answered last night - quite interesting.

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

May 29, Tuesday night

Dear Margaret,

Am listening to the news from San Francisco and they are talking about the happenings right around here. It appears funny for the news to travel there and back here again. However, I am not getting much out of it for all of the interference that is going on.

We have finally had a little rain. It rained last night and again this P.M. I don't like to see it come as it means mud but it will be a relief from some of the heat we have been having.

Not too much to talk about tonight, except that I expect to go on a jeep trip tomorrow. I expect to be gone until Friday night and if it is successful, I hope to see Lewis Thomas. I really hope I can, as it has been a long time and we could have quite a time talking and seeing each other again.

There is so much racket going on around here that it is almost impossible to think. I can't hear the radio at all. You see my hut is only about 100 yards from the road and a bunch of tractors just came by. Thank goodness you can only hear them in the distance now. Not much to talk with you tonight darling so will quit until I return.

All my love,

Stokes

**Margaret G. Kirk to J. Stokes Kirk**

May 29, Tuesday night

Dearest Stokes,

I started to put Major on an envelope from force of habit so had to start another. I remember how Daddy Kirk laughed at me when I used ink eradicator to get the "Lt." off when I heard you had been promoted to Captain. I was down there and had addressed an envelope to you and was writing my letter when Daddy Kirk brought in the letter. Mother had sent it to Chuckatuck and he picked it up when he went down to a meeting. John is as bad as Isabelle - he tells everybody that "They call my Daddy Col. Kirk now." I read the kids your letter and that is where he got that from. We are really proud of our Daddy though, just hope you are not too

important now - that is, I hope the Army won't think you are too valuable to release. You are mighty valuable to us and we do want you with us so badly. Please write a convincing letter about the necessity of your return to an essential industry, maybe that will help more than anything else.

Shirley [*Robert Gill's wife*] called tonight and said she had a letter from Robert today written the 21<sup>st</sup> - that came quicker than any so far. He was still at Lighorn [*Leghorn Livorno, Italy*] guarding S.S. Trooper. He also said he was doing some work clearing areas of mines and booby traps - nice, safe work, I'd say (like fun). One D - thing after another to worry about it seems.

No word yet from "Bud," but Mrs. Barlow called today and said she had a letter from Gus, asking if "Bud" had gotten home yet. He said Bud left a week before and that letter was written the 20<sup>th</sup>. But our latest from "Bud" was written the 17<sup>th</sup> and he said, "Things are about the same out here," and made no mention of a move so we don't know what to think. Just have to do a little more waiting, I guess.

I have been feeling rotten today - just a pain in my tummy, but I couldn't do quite as much as I had planned to do today. Managed to accomplish a few jobs this morning though and hope I'll feel more like working tomorrow. Mother still hasn't found a house and there is so much to be done. I dread to start packing - seems I always put things at the bottom that are needed first. I know I'll be glad when you do come home and we can live in a house of our own - my things are scattered around so now that I don't even know what I have.

Well, I have to take the kids to school tomorrow and Thursday, then I'll be through for the year. School closes the 4<sup>th</sup> and John is very glad and I am also. Hope you'll be here to go to school next year.

I was sitting on the porch this afternoon and Rob Scott came by and talked awhile - I didn't know him but he knew Robert and Bud real well, went to school with them. He was taken prisoner December 17<sup>th</sup> in the Battle of the Bulge, as it was called. He says he has gained quite a bit but he still looks thin. They really went through something in those prison camps.

Be sweet for me and do take care of your precious self.

All My Love,  
Margaret

**Arthur Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**  
Brilon, Germany V-Mail

May 31

Dear Mom,

I am still alive & well. Today I went up town & found that they had the streets decorated with branches of trees on the sides & down the center of many & had flower petal patterns running for blocks & ending in the church yards. The pictures were all different but appeared similar to this (all little girls were dressed up with flowers in their hair & baskets of flowers on their arms).

Love,  
Arthur

**John C. Ceade to J. Stokes Kirk**  
Base Headquarters to Philippines

May 31

Dear Major:

Sometime ago I wrote to Major Belote but I don't know whether he came back to the regiment or was he returned to the States. I haven't had any news what so ever from some of the regiment since leaving it and often wonder what it and all of you are doing. Very few people came back here from the Philippines to give us any news.

I am still here at 322 and have been expecting orders all this month. I complained to almost everyone I could about being sent back. I saw General Ross on the way down here but it didn't do any good. Apparently the original plan was to send me back here and then back to the States in May so I could get my four months accrued leave before retiring in October.

General Stenderment [?] wrote to me that he agreed that service in the Philippines was no more arduous than in New Guinea but the policy was so and so and that the work I was doing here was important and also he saw no one in my unit taking leave as with the war in Europe soon to end (this was two months ago) there would be officers in great number available to carry on the one here. I also had a letter from General Serdevys along such lines anyway it was thoughtful of them to try to make me feel better but it didn't change my situation any. I wrote back to General Stenderment that under the circumstances it would be agreeable to me to return to the States and take expected leave and I expected orders to that effect long before now.

I have been spending quite a lot of time over in New Butuan closing out a base there. I came back yesterday but will return there within a few days to see the very last troops and equipment leave. We had to wait until the last of the --- Division left before we would completely close out.

Are you in the same campsite? No doubt the rains have begun by now and those rice paddies are very muddy. I wonder what jobs you have been on since I left. I would greatly appreciate having news of the regiment and of the officers and men I know so well. Do you know what organization Major Reddick is with? I should write to him to thank him for his efforts in getting me on a plane with all of my baggage. Yesterday I received a alumni paper from the University of Wisconsin and I saw in it that the new president of the University is from your school. I am enclosing the article about him.

No doubt the Philippines will now be flooded with colonels and generals from the European theater.

With best regards

Yours sincerely

John C. Ceade

I wonder if it would be possible to send or have me sent a roster of the officers from the last month I was with the regiment, that is for February. I would like to have it so as to remember all of their names. I intended to get one before I left but neglected to do so.

J

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

June 1, Friday night

Dear Margaret,

I got back from my trip about 5:00 o'clock this afternoon after traveling most of the day. I enjoyed it a lot - the trip - and was really glad I was able to make it. I saw Pelt and a lot of other officers I hadn't seen for some time.

Had two letters waiting when I got back written 16 May & 19 May. One had Uncle Lemuel's drawing of the kids and it is very cute and I know they want to keep it. The other told about the play and I am glad John did so splendidly. Am sending the cartoon and play program back.

Today was the first day of driving on the right side of the road in the Philippines. For the last 16 months, in New Guinea and here we have been driving on the left and the Flips have always driven on the left. Well the Army changed in over to fit the most vehicles (and I expected to see one hell of a mess coming back and was going to take my chances in the middle or in the ditch as it is hard to change the mind of a Carabao [*water buffalo*] or a baby horse overnight. However, I didn't see a thing or a single accident that would indicate that people here hadn't been driving on the right all of their lives. It was really remarkable. It did get a lot of buildup and hullabaloo.

Guess will stop for now,  
All my love,  
Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

June 2, Saturday night

Dear Margaret,

Just a short letter again as it was last night. Not a whole lot exciting now except I just came from a show starring Joe E. Brown. It is only 9:15 and home already. It started to rain which put a premature stop to the show. Fortunately, I carried my rain coat as I knew it will probably rain every night from now on. I am enclosing the ticket to show that we are really getting to be Base "M" commanders now.

I am sending the weekly newspaper along with the ticket. The news is pretty good if you overlook the spelling. The company reporters always have some dirty digs about E. M.'s and their Flip girlfriends.

Not exactly in the mood to write a letter tonight so will quit till later.  
All my love,  
Stokes

**J. Stokes Kirk to Merle A. Kirk and J. Russell Kirk**

June 6, Tuesday night

Dear Mom & Dad,

Wish you would buy some flowers for Margaret for our wedding anniversary. I am enclosing the cards which I got too late for Christmas and you may use them this time. I am trying to get my release now but have no idea how soon it will be. I have 111 points, the highest in the regiment and maybe I will eventually get my chance.

I heard from Maj. Belote and Margaret says that she saw him about 10 days ago. I know she was full of questions and I bet she found out all there was to know. But Belote didn't know exactly where we are as we have moved since he left. There is not a lot to write about so will stop.

Love to all,  
Stokes

**Jack Thomas to J. Stokes Kirk**  
European Theater to Philippines

June 6

Congratulations

Hi Fella,

The mail just came and I got a letter from Mother and she told me of your promotion and I'm sure glad. I just hope that you'll continue to get them as fast as you have in the past.

Today being one year after D day over here we had a holiday. We slept most of the morning and then this afternoon we went swimming and it sure felt good to get into the water once more.

I guess that you've heard that my Div. is going to the States and after we all have furlough we are headed out towards Japan. We are supposed to leave soon and if we go anywhere near Arthur on our way back I'm going to look him up. From his letters and the letters I've gotten from home he's having quite a time. There isn't much news over here since the war ended so I guess I'll have to close. I'm still in Halle, Germany but I'm in hopes of being home next month this time.

The best of luck to you and I hope that you can get another promotion soon.

Just me,

Jack

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

June 6, Tuesday night

Dear Margaret,

Just a short letter again tonight. Not a whole heck of a lot to write about except that since this point system has come up and I can see a chance to get home I am getting more & more anxious to do so. You can bet that I am doing all possible to get there.

We expect to have a promotion party this Sat night in one of the company Officer's rec. bldg's. Maj. Larsh and I are giving it for all of the officers and I expect to have all kinds of chicken, custard, and something to drink. It is all stag and I hope everybody enjoys it.

I heard from Barney and also from you that he had come by. He could give you some dope, but not the latest as we have moved since he was here.

Well, this is about all this time, more later.

All my love,

Stokes

**Arthur Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**

June 7

Brilon, Germany V-Mail

Dear Mom,

I am still in the same place & things haven't changed. We expect to be moved one of these days but I don't know where. I got a toy for Lynn the other day. I hope she enjoys it. It was made by cripple children in at one of the hospitals here. It is one that Hitler must have missed. The man that painted it had one arm cut off above the elbow & his left cut off just below the elbow.

Love,

Arthur

**Jackie White to Bud Gill**

June 7

Dear Bud,

This is my first attempt to answer the last letter I got from you. Recently I have been in such an awful mood that I didn't think you would want to hear from me. Since then, though, or rather, since Saturday, I have heard so much exciting news that I feel like doing almost anything except trying to express my feelings on paper. May be that won't be necessary much longer if what everyone greeted me with Saturday in Smithfield is true. Everybody I saw from the bus station to the drugstore told me that you were on your way home. Don't get fretted now, they always tell me the most exciting home news, not just because it's you. So, you know me, I got so excited, and could hardly wait to see your mother. So when I finally met her on the street she asked me if I had heard before I could ask her if it was true. Some how or other I just couldn't believe it so we were walking on to the grocery store and we saw Mrs. Gurley Barlow and she told me to ask him if it wasn't true. So I asked him and he said Gus said you sure were a lucky boy. I know you're tired of reading about it but that is the main subject of conversation right now and I know you are as anxious to get home as everybody is to see you.

If and when you do get home I hope you will let me know as soon as you get a chance. Mrs. Gill will let me know even if you don't. Guess your days will be well occupied running back and forth to Crittenden. May be I'll see you on Saturday when I come home for the week-end. Why talk about such things, I'll see you, regardless of anybody because I've been waiting and looking forward to this for an awfully long time.

Park Griffin is home now. He looks the same except he has aged a little which is naturally expected because he isn't getting any younger.

Bud, when I do see you I have so many jokes to tell you but some of them have to be told when it is dark and you can't see me blush!

I didn't come back from home last week-end until Monday night and "Coots" Hunter came back with me. We told jokes all the way back and it was the first time I haven't been to sleep coming back on a Sunday night in ages. See what a "man" can do to you. He was on his way back to Bainbridge, Md. The bus got here about 10:40 and he had to catch another one at 11:00 so he didn't have much time. I saw Mrs. Gill just before I left and she had gotten a letter from you but not what we wanted to hear. If you would tell me you're coming home I'll be relieved and not have to fear that it's a false alarm.

I'm not going home this week, I might go home with Margie. It all depends financially.

(Missing a portion) But for my souls...call and reverse the charges. You can get it though much quicker & I don't mind paying it.

Must go to sleep now. Good night!

Love,

Jack

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

June 8, Friday night

Dear Margaret,

Well, it can be told now and is not against censorship regulations anymore but I know Barney has already told you where we spent the first year in the S.W. Pacific. Anyhow, it was at Dobodura, one of the big air bases close to Buna and Ora Bay. Ora Bay was where we landed and Dobodura was where we moved to and did most of our work. Guess I will never forget all of

those names - such as Haranda, Inoda, Gona, Soputa, Borio and half dozen more names of places around there. They will always remain in my memory.

I heard from Barney the other day about his trunk and radio. I have sent the trunk to him and am trying to sell the radio but am not too anxious to part with it until I don't have any more use for it. Guess that will be when I return to the states for good. I don't think it will be 20 more months but might be sometime in the very near future. In other words, I am sick of overseas duty and want to get back, so that is what I am working for and think I have a fair chance with 111 points.

Well I disrupted the home life of a new family of rats who took over my quarters and built a nest in the radio. Things were frantically being torn up in here every night for the last four or five. Things were disappearing - papers etc., off of my desk cigarettes were being knawed into, the popcorn you sent and the fruit cake also suffered extensively. So I finally hit on the radio and what did I find but a rat and five babies in there along with the torn up paper. I tried to kill the rat and had about 15 Filipino boys try to help me but she was too fast and got away. Anyhow, I hope they have been run out for good now.

Expect to have the promotion party - Maj. Larsh and mine tomorrow night. I have a long trip ahead of me tomorrow but expect to get back in time.

Will sign off and write again later.

All my love,

Stokes

**Margaret G. Kirk to J. Stokes Kirk**

June 10, Sunday night

Dearest Stokes,

Seems as though we are having summer at last for it is quite warm now. Never can tell though because it was hot enough for sunsuits last Sunday and had to get outing pajamas out Monday night.

Mother Kirk called yesterday afternoon and said Aunt Hattie wanted us to come down for dinner today. It really is quite an undertaking for me to carry both children in that house with all those glass articles around. I had refused a couple of times though, so thought I better go this time. We met the folks at Chuckatuck at eleven - thirty and went down with them. We had dinner at one o'clock and left there before three. Daddy Kirk was just worn out he said and wanted to get home to rest a little before starting the week tomorrow. We went through Suffolk and stopped to look at the new machinery. He says he is really proud of that as he has never had a really new mill before, but it has really strapped him financially and will add lots of work and he doesn't seem to have a spare moment now.

Think I'll quit and look at the paper a bit before going to bed.

Forgot to mention - Aunt Hattie had Grandma and Kitty at her house today also. Kitty is staying at Aunt Eleanor's for a while now. She went over to get her baby after lunch, but Daddy Kirk said he just couldn't wait for her to come back. I never have seen the baby though it was born while I was in the hospital last March.

Be sweet for me.

All my Love,

Margaret

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

June 11, Monday night

Dear Margaret,

I have just finished wrapping up a small package of pictures you have sent me and ones I have collected here and some more Jap invasion money. Will mail it tomorrow. I am going to gradually try to clean out a few things I have been carrying around in preparation for a possible return in the next few months. Guess I will be first officer to leave the regiment but I am not building up hopes too fast. Have a good chance I think.

I bought a nice pocketbook today from the P.X. I know you have mailed one but I needed one so badly I grabbed at the chance. Only 5 pesos. It looks like I can't keep a hold of money over here. I had quite a bit but it seems that I draw on it besides spending the monthly that I draw. And I have only played one game of poker on Luzon (I won 10.5) so it can't be contributed to that. Guess before long you might have to send me money ha.

I received 3 letters last night and you had just heard of my promotion. It is nice to have it but know I am doing less work than before. I believe I would rather be Bn. C.O. than Regt. X.O. I received the Jan. 9<sup>th</sup> papers yesterday and just finished reading them. The pictures of the pin up girls is pretty good (Larry Briggs) especially the big picture. I believe you said something a long time ago about sending it.

I am listening to a lot of jabber on the radio from San Francisco. It is directed at the Philippines and must be Ilocano, Tagalog or some such native language. Understand a few words but not many.

So Arthur is sending a lot of stuff home now. There is not much that can be sent home from here. Jap rifles, knee mortars even bayonets, cannot be sent. Swords and Jap battle flags can be sent but it takes you a fortune to get a hold of one of these.

It is raining as usual guess the rainy season has really started. We are supposed to get 17 inches this month and believe we have already had at least 10. The heaviest rain ever recorded around here in a days time was 45 inches that is a lot of rain.

Guess you will get this pretty close to our anniversary. Many happy returns and hope I will be able to make it happier before the next one.

All my love,

Stokes

**Merle A. Kirk to J. Stokes Kirk**

June 11

Dear Son:

I believe Dad asked you if there could be anything for him to do which might help you come home for good. I am not sure I am right, but overheard something to that effect.

As I have said before he needs you now more than ever before in the past 4 years. His own words are "I have more than I can do." With Peter Griffin gone the four farms and stock have to be attended to and fed by him. You know all the trucks (no new ones have come yet) are requiring more and more repairs each month and he has to do or supervise all mechanical work on them and the mill. He has no mechanic. Now the new mill has arrived and he has to install that. All the while I keep thinking what Arthur said (he would have to slow down and live) or keep driving too hard and kill himself. Is there any request he could make? Now while some men are being discharged seems to be the only time.

I am busy this morning, will write later.

Love,

Mamma



**Margaret G. Kirk to J. Stokes Kirk**

June 11, Monday night

*Card: May your eighth Anniversary be one of your happiest days, and may all the good things of life always come your way*

The only kind of Anniversary card in town and I was afraid to wait any later to send one. Not much of an anniversary gift but you said not to send more boxes, so I'll just send.

All My Love

Margaret

Dearest Stokes,

I'll start this letter, even if I have to finish it in the morning. We are in the midst of a terrific thunder-storm and the lights have already been out once, and they don't look any too bright or steady now. It started storming just about nine o'clock as I was getting the children to bed but they got to sleep before the worst of it. I am glad because they might have been frightened. I let them stay up until eight - thirty last night and tonight also as it was so warm - consequently it is nine o'clock before I get them bathed and in bed, and I feel ready to go to bed myself then. It is usually eleven or after before I get there, though.

It has really been hot today so guess summer is here at last. The children put on sunsuits last Sunday though and had on sweaters Monday. They had on sunsuits all today and really stayed outside practically all day. John needed a haircut so badly that I did stop my work and take him to get it cut this morning. When I put them in the tub after lunch I washed his hair and Lynn's also. They played in the sand pile this afternoon though so they probably need another scrubbing but I just can't wash their hair every day.

Mother got a big box from Bud yesterday, containing all his winter clothes. I don't believe he has had any use for them since he left the States for he always said something about how hot it was, wherever he happened to be. We haven't heard anything from him since a letter written May 28<sup>th</sup> which Mother got June 4<sup>th</sup>. She had a letter yesterday from Robert, written June 1<sup>st</sup> and he said he had been to see Paul Woodward after he got my letter saying I knew who he was. They talked about half an hour then Paul dropped Robert by his Bn. on his way to Leghorn and said they'd get together again soon. He is in charge of 3<sup>rd</sup> Bn. and Robert is in the 1<sup>st</sup>, but Robert said the whole Regiment was close together now.

I finished up a dress and panties for Lynn this afternoon - they are real cute. The rascals had a time catching lightening bugs tonight. Hope I have a letter soon.

All My Love,

Margaret

**Margaret G. Kirk to Bud Gill**

June 11

Dear "Bud,"

I'd know a little better what to say to you if I knew just a little bit more about you. I'll scribble a few lines any way, but I surely hope you are home long before this reaches you. Mother's latest letter from you was written May 28<sup>th</sup> and she got that quite a while ago. Hope we have one tomorrow giving us a little more information. The box came yesterday with your winter clothes in it and we had them out to air all day today. Have you had any use at all for those since you left? I thought it had been hot everywhere you had been. John and Lynn were really excited when the box came - they think something of their Uncle "Bud" and the "narines."

We are in the midst of a terrific storm and the lights have already been out once so don't know whether I'll finish my writing or not as they are blinking again. Mother is having a fit over

the thunder and lightning. It has been terribly hot today and everyone has felt it so much because we have been having such cool weather. The children have had on sunsuits all day but don't know how long this warm spell will last. Last Sunday they put on sunsuits after Sunday School and by Monday night they had on thick pajamas to sleep in.

We met the Kirk's in Chuckatuck yesterday at eleven-thirty and went with them to Portsmouth. Uncle Jack and Aunt Hattie had invited us down there for dinner. I hated to leave Mother, but Aunt Hattie had invited us several times and I had refused, so thought we better go this time. We were back before 4 o'clock though and it was really hot coming back.

We are expecting Shirley this weekend and M. Koontz called last Thursday and said he hoped to get up this Monday, also I am anxious for him to meet Shirley.

Take care of yourself,

Love,

Sister

**Margaret G. Kirk to J. Stokes Kirk**

June 12, Tuesday night

Dearest Stokes,

I mailed you the funnies today, also a couple of jars of sliced beef. I got one jar last week then Mother got one for you today and I put them in a small box with shredded paper. You had said you didn't want anything else so I didn't send a large box.

