

24 July 45
- Philippines

Dear Fran,

You've probably long since heard of Duffy's death. What a break - 31 missions completed, a 2d lieutenantcy, only a month or so before V-E. - Rough. My mother wrote that Mr. & Mrs. Duffy have stood the shock well, which is the way I'd like my parents - and I'm sure you, yours - to be should death suddenly strike one day. The Duffys are fine people - all of them; notwithstanding John's hieroglyphics. At one time, I too, blew my top at him after receiving one of his inimitable V-mails. But all that didn't amount to anything other than filling a page. We did have enjoyable times together, and his absence will certainly be felt.

Since I last wrote to you, nothing of great importance has happened my way, so let's get down to trivialities.

You think you're having trouble with USAFI? If you remember, I sent an application last Dec. (1944 no less) to the U. of Pa. for that Int. Calc. course, and a few months ago, received a card stating that the text was on the way. The text did not come, but a good U.S. check for \$1.60 did, with an accompanying letter

informing me that since I already had the text in my possession, my share of it's cost had been returned. That would have been fine, had I still had the text. I lost it (together with 24 cans of beer - that's another story in itself) on the trip to ~~here~~ Finschhafen. I didn't mention that fact when submitting my application, since the cost of a text is included in the enrollment fee, as you know. I expected another one, but Mr. Ames - bless his athletic heart - with laudable perspicacity thought he would graciously rebate my \$1.60. I suppose it was my error in not definitely stating I needed another text, but on the other hand, I had never seen any information relative to continuing a course, using the same text, or what procedure would be attached thereto. So what can ya do? Now comes the payoff. I had returned the check, explaining the need for another text, and a few days ago, received another letter which quotes the USAFI Fiscal Officer as writing: "as the student has lost his first text, it is the opinion of this office that he should be asked to pay the full price of the duplicate text." (They want \$1.60 more!) At this rate, I think I'll send the U. of Pa. a

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polite note, telling them to forget the whole deal and contribute my 5 bucks to the Red Cross. At that, the R.C. won't get a full five. The U. has already sent me the lessons and the stationery for them!

While still on TD down at the Main Exchange, the bare PX, two other fellows and I took a trip to Manila. It's easy Cor was, at that time, enough to get off the island. Simply go down to the field and have your name added to a shipping manifest. Just like a piece of freight, but freight has priority. Then you sit and wait for a ship going your way. Fortunately, however, we had met a C-46 pilot down at the PX, and sure enough, on the day we went to the field, he was taking a ship to Luzon. Accordingly, we didn't have any wait for transportation.

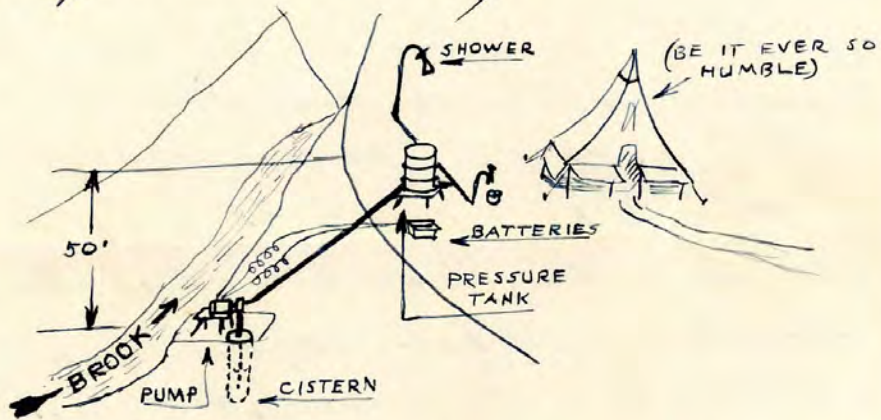
Manila is, like most captured & recaptured ^{cities,} a shambles. We went there about a month after its recapture, and ^{except} for the main avenues having been cleared, everything was in ruins. You know what a bombed-out, burned-out, blasted-out city looks like, so let's skip the description. However, we hadn't seen any kind of large city since Suva, Fiji, so decided to see what was what. For us, it was worth the trip - sightseers!

Eventually, all of us "A" Btry personnel were taken off our tour of TD at the M.E., since our battery was scheduled to go into the field, into gun positions. With 3 others, 2 more ~~&~~ communications men & the platoon sgt., I was part of the 2d platoon CP and was stuck out in the middle of a desolate waste. Before the really heavy rains came, we ate at a gun position a few hundred yards away. When the rains came, the roads went. For the greater part of the month we existed on 10-in-4's and rainwater. There was plenty of both, so it wasn't too bad.

Because of our and the gun section's inaccessibility, we were pulled out (literally - bulldozers) and thrown back into the battery area.

It was a pity to pack again after only a month's stay. We had reached the point where we were ready to install a wood floor in the tent. Outside, we already had water under pressure right up to the door. There was a little brook flowing not far from the tent, but it was at the bottom of a steep-walled, 50 foot deep gully; and it wasn't much fun slithering down the slope for wash & shower water. The thing to do would be to pump it up. So we did. By means of "deals", begging, borrowing, and a little stealing, we managed to set

the project up. Here's the story:



SPECIFICATIONS:

(ALL SIZES INDETERMINATE)

PUMP & MOTOR - AIRPLANE OIL PUMP (4 MIN. ; 600 ^{GALS.} _{IN 2}) AAF.

CISTERN - 2 SUNKEN DRUMS

PRESS. TANK - DRUM

FITTINGS - AIRPLANE HOSE FIXTURES (PLANE DUMP)

COUPLINGS - " " CLAMPS " "

BATTERIES - 2-12V, COURTESY AAF

PIPES - SEVERAL LENGTHS BEGGED } QM BAKERY. (DONT KNOW
" " APPROPRIATED) ANY REASON WHY NOT

TOOLS - PIPE WRENCH, MONKEY WRENCH, HACK-SAW, HAMMER, ETC.
COURTESY AAF.

COST: 1 ZIPPO, 2 RONSONS. OBTAINED AT COST FROM MAIN EX.

Right now, it seems I'm doomed to a life of TD. It's group hdqtrs. in the AAOR (AA Operation Room) this time, as switch board & radio operator. Both the board and radio are as lively and interesting as a week-dead mackerel. All you do is sit 5 or 7 hours each day making a time check every half hour. I suppose if there ever were any alerts, things might pick up. But we arrived

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too late for any of that rough stuff.

You were close in approximating my point score with your estimate of 50. Actually it's 53. We did manage to land here in time to be eligible for a battle star — a star for nothing more hazardous than smashing through a mud-hole or outflanking a herd of caribou, and it's attendant 5 points, which didn't help in making the total a very bright ray of hope. I, too, am stuck 'till the end. Yep, the very end. —

Eugene.

— Couldn't find your envelope with your latest APO. Hope this reaches you eventually.

AFTER 5 DAYS RETURN TO

PFC. E. DEMBINSKI, 3264

BTRY A, 205TH I. A. A.

APO 321, 9 PM, FRIEDO, CAL.



VIA AIR MAIL

¹⁷/₁₃ FRANCIS J. SHIELDS

CO. C., 3186 SIG. SERV. BN

APO 887

9 PM, NEW YORK,
N. Y.

