

19 March 1955  
Buckner Bay, Okinawa

Folks:

Standing a quiet mid-watch at anchor, so I think I'll use some of the lei sure time to write.

The last two weeks have been in and out of Buckner Bay here. Training exercises are such. One unusual assignment is described in the enclosed notes... the penned one was a night letter I tried to send you last Monday morning, but the Class "E" message is reserved for emergency communication when at sea, so I didn't send it. The typed message is one sent several hours later by the Commodore to ComNaval Forces Far East. The newspaper clipping was one I tore out of the Stars & Stripes newspaper (16 Mar) over at the Officers Club last night. I think they are all self-explanatory. We brought the guy back to Okinawa that night. After we got him to an Interpreter, we found out that all the others had been on the raft with him at first, but one by one were washed off. He and this other guy had tied themselves on... the other's guy's rope broke at one end, and he went off, too, but stayed attached to the raft (underwater). The seas had been pretty rough the night before, and when we found them even. The raft had been in the water about 12 hours. The vessel was an 80 ton steamer, with gasoline and two trucks aboard. It had engine trouble, the trucks made the ship top-heavy to start with, so being dead in the water, it capsized and sank. 12 men aboard — found one alive, unhurt, but exhausted from fighting to stay on the raft; found one drowned, tied to a 10' length of line attached to one corner of the raft. We gave the survivor a hot shower, clean clothes, and put him to bed after some soup and rice. He slept for four hours while we searched for others. Finding none, the Commodore radioed to wake him and question him about the others supposed to be aboard. The Exec and I worked on him for thirty minutes and finally got all the crew's names, when the ship had sunk, why it had sunk, and his opinion that there were no other survivors. He didn't even know that the other guy was tied to the raft when we picked him up. He identified him. After relaying that info to the Commodore, we were ordered back to Okinawa. We offloaded the passengers the next morning, one under a Japanese flag, and the other amidst profuse bowing and Japanese "Arlgato" (Thank you... )

We are heading back for Japan tomorrow. Be up there for a couple of weeks.

Not much other news right now. How did the farm survive the tornado? Helen told me it took a path three miles south of her house.

Oh, yes, Dad, I tore up your check several days ago, and kept two quarters of it to stick in this letter...but I can't find them now. Thanks for the loan of it, but mine is lasting very fine...a lot better than in Chicago!! The Wardroom mess bill on here is \$25/month!!

Happy Birthday to you, Mother...probably by the time you get this it will be a month late... but I thought of you on the 10th.

Okinawa is primarily an Army base... so the O Club I referred to somewhere before in the letter is Army...it is called RyCom Officer's Club, since these islands around here are the Ryukus (misspelled). Very nice club... the island isn't much however.

Well, all for now ...my watch is over and it's nearly time for reveille, so I'd better go bed!

Love to all,