It has been quite hot today and the children got quite a bit of sunburn just playing out in the yard. John's shoulders were especially red tonight and I put some cream on them. Lynn must have been sitting in the shade because she isn't nearly as red as John. I never thought they would get as much, it turned hot so suddenly that it seems to have scorched everything. We had a heavy rain during the thunderstorm last night but it didn't cool things off much. The wind is blowing now and it is thundering so guess we are in for another storm. It is ten-thirty now I was late starting my letter as I had quite a bit of mending to do. Worked on it this afternoon and after supper, then finished up after I got the kids to bed.

John and Lynn had quite a time catching lightening bugs tonight and Lynn caught twenty-five alone - John only had about fifteen. Annette Cofer played with them last night and night before also, but she had company tonight so the kids had to catch their own.

Just had to stop and run upstairs to get the windows down as the rain started coming down. Got my dress all wet before I got them down. Seems like we are living in the tropics these days with the heat and sudden showers.

I had a letter from Isabelle Holmes this morning and she said Barney and Georgia came to see her the Monday after they were here on Friday and they were there one night last week also. She said they had a room in a cottage on the Boulevard, so evidently Barney doesn't have to stay in the hospital all the time. I haven't heard anything from them since they were here.

I wrote a note to Aunt Hattie this morning to tell her we enjoyed being there Sunday. John wrote to her also, and says he is going to write to you in the morning. He says he has been too busy - the rascal. By the way, I'd like another letter soon from you. I got 14 in March, written from Feb. 8 to March 20<sup>th</sup>. 6 in April written from March 24<sup>th</sup> to April 19<sup>th</sup> and 7 in May written from April 15<sup>th</sup> to May 16<sup>th</sup>. I have gotten only 2 so far this month written May 22 & 27 and received June 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup>. Be sweet for me and take care of yourself.

All My Love,

Margaret

**Arthur Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**  
Mosburg, Germany V-Mail

June 13

Dear Mom,

We are again in tents for the first time in about 4 months. The other times we have lived in chateaus & houses & fortresses & barns & large stone rooms of mines. There was a 50-50 chance of going thru the states back over seas, but that has been changed & I won't be home now but may be later, but it will be a long time. The shot gun automatic was for dad's birthday present for last Christmas because I couldn't find one in the states for him. As for shells for the rifle you will have to write to one of the stores as Smith & Wesson for them telling them the type of gun.

Love,

Arthur

**Margaret G. Kirk to J. Stokes Kirk**

June 13, Wednesday night

Dearest Stokes,

I am enclosing a letter John wrote you this morning with no help from me. He wrote a note to Aunt Hattie yesterday morning and I hope he'll be in a notion to write to "Bud" or Robert tomorrow. He does his writing right after breakfast. Maybe I should try that as by night I am so worn out that I can hardly think of a thing to say.

It has been hot again today but I managed to get quite a few things done anyway. I keep going every minute all morning then don't have much energy in the afternoons. John and Lynn seem to have plenty energy all day though and are still going strong at bedtime. I have been getting them in about one-thirty or two and giving them a bath then making them keep quiet for an hour or more. They don't go to sleep but will stay on their beds for awhile and look at books or color. John reads little stories to Lynn also when the notion strikes him.

Today was Mother Kirk's birthday and I called her up to wish her a Happy Birthday, John talked to her also. Lynn was playing with Susanne Luter so missed the conversation. I had sent her a card from you and me and will carry her a little package when I go Friday. John fixed a cute card for her and gave it to her Sunday, along with some writing paper, and Lynn insisted she wanted to give her some red earrings, so I had to wrap up some I had to give her, as I couldn't find any here and wanted to avoid a tearful time. She seemed so pleased with the cards the children made also the one we sent her. She said she had a letter from Arthur today written the 2<sup>nd</sup> I believe, and he sent her some pictures of himself.

Mother had a letter from "Bud" today written the 6<sup>th</sup> and postmarked the 8<sup>th</sup> so that didn't lose any time did it? He still said nothing about coming home - just said he had been plenty busy and it was hot there, and he missed the boys. (There were quite a few from here on Guam.)

I had a letter from "Bud" Thrift (my first in over a month). It was written June 3<sup>rd</sup> and he was in Paris. From what he said he expects to go straight to see you and "Bud" without coming to the States first.

Saw Henry Crumpler today and he asked about you, he is one of Charlie Crumpler's boys. He is on crutches now after two months in the hospital. He was working for a sheet metal company and had hot tar dumped over on him.

All my love,

Margaret

**John S. Kirk to J. Stokes Kirk**

June

Dear Daddy

I wish you would hurry and come home and play with me. See if the War will let you

Love

John

Monday night

Dear Johnny,

Daddy believes he will be home before long. Believe the war will allow before long. It is raining now and Daddy is listening to the radio. Hope will be able to play with you and Lynn before the summer is over.

Love,

Daddy

**John S. Kirk to Bud Gill**

June 14

Dear Bud

I hope you will be home soon. Please write me a letter. Can you send us some money if you kill some Japs?

Love

John

**Margaret G. Kirk to Bud Gill**

June 14

Dear "Bud,"

It may be hot out there, but you are not the only hot one now. I am sitting on the front porch trying to cool off but don't seem to be making much headway at it. I stayed busy all morning and don't believe I have a dry thread on me. The rascals are playing outdoors and I'll take them upstairs about two o'clock and put them in the tub. John is as sunburned as if he had been on the beach, but Lynn has evidently spent most of her time in the shade. If it stays hot like this I want to go to the beach Saturday. Shirley expects to come over tomorrow night with her people and will spend the weekend with us.

I was so glad Mother had a letter from you yesterday, but do wish we knew where you were and what your chances are of getting home soon. John said this morning that he was going to write and ask you to find out where you were so you could tell us. I had to laugh at him. He started a letter to you this morning and just finished it a short while ago but I see he left out that part. He is a bird I'll tell you.

Had a letter from "Bud" Thrift yesterday, written June 3<sup>rd</sup>. He sounded as though he expected to go direct from where he was to the Pacific – said he'd see you and Stokes soon. He was in Paris then.

I received a note from Stokes this morning written May 29<sup>th</sup>. He seemed O.K. but too busy to write much – said he was leaving then on a jeep trip and wouldn't be back until that Friday. Surely do wish he could come home but it doesn't sound much like it now.

We still haven't found a place to move and Mother is so worried I hope we find it for time is getting short.

Well guess I'll cut this short and try to write a note to Robert and Arthur before bath time for the rascals. Take care of yourself.

Love, Sister

**Margaret G. Kirk to J. Stokes Kirk**

June 14, Thursday night

Dearest Stokes,

Well I finally got a note from you today my first since last Thursday. It was written May 29<sup>th</sup> and I was really glad to get it after waiting a week for news from you. You said you were going on a Jeep trip and hoped to see Lewis. That would be a joyful meeting and I hope you did see him. I am anxious to get more news from you, written after your trip.



Smithfield, VA: Mr. Koontz

while I was waiting for the kids to play awhile before I bathed them. I want to write a note to Arthur tonight but I am so hot the paper just sticks to my arm. Guess I'll write him a few lines anyway because I know I'll not get a chance for the next few days for any extra writing - I always manage to find time to write to you practically every day. Tomorrow will be a full day, then Shirley expects to come over tomorrow night for the weekend. I have promised the kids I'd take them to the Beach Saturday if it was still hot and Mr. Koontz said he expected to come up Sunday. We have invited Parke to have supper with us Saturday also.

Be sweet for me and do take care of yourself,  
All My Love,  
Margaret

**Margaret G. Kirk to J. Stokes Kirk**

June 15, Friday night

Dearest Stokes,

Seems like I have collected an envelope full of clippings so don't guess I need to write much tonight, as you'll have plenty to read without that.

Another hot day, but I haven't done any really hard work today so haven't minded it so much. I had my hair washed and set this morning so that took most of the morning. Then I had to

buy something for Daddy Kirk for Father's Day. That is Sunday and I knew I wouldn't get down there again by that time. Mother Kirk told me he needed some ties so I got two real pretty ones from you and me. He seemed very pleased when he opened the package this afternoon. I also got Mother Kirk a couple of pretty handkerchiefs for her birthday.

We went down home this afternoon and stayed until eight-thirty so I was late getting the kids to bed. Shirley is here and will stay until Sunday Night. Her people are coming back by here tonight to get some bacon Mother got for them so guess we'll be late getting to bed too. They have gone on to Dendron and they usually stay rather late.

Gran had made Lynn two more cute sunsuits - she is really a lady with a wardrobe these days and she loves to dress up. We had a nice supper at Gran's then we went over to Saunders and Grays. After that I had to go up to Mrs. Derring to carry her a pattern. Mother Kirk gave me a lovely piece of material and showed me a picture like she wanted me to have it made so I got the pattern nearest like it, and Mrs. Derring said she could make it by that. It is a pretty Scotch plaid with lots of red in it.

Daddy Kirk is really busy now trying to get in the new mill - he said he certainly needed you now. Mr. Wagner is in the hospital and Alton isn't working just at a time when he is needed most. Betty and Josh went swimming in the marl pit after supper so we didn't see much of them.

Gran gave us some peaches and some milk so guess we'll have ice cream for Sunday.

Take care of yourself.

All My Love,

Margaret

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

June 16, Saturday night

Dear Margaret,

I didn't tell you, but on my trip 1 June I went to Manila. I didn't see Lewis but did find out that he was there around about 18 May or before. We are now able to say that we are on Luzon and also to state that Manila was visited.

Just burned most of my old letters in a clean up drive I have started. If I do get a chance to leave I want to be ready so I am sending one of my footlockers home tomorrow. I hope it gets there OK but I have grave doubts as a lot of people claim that Q.M. baggage doesn't get where it is going. One item alone is 30 prs. socks, so you can see what a pile of stuff is being sent. Also sending 4 tapacloth I brought up from New Guinea. It is made by the natives out of wood and has various designs which is a history of the native tribe.

I checked up on your letters and found out that 419 thru 427 had been duplicated so you evidently lost track of your number for about 8 or 9 days. Guess at the time your numbering system got mixed up.

I am glad Bud is on his way home. Hope he is assigned to the states this time and won't have to leave again. Also hope Robert will be back before long. Maybe he will and if I get there we will all have a glorious reunion. Guess Bud will get there in time to help you more. I know your Mother is worried and I hope you are able to locate a place soon.

I don't know whether I said so before or not but a few days ago I sent a small box of pictures (you had mailed to me) home. I am also enclosing a picture I had taken this past Sunday. Notice the crease in my khaki putting on the dog here with these Filipino wash women to do the clothes. Laundry cost about \$2.00 a month to have done. How do you like my hat? It is not very good for wet weather but I let the front and back down when it rains, so it is fairly dry. On the

shelf in the nearest corner of the hut you can see Barney's radio. John and Lynn might be interested to know that is where the rat had its nest and five little babies.

One of our officers, Lt. Pratt, has a birthday Monday so Mr. Aquino is giving a party in celebration. Guess I will go up and see what goes. Hope it will be better than the last "slow" party he gave.

I don't know what Arthur is going to do with all of his souvenirs he is sending home. I have been doing my best to get a Jap flag but it seems as if somebody grabs them off quick and then want to sell them for high prices which I won't pay.

"Doc" Jennings and I are heating up some of your noodle soup for a 9:30 treat tonight. I believe it will be good. Have tried some, once before and it was good. I also gave Woodman and Mr. Aquino a package. Glad to hear Parke is home and looking well.

All my love,

Stokes

**Margaret G. Kirk to J. Stokes Kirk**

June 17, Sunday night

Dearest Stokes,

I am enclosing the little cards the children made at Sunday School for Father's Day. Surely hope you'll be here with your children for next Father's Day.

I had two nice letters from you today written June 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> I was glad you were back from your jeep trip safely. Evidently you didn't see Lewis, as you said you had hoped to in your last letter. I enjoyed the little newspaper very much - wish you'd send them all. I didn't recognize many of the names but I didn't know any in the Boston Times that you have not seen several times. Both letters had been opened but nothing was cut out. I am expecting something big pretty soon, as usually when several letters are censored straight along something breaks soon. Oh! how I do wish you could come home. Seems like they would let you since you have more points than anyone else, even if points are secondary with the officers- just as sort of a prize for the highest score. I talked to Daddy Kirk after he came from church and he seemed glad to get news from you on Father's Day. I told him I hoped he'd have both his sons' home by next Father's Day. He said he wished he had you here now- he needs you to help get the new mill put in.

I have been in a race since I wrote you Friday night. I hurried around yesterday morning and got things straight so we could go to the beach as I had promised Shirley and the children we would go. We took Annette Cofer also and all seemed to enjoy it very much. I got a rather painful sunburn on my shoulders by staying in shallow water with Lynn but hope it isn't going to blister. The children have turned brown as bunnies but they had been outdoors in just sunsuits all week. We ate lunch down there and they had a good time. Parke was here for supper last night. Then Mr. Koontz and Mr. Sonako were here for dinner today and spent the afternoon. Shirley had dinner with Emma and Granville and seemed to enjoy it. She went back with Stock Wright tonight. We had a storm this afternoon which cooled things off.

All my love,

Margaret

**Margaret G. Kirk to Bud Gill**

June 18

Dear "Bud,"

I am enclosing a picture I took of Parke a couple of weeks ago. I think he looks pretty good, considering being a German prisoner over four months. He had supper with us Saturday night and really seemed to enjoy it.



Smithfield, VA: Parke Griffin, Madge Gill,  
John and Lynn Kirk

Take care of yourself and write when you can. I hope those rumors about you coming home will soon come true.

Love,

Sister

**Arthur Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

June 21

Dear Margaret

Here are a couple of "Flanders Fields" poppies for the kids.

Love,

Arthur

*From its association with poppies flowering in the spring of 1915 on the battlefields of Belgium, France and Gallipoli this vivid red flower has become synonymous with great loss of life in war.*



**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

June 24, Sunday afternoon

Dear Margaret,

Got some of the best orders I have received for a long time and believe they will really make you feel pretty good. I received my orders transferring me from 1312<sup>th</sup> to Base "X" yesterday as a casual for return to the states under the redeployment and reassignment program. I expect to leave for Manila tomorrow, and don't know how long it will take, but know I will be home again within the next 3 months or possibly less. So my original forecast of getting home by Christmas is coming true and then too, much sooner than Christmas.

Expect you had better hold off on your letters, until you hear again where to write. Guess I will be receiving them for months to come anyhow so there is no need of writing or sending anything else.

I received a letter yesterday with John's letter enclosed. He wanted me to write and send a lot of Jap money. I have already sent quite a bit in a small box but as far as writing is concerned would rather surprise him.

It is raining and the sun is shining as brightly as ever. We really do have funny weather around here.

Guess I will see Pelt when I reach Manila. He is in a higher hq. now and I understand he is doing pretty good.

Well darling, guess I will cut the chatter short and hope that the day will speed when we will see each other again.

All my love,

Stokes

**Arthur Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**

June 25

France V-Mail

Dear Mom,

I went to Paris the other day while riding down the street Jack Benny drove up in a car along side us. We said hello to him & he smiled & waved back. He is over putting on some show for the boys in Paris. I guess we will be headed over seas soon & perhaps we can be over on states side. It will be mighty hard to say when but I don't suspect it will be too long before Stokes will be out.

Love,

Arthur

**J. Stokes Kirk to Margaret G. Kirk**

June 28, Thursday night

Dear Margaret,

Have been busy during the last few days getting ready for my trip. I don't know when I am leaving but hope it won't be long. I am now with the Disposition Center Base "X" APO 75 and no longer in the 1312<sup>th</sup> Engrs (But don't write to either of the above addresses).

I received 10 letters today - 8 from you, one from Mom and one from Jack Thomas. Really a "red letter day." Mom seems to be worried quite a bit about the work that is being thrown on Dad. I know it is a lot as there are so many things to be done these days there. I think I will be there to help before very long and help ease his burden some.

I have been all over Manila and it is really remarkable about the amount of damage that was done in such a short time. It was a beautiful modernistic city a few months ago but not much of the modern city is left.

Been seeing a lot of Pelt lately. We went riding this afternoon along with Capt. Brandon from Suffolk. Brandon finished VPI in 1935 and knows a lot of people I do.

Glad to hear that John did so nicely a school. So he is in the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade now. That is fine and I hope I will be able to help him some thru that grade.

The radio here is fine. I have just heard the news and now a recording of Jack Benny is on and is pretty good.

Not a lot I can write about now so will stop until later.

All my love,

Stokes

**Pauline Anna Preston to Bud Gill**

July 5, Thursday

Crittenden, VA

Dear Bud;

You can't know how glad I was to hear from you after so long. Lots of times I have thought about how little I had written to you and whenever I wrote a letter I knew I should write to you.

Every time I see your Mother I have to ask her your address then I don't remember it. This time I will though and I promise to write more often after this.

So much has happened since my last letter to you. I doubt if I can even begin to tell it all to you but I think the best news I have is that Jack finally came back home. Sunday nite he was here and since then I think they have probably gone to a yard somewhere, probably Brooklyn. But we did see him for a while anyway and it was so good to have him home again, He's the same to me – he was always my favorite brother. He's getting 30 or 45 days leave sometime soon. Ted was home for 14 days about 2 weeks ago – he's in Charleston, S. C. now. I wish he & Jack could see each other because they haven't seen each other since before Ted was in the Navy. Jack made Boatswain's Mate 2/c & Ted 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Now about Charlie – he was stationed at N.O.B. for about 4 months left in February for Boston, left there in April on a shakedown cruise to Cuba. Then he came home for 7 days in June and soon after he went back to Boston, they left and he did tell me where they would go from there but it's kind of complicated so I'll tell you that I suppose he'll be heading your way soon. He's making his rate (Electrician 3<sup>rd</sup>) in July. Should have it by now I guess. I guess everyone expected us to get married while he was home but we disappointed them or surprised them, I don't know which. I suppose it's because there's a war on or maybe we're too young – something anyway. I suppose we're better off this way.

By the way, how did you ever remember my birthday? Thanks for remembering anyway - Charlie doesn't ever remember. I doubt if he even knows I'm finally 19.

Yes, I'm still working in the Navy Yard. I like my work pretty well. I'd much rather be working than staying at home all the time. It makes the time go by so much faster. In fact, I can hardly keep up with it. (excuse)

You ask me what the good news was that I was going to tell you the last time I wrote. You've got me, it's been so long, it may even be bad news now. Jean & I are going to the movies with Mom & Daddy tonite. Jean is working in the Navy Yard for the summer months.

Bud, when are you ever coming home? Please make it a point to come and see me when you do – you’d better. I wish we were still in school now. Those days were the best days weren’t they?

Do you hear from home often? I guess Jack White hears from you pretty often. I don’t know where many of the boys and girls are now. I’ve sort of lost out on all that since I’ve been working. I guess everyone has in a way. Most everyone is working away from home or married or in service. Our class is certainly spread out isn’t it? I have so many letters to write it seems like I’ll never get them all written but I’m glad this one is on its way.

I think about you a lot Bud, even if you never hear from me. You said if I ever need anything to call on you – I guess I did once and you helped me. Someday I may have to again – whether I do or not I wish you would always be around just in case. I have thought lots of times that I couldn’t have stuck it out if it hadn’t been for you and I know I couldn’t.

Well, we’re home now so I’ll finish this up – the movie was “To Have and to Have Not” (Can you figure that one?) It was good. Humphrey Bogart & Lauren Bacall.

Well, I guess this is a pretty dull letter but I hope it gets to you soon so you’ll write again. Don’t forget, you’ve got a date with me when you get here, because I’ve already asked you.

Bud, have you ever found a girl good enough yet? If you ever do, I’d like to meet her. Well, I guess this is really all – write real soon won’t you and take good care of yourself.

Love,

Polly

**Shirley W. Gill to Bud Gill**

July 8, Sunday afternoon

Dear “Bud”

I know you will be surprised to hear from me, after such a long time. Honestly I’ve been planning to write and I just keep putting it off.

I came over yesterday afternoon for the week-end. Margaret and the children are upstairs lying down, so I thought I would drop you a line while it is quiet. No doubt Margaret has written you about Stokes coming home, and yesterday we read in the paper that the 473<sup>rd</sup> Inf. Regt. the one Robert is in, is scheduled to leave for the states in Sept. So now all we need is for you to write you’re coming home.

It’s just a little over a month and a half to wait but it will probably seem like a year. I know I won’t know how to act when he gets here.

My brother that’s in the Marines is in Eagle Mountain Lake, Texas now, and he likes it fine. Well, Bud I’ll close for now and drop me a line if you get the chance.

Love,

Shirley

**Arthur Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**

July 22

France

Dear Mom,

I’m still kicking. I went to the art museum in Paris last week & saw the statue of a winged Victory.

Love,

Arthur

**Arthur Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**  
France

July 28

Dear Mom,

At last we had some rains last night & it was surely welcome for it had been awfully dusty. I have a few things left I'm going to send home including a pair of shoes for myself.

Love,

Arthur

**Jackie White to Bud Gill**

July 30

Dear Bud,

Received your letter today and I'm glad to know you are all right. It made me very happy to hear from you even if you did have to tell me that the news I have been hearing isn't on the beam. I don't know why but you had me worried a little because I haven't heard from you, until today, since about May 19<sup>th</sup>. That's an awful long time to have to go without a single letter, but I'm still able to write, even though I didn't because I didn't hear from you.

Mother saw Mrs. Gill Friday night and she said one of the boys had written that week and said you were definitely coming home. I wish you would tell those boys (Buck, Ronald & Gus) to write true facts from now on and stop getting everyone all stirred up with excitement.

