



Norfolk Va.

Feb. 21, 1943.

Dearest Darlin.

Well, here we are in Norfolk and what a hob it is. The ride down was terrific, we all need a months rest after that. I don't see how you stood it. Norfolk is a hell of a town, don't wonder Johnny didn't like it. The boat was loaded with sailors and soldiers, a lot of them had to stand up all the way. It is just like being in boat camp again, but its only for six days starting tomorrow.

The instructors in the fire school tell me it is a very tough course, as they shove into one week what which would ordinarily take a month. There are a lot of fellows from the Boise down here. I thought it had gone from Philo. but they just moved it to another part of the yard. They have told me all about the bits she was in and I'll tell you about it when I come back.

II

There isn't any doubt that Paintbridge will
be near them here when it is finished.

For the first time since I've been in the
Navy I had fried eggs for breakfast, so
that shows you how wrong this place is. John
was right about the beer, they aren't even
close to Philly on that. The trolleys down
here charge a dime to go anywhere, in fact
it is worse than the seashore at its worst.

That guy that was drunk at the station
stayed drunk all the way down, he went out last
night without a pass and will probably wind up
in the Brig where he belongs.

How does Mary like the village? She
should really stay the soldiers and she can't run
there because there are too many of them.

All the C. P. O's down here think they
are Vice Admirals but nobody pays any attention to
them. They are too used to the four week boats,
and we are all old salts now.

The recreation facilities here are practically nil, and we can go to town until next week, so we will be too tired to go then if all the stories are true. It's hard on the fellows that don't like to read because I can spend my whole week in the library.

Airplanes are always waving around our head day and night, its about as tranquil as a boiler factory.

We stopped in the Navy Y.M.C.A. where we came in Norfolk for breakfast and I got in an argument with a waitress, I think I won the argument because she shut up and walked away and when a woman shuts up it means certain defeat. I told her what I wanted and I guess she didn't hear me, because she asked me again in a very snotty way. So I told her I knew the people in Norfolk couldn't talk English but that I ~~they~~ didn't know they couldn't understand it too, and she got mad and we all had a good laugh.

How were the musketeers when you got

home? and mine?

If you can send a letter here in time I will get it. We will be here until Sat noon. I'll be glad to come back to Philly where things are much better than here. I'm glad I didn't have to put in my foot trainings here.

Well mommy, I've about all there is to say and all write again some time this week and tell you about the fire school.

Love and kisses to my Sweetest
Yours
Parker.

Joseph Parker Williamson Plt 3c
Fleet Service Schools
F.F. Division
Barracks 2C
Norfolk Va.

Wednesday
Sometime in Feb.
Norfolk Va.

Dear,



Free

This is Wednesday in

forgot the date, these three days have been very
hurry. We are learning here by practical experience,
I am as tired every night as I can ever remember
being. We carried miles and miles of fire hose, at-
tached and disconnected it, carried pounds and pounds
of nozzles, breathed in bushels and bushels of oil
and gasoline smoke, had our faces scorched, and climbed
yards of ship ladders in heavy, too large, wet boots
iron ladders and very narrow ones, been half drowned
by spray and back lash from nozzles of the hoses, seen
water come out, or rather a chemical come out at 100 lb.
pressure and break off in foot lengths like falling ice
cylinders(?) 6" in diameter and a foot long. Seen the side of
a tin building coated with this ice like an snow iced cake.
Made rooms of notes and listened to various lectures. Most of
our trouble has been with an engine called a Handy-Billy,
a little two by four affair that when going sounds exactly
like a high speed outboard when it finally gets going. It is
used to pump water on a ship when the regular mains are
damaged beyond use. It is as temperamental as

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Harbo and is a jewel when it gets going. Today we had a test the last thing in the afternoon with this Handy-Billy. We started 100 ft away from the source of water, set up the Handy Billy, ran 2 hose lines of 2 lengths each, attached 2 10 ft extension nozzles, connected all the hose and put out a fire in a 5 ft oil tank about 20 ft in diameter and filled with Diesel engine oil in 45 seconds, which is within 11 seconds of the time set by the schools professional fireman, most of them from the New York fire Dept. In all today we had 182 ~~to~~ fires to extinguish in various places.

They have what they call a fire ship here, it is set up just like a ship and fires are started in various places all day, always gasoline or oil, and believe me a nice wood fire is a cinch alongside of these stubborn blasters. The worst one was down below decks, it just wouldn't go out, the water just seemed to choke it around, you would think it was all out and there would be a gust of air and it would start all over again. The only way to get out of there before the fire is out is to peel over; the instructors think a human breathes smoke instead of air. When I come from here pop will be #2 in the family as a fireman. There are only three more days now.

The only good thing about this place is weather, it has been possible to go around in shirt sleeves all the time

III

I've been here. The chow is lousy and so are the regulations. I'm glad they have a library. I've just finished a swell story called the "Crime of the Prussian Wolf", it was all about the crime of a German Prussian in the last war, now every peaceful looking ship I see I will think it is a raider. I don't seem to town since I came here, and in the discussion I had with a Lt. (J.G.) on the train coming down, I don't think I'm missing anything. Besides I want to see what money I have to come home with if I get the chance.

How is Mary making out there? Is Anne still there? I may want you to come to Phila Sunday if I can't get there. Are the menhaden all out? Have you heard from Johnny? I had to buy a white hat because that's regulations here and I didn't bring any with me. What's damp. Next to Bainbridge this is the worse. It's funny in our school there is a Lt Comm. some Lts, and S.P.O.s, The instructor told them that no rank was recognized there and all in the class are treated alike. and the funny part of it is they are, they're just as dirty and wet as we are when the day is done. Also they're are a bunch of these college ensigns, those especially we don't help too much, no more than enough to assure the success of the man-overs.

The fellow that was drunk at the station in Philly went A.W.O.S. the Saturday night we arrived, nothing has been seen of him since, they were calling his name over the speaker system Monday, but that just was a matter of form, he's a dead pigeon. I feel sorry for him, but he was very loud mouthed, I guess uncouth would be the word. There were four of us in our party sent to this school, it means the other three will have

more work to do, since we are three out of 200 that compose the crew. A job is to learn it cold and teach those on the ship how to do it, and it is very valuable, especially on these. All in all I think he was good riddance.

I'm kind of taking it for granted my darling around home safe and sound, I never think of anything happening to you in the way of an accident, I'm always afraid you will get sick and there won't be anybody there to take care of you. I'll be glad in a way when we stop saying "so long" at stations, cause that is hard on all concerned, and it seems like I'm always leaving you at a station. I hate to be leaving you mommy, I love you so much, but there is a job to be done and maybe I'll still be able to make a mark in the world. I don't think my number is ~~it~~ up in this war, if it was I'm sure I would feel it. I don't feel any apprehension at all. So there is really nothing for you to worry about.

Somebody swiped my towel the second day I was here, so I had to buy another, that and the hat set me back 90¢. Such is life. However I still have the hat in addition to my other two, the net loss is the towel which I will make up from the Sucky Bag when I get back to Philly. I'm sitting here in my undersweats, shoes and socks, writing this, all the windows are open, so you can about guess the temp. here.

Well darlin until the next round-up I will sign off, just remember I love you more than anything in the world or out of it, and nothing will ever change that, never have I seen anyone that could hold a candle to you, and you have to admit I've seen a lot of people in my life. So until our next day.

Bob.