

Jan 5-44  
Philippines

My Darling Wife.

I hope someone mailed my letter to you, which I wrote Jan 1<sup>st</sup>. I got up too early on the 2<sup>nd</sup> to mail it and haven't been back to the 8<sup>th</sup> since. We left early that morning in a four ship flight, two of us taking pictures of Japs installations and shipping. We got some wonderful pictures and sighted a lot of important shipping targets. Two planes flying top cover for us shot down two Jap planes, so we had a very successful and valuable mission. That afternoon we loaded up with bombs, and a large number of other planes outside our squadron went with us, we led them to the target. We dive bombed the ships then came back to straf them, they were shooting at us all the time, as we went in for the final kill my plane was hit in the engine but it went a few more minutes and I was well away from them when I had to bail out. I was off shore about five miles and the seas was pretty rough so I had a little trouble getting my life raft out and inflated. I think you must have been saying a prayer

for me about that time, Harry. I sat out in the boat until dark and then paddled into shore, because Japs boats started passing pretty close to my position. I had picked out the most deserted looking place on shore while it was still light and made a very lucky choice as I found out the next morning. I hid my raft and jungle kit in the bushes and went a short distance into the jungle to wait for morning. About dawn a bunch of natives come down to fish, so I slipped up close enough so I could be sure they weren't Japs and called to one of them and told him my predicament. He got food and water for me and helped me dodge Jap patrols. They were well inland while the Japs were on the beach, so when the rescue plane came to see if they could find any trace of me, I waved my signal to them and was afraid they would give up the search before I could get back to the shore and determine whether or not the Japs were out of sight. The Filipinos sent some fleet footed scouts out to check on the Japs position while we made our way back out of the jungle. (The jungle was not real dense at this place.) Luckily the rescue plane came back for one more look and I signaled to them from the beach.

I inflated my raft again and paddled out to sea while they landed on the water and came in as close as they dared which turned out to be almost too close, because just after they hauled me on board, the Japs had returned to the shore and started shooting at us, putting several bullet holes in the big float plane and slightly wounding two more men. He got away and got back to base with one of the engineers cutting out all the way.

Honey, I guess that sounds like a story you would read out of a book, but it is all true plus a good bit more that I don't feel like writing just now. Honey, you can let our folks read this because I don't want to write it anymore. I have had to tell so many guys the story that I am tired of it. I know I will have to tell it a good many more times yet.

None of my injuries were serious and I will get out of the hospital this afternoon or in the morning. My right leg got a little skin grazed off and bruised and my left hip hit the tail of the plane when I jumped out, it is skinned and

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bruised but not bad. I want fly for a few days but am O.K. now.

I lost my fountain pen and I'm afraid the watch you gave me is completely ruined.

God is bound to be with me or I would not be here. I had a total of six very narrow escapes in that short 24 hrs. I never lost my head once and am suffering no ill effects from my experience and exposure.

I was afraid I would have to spend a couple of months getting back, because of the Japs on the shore. The Filipinos promised to take <sup>care</sup> of me and get me to their guerrilla forces. My only concern was for you and the baby. I still haven't heard from you so I don't know about the baby yet. I will still try to be patient. It will probably be another week before I hear from you.

Tell Mom and all that I will write as soon as possible and I will write you again as soon as I get some more paper and a pen. I know this won't be easy to read but it is the best I can do at present. I will sign off now with all my love  
P.S. I guess I'll get the Purple Heart. Randall