



My Letters Home from the Pacific War: A 90 year old veteran finds his 70 year old letters

Mr William J Starr

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These letters cover an unbelievable variety of war-time experiences, not shared by many servicemen, from terrifying near-death experiences on the beaches at Iwo Jima where 6000 casualties occurred on the first day, and where a kamikaze pilot's last-second inexplicable course-change caused his plane to crash harmlessly into the ship, (see front cover) to light-hearted accounts of tricky deals getting supplies. Also, in the move to Japan, the remarkable coincidental meeting, in a pearl shop in Osaka, of two former residents of New York, one American and one Japanese, and the unforgettable encounter with a Japanese Good Samaritan train-station agent. The ship moves to Shanghai where it is to deliver pure water to the ships docked in the Whangpoo River. The Shanghai stories include the author's near-miss of the Admiral's ship and the unforeseen reputation from that near-miss, the crew's magical response to a priest's request for aid to his famished orphans, the beautiful unapproachable Iranian page in the British production of Richard II, the hordes of international shoppers and the \$63,000 suitcase, and widespread dysentery from 'C' rated restaurants. The next few months are spent on a frightening assignment as a 'detonator' ship, working with minesweepers off the coast of Formosa, clearing the area of mines. The letters then move to Pearl Harbor where the author, now captain of the ship, through forgivable trickery, saves members of his crew from being transferred to ships going to the Bikini Atom Bomb test. On the last leg of the 8,000-mile return from Shanghai to the States, the ship runs into a massive storm off California, where it comes within 2 degrees of capsizing under mountainous waves. A truly remarkable odyssey!

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