

# *The Soldiers Wife*

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# 11

In mid-September, 1944 the 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division had fought their way into the port of Brest in the Crozon Peninsula. The Division then traveled across liberated Northern France and northward to the Belgian-German border where they held the front through mid-December. Many of the officers and enlisted men that Arthur had trained and fought with had been replaced by this time.

The Prov. BN that Arthur was serving in was re-designated the 226 Replacement Co. He continued to wear his 2<sup>nd</sup> ID shoulder patch and still wanted to get back to his buddies in the 9<sup>th</sup> Regiment. He had no way of knowing how many of them had been replaced. Besides, the Army's method of replacing troops did not usually work out well for the best interest of the individual soldier. Many were separated from those they had trained with and ended up in units where they knew no one; making it difficult for the replacement to bond with the veterans on the front.

On the morning of December 16, 1944 the Germans launched an all-out counteroffensive along the front lines in the Ardennes Forrest. Because the Germans initially pushed the Allies back it would be known as the Battle of the Bulge. The battle was fought under severe winter conditions and continued through late January, 1945 with the Allies recovering the lost ground. The winter training that Arthur had received in Wisconsin was invaluable in helping to prepare the young replacements who were hurried to the Ardennes during the battle. Christmas and New Year's was not very happy for many. The battle was the largest and bloodiest fought by the U.S. in The War.



Dec. 14, 1944

*My dearest husband:*

*Sweetheart, hope you are alright. I was reading your change of address and hope and pray to dear God to hear and answer my daily prayers that you not be sent back to the front lines. I will never stop praying, darling. I have faith in God and I know that you do too.*

*The children are fine so do not worry. Jimmy will soon be out of school for the Christmas holidays and we will go to Eagle Pass for about a week. He said he will buy a couple of bonds to bring you back sooner; one for him and one for Rose Lee will be hanging on the Christmas tree. Goodnight honey and God Bless You.*

*Your wife forever, Pito*

Pito put the Christmas tree up in the front room of mama Lupita's house with Jimmy's help. Rose Lee was fascinated with all the decorations and her eyes got bigger as the little colored lights on the tree were turned on. After Christmas Day, Pito and the children took the train to Eagle Pass to spend some of the holidays. Nana was very happy to have them there and Joe put up a special tree for Rose Lee. Mary had recovered from her operation and was back to work at the Army Air Field. She was delighted to help Jimmy cut out tree and Santa Clause figures that he had drawn for Rose Lee. Upon returning to San Antonio they spent a quiet New Years. News of the Battle of the Bulge had reached the home front and it was disheartening.

It was still taking up to two weeks for letters to get delivered and Arthur could not write much about his duty station or what he was doing. Pito didn't even know the details about his wounds, other than that he had recovered. She wondered if maybe he had lost a limb and wouldn't talk about it. But no; how could it be, he would have been sent home by now.

4 Jan, 1945

*My dearest Wife:*

*Hello honey, received your letters and hope you had a Merry Christmas and a very happy New Year. I have so many things to tell you but if I was to write it on paper; all the paper in the E.T.O. wouldn't be enough. So all I can say is that I am okay. Give my love to the kids and regards to the family.*

*Lots of Love forever, Arthur*

17 Jan, 1945

*My dearest Wife:*

*Sweetheart, glad to hear that you had a good time in Eagle Pass. Hope you go back soon as Mother will always be glad to have you. They all write me such nice letters about you. Please don't worry about me, I am okay thank God. Joe says in his letters that some of the boys are back in Eagle Pass;*

*isn't that nice to be back home. I don't know about me. Sometimes I can hear Oscar calling me. I haven't seen Edward in over two years. Glad to hear that he is okay. Sweetheart, I miss you very much and love you so very much. Give my love to the kids.*

*Always yours, Arthur*

*Feb. 6, 1945*

*My dearest beloved husband:*

*I received your letter of Jan 17 which caused a tear to roll down my cheek. Dearest, don't let your mind run away from you in thinking you hear Oscar calling you. No, sweetheart, just pretend Oscar is back home just like Joe is and think of you coming home soon and look forward to seeing your family, dear Nana, your wife and children. Instead of thinking Oscar is calling you, think of little Rose Lee calling. Oh my darling Arthur, do promise me not to let your mind run away from you that way! You are a real man and have the power to pull yourself together right this minute. The baby is calling you; Ta-Ta. Close your eyes and hear Rose Lee's tiny little voice. A voice that is alive and waiting for you. I'm calling you too, hear me. Jimmy calls for you every night in his prayers. We will see each other soon. Your wife forever, Pito*

On February 16 the USS *Bismarck Sea*, on which Charles was serving, arrived off Iwo Jima to support landings of U.S. Marines in the invasion of that island. After recovering aircraft returning from a mission on the evening of February 21, the escort carrier was attacked by a swarm of Japanese planes. A kamikaze crashed into the ship destroying the aft elevator and knocking ordinance loose on the hanger deck below. The crew was getting fires from the crash under control when a second kamikaze struck causing a large explosion of ordinance and aircraft fuel. There was no saving the ship and the Captain gave the order to abandon. Escort destroyers spent several hours through the night and next morning picking up survivors; luckily Charles was among them. From a crew of 923 sailors, 318 were lost. The survivors were taken to transport ships off Iwo Jima where they witnessed the raising of the American flag on Mount Suribachi in the distance.

