

10

Charles had completed basic training with the Navy and was on furlough, visiting Nana in Eagle Pass, when Pito's letter arrived.

Sept. 7, 1944

Dearest Brother:

Just a few minutes ago Chato came in running with a letter Pito sent Mother where she says you had written her telling her you were at a Hospital in England. I am sure glad you are there as I have been terribly worried since we got word of you being wounded. If you can write please do so, as I would like to hear from you. I promise to write more often, as I could not do so while in training. I am leaving today to San Diego to continue my training.

Here's wishing for a quick recovery.

All my love Your Brother, Charles

When Charles arrived back to his duty station in San Diego he was assigned to the USS *Bismarck Sea*, an escort aircraft carrier. They sailed to Pearl Harbor on October 16, and then to the South Pacific to support the invasions of Japanese held islands.

After his release from the Hospital, Arthur was sent to the 1st Provisional Battalion, Army School Center in Swindon, England. The Prov. BN was made up of fresh troops coming from the States and soldiers who had recovered from wounds. Here the soldiers would receive further training and re-training to prepare them for action in the combat areas. They would then be sent to the front lines where needed to replace ongoing casualties.

Because Arthur was an experienced combat veteran he was assigned to provide training for the fresh troops arriving from the States.



24, Sept. 1944 *Somewhere in England*
Dearest Sweetheart:

Hello Honey. I haven't heard from you for some time. I hope nothing is wrong. I hope that you have been getting my letters as I write you as often as I can. Please address your next letter to the address enclosed. How is Jimmy and Rose Lee. I bet she is very pretty like her Mother. I guess by this time you know what happened to my brother. Honey, I can't write in words the way I feel.

Please write when you can and please write to Mother. I am worrying about her. Miss you all very much.

*With Best of Love
Arthur*

It was still taking a long time to receive letters but Pito and Arthur would write almost every day. When letters were finally received there would be several in a bundle. Letters were usually short because of the small size of V-Mail. The worry never seemed to stop but letters from home were always comforting and Arthur enjoyed reading them very much.

Sept. 8, 1944

My dearest husband, Arthur:

Sweetheart, today I received the "Purple Heart" medal awarded you for your wounds received in action, and believe me, I felt as if I had received part of you. I'm surely proud of you and proud also of possessing this medal. Am writing Mary today about it. Jimmy thinks the world of you and tears rolled down his cheeks when we received the "Purple Heart". Keep your chin up and pray that you will be with us soon.

May God Bless You

*Your wife forever,
Pito*



Sept. 11, 1944

My dearest husband:

Sweetheart, I pray the Lord with all my heart that you will not be sent back to the front lines. You have done your part, your duty as a soldier. I pray, not only for my sake and your mother's, but for the children's sake, especially Rose Lee whom you don't know. God will hear me and help me out. I talk to Him nightly and hope you do the same. The Guardian Angel will guard you wherever you will be, I am satisfied of that. Honey, do pray hard that you will soon be back with us and please let us know how you really are. Do not worry about anything, sweetheart, and may the Lord answer my prayers.

God Bless You

Your wife forever, Pito

9-13-44

Dear Arthur:

So far I have not heard from you. I know where you are because of Pito. I only hope that everything is alright with you. Do write as soon as you can. Would like to hear from you and do tell me all about it if it isn't too much for you. I know you would rather not speak of it all, that you want to forget, not talk about it. I know how you must feel, but I want you to know that I am very proud of you. Pito wrote that she had received the "Purple Heart". She is proud of it and you, but she would rather have you home as the rest of us do. May God Bless You.

Love, your sister Mary

It would take Arthur some time to talk about Oscar; but he would never forget. He was anxious to get back to the 9th Regiment on the front and help finish this War so he could go home, but his duty was now to train the fresh troops and he would remain in England for several months performing that duty; hoping that the training would save some young soldiers life.



Pito remained hopeful that Arthur would not be sent back to the front lines. She was staying busy at home taking care of the children and she never ceased to pray. Jimmy was now in the third grade and had more school work to do which Pito would help him with. Rose Lee was getting bigger and Pito would take her to the Hospital for regular checkups and shots; she was a good baby and liked to play with her rattles till she fell asleep. Everyone adored her and said she looked like Arthur. There were also repairs still to be done in mama Lupita's house. Pito wall papered the room she was staying in and painted the woodwork ivory to give it a warm and comforting look.

Pito stayed in touch with Arthur's family in Eagle Pass and with his brothers in the Pacific. Edward would write to her often and she would let Arthur know in her letters that his brothers and everyone in Eagle Pass were doing okay. They all still looked at Edward as the baby. Nana took the loss of Oscar very hard but she was getting better as time went on. Mary's boys were a helpful distraction.

Sept. 27, 1944

My dearest husband:

Sweetheart, the baby is getting so big and strong that I can't hold her in my arms any more. She's always jumping and moving so much. She crawls all over the bed and sometimes I put her on the floor for a while.

Edward is doing well as per his letters. He sure is a swell kid; God take care of him.

Jimmy is doing fine in school. Honey, do not worry about us. We love you very much and always will. Nana and the rest of the family are okay. I hear from them often and hope to hear from you soon. Darling, I'm so proud of you and love you so much that it hurts inside. Goodnight and God Bless you.

Your wife forever, Pito

Edward was enjoying a long furlough in Australia before heading back to New Guinea in late October. Pito's brother Leo was home on leave in October and the family had a reunion for him at mama Lupita's house. She was very happy to see her son; they were all happy to see him. Leo and Tinzi had good news that they were going to have a baby. It was also sad because Leo had to return to his duty station in California soon.

