

5 April 1945
- Philippines

Dear Fran;

Before giving you some details of what's been goin' in my alley, let me answer your letter.

As you had remarked, the mail service between us is remarkably rapid. Your letter, too, arrived comparatively early. (Forget exactly how long it took)

Yep, I considered that Diff. Calc. course I took from the U. of Pa. to be a worthwhile one. Naturally, as in any other correspondence course, you teach yourself and hope your invisible "instructor" will give you satisfactory explanation of any particular question that might arise. Actually, you could teach yourself such a course without any aid from an instructor. However, I plan to use the credits of my forthcoming Integral Calc. course, and for that reason, have "re-enrolled". It's been 5 months since I mailed my application, and just today — my back! — just today, I received a card stating my application had been receipted and transmitted to the U. of Pa. By the time the course will have arrived, I'll be ready to review Analytic!

Incidentally, I didn't deserve that beautiful, passionate diatribe about the stationery I used for my last letter. It happened that, at the time, paper

was almost impossible to obtain, and that was all I could find. I fully realized how in-apropos it was, but paper is paper!

I haven't heard from Fel. for about 6 months now, — it must be some life they lead! — but my Mom did mention in one of her letters that the girls really enjoy the regimentated existence, and she told me of Fel's debut as a singer in one of their stage shows. Evidently Fel made quite a bit — whistles, applause, etc. — and the roof came down! Actually. It had snowed that evening, and obviously a portion of the roof wasn't designed for much of a snow load — so it came down!

Have you fully decided to marry the dream-girl when this hullabaloo is over? If so, definitely count me in as being one of your men of honor. Meanwhile, I'll keep you posted on my status. H'm, there's that cute little Filipino that does our laundry.....!

It was almost a crime to move out of New Guinea after being there only 3 months, and after we had built that camp area up so neatly. And as for that LST on which we came over! I earnestly believe that cattle, and even bananas, are more comfortable on their respective

types of vessels than we were.

There were quarters below deck for only about half the mob on each ship. So half of us had to find places on deck in which to live and sleep. But that wasn't too bad. My buddy and I had both decided it was immeasurably cooler on deck anyhow. Although the deck plates were of soft steel, we found that didn't add any Beauty-Rest qualities to our sleep. However, after a few days at sea, we managed to secure 2 cots. Those, with the tarpaulin we had erected into a sun & rain shelter, made a good deal. Everything would have been fine had the tarp shed water and had it not rained at least once almost every day, and had not showers of spray drenched the decks every few minutes, when the weather was windy! Managed to survive, however.

This island is considered to be a combat area, but they say the only Japs there might still be ^{here} are high, high up in the hills. The only aircraft in the skies are ours, and the blue is filled with them - all types. Although occasionally a 'bolt' does drop from the blue. Since we're situated so near the strips, we simply shrug and maintain that it Japs don't ever get us, then the Air Corps will!

While we were still in N. Guinea, I was working for a time ^{on TD,} in the G-1 section of the 14th AA Command, as a clerk typist. That was quite the racket. Had my own transportation to and from camp - usually. Sometimes I couldn't get a jeep until 10 A.M., and even sauntering in at that time didn't raise comment. Just before we moved, I was offered a permanent place there, with a rating of corporal or better; and you may be sure that when the Command moves, it will be to some large, modern city. Before it came to N.G. for its stay, the personnel worked in a commercial office building right in the heart of Brisbane's business section. But I refused the job. In the short time I had worked there I found the work boring. So why "knock myself out" by forcing myself onto a job that held such little attraction. It could lead, eventually, only to disgust for both myself and my work. I'll probably kick myself a thousand or more times for passing up an opportunity like that, but so it goes.

However, my luck is still holding. We had escaped dock details in N.G., but upon arriving here, found a suitable substitute awaiting us.

The whole of the 205th is now supplying the "labor" in labor details. I was fortunate enough to have been assigned to the Main P.X. - the Main Exchange, again typing, while other poor devils are out sweating, pushing gas drums all over creation, pulling guard or M.P., and road-building.

There's enough work here to be faintfully occupied all day, and our 3 officers are considerate, likable men. Not at all like the majority of the rapacious, self-centered boors of my own battalion - sad to relate.

You probably know that one of the most popular pastimes in the Philippines is cock-fighting. ~~At times, some matches~~ It's not uncommon for 2 or 3 thousand Pesos to be bet on the outcome of a single match (50¢ per peso), and that sum between the 100 or so spectators. As yet, I haven't gambled ~~on any of~~, not knowing a cock from a hen, but I've watched several matches.

The cocks are evenly paired as possible regarding height and weight. Each cock sports a ^{3 in. long} razor-keen steel spur strapped over its left natural spur.

Before the fight starts, the handlers hold the two birds against each other, and if both show antagonism - evidenced by the sharp ^{rise} of feathers on the birds

(OVER)

scruffs, then they are set free and the action begins. Otherwise, no match.

The fight itself, I've found, isn't very exciting. After glaring at each other for a few seconds, one of the cocks will jump, wings flailing, trying to drive home his spur into his ~~the~~ opponent's vitals. A little scuffle occurs while they separate, and the process is repeated until either one drops from his wounds, or tries to run out of the ring, feeling he has had enough fun for one evening. Occasionally, two birds will battle it out to the end ^(mutual end) - the ~~last~~ one remaining on his feet longest, winning.

It's a messy, apparently inhumane sport; but to a Filipino, probably more civilized than having 2 humans beat each other to pulps.

That's enough for now, so

Lucky,
Eugene

→ Now that you're a PFC come to glory, congrats!

AFTER 5 DAYS RETURN TO

PFC. E. DEMBINSKI 32698420



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