I have been home for the last three week-ends. Have had some wonderful times. I don't think I'm going this week since I'm going with one of the girls from the office home. Last Friday night I went home with her and had a real nice time.

Tell me something, please! Just when is your birthday? I don't remember anything I wrote in my last letter. Please set me right on this matter.

Now for some big news: Chicken Turner and Kitty Edwards are married. I hope you don't fall out when you read that. I really can't believe it but it's the truth. They married in South Mills.

Guess what I'm doing besides writing to you? Eating popcorn! It is so fresh and salty! Want some? Well, you can have all you want if you'll just come and get it, you might even have to buy it though because Wednesday is payday and as usual I'm broke. I got a raise and was promoted last week. Isn't that wonderful?

Did you hear about the bus wreck about two weeks ago? A Greyhound bus with about 45 passengers was coming to Richmond from Newport News one night when it was raining so hard. I came in about 2 o'clock that night and it was raining harder than I have ever seen it rain in my whole life. So the bus started across this little bridge, its small but very deep, and the bridge gave way and the bus went down. It happened about 3 o'clock that night. It was down the hill from the park where I live so the next night we all walked down and the bus was out but it was a mess. Two soldiers and a baby were killed. That's just one of the casualties of this rain we have been having. It has rained just about every day this month. So I'm getting a little use to it by now.

John Brabrand has been home on leave but he left last Wednesday. He looks real good but just as silly and slap-happy as ever. By the way, he dated Ann Fulgham the whole time he was home. Jack Gale is home now but I haven't seen him yet. Winks is home, as I suppose you know, and looking fine, except for the loss of a few pounds. Harry Dashiells was home not so long ago and again he looks fine, too.

I saw Polly about three weeks ago and she is looking the same as usual. John, her brother, is back in the States, expecting a leave soon. I almost forgot to tell you that Ethel Barrett

just got married to a Lieut. Evelyn Timberlake & one of the Saunders' boys were married recently. I think that just about takes in all the news, so I'll close for tonight. Take care of yourself and tell all of the boys' hello, especially little "Hootsie". How is he now? Can't imagine him being in the service. Tell all of them hello & to take care of you. Write soon.

Love,

Jack

**Margaret G. Kirk to Bud Gill**

Aug. 1

Dear "Bud,"

Guess you are beginning to feel neglected because neither Mother nor I have written for the past few days. I told Mother I would stop long enough to drop you and Robert a few lines this afternoon and maybe we'll get back on schedule after this.

I left the children at the Kirk's Monday and brought a man over to help move. We got everything down here except the Frigidaire and a couple of boxes of books and we still haven't been able to get those moved. I went back down to the Kirk's Monday night then moved back over here yesterday with the children. We didn't have any help except Aunt Dinah yesterday, and did have an extra woman for awhile today, so we are still far from settled. We have all the bedrooms about straight though and all windows and floors on the second floor are washed. The attic is a sight to behold and so is the first floor but I believe by bedtime we'll have things in place.

Mr. Pound is at the hotel and he said he'd come around tonight and bring some of his men to put up shades, towel racks and mirrors and move some furniture around downstairs. I have been going every minute today so decided I'd just stop and take a bath and write to you and Robert. I'll start to work again after supper.

Stokes called at three o'clock Saturday morning from San Francisco. He said he had just gotten there and would leave there for Fort Bragg. This morning I had a telegram from him sent from Hattiesburg, Mississippi. He wants me to meet him in Fayetteville tomorrow night so I really have to move fast. I want to get as much done as possible before I leave here, so I have been racing madly all day. I'll have to go down on the train as I don't have gas enough to drive. Wish you and Robert could get here soon so we could have a reunion.

Take care of yourself and write when you can.

**Elizabeth to Bud Gill**

Aug. 2

Richmond, VA

Dear Bud,

I guess you think I forgot Smithfield and everybody there when I left. Well, right now I'm so homesick for that place I could cry. When I first came to Richmond I worked for Greyhound but didn't like it or they didn't like me or something. Anyway now I'm at the Division of Motor Vehicles and confidentially I'm not satisfied there. I really don't think I'll ever be satisfied working for anyone but Mr. Stephens.

I've been to Va. Beach about 3 or 4 week ends this summer. Had some good times. We've had so much rain here that we get sun tans and they go right away. We just can't get brown.

I live in a boarding house here with 25 other girls from all over the county. They're swell though. We have a grand time but I must say that I miss your Mother's good cooking. Richmond

is really serving me pretty bad. I've been going to Doctors ever since I've been up here. And I've had 3 spells of being sick. I'm just getting over a terrible cold and bronchitis now.

Friday 8-3-45

I got bothered last night. Eleanor Jane came down and talked to me a long time and I was too sleepy to finish.

I saw Mr. Cook here in Richmond about two or 3 weeks ago. He had just come from Smithfield. I was eating lunch today and one of the Carolina Trailways drivers that used to take me from Suffolk to Smithfield came in and ate with me. Sure made me homesick for Smithfield.

Guess you heard about the Greyhound that ran in the creek. Bridge washed away just as the bus drove on. Then the next day a drunk climbed up the flag pole on the bank building to fix the ropes and lost one stirrup & hung by one foot for about an hour and 15 minutes. I happened to be off for lunch then and saw him.

I saw Van Johnson in "Thrill of A Romance" last week and it was really good. I never go to movies anymore. I do good if I see one every 2 weeks now and I used to go about every other night.

Well, news is rather dry around here so I'll sign off. Just wanted to let you know I hadn't forgotten you all. I may go back to Smithfield to live again you know. Write me if you have a chance.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth

**Chassie Thomas to Merle A. Kirk**

Aug. 9

Port Norfolk, Portsmouth, VA to Everets, Suffolk, VA

Dear Merle,

Have you heard from Arthur? Do let me know. I was so glad to see all of you especially Stokes & to see how well he looked & did not get my trip to Richmond & don't expect to take it now.

Lemuel will be down sometime soon. Frances & the children came back Sunday. Laurence E. Lewis, a cousin of mine died in Florida last week with the heart attack. I am getting on very well. When will I see all of you again?

Love,

Mother

**Jackie White to Bud Gill**

Aug. 15

Dearest Bud,

Gosh, I'm so excited I can hardly collect my thoughts enough to write to you, so you know I'm excited! As you know, last night about 7 P.M. the President announced the unconditional surrender of Japan and was I excited. Just as soon as I heard that I just hollered, screamed, cried, and did a little of everything, not waiting to hear any more of the news. What do you think about it? I heard a broadcast from Guam and they said everybody there was celebrating. Also New York and San Francisco were celebrating. So naturally we did too! All of us went on the porch and just hollered at everyone that went by. Then this soldier came and took a crowd of us up to Broad Street. It was really a mess! Cars were coming from every possible direction, all wanting to get where they were going first and it looked like everybody was going the same way. The policemen tried to direct traffic but they were disregarded. Cars were even coming down the streetcar tracks! I saw a soldier and sailor exchanging uniforms. The soldier

had such a hard time getting on the sailor's suit because he was a little larger. So this policeman came up and I thought he was going to pick'em up but he started helping the soldier. He said he didn't care what anybody did, just let'em have their fun.

We went down to the Fire Department and they were giving away big and little flags. I got there a little late to get a big one but I did get a little one that was on one of the fire engines. Then one of the men asked me if I didn't want to wind the fire siren and it was lots of fun.

Last week end I went home with one of the girls from the office and I had a wonderful time. So I haven't been home since the last of July and believe you me, I'm ready to go. I didn't have to work today and I won't have to work tomorrow either. I didn't go home because I knew I would be going Saturday for a week. I'm taking my vacation next week! Will I see you then? Well, when?

Mother wrote that Margaret's husband is home. I guess she's pretty happy and especially the two kids.

I went to church tonight to celebrate V-J. Day. I was thinking about you a lot and I hope you will soon be home. Guess what? Rationing is off of gasoline!! Isn't that wonderful? I'm beginning to believe it now and will more when you get home. Hope F. G. keeps his promise, especially since rationing is off. I'm just rambling around and haven't said a thing but at least you know I'm thinking about you in these exciting days. Please write soon and take good care of yourself.

Love always,  
Jack

**Arthur Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**  
France

Aug. 17

Dear Mom,

Here is another post card I picked up in Paris while I was there. Some of the boys went down to Marseilles last night & seem to have had a very good time. They also went in swimming & had an excellent time there.

Love,  
Arthur

**Arthur Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**  
Germany V-Mail

Aug. 18

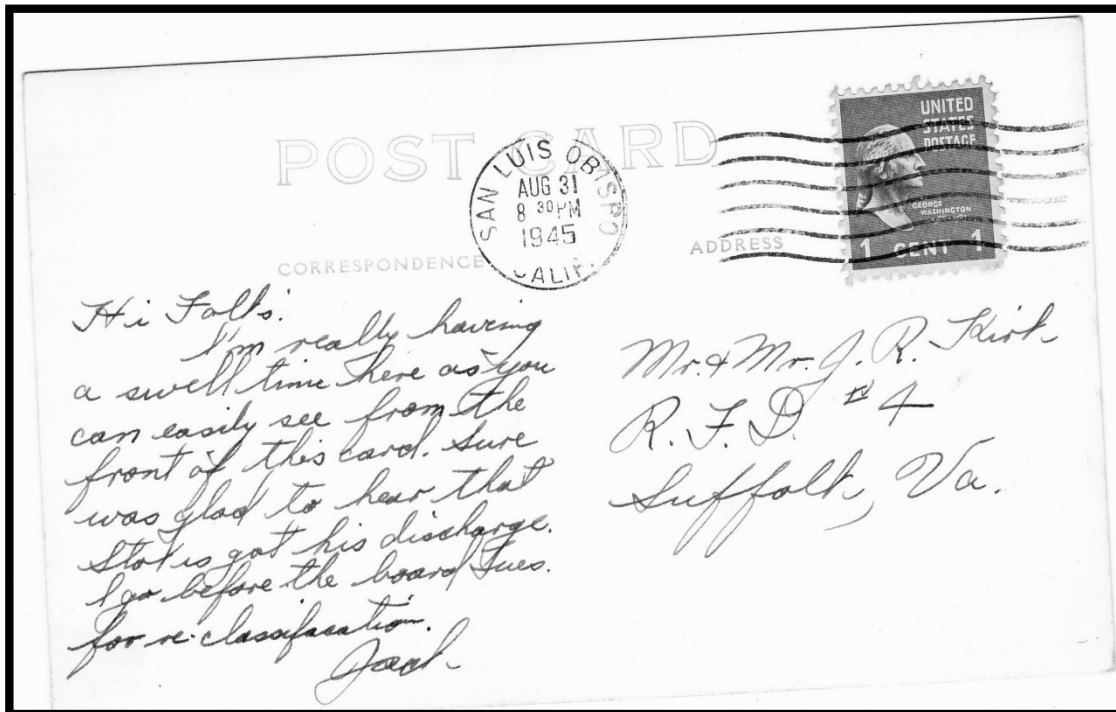
Dear Mom

It looks like since the age of the atom bomb that we will now change & come home. The men are all awfully glad, & are restless but happy. It also looks like we get 30 days at home & then it will be hard to guess what. There is still a chance that I'll stay over here for a while but I don't think so. We went over to swim yesterday & ran into Jimmie Powell from Petersburg. His brother Raleigh was killed over here.

Love,  
Arthur



Above on left: Jack Thomas





**3 MORE LOCAL  
SOLDIERS HOME**

**Wade Doughtie  
Gets Discharge**

SUFFOLK, Sept. 15. — Three more Suffolk and Nansemond County soldiers have returned to the States from the ETO theater of operations.

Arriving in New York on Thursday, aboard the General Taylor, were Major Arthur A. Kirk, of Everett's Bridge, and T/5 Hayfood M. Riddick, 234 Forrest Street, Suffolk.

**Jack Thomas to Lewis Thomas**

Aug. 31

San Luis Obispo, CA to 219 Broad Street, Portsmouth, VA

Hi Bud;

As you can see from the front of this I really had a time in town V Jay Day. I know that you were just as happy, but you probably weren't as fortunate as I in being able to throw a big bender. See you soon.

Jack

**Arthur Kirk to Merle A. Kirk**

Sept. 2

Germany V-Mail

Dear Mom

We expect to leave tomorrow for the states, take about 10 days to get there & about 4 or 5 more days before I will be able to get home.

Love,

Arthur

**J. Stokes Kirk to Army Finance Officer**

Nov. 19

Letterhead: Kirk Lumber Company, Suffolk VA

Finance Officer

Separation Center Fort Bragg, N.C.

Dear Sir,

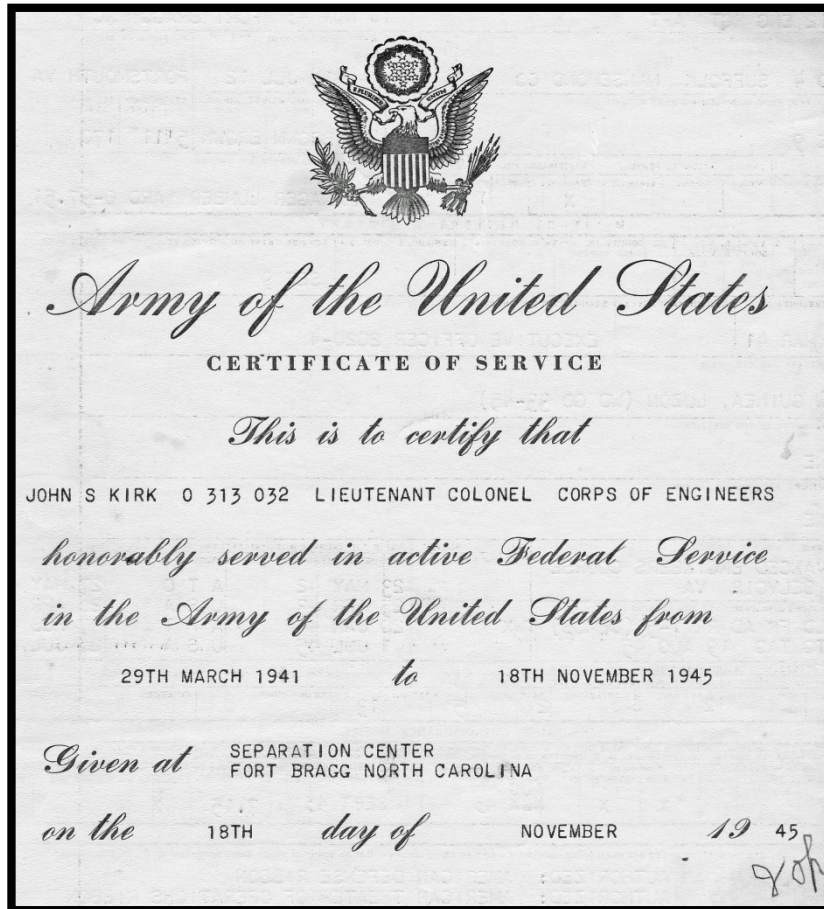
At the present time I am still due pay for the month of June 1945 and for the difference in pay and allowances between Major and Lt. Col for period 8 May 1945 to 31 May 1945 at the time of my separation proceedings on 21 August 1945, this was explained to my officer counselor and also to the Finance Officer who suggested that I await more information.

The particulars are as follows: On 15 June 1945 I signed a voucher (a duplicate copy is enclosed) at APO70 and as I left this station on 25 June 1945, I was unable to collect on this voucher. Since then I was unable to sign another voucher until I had ascertained that the first had been destroyed. I wrote to my former unit personnel officer, who went to the Finance Officer APO70 and found that the original voucher had been "spoiled" and that I could now sign another one. Accounting classification symbols unit special order number for promotion and orders are shown on the carbon copy of the original voucher.

The deductions are correct with the possible exception of the class B allotment which shows a \$75.00 deduction. As I understand this deduction, the Finance officer sends this to the Bond division which in turn mails the bond. However this particular bond has not been received therefore the \$75.00 should not be entered as a deduction. I do not desire to purchase this bond at this time. I request that a voucher be mailed as soon as possible to me for signature.

Yours truly,

John S. Kirk LT. Col. CE (inactive)



**Madge Gill to Bud Gill**

Dec. 17

Smithfield, VA to San Diego, CA *Christmas card*

Dearest Bud,

Hope you get the box I sent in time for Xmas – it's just eats-. I made you a fruit cake. I am so sorry you won't be home for Xmas. Robert is out got home Thursday. Take good care of yourself.

Lots of love

Mother

**Margaret G. Kirk to Bud Gill**

Jan. 13, 1946

Dear "Bud,"

Have been wondering how much longer it would be before we would see you, since the points were lowered. Surely hope you can soon get home. We miss you. Also hope we at least get a letter soon – we were at Mother's today and she seemed anxious to hear from you.

Shirley and Robert spent the weekend in Newport News and came back about six o'clock tonight. We went over this morning to Mother's and enjoyed spending the day with her. It is rather cool here now after about a week of real warm weather, so guess we'll all catch fresh colds – seems like that is always the way after such changeable weather.

The kids seem much better of their whooping cough though, and John started to school last Thursday. I don't think I'll let Lynn go to dancing school anymore until February though.

Well, I am beginning to think I'll actually be in our house before so very much longer. The furnace has been put in now and it shouldn't take too many weeks to finish up the interior. We really will need quite a few things to start out but Stokes says we'll only be able to get what is absolutely necessary as the furnace cost so much and the man is charging ten dollars a day to finish up the interior. I'll be so glad to get settled though that I'll not mind if we only have two chairs. Guess we can sit on the floor if we have company. John and Lynn are quite excited over the house and want to stay down there all the time. In fact John really fussed about having to start back to school. I don't want them bothering that carpenter too much, at ten dollars a day.

We surely did enjoy the candy you sent us and we are still enjoying the gum. I am certainly proud of my towels too and know they'll come in handy when we do get in the house.

Write when you can, and take care of yourself. Hope we will soon hear that you are on your way home.

Love,

Sister

**Madge Gill to Bud Gill**

Jan. 16, Wednesday

Dearest Bud,

Your dear letter just came and I was so glad to get it. Do take good care of your dear self and don't get sick. I don't know where my letters have gone for I have written. That almond candy you sent was the best I have eaten in a long time. I am glad you are enjoying your box. Dick put some candy bars in it. Sorry you missed John Brabrand.

So many of the boys are home. Randolph Carter, and Bob Gale came Monday.

Robert says he is going to leave and go to school in Feb. Boy the weather is some cold here now. How I would love to see you.

Sister and Lynn spent the day yesterday it was Lynn's birthday she was five and some little mess. I got something for you and I. John is getting so big.

Now let me know if you need any thing. Take care of your self and be real good boy for my sake. Write as often as you can for I am always so anxious about you. With a heart full of love to my dear boy.

Your dear devoted

Mother

**Shirley W. Gill to Bud Gill**

Jan. 16, Wednesday

Dear "Bud,"

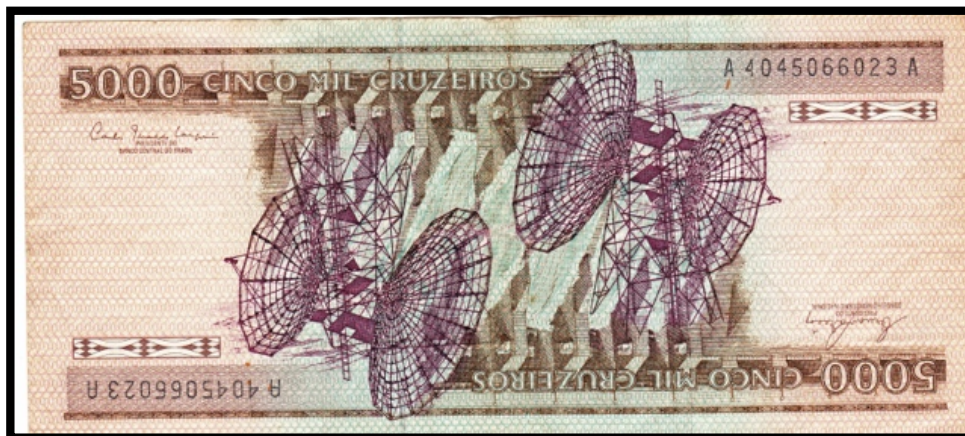
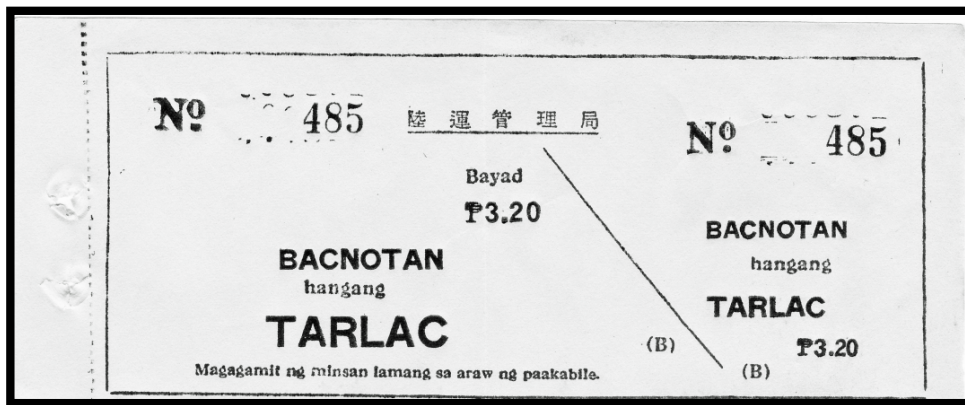
How's everything out in California? Your mother heard from you today, "at last," she was getting ready to wire you. Your mother is telling Parke & Robert that you're working night & day that's the reason you hadn't written, and they're just laughing, telling her all you're doing is running around. She's fussing back at them. The Army against the Marines. Ha! Ha!

