

OK

Friday
October 19th

Fudgie Darling -

Yesterday I used a typewriter even though I wasn't CQ - just sitting down in the supply clerk's room - but this evening instead of being in the supply room - I am CQ.

They told us yesterday that they were going to give back to us the notes some of us had taken on the trip over here - so this afternoon I re-claimed mine. About all it tells is the names of the various cities we passed through and when we passed through them, and some dates things happened on the ocean part of the trip. So - we'll begin the story back at Camp Barton in New Jersey. The whole thing started at 5:45 Saturday morning, March 10th. I'll never forget it. They got us up early, we had an early breakfast, the barracks were cleaned of all of our possessions and we, with all of our equipment, stood around outside waiting for the word to go. The minutes passed and still nothing happened, so we started wandering up to the PX that was on a hill about 300 yards away. There we bought boxes of candy, chewing gum, and crackers to take along for the train ride, at the same time filling ourselves with cake, ice cream and cokes. It's good that we took advantage of the opportunity 'cause 12:00 was coming around and there were no means available for feeding us. At ten minutes of twelve we started for the train station - about a mile away. We got on the train about 12:30 and I was glad to see that we would have Pullmans for the trip across the States. The coaches were nice - pretty upholstery and all that - and though they weren't the latest thing, they were far better than troop sleepers. Once on the train we took off our equipment and made ourselves comfortable and - oh, yes - spreading rumors all the while! We also found out that we would not need our mess kits on the train: all of our meals would be served on paper plates and we would have paper cups and wooden



utensils - the old ones being discarded after each meal. The battalion had three prisoners (AWOL cases) and their job was in the kitchen car - they took care of the KP end of things. Finally at 1:30 the train started and we were off on our long journey. We followed the Central Railroad of New Jersey's tracks for the first part of the trip - later changing to the Wabash Railroad and finally the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe. Correction! That wasn't the final route: after the A T & S F we went to the Southern Pacific which took us to the end of our train ride and the real beginning of our trip. But let's go back - golly, we just started! That first afternoon on the train we didn't do very much - just sat around trying to keep our spirits somewhere around normal. Shortly after we started, Captain Bandy made the announcement that from that point on there would be no letters written on the train - but even when we were again able to write our letters would be censored. He gave us our new address: APO 18659 c/o PM NY, NY and told us we were heading for Camp Anza, just outside Riverside, California. When we heard that - well, it didn't help those spirits any and quite a few of us could be found to be concentrating our thoughts on something outside the car window - . So - suppertime came round and we started to settle down for come what may. We did pay some attention, though, to what was going on outside the car window- and we took a good look at each city as we went through. At 6:00 we went through Easton - on to Bethlehem at 6:15 and then Allentown at 6:30. Before we reached Scranton at 10:00 the ground was covered with snow and soon we were in snowy weather. When the porter came around to make our beds, most of us had already had some experience in making up Pullman beds - learned when we moved from Camp Murphy, Florida to Camp Barton. I was up early that morning - the excitement added its bit and finally - the swaying of the car - I was asleep. When I got up the next morning we were in Buffalo. Kegel, two other fellows and I passed the morning playing Hearts, but when we hit Meadville, Pa. about noon, something new was added. We stopped for a walk around town - gave us a chance to stretch our legs and get some fresh air. While we were there, several fellows were designated to scour the town for ice cream and candy, so



when we started out again we had something to replenish those already dwindling supplies we had purchased at the PX the day before. We did that at every stop - fellows were sent out to buy things like that - and after that first unexpected stop we systematized the idea. We took orders before the train stopped - so when the fellows dashed into a store they had some idea of what was wanted. In a lot of cities there were women at the stations passing out sandwiches and other foodstuffs and believe you me, it was really appreciated. Let's see - where were we? Oh, yes - Meadville. Well, we left Meadville about 12:30 and had dinner. One nice thing about the Pullmans: they always had plenty of cold drinking water and somehow it was just impossible to quench your thirst all during the trip. At a quarter past three we passed through Kent, Ohio and I guess the engineer changed his mind. We passed through the town - got just outside, and we backed up - into the station again for a half hour stop! We saw Akron at a quarter past four and when we reached Marion, Ohio at 6:00 we set our clocks back an hour for the first time. Before we reached our destination we were going to turn our watches back a total of fourteen hours and ahead once for a half hour making us thirteen and one half hours ahead of Eastern War Time. Marion marked the passing of our second day on our way across the States. One city I missed that I really wanted to see was Chicago. We passed through there about 3:00 the next morning, so even if I had been awake I would have missed it - 'cause somehow, after dark all cities look alike. When we reached Decatur at 8:30 we got off for another walk - our morning tonic - and got back on the train for breakfast at 8:45. Springfield, Illinois was our next city and after we passed Springfield a memorable thing took place: I crossed the Mississippi River. Just between the two of us, Ole Man River looks just like all the other rivers I've ever seen - maybe a little 'muddier,' and at the time, I was hoping the Mississippi would have been the Codorus Creek - and I was coming into York instead of entering Missouri. Incidentally, Hannibal was the name of the town beside the Mississippi. Perhaps the River is more interesting as it winds through the Deep South - pickaninnies, bales of cotton,



