

September 3, 1944

Dear Mother and Dad,

This will be the first letter you have gotten from me in a good long while. I wish I could tell you that as I write this I am feeling well and Happy. Physically I am O.K., but I am troubled inside and with good cause. Here is the whole story at least as much of it as I am allowed to relate right now.

Yesterday was a day which will long stand in my memory. I was on a bombing hop with Dlaney as my radioman and Lt. (j.g.) Ted White as my gunner. He did not usually fly, but I asked him if he would like to go with me and he wanted to. We had the usual joking around in the readyroom about having to bail out etc. - at that time it all seemed so friendly and innocent but now it seems awful and sinister.

I will have to skip all the details of the ~~xx~~ attack as they would not pass the censorship, but the fact remains that we got hit. The cockpit filled with smoke and I told the boys in back to get their parachutes on. They didn't answer at all, but I looked around and couldn't see Ted in the turret so I assumed he had gone below to get his chute fastened on. I headed the plane out to sea and put on the throttle so as we could get away from the land as much as possible. I am not too clear about the next parts. ~~I~~ I told them to bail out, and then I called up the skipper and told him I was bailing out. My crewmen never acknowledged either transmission, and yet the radio gear was working - at least mine was and unless they had been hit back there theirs should have been, as since we had talked not long before. I heard the skipper say something but things were happening so fast that I don't quite remember what it was. I turned the plane up in an attitude so as to take pressure off the back hatch so the boys could get out. After that I straightened up and started to get out myself. At that time I felt certain that they had bailed out. The cockpit was full of smoke and I was choking from it. I glanced at the wings and noticed that they were on fire. I still do not know where we got hit and never will. I am now beginning to think that perhaps some of the fragments may have wither killed the two in back, or possibly knocked out their communications.

Fortunately I had fastened all my ~~xxxxxx~~ straps before the dive and also I had left my hatch open, something I hadn't been doing before. Just the day before I had asked the skipper and he advised leaving it open in a dive. The jump itself wasn't too bad. I stuck my head out first and the old wind really blew me the rest of the way out. I do remember tugging at my radio cord which I had forgotten to unplug. As I left the plane my head struck the tail. I now have a cut head and bruised eye but it is far from serious. After jumping, I must have pulled the ripcord too soon for when I was floating down, I looked up at the canopy and several of the panels were all ripped out. Just as I got floating down, I saw the plane strike the water ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ and also ~~my~~. There was ~~my~~ 1  
My back ached as did my leg ~~and~~ ~~my~~. In the meantime, I noticed ~~my~~ 1  
sore from the chute straps, but the



today I feel much better. Last nite I rolled and tossed. I kept reliving the whole experience. My heart aches for the families of those two boys with me. Delaney had always been a fine loyal crewman. His devotion to duty was at all times highly commendable and his personality ~~xx~~ most pleasing. I shall most certainly write to his family after I am sure they have been notified by the Bureau.

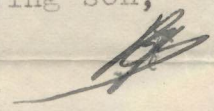
As for Ted White, I have spoken of him several times in my letters before. He was the fellow from Yale, one class ahead of Stu Clemat. He comes from St. Paul Minn, White Bear Lake to be exact. Perhaps Dad, you know the family. If so do not write them until you get the word from me or elsewhere that the family has been officially notified. There is a possibility that they parachuted and I did not see them, but I am afraid ~~xx~~ it is quite remote as we received a message aboard here last nite saying that only one chute opened. All in all it is terribly discouraging and frankly it bothers me a good deal.

As time goes by, I shall add bits to this letter and will mail it at my earliest possible ~~convenience~~. I shall do the same by Bar, but shall not go into detail like this over my experience so ~~xxxx~~ please read her the parts of this letter which might interest her. It's a funny thing how much I thought about Bar during the whole experience. What I wouldn't give to be with her right now. Just to see that lovely face and those beautiful eyes and to know she was by my side. <sup>would be so reassuring</sup> Right now I long to be with you so much. To be with you both ~~xxxx~~ and to be with Bar is my main desire—at least it won't be too long, the time is going by quite rapidly. I

Please excuse all my misspellings—they are caused not from ignorance but from carelessness in operating this machine.

much much love to you all,

your ever devoted and loving son,



Sept 5th

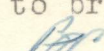
Dear Mym and Dad,

I have just finished writing Bar a long letter so I will add a bit more to this one for you. I did tell Bar all about what ~~xx~~ happened, so disregard the part I wrote in the first part of this concerning that.

I ~~xx~~ am now standing Junior officer of the Deck watches and I really love them. I am not in any way a qualified submariner as you can well imagine, but armed with a pair of binoculars and dark glasses if I need them I can sweep the sea and skies pretty well. After my griping about the security watches aboard the ship it may seem funny my enjoying any watches, but here it is different. These watches afford me a good chance to get up topside and grab some of that fresh air. When we are submerged, I am utterly useless to them, but when on the surface I stand two watches a day-6-8PM and 4-6AM. just a nice length.