Bud, we sure did enjoy the candy & gum, especially Parke & Robert, they had a time with the candy.

I hope you will be home soon, write every chance you get.

Love,

Shirley



Brazilian currency



Top left: Bacnotan, Philippines  
Top right: J. Stokes Kirk, Philippines  
Middle: Philippines General Hospital  
Bottom: destruction in the Philippines

## J. Stokes Kirk in the Philippines



## Robert M. Gill in Europe

Top left: Robert M. Gill in Italy  
Top right: Robert M. Gill in Paris  
Right: Robert M. Gill at the Leaning Tower of Pisa



## German Civilians Change Attitude, Brady Asserts

SUFFOLK, March 23. — "The Jerries seem to have changed their attitude now. In the first towns we took over, they gave us hard stares, full of hatred; but now it's just the opposite."

So writes Paul Kirk Brady, of Suffolk, a corporal attached to a field artillery unit somewhere in Germany, in a letter to his wife, Mrs. Elizabeth Griggs Brady, 513 West Washington Street.

"They try to act as if they're glad we are here," Corporal Brady writes, "and all of them swear that they're NOT Nazis. But still we find big Nazi flags in the basements, and all sorts of Nazi pins and emblems in every house."

"I suppose they're trying to win the peace now. They have really been living like kings in this place. Plenty of everything, and I'm not kidding."

Saying that the town he is in "is really an important point in the drive," Brady expressed hope he could get a few pictures of the place to send home.

### 'Situation Looks Good'

"The situation really looks good," he writes. "Naturally, I'm hoping it will soon be over, but one can't put too much hope in those Henies quitting too soon. They seem to want to fight to a finish, and I guess that's what they will get."

"I can't see it, though. Every day it's that many more towns and cities that are bombed and shelled until they are nothing more than piles of rubble and ruins."

Cpl. Brady said he wished he could tell just where he was, but that censorship forbade. "One thing about it, though, that river is so close that I could go fishing without moving very far. We're really up there. Just our guns making noise, that's all, and that is good, believe me."

### Plenty Of Liquors

Brady said the town he was in was "large, very large, and every cellar is full of wine, whiskey, brandy, etc. So you can just about imagine what is going on. I really could never feel 'good' from drinks over here. There is too much going on, and I'm sure you know what I mean. Really tough."

"One would expect fellows in my position to pour them down, but it just doesn't work that



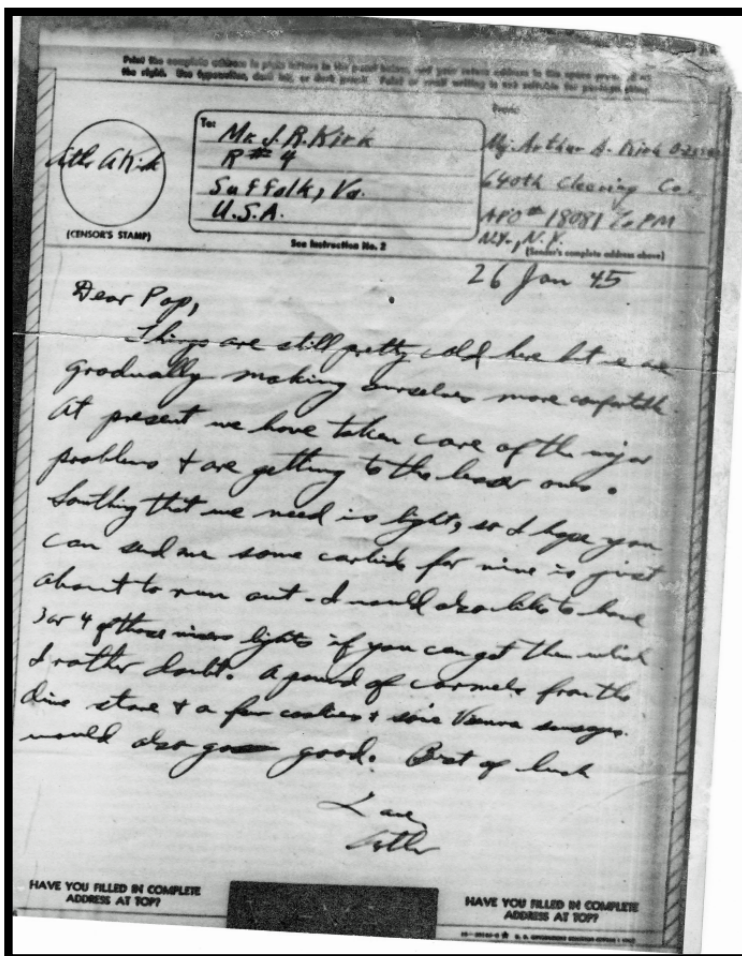
Grandson of 29 North + Margaretta Indiana, Pa.  
CORPORAL BRADY  
way with me! As I said, there's just too much going on."

Son of Mrs. Jack Brady, also of Suffolk, Corporal Brady has been overseas 13 months. He went into service in September, 1943. As a civilian, he operated the Radio Service Company on North Saratoga Street.



Paul Kirk Brady in Europe

# Arthur Kirk



Right: V-Mail Arthur Kirk  
Below: Arthur Kirk operating

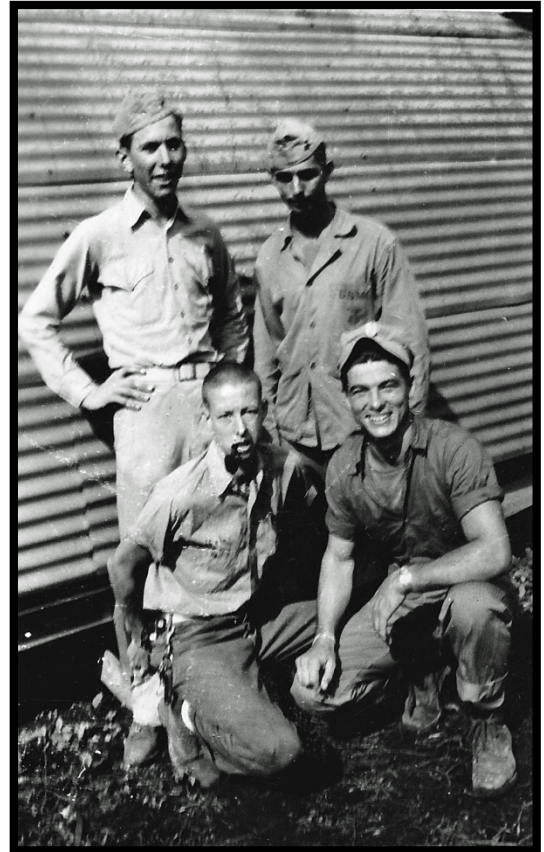




## Smithfield Friends in Guam



Above: Bud Gill on far right  
Right: from left standing: Bud Gill and Gus Barlow; from left kneeling Ronald Wilson and Buck Latimer  
Bottom: Walking through bombed city center





## Bud Gill

Left: Bud Gill on right, Buck Latimer on left in Guam  
Below: Goleta, CA Marine Air Base far right: Bud Gill



# After the War

## Merle A. Kirk diary 1929-1955:

November 29, 1948: *I suppose I have been too happy to write in this book. The war ending, Stokes home August 1945 and Arthur home in Sept. 1945. Then the world began to take on new life for us. Arthur married Marie Linge of Bethlehem soon after getting home and all six of us went there for the wedding. (Josh, Betty, Margaret, Stokes, Russell and I.) They now have a precious son Arthur Russell Kirk born November 8, 1947. He walked before he was ten months old and his first tooth came at 12 months. In the spring of 1946 Stokes, Margaret, John, Lynn, Josh and Betty were still here waiting for the two houses to be completed. Russell and I left for Shreveport April 21st where Arthur met us and we went to Leesville. Marie joined us and the four of us took a 30 day tour of Mexico and the States. It was wonderful.*



1950s Everets: Merle A. Kirk and J. Russell Kirk



**1958; Back row from left:** Betty & Joshua Pretlow, Arthur & Marie Kirk, Lynn Kirk, John Kirk **2<sup>nd</sup> row:** Anne Pretlow, Josh Pretlow Jr, A. Russell Kirk, Margaret & Stokes Kirk **3<sup>rd</sup> row:** T. Kirk Pretlow, J. Russell Kirk, Ann Kirk, Merle A. Kirk **Front row:** Bruce Kirk, infant Jennie Pretlow, William Kirk

*John Stokes Kirk 1912-1991:*

Eager to resume his work at the mill and bring his family together, Stokes set his attention to his partially built home. When the house was finished, Stokes and Margaret moved into it with John and Lynn. In 1950, when their last child arrived, Stokes decided it was time to quit smoking cigarettes, and gave them up the day they brought Bruce home from the hospital.

Resuming his community ties, Stokes returned to the Ruritan Club (where his nickname was Loblolly), the Masonic Lodge (where he was 33<sup>rd</sup> degree), activities at St. John's Episcopal Church as warden, and worked to perfect his card game of bridge. He played well enough to win tournaments, and became a Master level player. His main focus, though, was modernizing the sawmill and building a large office to handle the growing enterprise. As the majority of the logs that went through the mill were cut from standing timber on his father's property as well as his own, they restructured the company several times until becoming Kirk Lumber Co. and Kirk Timber and Farming. In 1965, Stokes drove the family into Canada to see the Alcan Highway. He was surprised to find much of it still unpaved and rough.

Stokes displayed the many colonial and Native American artifacts he found on his farms in the mill office. He also restored antique steam traction engines which were used in saw mills and on farms around the area in his grandfather, J. J. Kirk's, day. Each summer at the Pork Peanut and Pine Festival in Chippokes Plantation State Park in Surry, Virginia he demonstrated their use and told the crowds the history of the engines, which were in use before WWI. After Margaret's death in 1982, Stokes married the former Alice Beaton of Suffolk. Upon reaching

retirement age he continued to work in the mill office as well as managing the timber and farming concerns.

**Claude L. Hill to J. Stokes Kirk**  
Berkley, CA

December 25, 1955

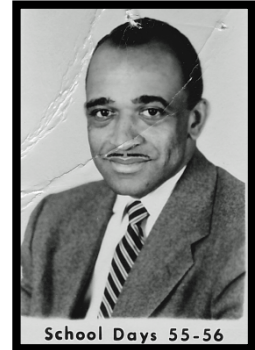
Hello!

Remember Me? I drove you & did job program reports at 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn. in Philippines. Originally from Co. F. things are O.K. with me. We are buying a home; I'm vice-principal of school, working with youth in my church. Frank Tawnley was by to visit us about one year ago. Was the W.O. in Bn. Hq.

See you

Should you come this way, drop in.

Claude Hill; U. S. Army



1990 Everets: Back row from left: Rusty Rose, John David Kirk, John Stokes Kirk Jr, John Rose, Charles Rose, Russ Kirk, Michael Kirk; Second row from left: Bruce Kirk, Kelly Kirk Stenger holding son Michael, Clemmie H. Kirk, Kim Kirk, Joshua Kirk, Elizabeth Tew Kirk, Jeff Kirk, Ann Kirk; Seated from left: Kitty C. Kirk, Charity Kirk, Beth Kirk, Alice B. Kirk Stokes Kirk, Arthur Kirk, Marie L. Kirk, Lynn Kirk Rose holding Eleanor Kirk

*Arthur Abbitt Kirk 1916-2016:*

At the close of war Arthur returned to the States to marry Marie Linge in Bethlehem, Pa. After completing his internship at Walter Reed Hospital he returned to Medical College of Virginia taking a pathology fellowship. He continued his studies in General Surgery, and three more years in Orthopedic Surgery. He chose Orthopedic Surgery because “no one else seemed to be interested in the field at the time.” In 1951, Arthur returned “as promised” to share an office

with his uncle, Dr. John Abbitt, in Portsmouth, Virginia, and they worked together at Parrish Memorial Hospital. He and Marie raised three children, Russell, Ann and William in the house his father Russell built for him in Portsmouth. With Dr. Abbitt's death in 1955, Arthur opened his own practice. Together, with Grace Cone, they established the Kirk-Cone Rehabilitation Center for local handicapped children. As his own three children entered school and participated in sports, he offered his services as team physician for all Portsmouth High Schools. From 1968 to 1971 his volunteering work with Care-Medico took him to Afghanistan, India and Indonesia for one month a year. While watching children in Pakistan cut and assemble elaborately carved wood and stone art, he thought, "if those children can do this work, I can too." He set aside his mural painting and furniture making to begin the craft of cutting and polishing gemstones. Not one to sit idle, he expanded his home garden adding Camellias, and successfully propagated a new cultivar, one he patented and named "Marie Kirk" [later renamed Autumn Moon] after his beloved wife.

### Miss Marie Linge, Maj. Arthur Kirk Wed in Bethlehem

The marriage of Miss Marie Linge, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Christ Linge, of Bethlehem, Pa., to Maj. Arthur Abbitt Kirk, (MC) USA, son of Mr. and Mrs. John Russell Kirk, of Suffolk, took place Saturday morning, September 29, at 11 o'clock in St. Mathew's Lutheran Church, Bethlehem. The ceremony was performed by the Rev. William C. Berkemeyer in the presence of relatives and friends.

Given in marriage by her father, the bride wore a gown of wine velvet with a matching feather hat. Mrs. William Linge was matron of honor and only attendant. She wore a green velvet dress with a matching feather hat. Both carried Colonial bouquets.

Lieut. Col. John Stokes Kirk, AUS, was best man for his brother.

A wedding breakfast for the immediate families followed in the Hotel Bethlehem, after which Major and Mrs. Kirk left for a wedding trip to Florida.

Among the out-of-town guests were Mr. and Mrs. John Russell Kirk, Lieut. Col. and Mrs. John Stokes Kirk, and Mr. and Mrs. Joshua Pretlow, of Suffolk.

The bride attended Cedar Crest College and was employed as a receptionist at St. Luke's Hospital in Bethlehem. Major Kirk is a graduate of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and the Medical School of the University of Virginia. He returned recently from overseas duty.

### Marie Kirk Clunan 2015-:

*Granddaddy wasn't afraid. He saw what was right and he did that. He wasn't afraid to make mistakes and so he was willing to experiment. As a doctor, if a surgery was not bringing a good enough result, he would invent a new one. Several decades ago he was mentioned in Time Magazine for discovering the "slam-dunk syndrome." At that time players in the NBA and all over the country were injuring their hands while trying to dunk the ball. Granddaddy figured out that this was happening because of the way the nets were tied onto the rims. He wrote the NBA, and as far as I know they fixed it and players aren't getting hurt anymore. He traveled to many places and served as a medical doctor doing mission work in Afghanistan and Indonesia; he visited China, Africa, and many other countries. He took his children and his grandchildren on trips to exotic places. When I was 19 he took me on a trip around the world to Brazil, South Africa, Kenya, Egypt, and Italy. It was a whirlwind of a trip, only 3 days in each place. I remember the beauty of Cape Town, South Africa. We had several visits there, including the family of one of his doctor friends, who had had to leave the country because he had spoken out against apartheid. The next day, on New Year's Day 1990, I wanted to see the place where everything was happening and understand what it was like there, so together we drove all around Soweto, the black township that was home to Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Desmond Tutu. He was always up for an adventure.*

Richard Finnis Dignity  
July 13, 1946  
By Arthur Abbott Kirk  
The Cancer of Hate

Editor of The Times-Dispatch:  
One of the most interesting features in any paper is the VOP. Yours is an exceptionally good one because it is well edited and the letters you publish are usually well thought out and well written.

Joseph Joel (July 9) stated that "England's tactics are going Hitler one better." I must take exception to this, for I have seen with my own eyes the results of Hitler's tactics—the living lying next to the dead, both skeletons, in dirty, gray-striped cloth. The only difference was that one turned his hollow eyes toward you, seeing without recognizing. Out of 960 we took in a concentration camp, 36 died before morning. There were Protestants, Jews and Catholics.

It is hard for many in America to understand how a number of Poles could murder Jews. After seeing how Hitler planted the seeds, I can understand. In this concentration camp people were separated as Poles, Hollanders, Russians, Jews, Belgians, Frenchmen, Czechoslovakians, Italians, Spaniards, etc. They were treated thus for two reasons: one was that they were easier to control. The other was that it made them factions that could be played against each other, and spend their hatred against one another. The products of these seeds were unbelievable. It worked like cancer, eating from within. The idea was to destroy the whole while Germany looked on—to watch the seeds of hatred destroy people whom Germany wants to rule.

A specific instance: A group of Jews, before being brought into camp, were given Red Cross packages. The SS guards told the Russians, and made no move to stop the resulting fight. They then told other factions that the Russians had taken the packages and did nothing to stop these results. After all factions had started to fight, the guards took the packages.

One must realize that these people were starved; who could blame them for trying to keep alive?

I hope this has helped put the blame where the greatest part belongs—on Hitler and his gang. His hatred will live long, and a strong and just world government is the only shield against it.

VET WHO SAW IT.  
Richmond ARTHUR KIRK

#### Joshua Pretlow 1919-1974:

Married in the spring of 1945 to Betty Cross, Josh built his house on the high ground, across the road from Cousin Merle and Cousin Russell's home. But as the rising waters of Norfolk's Western Branch Reservoir flooded his driveway, the City of Suffolk condemned his house and forced him to sell. Not willing to give up a perfectly good house, he petitioned to buy it back at a reduced price. He then moved the two-story wood frame house across the highway, within sight of the old site, but no longer on an island with rising waters. He and Betty raised four children, Joshua "Pret" Jr, Anne Abbitt, Thomas Kirk, and Jennie Cross in the newly bricked house. While continuing to handle the legal work for Kirk Lumber Company, he opened his law office in downtown Suffolk in 1948.

#### Paul Kirk Brady 1914-2012:

Paul Kirk Brady Jr.: Paul returned home in 1945 to run his radio business *Radio Service Company* in downtown Suffolk, VA. Paul and his wife, Elizabeth (married in June 1942) bought land on the Nansemond River in 1946 and restored the home they would share for 50 years, and where they raised their two children, Paul Kirk Jr. and Maribeth. In 1954, he created Brady's Marina on the Western Branch of the Nansemond River. In 1959, he and three other Suffolk men refloated and brought to port the African Queen, a Liberian oil tanker that ran aground and sank in a storm off Ocean City, Maryland in 1958. Experts had given up all attempts at recovering the Queen and expected the four amateur Suffolk men to fail as well. A parade was given in honor of the men. All were hailed as heroes and received Citations and the Key to the City of Norfolk when they brought the ship into the same port where Paul grew up as a boy. Once again, he returned to the radio business in Suffolk, which he ran with Elizabeth until he "retired" in 1978, to run the marina for 32 more years.

#### Robert Morgan Gill 1923-2014:

Robert Morgan Gill Jr.: Upon his return to Virginia, Robert attended the College of William & Mary. In 1949, he accepted his first teaching position, and continued teaching and coaching as well as head trainer for William & Mary. By 1968 he was promoted to Supervisor of Physical Education and Health for Arlington County, Va. schools. He was inducted into the William & Mary Athletic Hall of Fame in 1986. Robert and Shirley raised five children, Robert M. Jr, Thomas H., David G., Stephen C., and Margaret L.

#### Richard Goodson Gill 1924-:

Bud returned to his hometown of Smithfield, VA and found work in the cooler at Smithfield Ham & Products, Co. The work was uncomfortable, and when he was offered work by his brother-in-law, J. Stokes Kirk, in the planer shed as head lumber salesman, he accepted.

Without a car, he caught rides to Kirk Lumber Company from Smithfield until Stokes bought a car for him to use. Two years after the war Bud received an order for lumber to be sent to the docks for *Young America*. It was the same ship he crossed the Pacific on in 1945. In 1946, he met fifteen-year-old Joyce Helmick at a Smithfield H.S. football game held in Williamsburg. They dated three years before eloping, as Bud's mother Madge was against the marriage and would not give her consent. Nights and weekends Bud worked with Joyce's father, an electrician, and brother, a plumber, and built his home in Smithfield. As his



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1980 **Back row** L; Robert M. Gill Jr, Stokes Kirk, John Kirk, David Gill, Robert M. Gill, Steve Gill, Tom Gill, Charles Rose, Bud Gill. **2<sup>nd</sup> row** L; Shirley W. Gill, Kim Kirk, Kelly Kirk, Bruce Kirk, Peggy Gill holding Ethan Gill, Dorothy Gill holding Brendan Gill **3<sup>rd</sup> row** L; Lynn K. Rose, Russell Rose, Elizabeth Kirk, John David Kirk, John Rose, Jane Gill holding Brian, Joanna Gill. **4<sup>th</sup> row** L; Clemmie Kirk, infant Evie Gill, Nancy Gill, Cecile Gill, Margaret Gill Kirk, Joyce H. Gill. **5<sup>th</sup> front row** L; Richard Gill Jr, Roberta Gill, Gene Gill



## 5 Hats Bring On Headache

PORTSMOUTH—Lewis Thomas, 131 Florida Ave., now serving two weeks of training duty aboard the aircraft carrier USS Independence in qualification tests off the Virginia Capes, has worn five "hats of authority" in the Navy simultaneously.

