



Jan 10, 1944

Dearest Darlin,

We are now about half way to Casablanca, and though I can't mail this until we are back in the States I can at least write it. This is one of those famous slow convoys that this ship seems to have a knack of getting into.

Before I go into the usual chatter I want to put you aright on one subject. I'm not surrounded by myself with any pretty faces. I'm not chunking in excess. How that got into your head is more than I can figure. It's probably a figment of your own imagination. When you stop to think that there are about a hundred sailors to every girl in Norfolk you can readily see that even though I might have the desire it wouldn't be feasible. I imagine most of the girls would be as discerning as you and know a bad egg when they saw one.

I do go out and have a sort of a time with the fellows. After a week or more at sea, what ever it may be, one does feel like blowing off a little steam. The first thing we do is get a room with one honest-to-God bed in it. Then we get something to eat and drink. Anything to get away from this Navy cove. We generally have to get a double order in order to get filled, as one portion is hardly sufficient. I always start and finish with a quart of milk.

I'm writing this lying in my bunk with one

leg over on top of the other knee. You should try it some-
time. There's a gang over in the corner with a glee club in
full swing. It's a bit unharmonious, but they're having fun. This
trip is scheduled for forty nine days. (Round trip). As I was
going to add some more the lights went out. So I'm
writing now from the paint locker.

I expect that when our mail catches
up you'll be able to tell me about Christmas. I hope the
kiddies had a nice one. As you said they are good chil-
dren and deserve everything. I would certainly like to
see them again, but when that will be I've no idea.

I also wanted to tell you not to worry about
my soul. The Lord won't have it and the Devil doesn't
want it. In all I think I'll get along with it as
well as a good many of those hypocrites you see going
to church every Sunday. In addition, don't think
I'm risking my life, as the heap of pig iron will be
floating fifty years after the war is over.

I had a friend that works in a store here,
to take in the Vhs until we get back, that's the only way
I could get it without coming after it. I expect to disturb
some of the monotony that cloaks this existence with it. It's a
shame that Sears burned for I'm going to miss that
book. It was very complete.

Feb. 2.

Between this page and the last you received "v" mail. As usual there is very little to write of. The trip is slowly coming to its end. There is supposed to be many transfers this time. The Niobrara is to cease as a tanker. It's going to be converted into a crane ship. A hundred ~~and~~ fifty ton crane is to be mounted at the yard. Everyone is expecting a leave. I'm not optimistic about a leave or a transfer. I know my luck too well for that.

I could have had shore duty in Casablanca but couldn't make up my mind to stay there for eighteen months. It's a poor place, anyhow, and though the worst shore duty is considered better than the best sea duty, I didn't want it there.

I'm not in the writing mood tonight. My nerves are all on edge and I can't concentrate on anything. So Honey. I'll stop here and add to it later.

Still the same night. I can tell you about Casablanca. It's at least a topic for conversation.

The main street starts at the harbor. It's very wide, more so than Broadway. In the center there is a wide walk for pedestrians, fringed by native ^{shrubs} ~~plants~~ and trees resembling Palms. The buildings that line both sides are

from four to six stories high, cream colored cream and various shades of cream and tan. They are pretty from without. One of them is used by the Red Cross for a servicemen's center. It is a large tan building with a wide entrance set in a large arch above a half dozen steps. Inside is a large room with an information desk on the left. The center is occupied by a collection of multicolored leather chairs placed in a large circle. Above, a balcony goes three-quarters of the way around. Above the balcony is a large stained glass cupola. On the right side is a long narrow room that is used for a snack bar. The rear entrance opens into an oval garden, inclosed around the edge and furnished with wicker furniture. The shrubbery and trees are very dense in the center. Along the walk, canvas water-bugs hang from trees, as full plumping facilities haven't, as yet, been restored in the city.

The business district is composed of large, empty stores. It's much like a ghost section of city. The only stores being open are small novelty stores, and they sell mostly American imports. One of the most notable things, is the closed doors of the great French shipping lines. Old liner ads and ship sailing dates are still on the bill-boards.

The French people are clean and fairly well dressed. The Arabs, whom the Americans allowed to have the run of the city, are filthy and ragged to extreme. I haven't seen any that don't possess

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sores of some kind on the exposed parts of their bodies.

Most of the American Troops have been transferred.

The French are the main army of occupation. They are dressed, or I should say uniformed, in American uniforms from the last war. They, the few British soldiers, and the black British long-clause troops, along with French, British and American sailors make it quite a picturesque place.

The harbor has been nearly cleared of the sunken ships. a few destroyers and smaller craft are still under water. When we came in the harbor the bow of a 450 ft large ship was sticking from the water. In four days it was afloat and many hose lines were running water being pumped from the interior. The salvage crews have done a wonderful piece of work there. There were more than forty ships sunk at the time of the attack. Most of them were victims of the U.S.S. Brooklyn. A great French battleship, the pride of the French fleet was damaged so badly it is still undergoing repairs.

Well morning, that's all the news from the front. We still have 1800 miles to go, before I can mail this. So until the next round-up.

your
Parker.



(CENSOR'S STAMP)

TO: MRS. Joseph P. Hillman
275 No. Mississippi Ave.
Atlantic City, N. J.

SEE INSTRUCTION NO. 2

FROM

Joseph Parker Hillman Pfc 3c
651-94-94
USS Niobrara
% Fleet P.O. N.Y. N.Y.

(Sender's complete address above)

Dearest Darlin,

A. wee note to tell you everything is
O.K. I'm still a vast distance from Atlantic City.
There isn't very much to write of; the topics that
could make interesting reading would, in all probability,
be censored.

Each passing day brings the end closer,
either mine, or the wars. The only thing I can
tell you, is that it's peaceful here, and the war is far,
far away.

Say hello to the Musketeers and I'm looking
forward to seeing all of you at the first opportunity. This
is all for now, Honey.

yours
Parker

HAVE YOU FILLED IN COMPLETE
ADDRESS AT TOP?

REPLY BY
V---MAIL

HAVE YOU FILLED IN COMPLETE
ADDRESS AT TOP?

FROM: Joseph Parker Hillman
 USS Niobrara Ave
 910 Fleet P.O. N.Y. N.Y.



V... MAIL

TO: Mrs. Joseph P. Hillman
 275 No. Mississippi Ave.
 Atlantic City, N. J.

FOLD

HERE

FOLD

HERE

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