

IN REPLY REFER

TO NO.

UNITED STATES ASIATIC FLEET
U. S. S. SACRAMENTO

C/O POSTMASTER, SAN FRANCISCO, CAL.

Passage Aden, Arabia, for Alexandria, Egypt
18 March, 1939

Rear Admiral C. P. Snyder, U.S. Navy,
President, Naval War College,
Newport, R.I.

Dear Admiral Snyder,

Your most welcome and newsy letter reached me in Aden, Arabia, a few days ago. I hasten to assure you that I thoroughly appreciate how busy you have been at the War College — as a matter of fact, I can't imagine you not being busy on any job, and I have not expected any reply to my letter. I wish that more of my friends could understand that in a busy job, an officer who is conscientious seldom has time to keep up a personal correspondence with his friends, for I myself am terribly snowed under with a lot of letters that should have been answered a year ago.

I am happy to learn that the Snyders are all well and prospering. I am delighted in particular at the good news about Jane and her flying baby. Time moves on, certainly, and I find myself already with a young daughter who in the Orient has grown up to the point where she is already sizing up the young generation. I hope that she may be as fortunate as Jane when she eventually chooses a husband. I was very much impressed with that young man. I hope Jane did not have any complications such as Betty did at the time we were all together in Long Beach. I have my fourteen-year old son on board with me for a five months' cruise. He is having a splendid time and getting a great deal out of the trip. I hope that his interest will continue and that he will make a try for the Academy. He has completely straightened out in health, is nearly as tall as I am, and certainly a very different youngster from the fat little boy that used to give us so much worry about his health.

I have been most fortunate in my Asiatic duty. Although I was terribly disappointed at being ordered to shore duty, I found that I had a really responsible billet as Captain of the Yard, Commanding, and Reservation Officer at Olongapo. I had 10,000 natives to govern and a very

The Ayraults and Noyguards are all thriving and prospering. Ayrault has the squadron flagboat. Betty Noyguard's health seems much better.

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interesting area of some 40,000 acres to look out for, in addition to the purely naval end of the job. We went through one severe typhoon in the six months' duty there, during which I had to sink the dock to save it. From there I was suddenly ordered as Executive Officer of the BLACK HAWK. I went to that ship with some trepidation because I had had no executive officer cruise in my younger days and I knew the reputation of that very efficient but exacting skipper, Commander Bode. I think I made good without question. I enjoyed handling the something over 800 men and found Bode a much maligned officer. I was happy indeed to see that he was selected for Captain. He was relieved by Commander Cheadle, one of the most human officers I have ever served with, and I was just as disappointed at his failure of selection as I was happy about Bode's. I had six months on the BLACK HAWK and then, after my selection, was given the SACRAMENTO. I have been in China on her since last July and have been having a very comfortable and interesting tour. I think these coastal gunboats are the prize jobs out here for commanders, but I also think they are too easy going for an officer to spend too much time aboard. The Captain's quarters are very fine, and normally there is not much for the Captain to do except to maintain contact and keep the situation well in hand. As a matter of fact, so far as handling the ship is concerned, a Lieutenant would be just as suitable as skipper, but of course these boats are intended to handle situations, and it is for that reason they have commanders aboard.

I am afraid that I got to China after most of the excitement had occurred. We lay at Swatow a great deal of the time with occasional trips to Hong Kong. The Japanese were not very active around Swatow during this period, although they had a number of ships hanging around outside the harbor entrance and occasionally sent over a few bombers. In September we went to Shanghai as Station Ship for a short period, then I moved down and tied up at the Socony dock in the Whangpoo to protect that installation from the guerillas. Here we used to enjoy watching the comings and goings of all the new types of mine sweepers, mine layers, and special craft that the Japs were using in that area. Occasionally one of their modern cruisers would come by, and all types of their destroyers were around at some time or another. The most significant activity that we observed was the continuous flow of wounded out of Shanghai in hospital ships almost daily, sometimes as many as three and four

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clearing after some activity inland. It is understood that the Japs do not take many of their wounded back to Japan any more, but hospitalize them somewhere else, probably in "Manchukuo."

In Shanghai itself life is fairly normal. The Japanese have not as yet obtained any measure of control, but they are alert to take advantage of any incident to force their way in and take charge of the Settlement. I believe that if the assassinations continue they will not hesitate to do this. There is nobody to stop them when they get ready to move in. I was invited as one of five naval officers to attend a farewell banquet given by the high ranking Japanese officials to Colonel Price when he turned over command of the Marines. As you know, Colonel Price was a fighter and in several cases demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Japanese that the marines were ready to fight and would not stand for any monkey business. Evidently that is the only attitude that the Japanese appreciate. Admiral Nomura, three Rear Admirals, a Lieutenant General, and a half-dozen other Generals, the Consul General, and a large group of Colonels, Commanders, and Captains gave Colonel Price a wonderful send-off. I was very glad to be present because after the Admiral finished a very flattering testimonial speech, Colonel Price replied by saying that he was appreciative of the honor, but sorry to leave Shanghai still suffering from an injurious and abnormal situation, and that his greatest wish was that he would soon hear that this undesirable situation in Shanghai was ended. He told the Japs that he was glad they had understood that he had always dealt with them in a fair, if stern, manner. It was really unique situation and one to instill admiration for the courage and sincerity of Colonel Price. My old friend, Joe Fegan, will have no difficulty in handling the situation himself, although his is perhaps more of a diplomat's manner than was Colonel Price's.