During the Korean conflict, Capt. Thomas, a reservist, was called to active duty and assigned as:

Commanding officer of the Naval Communications Station in Boston; First Naval District communications officer; communications officer, Naval Base, Boston; commanding officer, Naval Communications Station, Newport, R.I., and communications officer, Naval Base, Newport.

"Wearing five hats," he said, "was a tremendous responsibility and gave many headaches. But the over-all mission was interesting. It was the climax and the most senior of all my assignments on active duty."

Capt. Thomas, in civilian life, is manager of the Portsmouth branch of the Sherwin-Williams Paint Co. He organized, established and served 10 years as commanding officer of the Naval Reserve Officer School 5-1 in Norfolk.



Thomas

He advanced in the Naval reserves from enlisted radioman through the rank of captain.

With 29 years service in active and inactive reserve time, he has been in every type of Navy craft from a 4-piper destroyer to modern carriers.

Thomas lauded the high morale aboard the Independence which only recently returned from deployment with the 7th Fleet.

"The morale aboard is high, the ship is neat and it's really the cleanest I've served on in a long time," he said.

Thomas attended Old Dominion College and is married to the former Miss Catherine Harrell of Edenton, N.C. They have a daughter, a senior at Madison College, and two sons attending Wilson High School.

spanned sixty years, as head lumber salesman, and later Executive Vice President. Bud stayed active in the American Legion, Post 8545 in Smithfield.

### *John Lewis Thomas 1916-2013:*

Lewis retired from active duty at the close of WWII and returned home to Port Norfolk, Portsmouth, VA. He continued in the reserve until 1950, when he was called back into active duty during the Korean conflict. Capt. Thomas was assigned Commanding officer of the Naval Communications Station in Boston, Mass. His command was as the First Naval District Communications officer at Naval Base Boston, as well as Commanding Officer of the Naval Communications Station, Newport, R.I. and Communications Officer, Naval Base, Newport, R.I. When the Korean conflict ended, Lewis first took a managerial position at Sherwin-Williams Paint Co., then worked as a chemist for Remington Rand, and finally he was employed at Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority.

Still serving in the reserve, he established an educational program and was one of the first instructors at St. Helen's Naval Reserve Officers Training School, teaching for ten years. Lewis and Kitty moved near his mother, Eleanor Abbitt Thomas, and across the street from "Granna," Chassie Thomas, on Florida Avenue. They raised three children, Catherine Eleanor, John Lewis Jr, and William Harrell Thomas. In 1992 Lewis attended a reunion for the ship U.S.S. Fletcher in Norfolk, Va. While talking with a Fletcher sailor about the sinking of his ship the U.S.S. Northampton in 1942 he mentioned the circumstances of his rescue, and the kindness of those who helped him aboard when he was too exhausted to climb the rope. It turned out he was speaking with his rescuer!

### *Jack C. Thomas 1920-2012:*

John C. Thomas Jr.: After the war, Jack attended the University of Virginia's School of Engineering and met Levato Jacobs who was attending University of Virginia's School of Education in the Graduate Nursing Program. They met in 1948 on a blind date and were married one year later on September 3, 1949 in the Chapel at the University and lived in the trailer park (#86) at University of Virginia set up for the married couples going to school post WW II. Their first child, Levato Thomas, was born in Charlottesville, on June 2, 1950. They were the first married couple to graduate together from the University of Virginia (which was an all-male school at the time for undergraduates) in May 1951.

His first job after college was with General Electric in Cincinnati, OH. 1951. Later, he accepted a position with Radio Corporation of America and moved his family to Haddonfield, New Jersey to be closer to Levato's relatives. Their last child John Cornelius, Jr. was born in 1953. He was at Radio Corporation of America for twelve years and was honored for obtaining the patent for a card-punch mechanism that both General Electric and Radio Corporation of America were developing for the computer. This card-punch mechanism was the first of eight patents he invented. The rest of his patents were developed after he started his own business in



1954: Thomas family **Back Row** L; Skippy Sledge, Catherine Thomas, Kitty Thomas, Lewis Thomas, Jack Thomas, infant John Thomas, Vettie J. Thomas. **Row 2** L; Reeves Sledge, Frances Thomas Sledge, Judge Lewis Thomas, Eleanor Abbitt Thomas, Nell Thomas Kirk, Mike Kirk holding Martin Kirk. **Front Row** L; Betsy Sledge, John L. Thomas, Cookie Thomas, William Thomas, Randy Thomas *on chair*: Robert Kirk

1965 known as J.C.T. Industries. J.C.T. Industries initially developed solutions for manufacturing processes (using his mechanical engineering skills in a variety of industries). Some of these solutions were used in the Vietnam War effort and later in the entertainment and novelty industry.

Jack was an avid card player, trickster and practical joker. He could fix just about anything and totally renovated a historic house to become the home of the 65 Club – a local (Haddonfield) home used for voting and used daily by local retired residents to play cards and socialize. He was active in church, Boy Scouts Troop 51 as the Scout Master, and together with his wife won consistently the best gardener and other awards at the community garden. He was a Mason for more than 75 years and together with his brother, Lewis Thomas, was honored as the only pair of brothers known to both be living Masons for 75 years. Jack regularly attended the 104th Timberwolf Reunions and at his 60th U.V.A. reunion, ran/walked with his wife in the 5K and they together won the first and last place award for their class.

The mayor of Haddonfield honored him at both his 90 birthday and finally at his funeral services as being an exemplary citizen of the community and personal friend of all who knew him.

# Appendix 1

## *Speech given by Stokes to the Chuckatuck Ruritan club in 1946.*

I consider the year I spent in Canada the most interesting to me and possibly the most interesting to many of you since it is not so far away and it is possible that some of you have visited it or may visit it some day. Now what I tell you will be wholly on the west central part of Canada, thru which the highway to Alaska runs, which is known as the Alcan Highway or the Alaska Highway and known to most of us who worked on it simply as the Road. The length of the road is about 1600 miles and runs thru British Columbia, the Yukon and ends at Fairbanks, Alaska. An idea of the distance involved is not really appreciated until it is compared with places in the U.S. It is about the distance from Maine to Florida. This is the distance that Engineer Troops there actually built road. Now the way to the highway runs thru Edmonton, Alberta, a modern city of about 150,000 population, by way of a dusty, dirt road, 495 miles to Dawson Creek where the railroad stops and also where the Army troops for the Southern end unloaded equipment and supplies and started moving north. At Dawson Creek, when I last saw it in 1943, was a much better road gravel surfaced, elevated curves with a roadbed of about fifty feet. This road ran on to Fort St. John, which was the last outpost of civilization because it was some months later and about 250 miles before we even saw a building and anyone other than the ARMY or those working for the Army. This was Fort Nelson with a population of about 50 persons.

Now before I get away from Fort St. John, I want to tell you what the people did. It was mostly a farming community. They grew wheat primarily and I did see potatoes, corn and tomatoes growing in some gardens. There were some trappers who lived there, but the community was primarily agricultural.

Now I will try to describe the country between Fort St. John and Fort Nelson. If you remember a few months ago the Musk Ox expedition went thru Northern Canada and this section of the highway was used on their return trip. In this section there are large what you might call "flatlands" that is the land is flat with quite a few rivers that have eroded their banks until there are vast valleys between the flatlands. The highway runs east of the Canadian Rockies along here and follows along the edge of the flatlands. This was done so as to dodge most of the muskeg which is a form of marsh. It is mostly decayed matter which has finally filled a depression in the ground. At some places this muskeg was sounded and found to be over 90 feet deep. The road dodges most of these places and where they couldn't be dodged a corduroy road was floated over. All along the highway there are spots of timber, especially in the lowlands. On the highlands, forest fires have raged and quite a bit has been burned clean.

Above Fort Nelson, the road crosses over the Canadian Rockies and extends on to Whitehorse which is about the halfway mark and also the center of gold rush activities about fifty years ago. This upper section of the road I know nothing about since my work was confined to the first 500 miles. A rather confining job, I should say.

Some of the things that stand out more in my mind about the road are: the cold winter I spent there, the rains in June & the dust in July. It froze up tight in October and the rivers thawed out in April. Of course there were snow storms and freezing nights in May but not so bad as the previous months when the temperature dropped to 55 below and was recorded as low as 70 – 75 below at other points. In June the rains came and we were really reduced to travel by foot or

tractor as the Army vehicles couldn't get thru. Then in July it became very dry and dusty. For a tourist trip there I would go during August or September as they are most ideal as far as climate is concerned.

Then again more wildlife can be seen during August and September. There are numerous kinds of game both small and large. Silver fox, deer, mountain sheep, moose, wolves and bear are plentiful and by the way I have a few bear stories I want to tell later. Small game- there are snow shoe rabbits, about twice the size of our rabbits, which do turn completely white during the winter, squirrels about half the size of ours, spruce hens, which look and fly like a cross between a chicken and a partridge, chipmunks, martens, muskrats, beaver and other fur bearing animals. Also ducks and Canadian geese inhabit the lakes until the last of September, and while there I managed to kill about a dozen ducks. I also got a 250 lb. bear with an Army rifle and some other members of our unit killed deer, moose and a number of bears. In regard to fishing, it is a fisherman's paradise. The streams and rivers are almost crystal clear with rock bottoms and most of them are rapids up close to the mountains. Dolly Barton and Grayling trout and other kinds were caught by some who had a spare Sunday afternoon or other spare time during the 20 hours of daylight.

On the lower end of the highway bears are rather wild and not many were seen by us, but as we moved up they became more plentiful and tamer. Our camps were very frequently near a week old camp of other units who had moved up. Bears came from far and wide to visit the garbage pits and after a while it became necessary to run the bears away to pour garbage in the pits. (Van Dyke story) (Latrine story) (Also Medical Detachment story)

Several months ago, I saw in the papers that the Canadian government had taken over the maintenance of the highway. Also some friends have told me that the highway has been completed and is now a good stabilized gravel road about the width of our four lane highways. However, I don't know whether the 495 miles from Edmonton to Dawson Creek are improved yet but I know they will be as the Canadian government will want to capitalize on what the U.S. opened up. I believe in a few years that tourist homes, repair shops and gas stations will spring up the entire length of the highway and that travel will be possible to Alaska by automobile. However my advice is to think twice before starting out and then be sure you have a first class car as it is about 6,000 miles for the round trip from the Canadian border to Fairbanks and back plus a month and a half travel. I would like very much to go back over all of this familiar ground again and hope I can someday. And if anyone here ever has the time and the chance, I believe that they will enjoy it and that it will be well worth the time. I thank you.

### ***J. Lewis Thomas, memoir***

#### Reporting to Active Duty December 3, 1940

Shortly after receiving my commission I started to receive inquiries from the Navy Department asking if I would accept Active Duty. Each succeeding one asked for additional information and it was easy to see that before long I would be called. The last one I received stated that they had openings for 10 officers with my communications qualifications and asked if I would accept. I answered "Yes, only if they could not find 10 others." Almost by return mail I received orders to report to San Pedro, California for transportation to Hawaii and duty on board the USS Northampton. It was really a surprise. I had just been down to Kitty's home and came back on Sunday 1 December 1940 when I received the mail. I only had one blue uniform and had to leave by Thursday for California. A quick call to the owners of the clothing store where I had

bought my one uniform started things moving. Thursday morning on the way to the train station in Norfolk I stopped by and picked up my uniforms and packed my trunk on the ferry to Norfolk. I went by train to Chicago and then to Los Angeles and street car to San Pedro.

I waited there until 26 or 27 December when I left on a fleet oiler for Hawaii and arrived in Pearl Harbor on Friday morning January 3, 1941. When I reported aboard the USS Northampton it was something. The crew was busy "Holy Stoneing" the deck for the Admiral's annual inspection which was to be Saturday morning. I came up the gangway and saluted smartly as Ensigns do and requested permission to come aboard and report for duty. Ensign Ennis was the Junior Officer on the Deck and in his Boston accent said, "Welcome aboard Ensign Thomas. We have been expecting you. By the way what is the date of your rank?" He then asked me to follow him into the wardroom until my baggage came aboard and he could get things straight for me. When we walked into the wardroom several officers were sitting in there talking and Ennis called overt to them and said "Jake, he is Senior." The one named answered, "Go to hell you SOB." I later learned that there were 3 of the V12 Ensigns aboard, Ennis Jacobson and another. With Jacobson being the junior one. All of the officers state rooms had been filled and depending on which one of us, myself or Jake, was the junior would determine who would get to sleep on a cot. Since I was senior to all 3 of the V12 boys Jake was to get the cot and Ennis' remarks and Jake's reply. As it turned out I was put in a warrant officer's state room so no one got a cot.

Saturday morning we had to swords and everything. I was the greenest and dumbest Ensign that you had ever seen since I had not received any training or other active duty as an officer. So you can easily understand how I felt toward this inspection. I had my sword and sword knot but did not know how to put the knot on or how to wear the sword. The doctor and supply officer were very helpful. They put the knot on properly and then put the sword on me and away I went for inspection.

#### 1941- Pre Pearl Harbor

The Northampton was the Flag Ship for Crudivision Five and thus carried an Admiral. It was this admiral that was inspecting us and he knew the Officers in Communications because they often carried him classified messages. The Radio and Division Officer, LTJG Cliff Foster, told me where to stand what to do during the inspection. If the Admiral said anything to me I was to answer with only a "yes sir, no sir, or aye aye sir" nothing else. Well the admiral came and stopped in front of me and looked me over from head to toe. Fortunately, he said nothing and didn't even comment on how I was shaking and moved on. After the inspection was over Liberty was granted, but I stayed aboard and worked with the Communications Duty Officer trying to learn something about my duties. This ended my second day aboard.

The Northampton was soon scheduled to go to Mare Island for a short overhaul and we got busy preparing for it. After several at sea periods we departed for Mare Island and overhaul after which we returned to Pearl Harbor. From Pearl Harbor we would conduct various fleet problems all of which gave us good training. I was no longer an inexperienced officer and am thankful for the training that I was getting. In late June 1941 we departed Pearl with the Salt Lake City not knowing where we were going. After a day or so at sea we rendezvoused with a Dutch Merchant Ship the Jagersfontein. We were then told that we were to escort her across the Pacific and be under full war time conditions. We were to avoid contact with all other vessels and transferred two signal men from our ship to assist in visual communications. The ship was carrying some volunteer fliers over to fly with the Chinese against the Japanese. Since we were that we would go to Australia after the Dutch Ship left we knew that we would cross the equator. This meant hasty preparations for the line crossing festivities and ceremonies that go with such.

A swimming pool was made out of the planks used by the crew when working over the side and covered by canvas. We had swimming call every day and the shellbacks would throw the pollywogs into the pool and vice versa at all hours.

The passage across the Pacific was uneventful except that we did sight smoke on the horizon once but avoided the ship before it came into sight and saw us. We had morning and evening General Quarters and the line crossing was a lot of fun. The Captain was the first one then followed by the officers and then the enlisted me. It lasted all day as there were so many of us and in due time we all became shellbacks.

### A Visit to Australia

Just before Australia we met two Dutch Cruisers one of which was the Java and turned the Jagersfontain over to them. We then proceeded down the coast of Australia to Brisbane. No one knew of our coming and it was a real surprise to them. Our ship had a fake bow wake painted on which made it look like it was going 21-22 knots. We approached the pilot boat, and the pilot could not understand why it was taking us so long to approach as he figured we were making 22 knots.

When we finally got into the harbor and docked there was much activity. The civilian population and town officials got busy and started to arrange parties, etc. for us. The Admiral made up our arrival message and I encrypted it and took it over to the British command to transmit for us. We were in a foreign port and could not use our transmitters. Also they would not reach Pearl. The British officer on duty asked if it was a machine code and I answered yes. He said then it was of no use for their intelligence to try to break it as it was impossible.

Party invitations were soon to come aboard in numbers. After Quarters in the morning, all officers reported to the Wardroom where we were assigned to attend the different ones. There were so many that we each had to attend at least three each day and all but the three of four officers that had the duty had to attend. The on coming watch would report aboard and the off going watch would leave for parties. We stated that we had just been on a training cruise and decided to drop in the area. Australia was at war then and most of their able bodied men were in the Middle East at the time. So you can see what a welcome we had. We were glad to get back to sea and get some rest.

### Fort Mosley and Rebaul

Instead of returning directly to Pearl we went to Port Moresby on the tip of New Guinea. We spent one day there and all of the Gunnery officers had to make an intelligence report on what they saw while ashore. The natives were very primitive. From there we went to Rebaul and did the same as Port Moresby. Here I saw an active volcano. Although it was not pouring out melted lava it was emitting steam, smoke and a light ash. From here we departed for Pearl Harbor departing from a direct track to cross the International Date Line and equator where they meet and thus became known as "Golden Shellbacks." This is something that not too many do.

On our return to Pearl we returned to our old routine of two weeks at sea and one in port. Each sea period was an extensive fleet exercise problem and the port time was spent on liberty and preparing for our next sea period. I might mention at this time that the Navy escorted all Navy ships that went west of Pearl Harbor after July 1941. Somewhere along in this time Admiral Raymond A. Spruance assumed command of Cru Div 5 aboard our ship.

### Trip to Wake Island

On November 28<sup>th</sup> we departed Pearl with the carrier Enterprise as part of her task force. Later that afternoon Admiral Halsey informed us of our destination; Wake Island to deliver

planes etc. We were to be under full war time conditions. Any ships that we encountered other than our own were to be sunk. Upon our return to Pearl we were not to disclose where we had been or what we did. Anyone doing so was to receive a court-martial. Since we did not carry any tankers it was necessary that the destroyers refuel from the carriers and cruisers present. On Friday, December 5, I believe, enroute back to Pearl from this mission the Northampton became dead in the water when a line (rope) used in refueling became wrapped around the propellers. We had to send down a diver to cut the line loose and we were there for about an hour with the task force standing by. We regained power and the task force proceeded slowly toward Pearl. We were due in there Saturday, December 6, but the delay and slow down changed our expected arrival to late Sunday morning, December 7<sup>th</sup>. Thus an unexpected occurrence was to have a big effect on the war's outcome because the Japanese had reported the Enterprise, us and the rest of the task force as being in Pearl as we were supposed to be there. Much to their sorry we were not and the various ships of that task force were to inflict heavy damage to the Japanese forces throughout the entire war. We represented one third of the combat force in Hawaii.

#### Pearl Harbor, December 7 to January 11, 1942

On the morning of December 7<sup>th</sup> we had General Quarters as usual. Afterwards I went down to my stateroom and went back to sleep (with all my clothes on) as was my custom until we had quarters at 0800. I skipped breakfast as I enjoyed the sleep more. I was awakened at 0730 by the marine messenger who had handed me the dispatch "Pearl Harbor has been attacked. This is no drill." I never questioned the message and knew that the radio circuits would be very busy. As Radio Officer, which title I had held for some time, I was responsible for the coding board and all radio communications. Besides the Radio room was my battle station. On the way to the Radio Shack I had to pass through the Wardroom. We were one of the few ships in the fleet, which had radar and it was very hush hush. It was known as CXAM then and Ens. Boyun was the Radar Officer. His nickname was "yum yum" and he was having breakfast. As I passed him I said you had better man the CXAM as this is it. Pearl has been hit. He never questioned it at all but got up from the table and went to his station. The attack came as a surprise, but when we were told that it had happened we accepted it. Our two cruises under war time conditions, especially the last one made us realize that things may come to a head any time.

Well, things really started to happen rather quickly as I expected. The radio circuits all became very busy. I had the entire code board alerted and standing by. From the dispatches it sounded like mass confusion was taking place. I believed that many of the messages that came over in plain languages were of Jap origin. Although I was never able to prove this I did read that something of this sort took place. The Enterprise launched planes and we sent off two of our scout planes. Our planes were jumped by a Jap plane, which they shot down. Our planes got down close to the water being slower and as the Jap plane dived on them the rear seat man would fire at them. One of the pilots later told me that the only difference between them and a submarine was the fact that a submarine had a periscope as he was down so close to the water.

We were all alert and ready for anything, but never saw any Japanese that day. Monday, December 8<sup>th</sup> we entered Pearl Harbor. As we approached the channel we could see smoke arising from the fires in the harbor. Coming on in we passed through the Anti submarine nets and first on our right was Hickman field with its destruction. Ahead was the Battleship Nevada with her nose run up toward the beach where she was grounded and her stern sticking out to the edge of the Channel. She was still smoking and it was obvious that she had attempted to get clear of the Harbor when the skipper realized her sinking condition and decided to beach her. Lucky that she did because if it had sunk anywhere on the channel it would have denied us the use of Pearl

for some time. (The entrance channel extended out some ways from the Harbor itself and was cut through the shallow coral ring in the area.) Ahead was Ford Island with the damaged hangers, twisted damaged and destroyed PBY's and other planes plus many fires still burning. To the right was the ship yard and day docks with the Pennsylvanian in one and two destroyers in the other. Boy what a mess they were. As we made our turn to the right to go around Ford Island to our normal mooring we got a full view of "Battleship Row" and the damage inflicted there. Fires were still burning and the rescue attempts were still being carried out. A ship located where we normally moored was hit (that was intended for us) so we moved in behind Ford Island to an assigned area. Fuel, stores and supplies were soon on their way to us to enable our return to sea. We were the fighting force left and it was our duty to go after them. I had to go over to the registered publications issuing office to update and draw additional classified publications. This is a routine done each time we came in from any extended time at sea. Ashore I went by the two dry docks and saw the destruction there and the Oglala which had capsized alongside the deck. There was a great deal of activity going on ashore and everyone was jumpy. Any boat in the Harbor was challenged by all and in the confusion would have to yell their identification. It was not too bad during the day, but at night he would be hoarse from yelling the identification. I went on watch Tuesday morning at 0400 and just about day break someone spotted something on the water. A small Jap submarine was reported to have been sunk close to our area on the 7<sup>th</sup> and others reported to have possibly gotten inside the area so you can imagine how we felt then. Our guns were trained on the spotted area and a close watch maintained ready to fire on a moments notice. The object did not move and as day began to break and it got lighter we saw that it was just an oil slick.

