

## WILLIS (BILL) BENNETT LETTERS FROM 1943

All letters are between Willis and his parents, Mr. & Mrs. Ben Bennett, unless noted otherwise but the exchange is mainly with his mother. References to Delbert & Max (Orval) are made in several letters and they're Bill Bennett's brothers.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Highlights</u>
08/20/1943	to Orval from Ray Colevriss	
09/29/1943	Post Card	We have been on the road 12 hours. There is about 600 of us and we will go to Idaho I think.
09/29/1943	Minot, ND	We have only 100 miles left to go in North Dakota. We just got off the train for 15 minutes for the first time in 27 hours. They say we will get there tomorrow night. We got a bunch of books from the USO in St. Paul, MN, and I have already got next Sunday's paper.
09/29/1943	Post Card	We are in North Dakota and have about 14 more hours. I wish I would of brought my watch.
09/29/1943	N. Ireland from Ray Erzinger	How is Bill now? Is he in the Army or Navy? Said he was going to enlist in the Navy. If he is in the service will you send me his address. I guess everyone one around there has a job now.
10/01/1943		We made it to camp OK. Some of the fellows here raze us about boots but I can take it. We got all those clothes that you seen in that book. I seen a lot of land on my trip, it took us 53 hours and we only got off the train 2 times. We are located in a big valley about 50 miles from Washington. We get a 15 days leave after boots. It will take me 5 days to travel so I will have about 9 or 10 days at home. We are in the Rocky Mountain country.
10/02/1943	Farragut, ID	They got us up at 4:30 and it was 7 before we ate. Today we get our pictures taken for our dog tag.
10/02/1943	from Reynold LaFontaine	Doreen told me you had a good job now, I knew you snag a good job someday Bill. She told me you try to get in the Navy and couldn't on account of your teeth.
10/04/1943	Farragut, ID	We go to the drill hall for church at 10 then I wash some clothes, lay around awhile then I go on guard duty inside the barracks from 16:00 to 20:00 which is from 4 to 8 this afternoon. Tell Delbert I will give him a sailor hat when I get home in December because we can't send any clothes out of here. Some of the fellows around here are from Pontiac, Momence, Chicago, Joliet, Manteno and Herscher. I am still with that old fellow from Bradley, Herb Summers. Pa knows him. The only time you can smoke is when the flag is down. That is three times a day and you have to go outside.
10/04/1943	Farragut, ID	There is a lot of stuff you have to learn in here like port side, starboard side, stantions, deck, overhead, bulkhead and navy flag code. We are

still in detention and will be for 3 weeks. After we get out we get a liberty of 12 hr. that is something you don't get in Great Lakes.

10/05/1943	to Willis, Farragut, ID	I sure was glad to get your address. Mrs. Mulligan "Red's Ma" said Red took his training at Farragut and it was the finest place of all. Better than Great Lakes. Ben & I went to see "Bataan" at the Paramount. There will not be any more Bataan because that was just after Pearl Harbor and we are on to their dirty Jap tricks now. All I think about now is your letters and will be counting the day till you come home. We don't feel like you are very far from home as long as there is a letter to read at night. All your doings are big doings to us. Remember you are a very special person to us. We have a nice service flag in our window and sure would love to see you in that new uniform.
10/10/1943	Farragut, ID	I bought a box of chalk at the canteen the other night and sold it for a dime a stick for spot remover for white hats. Did I make a haul on it, almost \$2.00. The guys all got mad when they found out what they got. But I proved it works.
10/06/1943	Farragut, ID	We went over today and took out insurance. I took 10,000 out, 5,000 to you and 5,000 to Pa. Then you keep my own up at home. I am going to get a bond a month. All toll they will take out \$25.15. I have to go to the hospital tonight and get the gold in my tooth fixed, it fell out.
10/07/1943		We got a new CPO but you don't know what that is. It's a company commander. He is a fellow about 33 from Texas, a fine fellow, Mr. Hindrix. I just got a paper from Farragut. This is the biggest town in Idaho. It is all sailors.
10/07/1943	to Willis	It takes about 3 days to get your letters. Ben worked today at Bradleys. Something about a new boiler they are putting in. Got a letter from Grandma Willis. She sure is proud of her 4 grandsons in the service. Ben and I talked Orval out of going head over heels in debt for a fine car. On account of the war, the financing is not as easy as it used to be and very expensive.
10/08/1943	to Willis	The boys went out. Delbert said he was going to use his "spring & fall" ticket into the football game. Something about springing over the fence and falling inside. Got a letter from Ray Erzinger. He is in Ireland, will send it to you. Do you have a radio there? I hope so then you can hear your old jitter bug music. I heard "Meet your Navy" tonight from Great Lakes. Sure sounds good to hear all those boys singing and telling of their adventures. Hope they broadcast from Farragut some time.
10/08/1943	Farragut, ID	We got a double shot today for typhoid fever and it really puts you out of commission. I will graduate from here in about 7 weeks, too early for Christmas and too late for thanksgiving. That is really hell ain't it. We had our first swimming test today. I passed that. You thought I couldn't swim. Well I didn't think so either. I took third place. We got our pictures taken today for our ID tag. We will also have some taken

to send home and a picture of the whole company.