The food continues to be excellent, with steaks ice cream, chicken etc in abundance. You actually can't believe how good the chow is. Of course they have a much smaller complement of officers to prepare for, but still the food is so much better that there is no comparison. As for sleep, I have been "claiming more than my fair share". I usually sleep all morning and also all nite until my watch comes up. The sacks are comfortable and so darn inviting. I'd love to see 'The Big One' trying to get in and out of some of them. Dad, you just couldn't do it. All the beds are fine once you get in- that is until you have to get out. I sort of get half way in and then have to pull the rest of me in like a worm. The boat is now over crowded, havinf three extra officers aboard. But since two men are on watch all the time there is always a bed for evryone. The fellow coming off watch just crawls into the bed which his relief had been sleeping in. That continues on till morning. Oh yes, they even have movies aboard evry other day. They show them in the crews messing compartment which is the largest (but still tiny) gathering place. They have a miniature screen and it is just as good. All the people love this duty. It is a very happy boat to say the least.

One of the officers showed me all around and tried to explian the equipment to me. I'm afraid I must have seemed like an egg-head, but I did get the general idea of the operations. So far diving and submerging haven't hurt my ears at all, and evrything about this life agrees with me. I think I would still prefer flying, since you are out in the open so much more, but this would be my second choice.

All the officers, and crew too, are just as nice as they can be. The Captain is ap each. He eats his meals with us in the wardroom and is just as good a guy as you'd want to meet. Yesterday I got a hunk of liferaft and stamped the name of the ship and the date on it and then all the officers signed it. They also took some picture the day they brought me aboard which I will try to get hold of to bring home. will quit now  
much love, 

September 8th

Dear Mum and Dad,

Back once again, I have just come off my early morning watch and breakfast won't be ready for a while so I shall write a little more. I have taken to sleeping even more than when I first came aboard. I now sleep for three hours in the Am and then try to sleep at least two in the the afternoon. I don't usually get in the sack at nite before 10 or 11 so I have to make up for it all in all. I try to get about 8 or 9 hours of sleep a day.

Haven't been doing a great deal out of the ordinary- just daydream the time away. It is such fun to think about getting home, the wedding and all that. I find myself bursting forth into song up on the bridge. I am not sure the others up there appreciate my efforts too much, but if they ever complain I am going to tell them that my mother feels I am potentially a second Caruso- and I don't mean Frank Caruso either.

My eye has completely healed, save for a tiny scar and, the worst part, one chunk of eyebrow is missing. It is sort of a laugh, but I do hope it grows back in. There is just skin where there should be eyebrow.

One thing I do miss aboard here is my daily shower which I loved aboard the ship. Water cannot be produced as abundantly aboard this boat, so naturally we have to conserve whenever and wherever possible. One shower per week is the ration. Tomorrow I can take mine- wow do I need it (unattractive) The shower is in a tiny little room but by being very cagey about it you can manage to get well cleaned up. The clothes situation is far from serious since all we wear is sandals, undies and pants- no shirts, just undershirts for meals.

I hope you have not been worrying up till the time you received these letters. This may be the first you have heard of my experience, I don't know. I try to think about it as little as possible, yet I cannot get the thought of those two boys out of my mind. It is so different, reading about people getting killed etc. Even when Jim and Dick Houle were lost, though I did feel it deeply, it did not affect me ~~ix~~ as this has. Oh, I am O.K. - I do want to fly again and I shall not be scared of it, but I know I shall never be able to shake the memory of this incident, and I don't believe I want to completely. They were both such fine people.

Well I smell the breakfast cooking so I will secure this for now. ~~xx~~ Much love to you all,



Copy 1-100-100-100

Saturday Sept 16th

Dear Mum and Dad,

Several days have slipped by since I last sat down before this machine - days not without excitement, but unfortunately the details will have to remain unrelated for the present.

Gradually I am becoming more used to this life. At first I missed my daily bath but now I am used to my weekly one. I will say that I certainly do look forward to the day when my bath is due. Today was the big day. Water is precious, but soap is plentiful, so I soap and soap and finally rinse. It is amazing how much better I feel after this weekly pleasure. With my bath comes a clean set of clothes. I hate to have to borrow other peoples things, but unfortunately I came equipped only with pants, drawers and flying jacket. They have a laundryman aboard which helps some.

I have been on the mid watch for the last few days. That puts me on watch from 12-2 at nite and from 12-3 during the day. This way I get a little sun once in awhile. If we are submerged I don't stand a watch for obvious reasons.

There is a fellow aboard here named Jerry Redmon. He graduated from Harvard in '42. They live right next door practically to the Lovetts on Long Island-Glen Cove I believe.

The food continues to be excellent. I have not been sleeping as well lately, and I am sure it is because I never get any exercise. I could take calisthenics I suppose. I better start soon because I really do feel sluggish and rotten without at least a trot down the old flight deck.

