





Portsmouth Va
April 12, 1943.

Dearest Darlin;

Received your letter today and certainly enjoyed the poem. I'm saving it. It was very swell. I'm writing this letter in the carpenter shop on top of a tool box. It is almost 8' o'clock and we have been working pretty hard since we've come back. There is quite a bit to do yet. There is quite a persistent scuttle-but going around about me. I'll write and let me know as soon as possible if ~~more~~ more is true. I could send you a telegram.

You asked what I thought of you in your letter. A very foolish question. I think you are the sweetest, Darlinest, cutest, goodest wife a guy could have, our arguments are water over the dam. You shouldn't worry about anything. I would like to stay in the Navy, but this I found I would like to be home with you better. The only thing about coming home is going away again. I hate the reason I don't want you to come to the Station with me. I can hardly bear seeing you walk away alone.

How are the kids? They should be all better by now. There isn't really anything to talk about Honey. You know this is Norfolk. Below there is a copy of that poem I was telling you about.

(over)



Norfolk

When God designed Creation
And laying the oceans and sands
With never a moment's taxation
Not even to spit on his hands.

As anyone will in a hurry,
Let things go now and then,
In all the excitement and worry
That no should have done over again.

So let us then move on the outfit,

to save the messes and blob,
And have them away in a corner
To do at the end of the job.

On the sixth afternoon of the contract
(His time would expire that day)

He boiled out the dregs of creation
and shoveled the litter away.

He gathered the wreckage and filling
The seam, the sewage and sump,
and built on the shores of the Chesapeake
The great "International Pump".

He rushed things in a hurry,
and because of the rush he was in,
He named the place Norfolk,
and Norfolk it always has been.

Then feeling gloomy and sarcastic
because it was Saturday night
He picked out the nastiest corner
And named it Granby* for spite.

It's the hum of the narrow minded
the buzzards and mud colored crows,
My strongest impression of Norfolk
Got into my head through my nose.

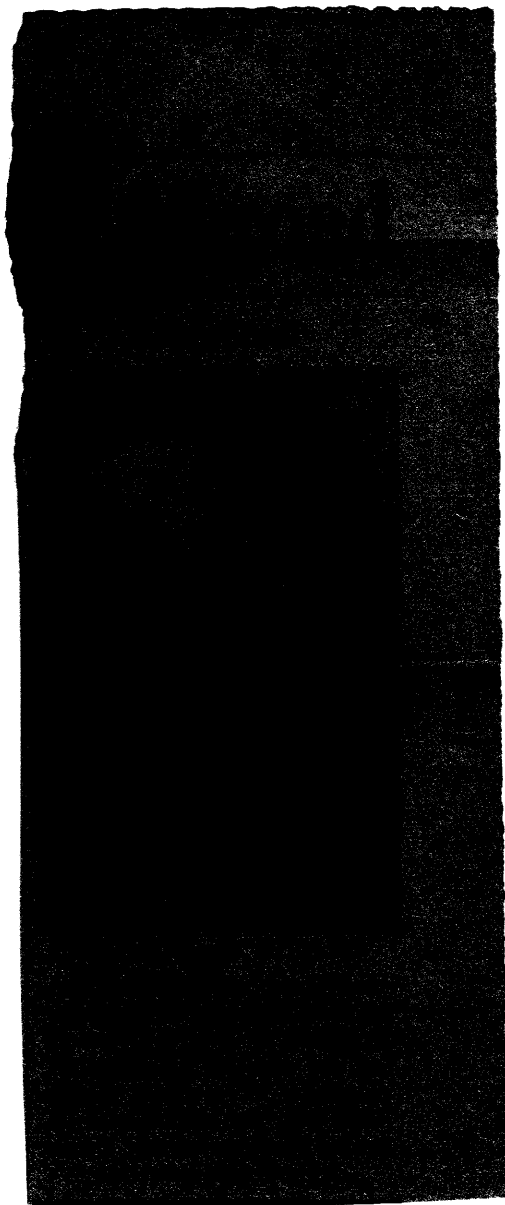
Yes, it's true they do things backwards
and the dirt doesn't dry between ribs
Here the highest prices are plentiful
And money is better than brains.

So it's back to the
A sadder but wiser
Cause God played
when Norfolk was
North for years truly
chap
I joke on the people
on the map.

It's the land on the
The town of the
The average American
would rather be
named in "hell".

James E. Parker

*Granby and Main str. same as 9th + Asbury Ave.





UNITED STATES NAVY

April 18, 1943

Dearest Darling,

You will be surprised to get this from Texas. I didn't even know we were going until a half an hour before we left. Right now we are just north of Cape Hatteras, we went into the Gulf Stream this a.m. I was certainly some surprised when I got up this morning and saw the color of the water. It is the darkest deepest blue you can imagine, I am still amazed at the color. The froth rolling back from the bow of the ship looks like white soap suds into which a bottle of blueing has been spilled. Last night was our first night out and it was rather a hectic night. There are some other ships like ours and some destroyers. Last night about 9:30 I was awakened by three shell booms and I thought sure a tin fish had got us, almost immediately the General quarters alarm went off. I mean I was scared and so was everybody else. I can remember saying "No hurry fellows, plenty of time" I guess I was afraid they would start a mad scramble for the Hatches, I was surprised at my voice. It was just as if I was saying it to you in our front room. We got to our stations as fast as we could.