In South China I had a great deal of dealings with the Chinese; none with the Japanese. In Shanghai I had frequent occasion, especially when there alone as Station Ship, to deal with Japanese officials. I found the naval officers very reasonable, especially the older ones, and I know that Admiral Yarnell has felt that the Japanese Admiral has done everything possible to keep a bad situation from becoming worse. From what little I saw, I am convinced that the Japanese Navy is very efficient. Their men are

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splendid specimens physically. A great deal more attention is devoted to keeping them in A-1 physical condition than in our own service. They are snappy and appear to be well trained professionally. I believe that any one who considers that they are a race of people too rapidly developed to be able to handle the material problems is mistaken. Everything that I saw confirmed the well-known belief that the trouble-makers are the younger element in the Army. I found them a supercilious, conceited, and resentful group, and some day something will have to be done about them.

In the Japanese lines around Shanghai I occasionally had opportunity to talk with some of their young English-speaking soldiers, and this was interesting because it indicated the extent to which the whole country has been mobilized. A number of these young fellows obviously had no heart for the war, and it could be easily seen that they would be happy when they had a chance to get back to their studies or business.

This is about all that I can speak about with any authority concerning the situation in China. It was a splendid thing for me to be able to have had the Junior Course at the War College before going out to China. I would like nothing better than to come back right now and take the Senior Course. I requested this but did not succeed in getting it, but am instead slated for the Army Industrial College.

As a final observation on China, I think the outcome will definitely depend upon whether or not China receives continued financial and economic support from Britain and us. Japan can not continue her effort there indefinitely, but there seems no reason to believe that China can not continue indefinitely her guerilla tactics and mobile army work as long as she is able to get supplies in through Burma and get financial backing. Certainly the will to resist is increasing every day in China.

This cruise home is one of the joys of naval life that used to happen but seldom does today. The Japs control all the decent coal in China, and since the SACRAMENTO is a coal-burner it has not been possible to get good coal for some time. Therefore the Admiral decided that we are too much of a problem and recommended our detachment. I suspect his strategy is that if he gets rid of us he will have a better chance of getting the ERIE and CHARLESTON out there.

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Opnev ordered our detachment and return via Suez to New York. The Admiral told me to submit an itinerary, which I did (with an eye to making the most of the opportunity and prolonging the cruise as much as reasonable). And so here we are on a five months' homeward bound voyage from China via Manila, Singapore, Colombo, the Maldivé Islands, Bombay, Aden, Alexandria, Naples, Villefrancé, Gibraltar, Azores, and Bermuda to New York. The Indian Ocean part has been the most interesting. I will have to tell you about that some day in person as it can not be written. Tomorrow afternoon we arrive Suez. I am going to take two days to transit the Canal so as to go through in day-light, stopping overnight at Ismailia, getting a look in at Port Said overnight, and then spending a week in Alexandria to let the crew visit Cairo, the pyramids, etc. Then I have one week at Naples and ten days in Villefrancé. The other stops from there on are just for coal, but we will have time enough for every one to see the places. I know you will agree that most people in this day and age go through their entire naval career without having such a fine cruise. We are absolutely independent and my biggest job so far has been holding up under the strain of the royal welcome that we get in each port. My crew have maintained a perfect record and we have left a fine impression in every port. The weather is made to order. Even here in the Red Sea, and Aden, supposedly the hottest places in the round-the-world cruise, it is delightfully cool. Navigation in the Indian Ocean was a joy, with perfect horizons and five-point fixes. We are going through a ticklish part here in the Red Sea and Gulf of Suez where there are more coral reefs than I realized and bad cross currents, but I have my fingers crossed and hope our luck stays with us.

I shall watch your orders with interest and am rooting for nothing less than four stars. Certainly if it is experience, judgment, and hard work (I can't say more without being too personal), you are their man. I myself hate to come ashore and shall be rearing to go when I get my next sea job, the quicker the better. Mrs. Allen and Jan^{ette} went home across the Pacific when we left China, and they are up on the hill in Grossmont now. Mrs. Allen enjoyed her Philippines and China visit but was terribly disappointed at not being able to come home via Europe. (I could not get permission for her to do so because I had no personal orders.) She says she has had enough traveling for a while and will stay at Grossmont next year. However, I hope she changes her mind and comes to Washington with me.

With kindest regards to all the family, I am

Most sincerely and respectfully yours,

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Jerry Allen