10/09/1943	Farragut, ID	Just go your letter and am the happiest guy in this camp. I almost gave up hope. But it made a new boy out of me. I sure miss my clean white shirt every night. And hope I get to wear them soon. When I get out of here I am going to buy the biggest plaid suit in town. We had a strength test today. That is what makes my back so sore.
10/10/1943	to Willis from Mom	I hope you get a chance to take up something that will help you in the future. You can try for it anyway even if you have no high school. If you prove yourself to be willing to learn and be a good boy, they may soon see that you are quick to learn.
10/11/1943	to Willis from Mom	Got 3 letters from you today, also your clothes and pkg. of pictures. Anything we have is yours and we all love you. So what more does a sailor boy really have to have. Sure didn't know you could swim. Guess you must have been swimming in the South Side Quarry. Delbert has his bike fixed up and is spinning up and down Broadway half the time.
10/11/1943	to Willis from Max	I took all the foundry shit I could, so I went to the Personnel office and told them I wanted something else or else, so I got an electricians job now, boy is it a snap. I only made \$13 last week. I had a bitch of a cold and didn't go in half of the time. I am taking out \$6.25 a week for bonds since you left and they hooked me for a five for the community chest war drive. 74 cents an hour now but I am learning a good trade, 10-12 hrs. a day and Sunday 14 hrs. double time that will make up for it. We got a v-mail from Ray Ersinger and I am enclosing it so drop him a line.
10/11/1943	to Willis from Pa	We try to write every day and we will as long as you are away. Be a good sailor and you will make it alright as ever.
10/12/1943	Farragut, ID	They took our smoking privileges away for 4 days because we had a dirty smoking kit. We took our IQ test today. I tried for diesel motors. As cook I don't know if I will ever get either one but I sure hope I do. They tell me we may get home in 6 weeks if we work real hard. We got 3 work suits, two undress jumpers, 1 dress jumper and 2 pairs of dress pants, 2 pair work shoes, one dress and 2 pair boots. I hate em.
10/12/1943	to Willis from Mom	Art was here to read the booklet. Say that booklet was fine - we have a good idea now how things look, quite a big place and nice too.
10/12/1943	to Willis from Dad	Delbert is at the rink. I seen in the paper tonight that Harry Longton is in jail for something, it did not say what.
10/12/1943	to Willis from Juanita	Went down to Pontiac Sunday. We were going to get a puppy for Vic but he treated it so rough we thought we'd wait awhile.
10/13/1943	to Willis from Mom	Clipped a little reading out of the paper you can read if you have time. They say its better to be in camp in the west than the south.

10/13/1943	Farragut, ID	We get our pay tomorrow and go to the dentist. Also get an interview for the job we get when we get out. I sure hope I get what I tried for. You should see what we had for chow today - steak, everything else, pie, cake, coffee, tea. They feed us good some days and others days they don't.
10/14/1943	to Willis from Mom	Got 2 grand letters and a card from you today. You do a fine job of letter writing and I feel better after I have had a nice fat letter from you. Tonight we heard the Andrew Sisters sing "Lay that Pistol Down", also heard Harry James. I'll tell you what the mean little kid in Red Skelton said one night that made me laugh. He stuck his head in the electric fan and said "Oh well, I always wanted a G.I. haircut any way". Pretty cute. Whenever you are tempted to do something that you are not quite sure about being right, just ask yourself if Ma would care. And then you will know.
10/15/1943	Farragut, ID	I am OK all but the shots we got today. We have been in this camp two weeks today. I will always remember Sep. 28, 1943, will you? They say we may get a 21 day leave at the end of boots. Don't forget to send me the Kankakee paper and don't forget that box with lots of candy in it. I got a card today frm a kid I used to know in Kankakee. He is in Camp Hill with Speed. Old Herb Summers told me his wife said the Doc in Bradley died Monday. That is good bad. He was a good old guy.
10/15/1943	to Delbert	I got your letter and was sure glad to get it. I want you to write a longer one next time and keep on writing. So the football team is hitting on all cylinders. Did they beat Herscher?
10/15/1943	to Willis from Mom	I didn't have to work today so went up town bought work shoes for Orv as he is working Sat. & Sunday, also pants for both boys, groceries, coal and paid Public Service. The big news at home is what you send us. Everybody asks about you.
10/15/1943	Farragut, ID	We go out and play ball, basketball and football. I got a third class machinist rate today. I got a chance for aircraft machinist but they told me I may get stationed in Hawaii. Got 6 teeth fixed today.
10/17/1943	Farragut, ID	Got a letter from Pa, Max and you yesterday. I sure was glad to hear from Pa, it is the first time he has wrote. Say who put that piece in the paper abut me? It is so cold outside I can't go out and smoke. I haven't got a P coat. But I signed up for one today. I sure hope I get it soon. Say Mom send me Aunt Tinys address and Pansy too. (Letter and envelope is on special Navy stationery)
10/18/1943	to Pop	It made a tear come in my eye to reddy my first letter from you. It makes a guy feel good to hear from his Pa. They say they will make a man out of you or kill you. I guess they will make a man out of me. I cooperate with em I want to be a man. Or a pretty good excuse of one anyhow. We have beans for breakfast, beans for dinner and for supper Navy beans. At night the barracks sounds like the rifle range.