U.S. NAVY

To find out that a destroyer had dropped three sixth charges on something it had picked up in its sounding device. Soon after the "all secure" word was passed. Tonight we are in more dangerous waters, I didn't sleep any last night until I came off watch at 4 A.M. so I'm pretty tired. Today we passed a large convey headed into Port. I'm beginning ~~until~~ to know what it means by "Safe in Port." We sleep with our clothes on, even our shoes, our life jackets are our pillow and we are still a long way from Texas. I feel pretty sure I'll sleep tonight, last night was sort of an initiation.

I have to go and relieve the 4 to 8 watch for supper now so I'll write more tomorrow. The light goes out at dusk as the ship is fast dark all night.

April 19, Last P.M. we ran into a terrific storm, that is wind storm, two-thirds of the crew are sea sick, I've been lucky I haven't felt a bit different. The ship sure is doing some funny gyrations and it seems to be getting rougher. Our gun mount is 30 ft above the water and waves were bumping into it so frequently that we had to go below into the forecabin and rig our phones up in there. The wind is still high but the sky has cleared and we've picked up a couple of planes about we were too late had earlier. We are now about halfway down the Texas coast but

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UNITED STATES NAVY

quite a distance out to sea, about 200 miles.

Another thing I've seen that I never saw before is flying fish. They are about 6" long and fly about 2 ft above the surface of the water for about 10 ft and then dive in. I bet the kids would get a kick out of them. Alf Johnny is on a destroyer I feel for him as I have been watching the ones with us through binoculars and most of the time all you can see of them is their radio mast sticking up out of the water. They go under every wave and must be pretty rough riding. Well mommy will write you more tomorrow as it is almost time for black-out.

April 20. Well Honey the storm has abated and though it looks as if we are heading into another the ocean is like a lake today. The wind started to go down last night. Today we picked up a couple of dirigibles off the Fla. coast and this afternoon we set our clocks back an 1/2 hour as we must have crossed a meridian. The weather here is warm, during the day it's too warm for me. This morning we were in sight of the coast and traveled along it all day. Miami Beach is certainly a beautiful place from the ocean front. All the buildings are white and there must be numerous hotels as there are a good



NAVY DEPARTMENT

many, tall, high white bledys along the shore. Tonight we will swing around Key West and head across the Gulf. We expect to be in Texas Sat where I'll mail this. We've had no more seas and most the fellows recovered from their sea sickness today. The day cruising is swell but we all hate to see night come. I know what Johnny meant when he said the navy was OK, but he would rather be home. It sure would be nice to go to bed again and feel secure for the night. A couple of the boys drew about 500 lb of fishing line over the stern now. Mike caught a small Barracuda this afternoon about 4 ft long, well honey its getting near time to darken ship so until to morrow, I'll have to start writing earlier so I can write you.

April 22. Missed last night Darling I was pretty tired so I layed down early and slept until 1130 P.M. We are now in the Gulf off Mexico and everything seems serene. It is the loneliest place I've seen, in all of yesterday and today we've sighted only one other ship and a plane. We are due in tomorrow night and the chamber of Commerce of Houston is giving the fellows a dance with free beer. I'm not going as I don't like my liberties planned for me and dances don't appeal. The weather is pretty hot here and I'm all suntanned like a port boiled lobster.



III

UNITED STATES NAVY

Tomorrow night we will be able to sleep in security and we won't have that 12 to 4 gun watch business either. When we go from Houston no one has heard, but I'll try to let you know if possible but I don't think it will be. My C.P.O. is going away on a 30 day leave and I think after that ~~that~~ he will be transferred. He has been teaching me damage control so I'll be busy on that until he comes back or some one else takes his place. Nobody seems to like this ship though I can see where its so bad, but as the chief says, when men grumble and growl their happy but when they don't growl its time to worry. Well mommy I'll sign off until tomorrow as I have to go to C.P.O.'s quarters and go over some blue prints. P.S. we set our clocks back another hr the last night.

Darling here we are in Texas. April 23. Well cows as yet or cowboys. Right now Berwick and I are on our 4th bottle of beer and are off to a good start. We are anchored in the Shell Refinery here. It is a virtual forest of oil tanks you can't see the end of them. It sure feels good to get on land again. We had to walk a 1 1/2 hrs to this place from the dock. We are on our way to Houston to get



WAX SEALS ONLY

Pickled. My Nuns can stand a good relocation. We
passed a floating mine-chase, m. about 3.30 in the Hal-
verson Bay. you can find it on the map. We missed it
by 50 feet the ship behind us missed it by 10 ft. It must
~~have been an American mine boat but broken down. It is~~
hotter than hell here. and we have to wear our blues
just the same. So you can understand why we stopped here
to get some beer before we went into town. I miss you very
much Darling and am looking forward to when I can get home
again. Don't be worried about me as this ship is practically
unsinkable. Let me know when Johnny is as soon as possible and
if you hear from him find out the number of his destroyer as
we will fuel a lot of them. I'm practically assured of a
raise in rating, but don't know when it will occur. Just
remember honey that my very thought is for you and the mis-
takers. I love you so much honey. I feel as if I've done you a
great wrong coming in the Navy, but try to see my side too,
its where I belong and every American that thinks enough of his
country to take care of it. Suppose the Japs were and done away
with Ruffitt season? I don't know when we go from here but
I will ~~write~~ write you as soon as possible. Let my Dad know my
whereabouts so he won't be worried.

Yours Parker