Early Tuesday morning our task force put to sea to search out and destroy the Jap force. The Destroyers always left first so they could screen against submarines, then the Cruisers and then the Carriers. Entry was made in the reverse order. Our departure was uneventful and we headed north looking for the Japs being ever on the look out for submarines. Many contacts were made and many depth charges dropped, but I think most of them were Black fish, which is a small whale. My stateroom was all the way forward and just below the water line. Aviation gas was stored just forward of my stateroom and the 8 inch magazines were just aft. To get out I had to go through three hatches, which were all bolted down now except for the escape hatch. If I happened to be in my stateroom when a supposedly sub contact was made and depth charges set off we would race out of the area at first. We did this several times a day when we realized that our situation was such that if we were hit in that area we would never know anything about it and also it would almost be impossible for us to get out. After that we just judged how close to us the charges were dropped by how the outside bulkheads rung or sprang in from the pressure to the blast.

Our task force represented the available combat ships in the area and we were now the Naval defense of the island. Fortunately for us we never found the Japs as we would have really been destroyed because of the overwhelming size of their attack force. Several times we put out of Pearl looking for the Japs and replenishing. Each entry into Pearl showed efforts of cleaning up the damage and preparations to conduct war. Also each day brought additional planes from the Mainland to help conduct searches and build upon the available forces.

In the Philippine area our naval forces were also taking a beating. Our forces there were greatly outnumbered and although they put up a good scrap they were soon overpowered. With sad hearts we learned of the loss of one of our sister ships, the heavy cruiser Houston being one of the Northampton class cruisers.



Sometime after the middle of December 1941 the Task force put to sea and headed west. We were again carrying reinforcements to Wake Island. Our destination was a location north and west of Wake so that we could intercept any Japanese force attempting to intercede with our reinforcement. The closer we got to Wake and our assigned patrol area the more it was realized that Wake would fall. We received word from CinPac to change our destination and reinforce Midway instead. Our task force took up a station west of Midway to protect our forces. Here we straddled the International Date Line Christmas Day 1941. We would cross back and forth during the day thus we did not know for sure if it was December 25<sup>th</sup> or 26<sup>th</sup>. After the operation was completed we returned to Pearl. Wake fell to the Japs as expected.

### Wotje Island

On January 11, 1942, once again our task force departed Pearl, but this time we handled South. We received word that a convoy of troops was due through the Panama Canal and were headed for Samoa. We were to position ourselves in an area to cover them and intercept any Japanese forces intending to attack them. We did not see any Japs amid our ships passed safely to their destination. Before departing that area we sent two of our scout planes into Samoa with mail etc. The water in the lagoon was so calm and slick that one of the planes was unable to break the suction to the pontoon and get up on the step, which enabled it to get enough speed to take off. We sent a dispatch to Admiral Halsey on the Enterprise with is stating this and jokingly said it was due to an overweight pilot. (He was a little bit on the heavy side.) The plane remained until the next day when it was able to take off and return to the ship. The Pilot was hot as heck when he saw the dispatch about him being overweight.

After recovering the plane, the Task Force departed the area to return to Pearl but such was not to be our destiny. We received a dispatch from CinPac directing us to attack the Japanese held island of Wotje in the Marshall-Gilbert chain. Hastily charts of the area were dug out and we discovered that they were all old. The Japanese had never issued any updated information and had not allowed anyone there. Never the less we had charts and plans were made. The Northampton and Salt Lake City along with a destroyer were to go in and conduct a shore bombardment while the Enterprise's planes were to attack from the air. In the early morning hours of January 31 or February 1 (I do not remember the exact date) the bombardment group reported from the carriers and her screen and proceeded towards Wotje.

At dawn we were off the entrance of the island and all set to go. The destroyer was to proceed us and conduct a anti submarine screen then the Northampton and followed by the Salt Lake City. A gun boat was departing the harbor and the destroyer engaged and sunk it in short order. We moved in closer and opened fire on the ships in the harbor and shore installations. The closer we got in the more return fire we encountered, but we were able to return more ourselves as we were also using our old 5 inch guns. Shells began to sing around our ship, one went between the stacks and below the radio antenna, and splashes from misses were appearing all around. Admiral Spurance, who was the CruDivision Commander aboard our ship, decided that since we had done enough damage (all six ships sunk plus destruction of many shore installations) and in turn had not received any damage to our own forces that it was time to withdraw. We also had received a report of a submarine coming out of the harbor.

As we withdrew we could see the smoke rising from the many fires that we had started and we had a real proud feeling of striking back at the Japanese and giving them a small taste of what we had suffered at Pearl. I might add that our plans had also been launched and took part in the attack. We recovered our planes and set course to rendezvous with the Enterprise but soon a Japanese scout plane arrived in the area and began following us. The plane we knew came from

one of the islands in the chain which were Jap held as none could operate from Wotje when we left. We changed course away from the Enterprise as we had no desire to disclose the location of one of the few carriers we had and thus subject her to air or submarine attacks. The patrol plane remained on station and at dusk it dropped bombs on us, but they were all misses. As soon as it became dark we changed course and proceeded to rejoin the Enterprise. We then learned that a Jap plane had dropped a small bomb that hit the rear of the Enterprise flight deck. No serious damage and no change to her operations.

We headed back to Pearl where a big welcome awaited us. We were told that this was the first offensive Naval action undertaken by the U.S. Navy since Dewey at Manila Bay during the Spanish American War. All other Naval action since that time was defensive. As was the custom we followed the Carrier in and were the second ship to enter. Just inside the net there was the Officer's Club at Hickman loaded with people cheering us. Normally there would be a few there looking us over to see if we had been damaged but this time the crowd was larger and cheering. Just past that was the Nevada still sitting on the bottom but her main deck several feet above water. On the stern of her was gathered a band which was playing welcoming music and another group of cheering people, sailors and yard workers. Further up the channel were several 50 foot motor launches which had bands in them playing for us and cheering. We had struck back at the Japs and struck our first victory, although small. It was a real shot in the arm for those at Pearl and they really showed our appreciation of it. It made us feel real proud of ourselves and also to have those ashore on our team. As I look back through the years I can easily say that this touched me more than anything else during the entire war. Everywhere, as we progressed into the Harbor to our mooring, crowds cheered us as we passed.

As wonderful as the welcome was, there was still a war on and additional work to be done. Crews were busy getting the Nevada afloat and moved, getting the damaged ships repaired and refloating and removing the other battleships.

#### Wake Bombardment February 1942

We had done such a good job on Wotje and the effect on the moral of the people in Hawaii was so great that we were soon headed to sea (Feb. 13<sup>th</sup>) to conduct another bombardment. As in November and again in December our destination was Wake but this time it was a Japanese held island and our mission was to destroy, not to reinforce and protect. The same task force and the same plan of attack. Dawn of the 24<sup>th</sup> found the two cruises and a destroyer off wake. In we go with guns blazing and the carrier planes attacking. There were planes here but the carrier planes were busy working them over.

One Jap dive bomber made an attack on us but missed by a wide margin. As at Wotje we departed when Admiral Spruance figured we had done the maximum damage to the Japs without receiving any ourselves. Our main concern now was to be alert for the air attacks. We were much closer to Japanese held islands that had air fields and we knew that they would try to attack with anything that they could reach us with. Patrol planes appeared to keep us under surveillance and sure enough the air attack came. Bombs were dropped but we were able to avoid them. And no hits were made. As before we rejoined the Enterprise after dark and then the task force proceeded to the area of Marcus Island where the Enterprise planes conducted a raid on the 4<sup>th</sup> of March before returning to Pearl. Until now liberty in Pearl was short. For single men it was from 10 A.M. until 5 P.M. and for married men with families there from 10 A.M. until 0800 the following morning. Only  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the crew was allowed ashore at a time and since we were only in port about 2 days at a time it meant that you got ashore about once a month as we got into port about every two weeks. We had to carry a gas mask with us whenever we went ashore and it was

something. The island had a black out every night. About this time they started to relax a little and we did not have to carry the gas mask. The single men were given over night liberty with special permission. Hawaii was feeling a little more secure.

#### April Air Raid on Tokyo

Around the end of March or first of April we departed Pearl as usual. No one knew our destination, but this was not unusual. The day before our departure we joined the Carrier Hornet. As we came close we noticed the strange planes loaded on her flight deck. These were not carrier planes, but were B 25's which were medium Army bombers. (The Air force was part of the Army until well after WWII when it became a separate service.) We received a visual message from Adm. Halsey on the Enterprise that the task force was to proceed to a place off the coast off Japan where the Hornet would launch the B 25's for an attack on Tokyo. The planes were to continue on to China after the raid as we could not recover them. We were to refuel from tankers and make a high speed run in to within approximately 450 miles and then launch the planes and return at high speeds to meet our replenishing group and destroyers. Destroyers were to be left behind as their fuel capacities and consumption would not allow them to maintain the high speeds for the required length of time for the run in and out; just carriers and cruisers.

On the morning of the 17<sup>th</sup> we started our fast run in and continued through the night. Several times we had radar contact with our unknown object and turned to avoid it. As dawn broke on the morning of the 18<sup>th</sup> there was a Japanese patrol boat. We had been sighted. The Cleveland was sent to destroy the patrol boat, but we felt sure that she had reported us to her base. This was the first action that the Cleveland had seen and she opened fire with everything she could on the patrol boat which was quickly dispatched to the bottom. We were not in as close to the mainland as we wanted to be before launching the planes but we could see a lot of activity on the flight deck of the Hornet. The planes had all been moved so that the tails extended over the edges of the flight deck and only the wheels of the planes remained on the deck. The planes were placed around the stern and sides in the shape of a "V" to give the first planes the maximum amount of flight deck available for take off. CincPac reported that the Jap patrol boat had reported us as we expected. Now we received word that the launch would begin. I went up top the flag bridge so that I could see better. The weather was rough and all of the ships were pitching with the seas. The planes would start down the deck as the carrier was down by the nose and timed to get to the end of the flight deck as it was rising upward to sort of give it an upward fling. The first planes were the most crucial ones as they did not have the full flight deck. The first plane seemed to come off very slowly and then instead of climbing, it began to sink slowly toward the sea. It looked like it was going to crash, but then just as it got to the wave tops it began to climb. The second plane did the same, but then each succeeding one sank less as the amount of flight deck available became longer.

Each time two planes became airborne they would circle the task force and then depart in pairs for Tokyo. They could not wait for all to get airborne and make one big raid since they were launched early and barely had enough fuel to reach their destinations. After the raid I stood along side of Admiral Spurance and watched the entire launch. As soon as the last B 25 was launched we turned for our high speed run out. The Hornet really put fighters on their flight deck quickly getting ready for any attack if it should come. We started out at 30 knots but had to slow to 25 as the weather was too rough for some of the ships. They were taking a beating at the higher speed. The Northampton was a good sea worthy ship and was not bothered but the carriers and new cruisers were. I went back to the radio room and tuned in to Radio Tokyo to see if we could determine when our planes arrived. Soon the radio became silent, our planes had

arrived and then very excited voices came on. The skipper of the Salt Lake City, Capt. Zackarias, spoke Japanese and he sent word over that the Jap radio was asking for blood donors and that mass confusion was in effect. The Japanese started all kinds of searches for us but did not find us and our return trip to our replenishment group and Pearl was uneventful. CincPac was breaking the Japanese codes and keeping us informed on the searches. The Japanese did not know what they were looking for or where. The report from the patrol boat that spotted us was incomplete. We all had to laugh at their efforts and felt good at our efforts. At last we had shown the Japanese that their homeland was vulnerable and we were recovering from our sneak attack on Pearl being fully aware that the raid was primarily a moral one, up for us, down for them. We returned to Pearl without any further incident.

### Coral Sea and return to Pearl

The Lexington and Yorktown were operating in the South Pacific and operations on both sides were continuing to build up into what was to be the Battle of Coral Sea which took place on May 7-8, 1942. We with the Enterprise and Hornet had departed Pearl for the area but were unable to arrive at the scene of the battle in time to participate. On Friday May 8 we were spotted in a patrol plane shortly after noon. Captains' inspection was scheduled and although the patrol plane was near by the inspection was held. As soon as it became dark the task force changed was held. As soon as it became dark the task force changed course and proceeded to return to Pearl.

### Midway, Battle and Operations

Enroute to Pearl we began to receive info from the breakdown of the Japanese code that they were beginning to build up for a big attack somewhere in the mid Pacific. We knew that as soon as we were able to take on fuel and supplies that we would depart Pearl and become a part of that battle. I drew additional radio equipment from the supply center and we quickly installed it ourselves. Admiral Hawlsey had developed a skin problem that was to require hospitalization for treatment and Admiral Spurance was detached from us and sent overt to the Enterprise to command that force for the forthcoming battle.

As we cleared Pearl Harbor we knew of the difficult task that lied ahead. We knew the approximate strength of the Japanese forces and knew that they far outnumbered us. Their force had more carrier that we had, battleships of which we had none, more powerful cruisers and more in number in cruisers and destroyers. Thanks to our breakdown of the Jap code we knew a great deal about their force and movements. It was really frightening to us because of the superior strength of their forces but we were determined to stop and defeat them. Each day my room mate, Dick Haugh, and I would greet each other not knowing if either of us would survive once the battle would start.

Much has been written about the Battle of Midway as the turning point of the war in the Pacific and many authors have written various stories about the battle. Rather than rewrite much that has been written I will attempt to write of those stories that I experienced and are untold by other authors.

When we received our first reports of the sightings we felt better because then we knew where they were but were disappointed as the carriers were not reported. Reports of sightings and type of ships that were made by the Army planes had to be evaluated as they were not properly trained in ship identification. Also they were quick to announce damage done on the enemy altho none had been inflicted. As the battle progressed and Navy fliers shot down were rescued by PBY's etc. and flown to Midway they were used in the B17's to identify ships and types to make the Army reports more accurate. Our carriers quickly painted their hull numbers as

big as possible on the front part of the flight deck to help the Army planes identify our carriers. I don't believe that the Army planes damaged a single Jap ship during the entire battle altho many hits were reported. Reports from Japanese sources after the war confirm "no hits."

The morning of June 4<sup>th</sup> brought forth our ships part in the battle. Our carriers launched their attack at 0900 and I had our radios tuned in on their frequency to get first hand of any reports that they might make. While our planes were making their attack the Japanese were doing the same to us. Our formation was circular with the carriers in the center on circle 1, cruisers on circle 2 and destroyers on circle 3. This gave good protection from any angle as attacking planes would have to pass over destroyers and cruisers before getting to the carriers. The Jap planes came in over the opposite side of the circle from us. The air was filled with AA fire from all of the ships that were within range. We did not fire because of the range. Many Japanese planes were shot down by our Combat Air Patrol and AA fire and we could see them falling into the sea. In spite of this some got through and the Yorktown was hit.

Soon our own planes were reporting their success on the Japanese force and we began to realize that victory was ours as their carriers were really taking a beating. The Yorktown was still operating and as our planes returned from their attack their verbal reports upon landing really told of the beating the Japanese had taken. Our sorrow was for the torpedo planes as all but six were lost. We sent our forty one. The Japanese concentrated their defense on the torpedo planes as they had inflicted the most damage in the Coral Sea Battle. Because of this the dive bombers were very effective at Midway. Other waves of planes came and went and the Yorktown was again attacked and this time received serious damage.

Later that day our remaining 6 torpedo planes and the dive bombers were to make a coordinated attack on the damaged fleet. We were listening in on the radio and heard the leader of the torpedo planes report that he was in position and asked when the diver bombers were ready. They reported not ready yet but would be soon. After several times of the same conversation the torpedo plane leader told the dive bomber group "To hell with you brave guys we are going in" and then started his attack. Soon the dive bombers were attacking and shouting with joy on each hit. I put the radio circuit on a loud speaker in the flag plot and bridge so that they could also hear the pilots. Conversations went like this: "Hey they are shooting AA at us," "Sissy," "Boy did you see that right down the Stack?" "I got a hit also." "Yes, but did you see mine, right down the stack." "Any of you fellows that have any bombs left there is a good ship over here," etc. This attack was just what our fliers needed as it was a big boost to their moral after their morning's losses.

At dusk of the 4<sup>th</sup> we recovered planes from the attack and headed to try to stay within striking distance of their retiring fleet and also in hopes of coming across any damaged ship that our surface forces could finish off. Our submarines were being moved to be in a position to intercept their retiring forces. The following morning, June 5<sup>th</sup>, we had lost combat and began searching. We launched our planes on an attack mission about 1700 and recovered them at dusk and continued our pursuit of the enemy. The cruisers and designated destroyers were eager and ready to break away from the carriers and engage the enemy in a surface engagement but such was never to occur.

On the morning of the 6<sup>th</sup> our scouting planes again located the Japanese Forces and air attacks were launched. Other attacks were conducted during the day and it appeared that our planes were having better success in each strike at the Japanese were now without aircraft to give them added protection.

At dusk on the 6<sup>th</sup> we were directed by CincPac to break off our pursuit. We were getting into an area where we were within the range of Japanese land based planes from Wake and possibly other Japanese held islands and could expect air attacks from them. Also we were also getting short on fuel and the pilots were becoming fatigued, the number of serviceable planes was greatly reduced and bombs and supplies for an attack were getting low. Now we stood a chance of receiving more damage than we could inflict on retiring fleet so we headed east to our replenishing group.

Enroute to the Battle of Midway we knew, through the breakdown of the Jap code, that they were also to attack some of our installations in Alaska and Aleutian chain, but Midway was the main force. Now with the Midway force depleted and limping home and our own forces replenished we were diverted to the Alaskan area. Japanese forces were already conducting raids there and our forces were responding. The further north we proceeded the cooler the weather became and soon we were to encounter light fog. Reports we were receiving from our Alaskan forces made Civic Pac realize that heavy fog in the area was not very good for carrier operations so we were ordered to return to Pearl.

I would like to point out at the time that many of the stories concerning the war do not coincide with my times, dates and info but they were written when censorship was still in effect and the full stories were not released for publication. I, myself, being in communications and handling the classified messages was able to keep abreast of the events. I often knew of our future plans and also change as in our present ones as soon as they became available to our fleet. I had a special clearance from Civic Pac to break and handle the Japanese codes as they were sent to our task force and group commanders. After showing the break down to the Admiral, Chief of Staff, and directed to the Captain of the Ship I destroyed the plain language copy to prevent the possibility of it ever getting into Japanese hands and disclosing that we were breaking their codes. This I did until the conclusion of WWII. I also decoded for the Admiral and Captain messages to and from all forces in the Pacific so we knew just what was happening everywhere. Throughout the war while serving afloat I was on a Flagship first as radio officer in ship company and then as Communication Officer for the staff.

Our return to Pearl was uneventful and we received a big welcome on our return. Not one like we received on our return from Wotje but none the less a big welcome. We were given liberty and allowed to relax a bit. Restrictions on shore leave were a lot less and we no longer had to carry gas masks with us when ashore. Hawaii was now beginning to feel secure. More and more ships were arriving and our fleet of fighting ships was getting larger all of the time. The old battleships had departed the west coast and now came into Pearl. (They had not left the west coast area since the sneak attack on Pearl on Dec. 7<sup>th</sup>. I do no recall just when the North Carolina arrived, but it was around this time.)

#### From Midway to the South Pacific

We were detached from a carrier group now and ordered to operate with the old battleships around Pearl the senior command was in one of the battleships and this was their first venture into a combat area. They were not wise in the Japanese methods of operation and kept us worried. Radio silence meant nothing to them and we knew this would surely disclose our location and enable Japanese subs to make an attack. Luck was with us and we had several weeks of exercises with them without any signs of enemy forces of any sort.

In the meantime there was much activity in and around Pearl. I knew what was taking place but could not say. We were getting an invasion force ready to depart for the South Pacific with Guadalcanal as the objective. We were not to be in the first group but were to be in the

follow up group. The invasion force departed as scheduled and some time later we departed for the South Pacific. The landing was made on August 7, 1942.

This time we were assigned an area of operation and stayed at sea in the area. We would move back and forth in this area. One morning we would be at one end of the area and the next morning at the other end. Apparently it did not take the Japs long to figure this out because in the afternoon of September 14<sup>th</sup> the general alarm went off and the word was passed "Air Attack." I was below in my room but rushed top side to the radio room where my battle station was. When I got topside I noticed several explosives in the water, which looked like bombs being dropped. It was Japanese torpedoes exploding at the end of their run after they had missed their targets. A plane spotted a torpedo aimed at us so we were able to avoid it but it hit the North Carolina in the forward magazine. The Wasp had been hit and began to burn, a big column of black smoke going straight up. We had truly run into a pack of Jap subs. The North Carolina soon reported that she was able to make 25 knots and as soon as the shoring of the damaged area was complete she could make 25 or 30 knots. We continued to operate around the area with our destroyers searching for the subs. Fires on the Wasp were becoming worse and at dusk we had to order our destroyers to sink her. We soon were to learn that when they were destroying their classified publications, the weighted bag containing the aircraft reporting codes was dropped into the water from the flight deck. The bag split open and publications floated away. Since there was the possibility of one of the Japanese subs picking up one or any of these we had to consider them compromised and drew replacement ones for them.