- steamboats - but I'm still not interested in that - I WANT TO SEE THE CODORUS!

The first stop in Missouri was the town of Moberly, where a big sign proclaimed it to be the home of General Omar Bradley. Being duly impressed, we got off again and took our first steps on Missouri soil. That was one thing: excluding New Jersey and New York, we made stops, and got off the train in every state that we went through. At ten o' clock that evening we crossed the Missouri River and reached Kansas City, Mo. at 10:30. We got to bed late that evening, but at 9:00 we set our watches back another hour, giving us our second 'extra' hour. And during the night we passed through a lot of Colorado. The next morning we found ourselves way out west - it really began to look like the pictures in the magazine advertisements! We got off of the train at a little place called La Junta (Colorado) and the station and most of the buildings were built along Mexican lines - one story buildings that sprawled all over the place and were painted in the yellows, tans and browns you associate with the Mexican haciendas. Even horses started to appear and the men were flecked out in boots and five-gallon hats (the little brothers of the old west's ten-gallon hats!). Have you ever been down Trinidad? I was - Trinidad, Colorado! And living up to the song -(the natives they're all going mad)- they gave us more to eat there than all the other stops put together - but unlike the song -(working for the Yankee dollar)- they weren't - it was all free! We reached Trinidad about 2:00 in the afternoon - and then we left Colorado to enter New Mexico - first stop Raton. We got off in Raton and trudged around the sand - the town really looked funny - no fences - no sidewalks - just houses. You couldn't tell if you were on the main street or on a back path - all the streets were just asphalt bordered with sand. At 5:45 we reached Las Vegas - and - well - I can't describe it -. Sitting on the track next to the one we were on was another train full of soldiers - BUT - their train was headed toward New York. They had just returned from the CBI - and we got a look at ourselves we didn't know how far into the future. They must all have been indoor men 'cause their atabrine tan was xreally showing - but most



likely we'll look the same way - all of the tan that hides our atabrine coloring will have 'worn off'. One thing I'll never forget - the words they had plastered all over the sides of their train: "Back alive in '45" - while we were thinking of ours - which would most likely be "The Golden Gate in '48". That night we went to bed rather quietly -. Before we went to bed we ran into a snow storm - and when we got up the next morning it was still snowing. This, by the way, was the morning of the 14th of March.. And now I've seen the town bearing the name of the man who conducts all these polls - Gallup, New Mexico! We had breakfast while we were sitting in the station there - about 7:30 - and soon we were on our way to Arizona. At 10:30 we stopped at Winslow, Arizona - a typical western town - sand, horses and Indians. One of our fellows remembered he had an uncle living in Winslow - one he had never seen - so he asked some of the fellows standing around the station if they knew his uncle. One of the fellows in the group he asked turned out to be his relative - so they became acquainted, and his uncle dispatched a letter that same evening to this kid's parents telling them all about the meeting. At 1:00 we went through Flagstaff, Arizona and at 4:00 while we were in Ash Fork we lost our third hour - I should say gained - we turned our watches back an hour. That was the last time we altered our timepieces while we were in the States - the rest of the changes would be made on the boat. At 3:30 (would have been 4:30, but we lost an hour) we took a walk through Seligman, Arizona - last stop in Arizona. We crossed the Colorado River into California at 7:30 - California - the land of sunshine - and uh-huh - it was raining like the dickens! You've heard of being on pins and needles; well - we stopped in Needles at ten o'clock that evening. The next day - March 15th - we reached our destination - but first - to do full honors to the Chamber Of Commerce of that fair little town - at 6:00 we passed through San Bernardino. We were all awake - 'cause we were getting mighty close to Camp Anza and getting ready to get off the train was quite a job: we had all of our equipment right with us - helmet, full pack (on our back), carbine, gas mask, and duffel bag. At 7:30 we pulled into the camp: Camp Anza - and in sunny