Oct. 12, 1944

My dearest husband:

Honey, brother Leo left today and gosh, it hurt to see him go. He left his wife here for a while until he knows his situation. He is to become a father in six or seven months. He thinks the world of you and said our baby is adorable and thinks his baby will be too. Leo's wife was out in the dumps and felt very blue, but I told her to keep her chin up that I had already gone through that and am here to help her. They both send you their regards. Do not worry, dearest, we are all getting along alright. Nana and the rest of the family are well. Edward writes often and he is okay. Sweetheart we love you very very much. Goodnight wherever you are and God Bless you.

Your wife forever, Pito



Section "B"

2516th A A F Base Unit

Eagle Pass Army Air Field

Eagle Pass, Texas

Oct. 23, 1944

Dearest Brother: Received your letter yesterday. Mother and Joe and my boys are all just fine. Hope this will find you the same God willing. Yes, dear brother, I know how

you must feel about poor Oscar. But, as you say, there is nothing we can do about it now. It was a great shock to all of us. But we have had to be very brave about it for Mother's sake. She was a nervous wreck for a while but she is alright now, don't you worry none about her. She went to visit your wife in San Antonio and the stay over seemed to do her good just like her doctor said it would. At first she did not want to go, but Pito came down for her. Yes, she is alright now and the boys are a great help cause they keep her busy. So you shouldn't worry so much about her or any of us. Take care of yourself so that someday you get to come home and be with us and your wife and darling baby, God willing.

Got a letter from Edward yesterday; he is back in New Guinea. He sent some pictures of him in the jungle. He also said that he wanted to know what was wrong since I never mention you or Oscar anymore in my letters. I had not said a word because when we got the notice about Oscar from the War Dept. we received a letter from Edward saying he was going to Australia on a furlough and I wanted him to enjoy his time there. Of course now that he wrote and said he was back on duty, I wrote and told him all about it. He had to know sooner

or later. I only hope he doesn't take it too hard. I wonder if I have done right? What do you think? I am worried now and won't rest or be at ease until I hear from him again. I hope he doesn't get nervous.

May God bless you and take care of you for us. Love, your sister Mary

Letters were starting to catch up with Arthur in England. Some of them had been written back in July and August. Pito often enclosed pictures of Rose Lee and the family in San Antonio; and also pictures she would take while visiting Nana in Eagle Pass. The pictures were a visual means of sharing life back home with Arthur and he was always anxious to see them.

1, November 1944 *Somewhere in England*
My Dearest Wife:

Honey, received some of your letters and pictures. I knew that sooner or later mail would catch up with me. I think some of the letters followed me around in France and here in England in the Hospital. I received about eight letters that you wrote some time in July, August, and September. Of course, I am getting some dated October too. Rose Lee really looks very pretty in the pictures.

How I wish I could see her. Jimmy looks good too. Glad to hear that he is doing alright in school. Honey, I write you as often as I can. Hope you get my letters soon. Please don't worry about me, I am okay thank God. Heard from my sister today and am writing her a letter. Give my love to your Mother and family. I miss you all very much. Please kiss Rose Lee for me, will you honey. Will write again soon. All my Love
Arthur

14 Nov. 44

Philippine Islands

Dear Arthur:

Hi there how are you? In the best of health I hope. It's been a long time since I heard from you. I heard about Oscar. Poor kid, I guess there's nothing we can do about it. Also heard about your mishap. Glad to hear you are up and around again. Let me know how it happened. I've been on quite a few invasion task forces. Had a furlough to Sydney, Australia and spent 36 days there. Came back just in time to make this invasion of the Philippines. Things here at first were pretty rough but everything under control now and running smoothly. I hear from Pito quite often. Expecting to hear from you soon. Take care of yourself. Best of luck and health.
Love, Edward

Another Thanksgiving and Christmas away from home came for Arthur and he hoped that everyone back home would have a good time. There was no traditional Macy's parade since the War began; all of the giant rubber balloons were donated to the War effort. Thanksgiving dinner was very different with millions of Americans serving overseas and on the home front. Because of food rationing the meal took more planning and recipes had to use alternative ingredients. Turkey was also in short supply because of a huge demand by the military for the troops. Still, the country paused as family members gathered to reflect on blessings and thank the Lord.

Nana had Thanksgiving dinner for the family in Eagle Pass. But Mary was in a hospital in San Antonio undergoing an operation and would stay with Pito while recuperating.

Pito's family gathered at Vera and Ralph's home for dinner, which remained a tradition in years to come. Tinzi had journeyed to California to stay with Leo for a while before he shipped out to the Pacific where he was

assigned to a land based aircraft support group. Even though the Island he was stationed on had been secured by American forces, there was still the threat of sniper fire and booby traps from Japanese holdouts.



Arthur would often break out in a cold sweat at night as distressing images of combat haunted him; the whistling sound followed by thunderous explosions of artillery, machine gun fire, shrieks and cries from fallen soldiers. Even the smells of battle were unforgettable. And worst of all, the loss of his brother.

Dear Sister Mary: 7, Dec. 1944

Received your letter yesterday and glad to hear that everyone is in good health. You mention that you wrote Edward about Oscar and now you are worrying about that. Well Sis. please don't worry, you did the right thing. I was with Oscar when it happened but I could not write home about it. I will never forget my dear brother, but what could I do but just keep up the fire until I got wounded. Oscar was buried in France as were many other heroes. Arthur