It now became apparent the folly of keeping a task force at sea for such a long time in one area unless something big was us and we were ordered into New Caladona. We waited for the boat pilots to arrive who should have charts showing minefields etc. but since none were forthcoming we went on into port. I do not know for sure if we went through any restricted area in our ignorance but it is said that we did. Anyway we got in port without any one hitting mines or running aground. Now we were to remain in port unless we were on a specific operation. Thus we were not unnecessarily exposing our ships to Japanese submarines. The loss of the Wasp had taught us a lesson.

#### Battle of Santa Cruz and Sinking of the Hornet

In October we put to sea with the Hornet and made air raids on Oct. 5, 1942 on Buin and Faisi. We were to destroy any ships present to prevent the enemy from reinforcing Guadalcanal. The Harbor at Buin was clear of ships but we had some luck at Faisi. Guadalcanal was still nip and tuck at this point and both us and the Japanese were trying to retain possession. We returned to New Caladona to await further orders.

The Enterprise which had been damaged on around August 24<sup>th</sup> had now been repaired and joined our group along with her force consisting of the Battleship South Dakota cruisers and destroyers. The Admiral on the Enterprise was the senior admiral and took over control of the combined group although the admiral on the Hornet was more experienced in battle. Things were beginning to look like something was stirring and soon something would happen. In case of an attack on our force we were to split into two separate groups, our original force to stay with the Hornet and the Enterprise group to stay with her. In the afternoon air search on 25<sup>th</sup> or 26<sup>th</sup> our search planes spotted a Japanese carrier force. It was too late to launch a day light attack. The admiral on the Hornet requested permission to launch a night attack (something unheard of at that time) as the moon was bright and we knew where the Japanese were then. The admiral on the Enterprise refused permission and so we prepared for the next day which we now knew would bring action.

Just before dawn on the 26<sup>th</sup> search planes were launched to again locate the Japanese force as we knew they had moved during the night. Our attack force was readied on the carrier deck awaiting word on the Japanese location before being launched. It took our search planes some time to find the Japanese forces as it had taken evasive action during the night. However they were located and their position reported. I had a personal communication type receiver that I took up to the radio room in times like this as it gave us an additional receiver that we could monitor aircraft frequencies on. I set this on the attack aircraft frequency to gather any information that we could. Soon I heard the commander of our planes report a large group of Japanese planes headed toward our forces. This information I relayed to the captain and learned that they had not received it. This was our warning and everyone went to general quarters to await the arrival of the attack. We split up into the two groups and steamed away from one another. The Combat Air Control (CAP) was in the Enterprise. Our attack group hit the Japanese and about the same time the Japanese air attack hit us. Because our forces had split it was necessary that they split up their attack. The Enterprise CAP control now ordered the CAP over to protect the Enterprise group and we were left without air protection. We open up with everything we had as did every other ship with us and the planes were falling in the water right and left. In spite of this some got through and the Hornet was hit. Fires broke out and the ship became dead in the water. Soon the Japanese left and then we began rescue attempts. Destroyers were ordered in to take off unnecessary personnel and wounded and to help fight fires. The Northampton made preparations to start towing the Hornet. Soon we had a tow line on but the Japanese planes appeared again. Now we dropped the tow line and circled the Hornet as did another ship, firing at the planes and offering as much protection to the Hornet as we could. We had no friendly air protection at all. The Enterprise group had taken it all with them. The returning Hornet planes had been taken aboard the Enterprise where they were refueled and sent into a air field ashore. If this had not been done the planes would have to been ditched in the sea. This way we saved the Hornet's planes.

The second Japanese air raid on our group was so timed so that we knew they were operating from a carrier close by and were flying back and refueling, remain and then returning. The Hornet was hit again although we destroyed many of the attacking planes. Once again we got a tow line over and this time we were towing the Hornet at about 5 knots when suddenly the third air attack was conducted. As before we steamed around the Hornet filling the air with AA fire and destroying most of the planes but again the Hornet was hit. Now it was late in the afternoon and we realized that we would be unable to save the Hornet. Destroyers were ordered in to sink with torpedoes. Our forces were having trouble at this time with defective torpedoes and altho many were fired and hit the Hornet all did not do any damage. Finally the destroyers opened with their guns and after dusk were told to rejoin with the Northampton. The Hornet was left sinking. The Japanese would not be able to salvage her or even get aboard to examine anything for intelligence.

As we departed the area we began receiving radio reports from a patrol plane reporting a Japanese force consisting of a battleship along with other ships and gave our approximate position. We continued to get several reports and finally the admiral ordered me to break radio silence and send a message that this was our forces that were being reported. May times jour aircraft sightings were in error as to the size and type of ships reported and this seemed like one of those times. We soon received a report back that the plane saw us but the other force that he was reporting was a Japanese one that was just over the horizon from us. Since it was now dark we continued on our way happy that the Japanese force being reported had not found us. We had



many of the survivors of the Hornet on board and now our group was ordered back into Noumea New Caledonia. This battle was known as the Santa Cruz Battle. The Battleship South Dakota was given credit in the press for having shot down many planes and was called Battleship "X," since censorship regulations would not allow the South Dakota to be actually named. Many of the planes credited to the S. D. were shot down by the CAP or other ships.

### Second and Third Battle of Guadalcanal

While in New Caladona the cruiser Juneau tied up along side us and I learned that Pete Cox from Portsmouth, was an officer in the Supply Corps aboard her. I knew Pete's father as well as him and asked Pete over for the evening meal Sunday, an appointment he was never to keep. Early that afternoon they had received word that the Japanese were moving again and the task force departed Noumea. As the Juneau pulled away I told Pete that he still had a reservation on their return. This task force took part in the Battle of Cape Espruance and consisted of the San Francisco, Salt Lake City, Helena, Barso, Portland, Juneau, Atlanta and others. It was a fierce night battle and our forces were able to cross the T in this battle which took place on October 12. Our forces inflicted a lot of damage on the Japanese force but also suffered some in return. Night battles are always full of confusion as identification of friendly ships soon becomes difficult as ships began maneuvering. News reports boasted of the Japanese firing on their own ships but so did we. It has been said that the San Francisco hit the Atlanta with a full 8 inch salvo that night. Anyway the Atlanta was so badly damaged that our own forces had to sink it shortly after daybreak. The San Francisco herself suffered severe damage but was not sunk. The Juneau had received a torpedo hit which effected its steering but otherwise was operational. The next morning our forces were retiring when a torpedo was sighted headed for the San Francisco. She was able to change course and avoid it but the torpedo was then headed for the Juneau. Because of the previous damage to the steering capabilities of the Juneau she was unable to avoid this torpedo and it hit it somewhere in a very vital spot. There was a terrific explosion and in about 15 seconds there was nothing left but the sea and debris where the Juneau had been. One of the 5 inch gun mounts was blown into the air and fell back into the sea 12 seconds later so great was the explosion. The forces with the Northampton came in behind the San Francisco group to intercept any pursuing Japanese but none showed. We arrived too late to take part in the night action. Another night action took place on the 14<sup>th</sup> but again we were not to take part. We were operating with a carrier and they would not expose them in such action.

On each of these battles we had lost ships and it was necessary to replace them from other sources and it was thus that we learned that our ship was to be detached from the carrier task force and proceed to Espiritu Santo and await further orders. This was the port from which our ship would depart for the surface battles off Guadalcanal. The Japanese forces would depart from the Bougainville area at dusk proceed at high speed the following day and arrive during dark off Guadalcanal. Our search planes would observe their departure and ships in Espiritu Santo would depart and proceed at high speed and intercept them off Guadalcanal. The Japanese run was called the "Tokyo Express" and our run often referred to as "The Milk Run." The area off Guadalcanal was referred to as "Iron Bottom Bay" because of the large number of ships sunk there, both theirs and ours. We knew from past experience that once you were put on the "Milk Run" there was no escape unless you were seriously damaged. Because of this and since we were leaving a carrier task force we were sad but gladly accepted our assignment.

As we entered the Harbor at Espiritu we noticed the merchant ship President Coolidge sunk and resting on its side close to the beach. She was carrying supplies and reinforcements for Guadalcanal and put into Espiritu enroute. Off the harbor she had a submarine scare and came in

thru our mine field and hit one. She was able to get into the harbor where she sunk and I understand many of the troops aboard put planks over the side and were able to walk ashore without getting wet. These were Army troops and supplies and were greatly needed at Guadalcanal. Their delay meant no relief for the already tired Marines at Guadalcanal for some time. While here awaiting word on the Tokyo Express we sent parties ashore to gather fresh fruit for our use. It was a real treat because we had not had any for a long time. They picked mostly bananas, oranges and limes but they were good.

#### Fourth Battle of Guadalcanal and sinking of the Northampton

On the evening of November 29, 1942 we were at the movies when we received an urgent message. Our patrol plane had spotted the Tokyo Express. We had shut down one of our boilers to repair some of the tubes but now we had orders to get under way at once. The Milk Run was on. The men were busy closing up the boiler when we departed Espiritu around midnight and went thru our mine field. As we departed the admiral on the Minneapolis wanted to know what our top speed was. We replied 26 knots and on completion of the closing of the boiler and placing it on line we could do 30 knots. We departed at 26 knots and then went to 30 as soon as possible. None of us turned in for the night until we were clear of the mine field. All day of the 30<sup>th</sup> we steamed at 30 knots. We pumped overboard all of the aviation gas and filled the tanks with sea water to lessen any fire possibilities and sent our planes off to the beach. They would have been a hazard to us on board and besides the concussion of our guns firing would damage them to the point that they could not be flown. We knew that we would have a battle that night and everyone was getting all set. We had an early supper and at dusk we went to general quarters. It was around 10 P.M. when the Fletcher under the command of Cdr. (later Rear Admiral) Cole picked up the Japanese force on his radar and requested permission to fire torpedoes. Admiral Wright delayed giving permission and when he did the destroyers had passed their option point and the torpedoes missed their mark. The destroyers were in a bent line screen which is shaped like an arc on a curve and the cruisers in a line behind the center of the screen. We were now located off Tassafaronga (Ex Lunga Point) and the battle became known as the Battle of Tassafaronga or the fourth Battle of Guadalcanal. Shortly after the destroyers fired their torpedoes the cruisers started firing. For identification of friendly ships at night we had lights strung on the foremast so that we could flash three colors. The Japanese were aware of this and during night actions we would momentarily flash them if we thought one of our own ships was firing at us. After a couple of quick flashes this night by various ships of our forces the Japanese got the set up and arranged to flash the same from their ships so we would think them friendly and stop shooting at them. A good idea except for one thing. We would just flick them on and right off. The Japanese held them on for several seconds which was a dead give away and drew our gun fire to them. As the Northampton began to fire the guns were turned far around on the port side and the concussion from the no. 2 turret three 8 inch guns was such that it began to damage some of the radio equipment in main radio where I was. Soon we received word from our telephone talker that the Minneapolis had been hit and the bow from the no.1 turret forward had been blown off. Admiral Wright turned command of the forces over to Admiral Tinsdale on the Honolulu. Then word came over the phones that the New Orleans had been hit and the bow from number 2 turret forward blown off. We were still travelling in a column and only changed course to avoid collision with our damaged ships. Then the Pensacola was hit with two torpedoes and this was followed by one or two torpedoes hits on the Northampton. During the battle start shells had been fired and also our planes were overhead to drop flares so the area was lit up from time to time. No order was ever given for the ships to maneuvered traveling in a straight line as

we were was a good set up for the torpedo attack that we received. The Honolulu now changes course and moved to get away from the area. When we were hit our guns were trained midships and we had stopped firing. I felt the ship shake as the torpedo hit and although official battle records record that we received 2 torpedo hits I never felt but one. We were asked by the personnel in Radio III for permission to abandon their station because of the fires just outside. I told them to place everything in remote and then to get out. The ship had taken a hit in the main engine room. The fuel tanks on the outside of the ship's side had been blown open and the fuel oil thrown all over the after part of the ship. Radio III was located in the top part of the hanger on the port side. Fire was outside everywhere and if the personnel had not gotten out when they did they would have been trapped. Most of our spare life jackets were stored in the hangers and personnel stationed aft made one trip there for life jackets and then were unable to get into the area again because of fires. The ship became dead in the water and we all realized we had received serious damage. Shortly Radio II requested permission to abandon because of fires and again I ordered everything to remote and then for the personnel to leave. Radio II was located at the base of the mainmast on the main deck. There was so much fire at the only hatch leading to Radio II that their way was blocked. At the last time in port Ens. Gray, the Radio material officer, had requested that a port hole be cut in the after bulkhead of Radio II in case their exit thru the hatch would become blocked. I had followed thru and had this done and now it provided an escape for the personnel there. Otherwise they would have perished. The fire aft was now beginning to spread. Lt. Wally now ordered the life rafts first put over the side in preparation to abandon ship if necessary. He had them secured to the ship by the small lines attached. The current thru this area was so strong that it broke the life rafts loose and as they floated off the personnel there now gathered on the fan tail grabbed them as they came by. This turned out to be a god send for them and saved many lives that otherwise might have been lost. The personnel in the tip of the mainmast had to slide down a line to the fan tail in order to get out because of the fires around all other escape routes. One man in the top was so badly injured that he could not get down the line and they were unable to carry him down. A life jacket was put on the injured man and as the ship sank he floated free. He was rescued later and sent to a hospital where he fully recovered.

The Forward engine room was not damaged and soon we were underway altho slowly. I now begin to open the safe containing registered and classified publications and codes and placing them in weighted canvas bags so I could drop them over the side when and if it became necessary. This was required to prevent possible capture or recovery by Japanese of our codes, etc.

Although we had some water on the fire hose it was not enough and the fire was getting worse. The ship was settling down by the stern and taking a list to port. Both of these was increasing and now the ammunition topside for the 5 inch guns and just aft of them was beginning to burn and explode. Red hot pieces were flying all over the place. We now became dead in the water once again. I asked the navigator about the depth of the water here. If too shallow there was always the possibility of the Japs recovering the weighted bags. Upon being informed that it was very deep (He gave me the depth but I forget the exact figure) I and 2 other officers took our weighted bags down to the quarter deck and dropped them over the side. This was the closest that I could get with the smallest drop to the water. I went back up to the bridge and reported to Capt. Kitts what we had done. So far we had not destroyed our code machine but now we saw that the ship would sink so we began to destroy them with a big mall kept there for just such a purpose. All radio equipment was now inoperative because of the loss of power so we

prepared to abandon ship when directed. There was nothing more we could do. The flag radio officer was using a portable battery set which was located on the flag bridge and kept the Honolulu informed of our condition and position. I gathered together all of the radio and communication personnel that I could and kept them forward where the flying pieces from the explosion aft would not hit them. Many others were also gathered in the area for the same reason. Finally word came for us to abandon and we loosened one end of each life line and left the lines hang over the side. Personnel were told to go down the life lines hand over hand and then drop into the water when they reached the end. Jumping from the deck was dangerous as the life jacket might snap a net when they hit the water. Everyone had a life jacket and there was no fear or panic. When time came for me to go I told Lt. Foster, who was a cousin of mine, "So long cuz I will see you later" and then I swung over the side and down the life line. I dropped into the water and began to swim away from the ship. At no time, then or later did I have any questions about not getting back safely home. In fact I thought "God, what a story I have to tell when I get home." Now survival became foremost in our minds and we must put into practice all that we had learned and read. The Northampton was alone, there were no other ships near but I knew that come daylight our forces would have planes out searching for survivors and then the PT boats would come out to pick us up. A person alone is difficult to see but larger groups are not so I begin getting those around to start forming groups. We had no life rafts and one of our two life boats had been destroyed by the torpedo hit. One of the men swimming with me said, "Mr. Thomas this is the second ship that I have been on that has been sunk and I wonder when the third will be." I replied by saying jokingly "You swim over there and I will swim over here so we will not be picked up together."

It is very difficult to tell how long we were in the water. Time can pass very slowly as it can rush by in situations such as this. I lost my watch somewhere, either when going down the lifeline or swimming in the water. All I know is that after I was picked up I looked at my wrist and it was gone. From the events that happened I figured that I was in the water about one hour.

### Rescue

The Fletcher and another destroyer were ordered back to assist in rescue operations of our personnel. When I saw the Fletcher I started to swim toward it but I didn't like the looks of the search lights around this afterpart of the ship (she was darkened and the only light around was from the fires on the Northampton). Many Japanese ships had a silhouette with search lights aft like this so I stopped swimming toward the ship and then I recognized it as the Fletcher. (It was a new class of destroyers just beginning to operate in our area.) The Fletcher dropped a cargo net over the side so we could climb up in it. I was among the first to get to it and the net did not quite reach the water. I grabbed hold and pulled myself up and was half way up the net when they asked for everyone to get off so that they could lower it. I was the only officer present so I ordered all others not to grab hold until they had lowered it and for the others to get off the net. As an example I dropped back overboard and the net was then lowered. Now personnel in the water started to arrive in numbers and started to crawl all over me trying to get off the net. I had exerted myself so much in swimming to the ship that I did not have much strength left and was unable to crawl back up the cargo net. I just let myself go and drifted aft where I caught hold of a line hanging over the side and took this and wrapped it around my waist. Sailors on board the Fletcher told me to crawl up this line, but I was unable. They had to haul me up which they did. When I got on deck I was unable to stand so they set me down against the deck house where I got some of my strength back. After 5 or 10 minutes of sitting there I was able to get up and walk. I went forth and to the radio shack where I took Kitty's picture from my pocket and put in

fresh water. I always put her picture in my pocket whenever we went into battle or thought one was possible. This way I knew that if I was saved so would the picture and that is just what happened. I went back on deck and started looking for close friends and men from my division.

The Northampton continued to burn and settle by the stern while listing to the port. Finally she turned completely over and her bow pointed up into the night. She stood this way for a few moments and then plunged stern first down into the depths. It is indeed a sad sight to watch a ship sink and even worse when it is your own. It was now about 1 A.M. on the morning of December 1, 1942, exactly 2 years since receiving orders to the Northampton. She had been a good home and a happy ship and served her country well. Luck was with us as our loss was about 5% (45 men, 4 officers) out of about 1100 men and 100 officers.

The Fletcher had then picked up most of our survivors and the other destroyer had the rest. They departed the area at high speed for Espiritu Santo as they were in no condition to engage any enemy with the excessive number of personnel; on board. The deck became very hot because of the heat generated by the boilers operating it at the high speeds and you could not walk barefooted on them. Many of our people had kicked off their shoes while in the water so this now became a problem. The Fletcher's crew took rolls of towel cloth and cut them up so our personnel could wrap their feet. I had kept my shoes but I was lucky in that respect. A message was prepared to report our loss of the Northampton and disposition of all of the registered publications etc. I encoded it using the Fletcher crypto room and when we put in to Espiritu Santo I went over to the tender there for them to transmit my message to CNO. Previous to this I have been watching for information on the survivors of the Juneau and from the dispatches had learned that there were only about 12 or 15 out of the entire crew. These survivors had been taken to Espiritu Santo and here I now was able to talk to one of them on the tender and asked about Pete Cox. I learned that he was not among those rescued and to all others death must have been fast.

I returned to the Fletcher and soon those of us on both destroyers were transferred to a ship, which took us to New Caladona where we were put in a survivor's camp just outside Noumea. We were issued a Red Cross package with useful articles and also received 2 changes of clothes and a new pair of shoes. The crew members that were in the after part of the ship and had to abandon shortly after we were hit were located after daylight on December 1<sup>st</sup> by our planes and PT boats from Tulagi on Savo Island. One I know of and possibly several men had died during the night in the raft from wounds that they had received. Those rescued were taken back to Tulagi and they were later moved to our survivors' camp at Noumea. Here a ships organization was once again in operation and after about two weeks time all but ten of us received orders back to the states for rest and reassignment. Capt. Kitts was trying to keep the crew intact and get a new ship for them. I was one of the unlucky 10 as were most of the communications officers. We were told that there was a shortage of communications officers in the area, but additional ones were on the way from the states. On their arrival in the area we would then be transferred back to the states. It was a good story but we did not believe it and it turned out just as we thought.

#### Assignment to Staff CDR Destroyer Squadron 12 Staff with additional duty on Staff of Commander Destroyer Pacific South Pacific REP

I was assigned to Communications Officer for the staff of Commander Squadron 12 under Capt. Tobin. The staff was located aboard the Destroyer Tender Whitey as Capt. Tobin's flagship to Arron Ward had been badly damaged in one of the battles up in the slot. The rest of his division had either received battle damage also and had been sent back for repairs or were so

scattered that they were not operating as a division or squadron. Because of this Adm. Halsey had Capt. Tobin remain in Noumea and take over the destroy duty part of his staff. Thus we became known as Com Des So Pac (Commander Destroyers Southern Pacific).