I am certainly eager to get back to the squadron now. It seems like ages since I have been back. I can just picture the letters on my desk and I long to be able to tear into them. I haven't heard from Bar in almost a month now. Did I tell you about my gotee. It started off beautifully, but gradually developed into a joke - sort of like Gruff's moustache, so today off it came. If worse came to worse X, however, I am now convinced that I could grow ~~xxx~~ a fairly presentable gotee, given plenty of time. Most of the enlisted men aboard here have big full faced beards. It is indeed quite a sight.

I have been doing quite a bit of reading lately. Retreat From Rostov; and Dos Passo's "Number One" plus "Captain from Connecticut" and now "The Robe". The latter appeals to me a great deal. So far I have only read a hundred pages or so but it has been deeply absorbing.

I wonder if you have seen Bar since you have been back from Maine. I imagine so if she didn't go back to college. By now Nance is undoubtedly back at college and Buck and John

almost ready for school now. Where is Buck going to go? In one of your letters you said that Pres was coming North for a week or so to see about his eyes. I wonder if he made it. I feel so darn out of touch with you and I hate the feeling. This great distance seems so much closer when I have your letters to fall back on.

My eye has completely healed now - there is no scar and the only visible sign of the accident is a big bare spot where eye brow should be growing. They were all kidding me because I have no scar or evidence of my wound now by which I can claim the PURPLE Heart.

I still think about the accident a good deal. So many things that could have done come to my mind and bother me. It was a terrible thing all right.

Getting on to another subject. Did you ever see that Oakes girl with the funny nick-name, I can't remember it for the life of me. She was my downfall. I hope your last letters have included bits of news about Ed, Vinny, Red Dog, etc. Perhaps some day I will run into them out here. I hope, however, that it will not be out here, but at the Field Club or some such spot.

Well, I have rambled on long enough, and shall secure for now. The steaks are on the table. Much much love to all the family and to yourselves,

The food continues to be excellent. I have not been sleeping as well lately, and I am sure it is because I never get any exercise. I could take calisthenics I suppose. I better start soon because I really do feel sluggish and rotten without at least a trot down the old flight deck.

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I wonder if you have seen Bar since you have been





was so tired he couldn't escape.  
He was a baby seagull I think -  
After a brief rest in the wardrobe,  
we turned him loose. Also one of  
the numerous flying fish in these  
waters came aboard. They are  
pretty and graceful, and though I have  
seen them continually for the last 6  
months I never tire of looking at  
them. That's all the news!

From the news broadcasts it  
seems that Jimmy's boys have been  
having quite an exciting time.

This is a sad letter.  
I miss you all very much and  
can hardly wait to get your letter.  
Much love to all,  
Pop

Sept 27th

Dear Mum and Dad,

This will be the last installment before mailing - I shall continue to write while we are at sea, but we will get an opportunity to get this off soon so I shall seal it up and get it ready.

Today was really rough - excellent Tomboy weather to say the least. I am afraid the poor Tomboy would never have been able to weather the waves we had today though. They would break over the bridge and we would immediately duck hoping to let them pass over us. My stomach has not bothered me today thank heavens. Remember the Bermuda trip when we were sick. I think perhaps I could weather it a little better now, having been at sea more; however, I still get that horrible feeling every so often.

I am most anxious to know what the bosses will do with us when we hit port. I am hoping that I will get back to the squadron. If not I may get stuck in another outfit which would be terrible, but then too I may get sent home which would be perfect, even though I would have to travel in a barrel and without a sign of a record or a paper with me. Actually I do not have any idea what they will do with me, so it is not worthwhile speculating. I am hoping to get either back to the squadron or to get home of course, but for love nor money could I say what the outcome of this little adventure will be.

I shall look up Pressy's father in law in a few days, may not see him but will get in touch with him if at all possible.

I think you had better not mention the fact that Ted White was with me to anyone who could possibly let it get to the Whites unless for some reason you know that they have definitely been notified by the government. As soon as I find out that they have been notified I shall write to them. They will probably receive the word that he is "missing in action" so there too we will have to be tactful.

Well, I shall stop for now. I hope this letter does not worry you. You have told me that you want to know everything that happens, and I too think it is by far better than just getting "the day is fine" letters. I am now fine and am in all respects ready to finish up with the squadron. I have not forgotten what has happened, but then I never shall completely forget about ~~the~~ it; however, I am no longer as troubled by the tragic mishap as I was at first.

Much much love to you all. I shall write you soon again. With much love to all the family and to my Barbara girl,

*your ever devoted Pop*

Lt V. J. G. W. Bush  
VT 5,  
FPO  
San Francisco, Cal.

OCT  
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1944  
NAVY



Mr. Mrs. Prescott S. BUSH  
Grove Lane  
Greenwich, Conn.

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