California we still hadn't seen the sun - the weather was misty with a genuine shower thrown in every once in a while. We got off of the train at 8:30 using a very unique system. With all of our equipment, we were too wide to squeeze through the door of our Pullman - so as we approached the door, we gave the fellow in front of us a firm, but gentle(?) push and as you stepped up to the door, the fellow behind you returned the favor(?). As soon as we got off we filed into a large building where we took off our equipment. Wondering what was coming next, we walked into the next building and learned: shots! After we got our shots we were assigned to our barracks and had the rest of the day to ourselves to get settled (for a week). The first few days there were no passes handed out so we spent most of our time exploring the camp. Nice place: soda fountains, lounging rooms, bowling alleys - practically anything you wanted. While we were there we got quite a bit of new clothing and we were really 'up' as far as Army style was concerned. Did you ever see any of the new field jackets? They're sort of a green, about the length of the blouse, and the most stylish looking of any piece of Army clothing. Here's how I was decked out to go to Los Angeles and Hollywood: Combat boots with my OD trousers tucked into the tops of the boots. Over a suntan shirt and tie, I wore the new field jacket, with my overseas hat sitting on my head at a jaunty angle. Los Angeles - well - it was all right - but I was on Cottage Place in York wishing so much I could really be there. So, after a week at Camp Anza, we got up at 3:45 Thursday morning (the 22nd of March) and, as usual, since we were moving, we fooled around till 8:30 when we finally got on the train. Can you picture that ride? Two seats were turned together (like we do when the coaches aren't crowded) and there were three of us to those four seats - but - three ~~soldiers~~ not soldiers! - three fellows - with all of their equipment - were pretty crowded for that three hour train ride! We arrived at the Los Angeles Port Of Embarkation about 11:30 - seems we always missed a meal somewhere when we were moving -! Let's not talk about the coffee and doughnuts - the gangplank and all that - now I'm hoping I'll be making that trip headed the other way - and that's the trip I want to think



about! We got aboard about 12:30 and were assigned to bunks. Then we were free to become acquainted with the ship. A fellow really learns the meaning of envy when he sees those civilians working on the docks -: they watch the ships leave - but they never have to think about leaving; then I really wished I were a dock hand or a stevedore! Let's not even mention that strike in New York - but I still think all strikers who really have no complaint should, upon striking, be shipped to the interior of the Naga Hills! That's present day news - let's get back to March 22nd. I don't remember just what they had for supper, but it was a good meal - and I'm glad I ate my fill 'cause the next day - well - I wasn't hungry! We left the Continental limits of the United States that evening between eleven o'clock and midnight. At the time, Jerry was asleep, and in my dreams I was traveling east - not west. The next morning when I got out of bed the atmosphere was warm and close. I started dressing and finished like a streak of lightning - dressing on the way to the - well, dressing on the way. Then - instead of going above and getting some air, I came back to my bunk and remained in a horizontal position the remainder of that day and night. Finally, on the third day out, I ventured to the deck and once again became aware of the world around me. World? Water! From there on it wasn't too bad and by the time dinner rolled around, instead of shuddering when my coffee cup went skidding across the table, propelled by some unseen force, I fought to save every drop - and food suddenly became edible again! I guess the only thing I didn't tell you about the trip was the gunnery practice. The ship had all sorts of guns - five-inchers, 40 mm anti-aircraft, .50 cal. machine guns - everywhere you looked there were guns.. We were out about a week and the first practice came around - . I'll never say a word about Navy gunners - the gunners on our ship were tops - gave you a little relaxation on that worry of enemy bombers. Their target was a black charge. They fired it first and it exploded in mid-air dropping slowly like a black ball. I didn't see one that ever reached the sea. They were way out over the ocean and just about as big as a baseball in appearance - but even moving as



