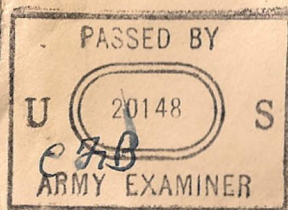


Pvt E. J. Thomas
ASN 36576155
Service Co., PIR, 153rd Inf.
PO #948, c/o Postmaster
Seattle, Wash.



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Mrs. Victoria Thomas
17457 Filer Ave.
Detroit (12), Michigan

Alaska
Nov. 9, 1943

Dear Mom & Harry:

This has been the earliest Christmas I have ever celebrated. Also it was the first time I celebrated my birthday together with Christmas. I received my birthday package at the same time I received all the other Christmas packages. They all arrived here in good condition. Thanks for all the things you've sent me. I enjoyed eating your cookies and chocolates and so did quite a few other fellows in my hut. I especially liked the razor you sent me. It does the work a great deal better than the FX razor I had. Give my thanks to Issy and Mac and Gertie and Gene for their presents. I know how hard it is to think of something to send to a person in Alaska but in spite of this difficulty all of you seemed to have chosen your gifts very wisely.

So far I've received five rolls of film. From your past letters I know there is no doubt that you had a hard time in getting so many and I hope the snapshots taken with these films won't be too disappointing for the trouble you've gone through. Right now I have eight snapshots which I am enclosing. They were taken about two months ago. I don't know whether all of them will pass through the censor. Anyway, if you will find less than eight, you will know why. The other fellows in the pictures are some of the boys from my hut. The backgrounds in these snapshots do not represent the best sceneries around here but only what I am allowed to show you.

Some time ago I promised to send you Stanley's letter of August 31 and here it is just as he wrote it to me:

"Your letter came about two weeks ago. I have been intending to write sooner but the wife's mother and sister came from Ohio and I was kept pretty busy. The object of their visit was twofold. Sarah's sister Mary has been worried about her mother living alone since the death of her husband and has persuaded her to come to California for the winter where she could be near us. She wanted to rent an apartment, but as they are just about out of the question here now and requiring a king's ransom to get one if available, we persuaded her to stay with us. The other reason was to see the new son-in-law. Judging from the reaction, I seemed to have passed inspection. For a while I felt like a convict on probation. All joking aside tho, they are very fine people and it is a pleasure to know them. Mary left last week as the school where she teaches (Cincinnati, Ohio) opens Sept 6. I sure hated to see her go.

"I am wondering how you like Alaska by this time. As I remember, Alaska was one of the places we wanted to see under more favorable circumstances, of course. As you got there under duress, in a manner of speaking, I don't suppose you are in much of a position to see much of the place. I'm wondering what your job is. Upon inquiry, I learned that "Headquarters Co." means the group stationed at headquarters doing work ranging from office work[&] driving trucks to ditch digging. Knowing your profession in civil life, I'm willing to bet you are doing office work. I may be wrong in these presumptions. One can never tell about the Army. I'm sorry you didn't come to this part of the country. I certainly would have liked to see you.

"My life is the same old routine--work, eat, sleep. I don't do much of anything else. Usually I'm too tired to stir out of the house. I have a bronchial cough which is getting worse. It's about time to have another check-up by my doctor.

"There is something new at the shipyard tho. They have changed over from Liberty freighters to tankers which are much more complicated and interesting. I learned definitely that this yard will be kept in operation after the war by the U. S. Maritime Commission to build up the Merchant Marine. When that time comes, they won't push ships out by mass production as they are doing now. It takes from one to three years to build a ship in normal times. We have cut this down to twenty-three days from keel laying to launching and another seven days for outfitting and delivery. These are 10,500 ton freighters, 447 feet long. This is very remarkable progress, but they are simplified emergency ships. A standard design ship has many more parts and is more complicated to assemble.

"They are now changing over to faster ships now that the worst emergency shipping needs have been supplied.

"A letter from home informs me that my brother, Harry, who has been to Radio School in Kentucky is now back at Camp White, Oregon, after spending a furlough at home. Brother Arthur has been ordered to report to his Induction Center. Haven't heard yet how he came out. For all I know, he may be in uniform now.

"I was surprised to see the Army censor's stamp on your letter. I didn't know mail from Alaska was censored. This probably makes it impossible for you to reveal where you are stationed. If you are in a placer gold region, you will probably be tempted to get a gold pan and try your luck. The gold fever isn't completely out of my blood yet. Often I find myself planning to get back into the mountains when the post-war depression hits as it is almost certain to. No peace-time demand can keep our huge war industries going after the war is over. I may be pessimistic, but I'm prepared for the worst. So, if you are in a good gold region, don't forget to stake out a few claims for me, and I don't mean the "biscuit and beans"

type either. While you are at it, you may as well pick out the bonanza spots and make sure the winters aren't too cold. I can't stand cold weather after living in this mild climate.

"When you write, tell me all the censors permit. As you know, I'm interested.

"Will close now and get to bed for some shut-eye.

"Will be waiting anxiously for your next letter."

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Mom, in your letter of October 24, you reminded me of the pelting season which is about due. It is hardly believeable that this is the first pelting season that is going to pass by since my induction into the Army. Some how I had the impression that I have already missed about three or four pelting seasons. The days seem to pass by like wild-fire, but when I look back it seems that I've been in the Army many years instead of months. If it weren't for the war, I believe that right now I'd be examining, selecting, and marking hundreds of mink for pelting, and at the same time wishing, perhaps, that I could have a vacation to travel and see other parts of the world such as Alaska. Well now I'm in Alaska and wishing that I could be ^{in Detroit} looking over my mink. ~~in Detroit~~

Harry, I now recall that you asked me some time ago whether I would care to have a radio here. I wouldn't want you to send me one because there is one already here in my hut and I'm able to hear mostly all the programs you listen to. Of course, these programs are recorded and re-broadcasted by the stations here. Any particular program you are listening to now, I may not hear until a week later or so. Getting programs direct from the States is about as easy as it is for you to get them from Europe. If atmospheric conditions are all right for direct reception,

there is another obstacle to overcome and that is the big difference in time between any of the States and the place I am in. This difference is even greater than you may imagine or greater than I ever imagined before coming up here.

Now I'll have to think about ending this letter and, if I have the time, start writing one to Stanley.

So long,

Eddie
Eddie

PS - Discontinue the daily News and have only the Sunday paper sent to me. The daily papers come in such big bunches that I seldom have the time to go thru them before more bunches are received.

Tell Issy & Mac that their letter of Oct 22 reached me a few days ago and will be answered at the first opportunity.