Shortly after I arrived on Capt. Tobin's staff Cdr. Cole was assigned to await further orders. Our forces had really taken a beating the night we were sunk. We had sunk a good number of Japanese that night but out of 5 of our cruisers that night we had lost one and three others were seriously damaged. One escaped without damage. Adm. Wright being the officer in command of the force was responsible and in an attempt to explain the reason for the outcome claimed that when the Fletcher requested permission to fire the torpedoes it alerted the Japanese so we lost our element of surprise thus his explanation of the outcome of the battle. Adm. Halsey relieved Cdr. Cole of his command, based on this report and this is why he reported to Capt. Tobin. As reports from the others involved in this battle began to reach Adm. Halsey he realized that Adm. Wright was the one who pulled the boner and Adm. Wright was relieved and went back to the states where I was told he became a district commander. This was a favorite trick to keep inefficient ones out of the war zone. Cdr. Cole was now assigned as Chief of Staff to Capt. Tobin and our staff now became an official part of Commanders Destroyers. Pacific staff and became known as Com Des Pac So Pac Rep. My job was to inspect each destroyer reporting in this area and see that everything was in proper order as far as communication was concerned. I insured that the personnel was properly trained and passed along any combat information that would help them. I ordered removal of equipment from damaged destroyers that were returning to Pearl or the States for repair and assisted in obtaining repairs or parts for those remaining in the area. Our staff sometime along here transferred to the /Destroyer Tender Dixie. The Whitney had been in and out of port and with our new staff assignment it was necessary that we stay in port. Each Destroyer Tender always had several destroyers alongside undergoing repairs or overhaul as necessary to keep them in top condition. It was not long before the Fletcher became one of these alongside and Cdr. Cole was real pleased. He had commissioned this ship and trained the crew so he felt that he was part of what they did. They had just sunk a Japanese sub on their last trip out.

That night after the movies I was in my stateroom censoring mail when he came in and said that he had something that meant more to me than it did to him and then he gave me the letters from the Northampton lifeboat. During the rescue operations when we were sunk the Fletcher had lost her lifeboat and in its place took our one remaining one. Of course it had to remove the NOR letters from the lifeboat and this is what they had given to Cdr. Cole. They also gave him some teak deck from the Jap sub at the same time (for which I am grateful). So he kept the teak deck and gave me the letters.

# Appendix 2

## Rank, Unit, Awards, Medals

### Lt. Colonel John Stokes Kirk, 1912-1991

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.  
Served with 95<sup>th</sup> Engr. Camp Claiborne, LA,  
1312<sup>th</sup> Engr. British Columbia, New Guinea and Philippines.  
Philippine Liberation Ribbon with 1 Battle Star; Bronze Star;  
American Theater of Operations Ribbon; American Defense Ribbon;  
Asiatic-Pacific Theater Ribbon with 2 Battle Stars; New Guinea Campaign

### Major Arthur Abbitt Kirk, 1916-2015

U.S. Army Medical Corps  
640<sup>th</sup> Medical Clearing Co deployed to Europe with 5<sup>th</sup> Infantry and supported  
82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne. Liberated Prisoner of war Concentration Camp [Wöbbelin] in  
Ludwigslust, Germany.

### Tech-5 Paul Kirk Brady, 1914-2012

U.S. Army Hq. Bt. Rgt. 751th Field Artillery Bn. Served in Europe  
Battle of the Bulge; Good Conduct Ribbon

### Corporal Robert Morgan Gill, 1923-2014

473<sup>rd</sup> Infantry 5<sup>th</sup> Army, Co. B, 802<sup>nd</sup> Replacement Bn.,  
Deployed to North Africa and Italy.  
Combat Infantry Badge, Good Conduct Medal, European-African  
Middle-Eastern Ribbon, Victory Ribbon

### Sgt. Richard *Bud* Goodson Gill, 1924-

1<sup>st</sup>. Provisional Marine Brigade Aviation Ordinance and Ground Defense.  
Marine Night Fighter 3<sup>rd</sup> Squad # 534. Deployed to Guam

### Commander John Lewis Thomas, 1916-2013

U.S. Navy Communications Officer & deck watch officer. Participated in all  
of the South and Southwest Pacific battles, the Philippines invasions,  
bombardments, as well as the Borneo invasion. He took part in the Battle of  
Wotje, Battle of Midway and Guadalcanal. Defense Ribbon with a service star;  
Atlantic and Philippines area ribbons; Pacific Ribbon with six battle stars;  
Silver Star.

### Pfc. John *Jack* C. Thomas, 1920-2012.

U.S. Army 104th Infantry Division under Major General Terry Allen's  
Timberwolves Division. Motto: "Nothing in Hell can stop the Timberwolves."  
Served in Europe. Purple Heart and the Bronze Star

## HONORABLE DISCHARGE

1. LAST NAME - FIRST NAME - MIDDLE INITIAL <b>GILL ROBERT M</b>		2. ARMY SERIAL NO. <b>33 644 994</b>	3. GRADE <b>CPL</b>	4. ARM OR SERVICE <b>INF</b>	5. COMPONENT <b>AUS</b>
6. ORGANIZATION <b>CO B 802ND REPLACEMENT BATTALION</b>		7. DATE OF SEPARATION <b>11 DEC 45</b>	8. PLACE OF SEPARATION <b>SEPARATION CEN FT GEO G MEADE MD</b>		
9. PERMANENT ADDRESS FOR MAILING PURPOSES <b>1/2 PM SMITHFIELD VA</b>		10. DATE OF BIRTH <b>16 FEB 23</b>	11. PLACE OF BIRTH <b>SMITHFIELD VA</b>		
12. ADDRESS FROM WHICH EMPLOYMENT WILL BE SOUGHT <b>SEE 9</b>		13. COLOR EYES <b>BROWN</b>	14. COLOR HAIR <b>BROWN</b>	15. HEIGHT <b>6'4"</b>	16. WEIGHT <b>185 LBS</b>
17. NO. DEPEND.	18. RACE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> WHITE <input type="checkbox"/> NEGRO <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (specify)		19. MARITAL STATUS <input type="checkbox"/> SINGLE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MARRIED <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (specify)		20. U.S. CITIZEN <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
21. CIVILIAN OCCUPATION AND NO. <b>SHIPPING CLERK 1-34 13</b>					

### MILITARY HISTORY

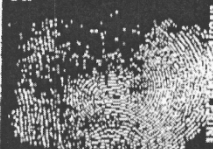

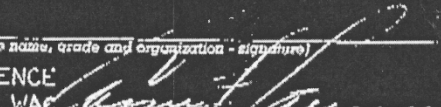
22. DATE OF INDUCTION <b>4 AUG 43</b>		23. DATE OF ENLISTMENT <b>25 AUG 43</b>		24. DATE OF ENTRY INTO ACTIVE SERVICE <b>CAMP LEE VA</b>	
25. PLACE OF ENTRY INTO SERVICE <b>VA</b>		26. HOME ADDRESS AT TIME OF ENTRY INTO SERVICE <b>SMITHFIELD VA</b>		27. LOCAL U.S. BOARD NO. <b>#1</b>	
28. COUNTY AND STATE <b>ISLE OF WIGHT CO</b>		29. HOME ADDRESS AT TIME OF ENTRY INTO SERVICE <b>SMITHFIELD VA</b>		30. MILITARY OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALTY AND NO. <b>DUTY NCO 566</b>	
31. MILITARY QUALIFICATION AND DATA (i.e., Janitor, aviation and marksmanship badges, etc.) <b>COMBAT INF BADGE</b>		32. BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS <b>GO33WD45: ROME-ARNO N APENNINES PO VALLEY</b>			
33. DECORATIONS AND CITATIONS <b>GOOD CONDUCT MEDAL EUROPEAN AFRICAN MIDDLE EASTERN RIBBON WORLD WAR II VICTORY RIBBON</b>					
34. WOUNDS RECEIVED IN ACTION <b>NONE</b>					
35. LATEST IMMUNIZATION DATES		36. SERVICE OUTSIDE CONTINENTAL U.S. AND RETURN			
SMALLPOX	TYPHOID	TETANUS	OTHER (specify)	DATE OF DEPARTURE	DESTINATION
<b>JUN 45</b>	<b>JUN 45</b>	<b>APR 45</b>	<b>TYP APR 45</b>	<b>30 JAN 44</b>	<b>N AFRICA</b>
37. TOTAL LENGTH OF SERVICE		38. HIGHEST GRADE HELD			
CONTINENTAL SERVICE		FOREIGN SERVICE		DATE OF ARRIVAL	
YEARS	MONTHS	DAYS	YEARS	MONTHS	DAYS
<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>24</b>
39. PRIOR SERVICE			40. SERVICE OUTSIDE CONTINENTAL U.S. AND RETURN		
<b>NONE</b>			<b>13 AUG 45 UNITED STATES 24 AUG 45</b>		
41. REASON AND AUTHORITY FOR SEPARATION <b>WDAG TWX 40094 24 SEP 45 WD TWX 40111 SPXOC-E 19 OCT 45 AR 615-365 15 DEC 45</b>					
42. SERVICE SCHOOLS ATTENDED <b>NONE</b>					
43. EDUCATION (Years) <b>7 4 0</b>					

### PAY DATA

43. LONGEVITY FOR PAY PURSUAL		44. REGISTERED GUY PAY		45. UNIFORMS OR GEAR		46. TRAVEL PAY		47. TOTAL AMOUNT, NAME OF DISBURSING OFFICER	
YEARS	MONTHS	DAYS	TOTAL	THIS PAYMENT	NONE	\$ 10.85	\$315.22	<b>W A PEARSON CAPTAIN ED</b>	

### INSURANCE NOTICE

IMPORTANT: IF PREMIES TO NOT PAID WITHIN THIRTY-DAY DAYS THEREAFTER, INSURANCE WILL Lapse. MAKE CHECKS OR MONEY ORDERS PAYABLE TO THE TREASURER OF THE U. S. AND FORWARD TO COLLECTIONS SUBDIVISION, VETERANS ADMINISTRATION, WASHINGTON 25, D. C.										
48. KIND OF INSURANCE			49. HOW PAID		50. Effective Date of Alternative Discontinuance		51. Date of Next Premium Due (One month after 50)		52. PREMIUM DUE EACH MONTH	
Life Surv.	U.S. Govt.	None	Assignment	Direct to V. A.	<b>31 DEC 45</b>		<b>31 JAN 46</b>		<b>6.50</b>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
									<input type="checkbox"/>	

	54. REMARKS (This space for completion of above items or entry of other items specified in W. D. Directives)	
	<p style="text-align: center;">LAPEL BUTTON ISSUED      NO DAYS LOST UNDER AW 107</p> <p style="text-align: center;">ASR SCORE 58</p>	
55. SIGNATURE OF PERSON BEING SEPARATED		56. PERSONNEL OFFICER (Type name, grade and organization - signature)
		<p><b>CASSIE F LAURENCE</b> 1ST LT</p> 

WD AGO FORM 55-55  
1 November 1944

This form supersedes all previous editions of WD AGO Forms 55 and 55 for enlisted personnel entitled to an Honorable Discharge, which will not be used after receipt of this revision.

1945 Robert M. Gill discharge papers



## MILITARY RECORD AND REPORT OF SEPARATION CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE


1. LAST NAME - FIRST NAME - MIDDLE INITIAL <b>KIRK JOHN S</b>			2. ARMY SERIAL NUMBER <b>0 313 032</b>	3. AUS. GRADE <b>LT COL</b>	4. ARM OR SERVICE <b>CE</b>	5. COMPONENT <b>ORC</b>
6. ORGANIZATION <b>1312 ENG RGT APT</b>			7. DATE OF RELIEF FROM ACTIVE DUTY <b>18 NOV 45</b>	8. PLACE OF SEPARATION <b>SEPARATION CENTER FORT BRAGG NC</b>		
9. PERMANENT ADDRESS FOR MAILING PURPOSES <b>RFD 4 SUFFOLK NANSEMOND CO VA</b>				10. DATE OF BIRTH <b>18 JUL 12</b>	11. PLACE OF BIRTH <b>PORTSMOUTH VA</b>	
12. ADDRESS FROM WHICH EMPLOYMENT WILL BE SOUGHT <b>SEE 9</b>				13. COLOR EYES <b>BROWN</b>	14. COLOR HAIR <b>BROWN</b>	15. HEIGHT <b>5'11"</b>
				16. WEIGHT <b>170</b>	17. NO. OF DEPENDENTS <b>3</b>	
18. RACE WHITE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NEGRO <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (specify) <input type="checkbox"/>		19. MARITAL STATUS SINGLE <input type="checkbox"/> MARRIED <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (specify) <input type="checkbox"/>		20. U.S. CITIZEN YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	21. CIVILIAN OCCUPATION AND NO. <b>MANAGER LUMBER YARD 0-97.51</b>	

### MILITARY HISTORY

SELECTIVE SERVICE DATA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	22. REGISTERED YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	23. LOCAL S. S. BOARD NUMBER	24. COUNTY AND STATE	25. HOME ADDRESS AT TIME OF ENTRY ON ACTIVE DUTY <b>SEE 9</b>	
26. DATE OF ENTRY ON ACTIVE DUTY <b>29 MAR 41</b>		27. MILITARY OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALTY AND NO. <b>EXECUTIVE OFFICER 2020-4</b>			
28. BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS <b>NEW GUINEA, LUZON (WD GO 33-45)</b>					
29. DECORATIONS AND CITATIONS <b>NONE</b>					
30. WOUNDS RECEIVED IN ACTION <b>NONE</b>					
31. SERVICE SCHOOLS ATTENDED <b>ADVANCED ENGINEERS COURSE FT BELVOIR VA</b>			32. SERVICE OUTSIDE CONTINENTAL U. S. AND RETURN		
			DATE OF DEPARTURE	DESTINATION	DATE OF ARRIVAL
			<b>23 MAY 42</b>	<b>A T O</b>	<b>27 MAY 42</b>
			<b>25 APR 43</b>	<b>U S A</b>	<b>28 APR 43</b>
			<b>20 JAN 44</b>	<b>A P T</b>	<b>7 FEB 44</b>
			<b>1 JUL 45</b>	<b>U S A</b>	<b>28 JUL 45</b>
33. REASON AND AUTHORITY FOR SEPARATION <b>RELD FR AD RR 1-5 (DEMOB) TWX ACTG TAG 19 AUG 45</b>					
34. CURRENT TOUR OF ACTIVE DUTY					
CONTINENTAL SERVICE			FOREIGN SERVICE		
YEARS	MONTHS	DAYS	YEARS	MONTHS	DAYS
<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>13</b>
35. EDUCATION (years)					
GRAMMAR SCHOOL		HIGH SCHOOL		COLLEGE	
<b>8</b>		<b>4</b>		<b>4</b>	

### INSURANCE NOTICE

IMPORTANT IF PREMIUM IS NOT PAID WHEN DUE OR WITHIN THIRTY-ONE DAYS THEREAFTER, INSURANCE WILL LAPSE. MAKE CHECKS OR MONEY ORDERS PAYABLE TO THE TREASURER OF THE U. S. AND FORWARD TO COLLECTIONS SUBDIVISION, VETERANS ADMINISTRATION, WASHINGTON 25, D. C.							
36. KIND OF INSURANCE		37. HOW PAID		38. Effective Date of Allotment Discontinuance	39. Date of Next Premium Due (one month after 38)	40. PREMIUM DUE EACH MONTH	41. INTENTION OF VETERAN TO
Nat. Serv.	U. S. Govt.	None	Allotment	Direct to V.A.			Continue
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>AUG 45</b>	<b>SEPT 45 * 7.15</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

 RIGHT THUMB PRINT	42.	43. REMARKS (This space for completion of above items or entry of other items specified in W. D. Directives)
		AUTHORIZED: AMERICAN DEFENSE RIBBON AUTHORIZED: AMERICAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS RIBBON AUTHORIZED: ASIATIC-PACIFIC THEATER RIBBON WITH 2 BATTLE STARS AUTHORIZED: PHILIPPINE LIBERATION RIBBON WITH 1 BATTLE STAR (USAFFE GO 23-45) LAPEL BUTTON ISSUED
44. SIGNATURE OF OFFICER BEING SEPARATED <i>John S. Kirk</i> JOHN S KIRK		45. PERSONNEL OFFICER (Type name, grade and organization - signature) <i>W G Stille</i> W G STILLE 1ST LT ORD SEP CEN FT BRAGG NC

WD AGO FORM 53-98  
1 November 1944

This form supersedes all previous editions of WD AGO Forms 53 and 280 for officers entitled to a Certificate of Service, which will not be used after receipt of this revision.

1945 Stokes Kirk discharge paper

# Acknowledgements

## Photos

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J. Stokes Kirk, courtesy of Lynn Kirk Rose  
Margaret G. Kirk, courtesy of Lynn Kirk Rose  
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John Cornelius *Jack* Thomas, courtesy of John C. Thomas, Jr.  
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Richard *Bud* Goodson Gill, courtesy of *Bud*  
Veterans Day 11/11/2013 with Bud & Joyce Gill courtesy of The Smithfield Times, John B.  
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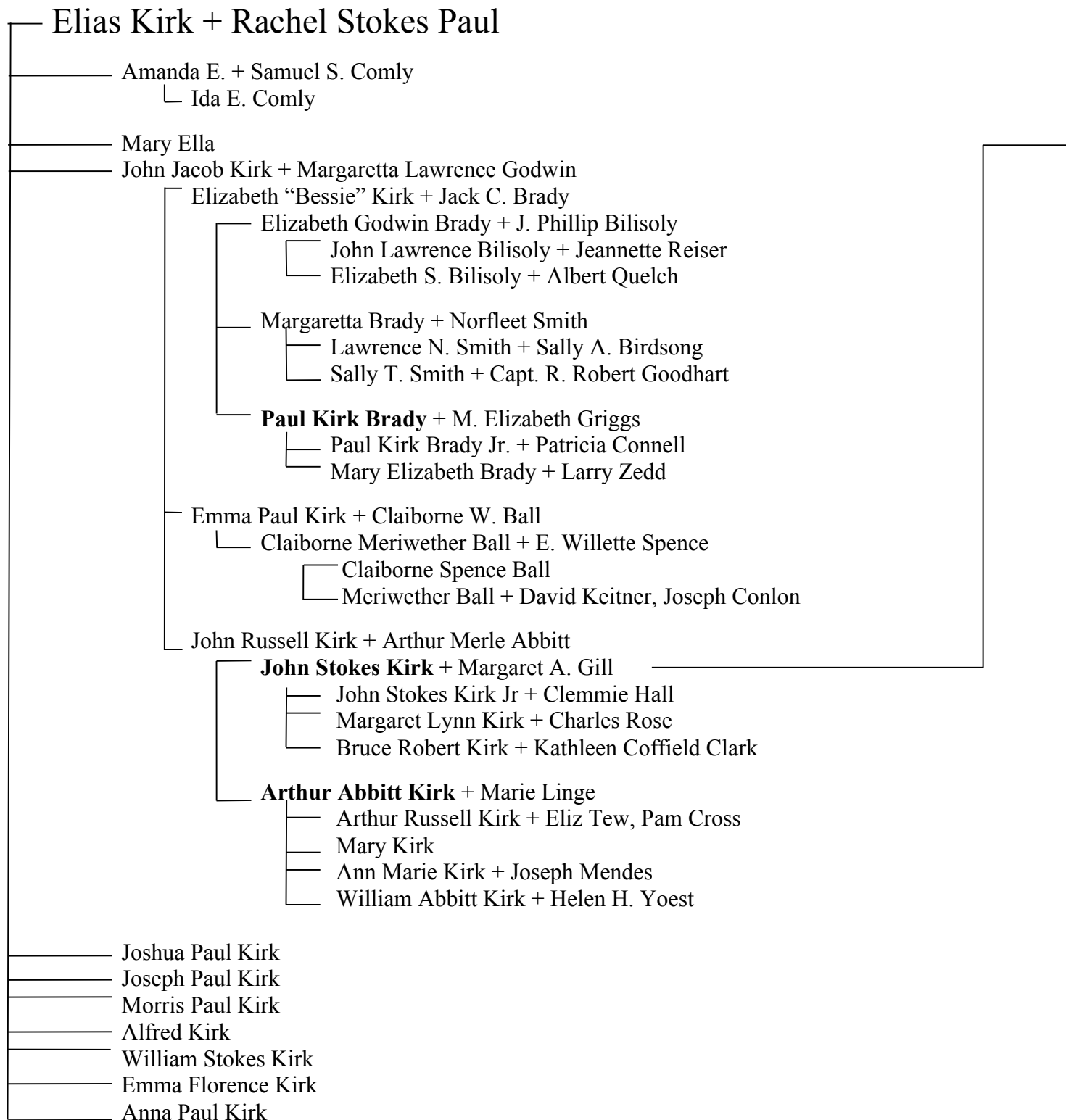
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# Kirk Family Tree





# Gill Family tree

Robert Edward Gill + Mary Alida Wheadon

Bessie Gill

Ethel Gill

Robert Henry Gill + Margarette "Madge" Adams Goodson

Margaret Aphia Gill + **John Stokes Kirk**

John Stokes Kirk Jr. + Clemmie Hall

Margaret Lynn Kirk + Charles Rose

Bruce Robert Kirk + Kathleen Coffield Clark

**Robert Morgan Gill** + Shirley Lewis Wiggins

Robert M. Gill Jr. + D. Carter, D. Flint, Daysi Fuentes

Thomas Henry Gill + Jane Swanson

David Goodson Gill + Lindsey Riddell

Stephan Claiborne Gill + Catharine Tyler

Margaret Lewis Gill + James Cleer

**Richard Bud Goodson Gill** + Joyce Helmick

Richard Goodson Gill Jr. + Nancy Batten

Gene Helmick Gill + Vicki Vaughan

Roberta Lynn Gill + Brad Williams

Joanna Marshall Gill + J. Campbell, Douglas Bateman

Armistead Wheadon Gill

Mary Cecile Gill