By April Charles was back in Hawaii assigned to CASU-2. He never spoke much about his experience at Iwo Jima.



Explosion on board USS *Bismarck Sea*

April 7, 1945

Dear Brother:

Well how are things in your neck of the woods? Hope you are well. I guess you have been thinking what ever became of me. Well, I have been fine thank God and just wondering if my letters have reached you. Sure hope this one does, and if you have time, do answer. I would like to hear from you. News here are few and I do not have much to say. How about you? How is Pito and your baby? Mother told me she came over around Christmas. Mother says your baby is very pretty and she sure favors you. Boy, it will be nice when we can go home and live in peace with our wife and children again. We'll have a lot to catch up with. Write soon.

Love, Your Brother Charles S2C

Edward was still in the Philippines where many battles were fought for the liberation from the Japanese invaders.

In March, Arthur was ordered back to France where he was stationed at Le Havre with the 2976 Replacement Company.

There were several temporary camps constructed by the U.S. Army around the harbor of Le Havre which were used as staging areas for new and returning troops arriving in France. The camps consisted of portable structures, tents and Nissen huts. From here, troops who were headed to combat were first sent to assembly areas and then to the front lines. For security reasons, and to a lesser degree for morale, the staging areas were named after popular brands of cigarettes and the assembly areas were named after familiar cities back home. Thus, the staging areas were referred to as “Cigarette Camps” and the assembly areas as “City Camps”. Arthur was at the staging area named Camp Herbert Tareyton where he awaited further orders.

April 8, 1945

San Antonio, Texas

My dearest beloved husband:

Enclosed are the latest pictures taken of our daughter, Rose Lee, 14 months old. They were taken last Sunday, Easter. She was wearing the white silk dress Nana sent her for her birthday. The Easter bunny is red and white checkers also sent her by Nana. Am sending her some pictures too, and some to Edward and Leo. Hope you will get them soon. You can see by the pictures how mischievous Rose Lee is. One picture shows where she is getting the grass from the basket. Then she is running away with the rabbit as aunt Cookie looks on. Another picture shows when she got an Easter egg and is holding it high. Then another picture shows where Cookie is holding the rabbit and Rose Lee is breaking the basket. She had lots of fun.

The last three pictures show her the way she looks when she needs a bath. One picture shows her taking off an old hat of mine she plays with, and another shows her running away from the camera with hat on her head. She is so strong that a while ago she made Jimmy cry pulling his hair and ears. They are both fast asleep now.

*Sweetheart, do not worry about us, we are getting along fine. You take care of yourself, dearest, and hope and pray you will come home soon. You are always on my mind; remembering little things we used to say and do when you were here and when we were in Wisconsin. Hope to hear from you again soon. Goodnight and God Bless You.*

*Your wife forever, Pito*



FDR had served three terms as President of The United States and in November, 1944 won a fourth term with Harry S. Truman as his running mate. Although Roosevelt had been suffering from declining health for several years, it was not made known to the general public, and he was determined to see the Nation through the end of the War. Sadly, on April 12, 1945 the President died at the age of 63 and.....THE NATION MOURNED

Upon being sworn in, Truman asked Mrs. Roosevelt if there was anything he could do for her. She responded.....

*“Is there anything we can do for you? For you are the one in trouble now!”*



Funeral procession of President Roosevelt, Washington D.C.

Although President Truman had a heavy burden fall upon him, the war in Europe was practically over. Much of Germany lay in ruins in January 1945. The Western Allies and the Soviets on the Eastern front were closing in on Berlin. By April 30 the Soviets were within walking distance of the Reich Chancellery in Berlin where Adolf Hitler was sheltered. He was found dead from a self-inflicted gunshot. Berlin surrendered to the Soviet troops on May 2, 1945. The formal unconditional surrender of Nazi Germany to the Allies was signed on May 8, 1945 in Berlin.

Victory in Europe, V-E Day, was noted in the San Antonio newspaper as in all newspapers across the United States. But the War was not over yet as fighting continued in the Pacific.



As our flag is lowered to half mast today in reverence to those who already have given their lives in this war to end all tyranny forever, let's earnestly "THANK GOD", the giver of all things, for this day of VICTORY and pledge ourselves to further the defeat of JAPAN.

*THANK GOD*  
*for This Day of*  
**VICTORY!**

REMEMBER "IT'S TWO DOWN and STILL ONE TO GO"  
We Must Stay On the Job...BUY BONDS...GIVE BLOOD

Tuesday May 8, 1945