it was - the target moving and the ship moving - the gunners hit them every time. When they were firing you were jarred out of your skin - the whole boat shook. But, after the firing, we'd all go back to what we were doing - feeling a little safer. Now comes some more 'data'. We crossed the equator on Easter Sunday, April 1st, at 6:35 in the afternoon with the conventional Ceremonies. At - oh, dusk that evening we passed Baker and Holland Islands. Incidentally, it's believed that Amelia Earhart crashed on Holland Island. The charred remains of an unidentified plane were found there, but nothing definite can be determined. On April 6th we passed near New Caledonia and on the 8th we crossed the Tropic of Capricorn. Almost forgot! We had no April 3rd. We went to bed Tuesday evening, April 2nd - during the night we crossed the International Date Line and when we got up the next morning it was Thursday, April 4th. We'll wait till we can have an instant-two-way conversation before we try to straighten out this "time" business! On the ninth of April we felt land swells from Australia, and on the tenth we entered the Tasmanian Sea. At ten o'clock on the morning of the eleventh we docked at Melbourne, Australia. There we took on supplies and sent out the first batch of mail since we left the States - those first twelve that you received April 21st. We didn't get to see much of Melbourne even though we did stay there till the 13th. At 9:30 on the morning of the 13th we learned of the death of President Roosevelt. And at 10:30, Friday the 13th, we left Melbourne (never to see it again, I hope!) On the evening of the 17th we passed Perth, Australia - smaller ships than the one we were on stop there as well as at Melbourne before the dash through the then dangerous waters between there and India. On April 23rd we picked up the vessel which was to 'protect' us - the British Corvette, HMS Rocket. Nothing happened - no enemy approached and on the same day the other ship joined us we crossed the equator the second time at 7:00 in the evening. Finally, on the 27th of April we entered the Ganges River and came on up to the Hooghly River where we weighed anchor at 4:30 in the afternoon. After we had arrived (still on the ship) our American money



was exchanged for Indian - Rupees and Annas. The money then, and still, looked like valueless pieces of paper (and I'll be glad to have good old dollars and cents back in my pocket!) Well - that got us to India - so we'll stop there for the evening. Most of what followed you've already heard - the train ride to Ledo and our life from there on. They gave us some information the last day we were on the boat - more figures - so I'll pass them along. The captain of our ship (A captain in the Navy is equivalent to a full colonel in the Army - one step below a brigadier general) was William Wakefield. The ship, the USS General LeRoy Eltinge, was commissioned February 21st in San Francisco. She was built in the Kaiser Yards in Richmond, California. The ship weighed 17,500 Tons and cruised at a speed of 18 knots per hour - 21.6 miles per hour. The trip from Los Angeles to Australia covered 7,170 miles and from Melbourne to Calcutta was another 5,800 miles. Strange as it may seem, our vision while we were at sea was limited to 2.9 miles in any direction, due to the curvature of the earth. We travelled 38 days to get from ~~XXXXXX~~ Los Angeles to Calcutta while by air the trip can be made by commercial airlines in 67 hours! One big worry while we were at sea was fresh water. The ship had its own distilling plant and distilled 40,000 gallons of water daily. But, with 3000 troops aboard, plus all the cooking, laundry and other needs, they kept at us every day to conserve water. The warning was heeded so we had water all of the time - but on the ship that followed a day behind us - we met some of the fellows after we got here - the water was rationed - turned on only certain hours and available in certain quantities.

Pudgie, I've just been rambling on - looking at my hurried notes taken from time to time on the way over and adding little things that I remembered. But - that's it - and anything you want to know that I've omitted or didn't explain - well, I'll answer all questions - and add a lot more when I come home.

Today was another of those 'paper days'. That paper work is clearing up more and more - where before there were about 138 items to account for, now there are only 33 - we're operating at a minimum!

And tomorrow the list of point scores will arrive from Myitkyina. Pudgie,

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keep your fingers crossed - hope that that 45 comes through! Next month at this time if everything goes as planned, we'll be ready to step on the train to Karachi tomorrow. I can hardly wait to see that list!

Now it's bedtime - almost 10:30, so we'll get ready for bed. The camp is quiet - just a few night sounds - let's turn out the light and cuddle up under the covers. I pray that Our Day may be soon - that your head will really be on my shoulder - that we will really fall asleep in each other's arms. Goodnight, Darling, God Bless You -

I send my love - it's all for you -

I love you, Fudgie -

Your Hubby -

Jerry ♡