10/18/1943	to Willis from Mom	We got 2 letters from you today. I will send you some more eats soon. And please forgive your mother for not making Baby Ruth cookies, but I couldn't get any bars. Saturday night I worked at the Legion home frying chicken. I didn't know they were short of help. So they cam after me and Anna Chamness and I fried chicken. We were all sold out by 11:00. It looks like the Germans will have to give up soon. If they do, then we will turn all our forces on the Japs and it will all be over. The radio says it may be over any time.
10/19/1943	Farragut, ID	Got a letter from Jackie Alexander yesterday and Ducky Rivard today. Last night I was on guard again so I couldn't write. We go to a movie today all abut airplanes. We have a lot to learn before we get out of boots.
10/19/1943	Farragut, ID	We have two mail deliveries a day. We done a lot this afternoon - movie on airplanes, hair cut and flag signals.
10/20/1943	to Willis from Grandma Hollingsworth	I am working taking care of a Mrs. Kunde who had an operation. Guess this will be my last week, 3 weeks. I get \$10 per week, not bad for an old 67 yr. old grandma.. I'm going to register for the new ration book No. 4 this afternoon. I am over on South Myrtle, 655, just a block from your Grandma willis. I went over & visited with her last week. She sure was glad to get a letter from you and said she could hardly wait to see a picture of you in uniform.
10/20/1943	Farragut, ID	Today was a big day, we got up at 5 a.m., had chow, then had four hrs. of drill, a movie on red cross, and a blue jackets manual lecture. Then when we thought the day was over they sent us out to run that two mile cross country run. I made it in 15 minutes today. The fastest was the red head from Herscher. He made it in 11 minutes. Two of the guys in our company have Scarlet Fever. One of the guys in our company plays the piano "hot" and we also have a "hot" drummer.
10/21/1943	to Willis from Mom	Ben quit Bradleys. He done labor work two days now. He took Art and Delbert n his job today. Delbert didn't have any school because they are issuing ration books for food today and the rest of the week at school. I went to school and registered for our ration books. They make me tired with their ration points.
10/?/1943 Sunday	to Willis from Mom	I sent you some crackers & cheese that they would make a good little snack. I sure miss you - especially on Sundays.
10/21/1943	Willis from Aunt Juanita	Every night in the paper it tells a bunch of fellows names that have been sent out there. Fran is still working day and night. Days at Turks and at night he's helping to remodel a house his folks bought over on Grand Ave.
10/21/1943	Farragut, ID	Today was our first day of snow. I finally got a permit to mail your package. 8 o'clock is our anniversary of three weeks up here.
10/21/1943	to Willis from Art	I had a spat with Joe Banannas and he sent me to the Personnel for a

transfer and they wanted to put me out in the steel yard. They said that is all they had, so I quit. But they gave me a release so now I am looking for a good job and not as an inspector.

- 10/22/1943 to Willis from Mom I have a goal that I always work for and you know what it is - it is to get you kids raised up to the place where you can stand on your own feet. And I sure am proud of my job. I don't expect you kids to be perfect, but if you just stay out of big trouble and are able to make an honest living and be happy, I will sure be well rewarded for all my effort. Ben blows off about you all the time - he thinks you are the berries. Says you will make it because you are a smart kid.
- 10/23/1943 Farragut, ID I got a check from the factory for \$28.40 that will help me to get home. We get about \$50 before we leave so it will make it \$78. I bought a carton of cigs last nite at ship service. It only cost me 41.30 so don't send me any I can get em cheaper up here.
- 10/23/1943 Farragut, ID We went to the lake today and rowed a boat all over the place. There was 13 of us in one boat. We had to march all the way. It was about 2½ miles one way. It took us 35 minutes.
- 10/24/1943 Farragut, ID Our co. has to go on regional guard for a week so I may not get a chance to write every day. I might have to go on any time of night or day for a week. But on that job we get a 30-30 army rifle so I won't get scared.
- 10/25/1943 to Pop So you quit Bradleys too. Well I bet I will be the only one working there when I get home. I am going back and get to be boss in the warehouse.
- 10/25/1943 Farragut, ID I got a letter from Doreen Birr today. She said her mom is sick and that Speed don't get home till about Christmas. I get home a little after Thanksgiving. So Art quit the factory. Well to tell you what I think, "I think he is nuts". Her has been there over a year.
- 10/26/1943 to Willis from Mom I had your watch packed at Huff & Wolf Jewelry store. So tonight I took it to the post to mail it and the lady wouldn't take it. Said for me to pack it in a large box with lots of paper so it wouldn't get broke. She said they slam things down on each other so bad. They are still going strong on "Paper Doll" and "Pistol Packing Mama. I suppose you have about the same tunes we do.
- 10/26/1943 Farragut, ID Day after tomorrow we go on liberty. The first thing I am going to do is get me a quart of milk. We only get milk on our breakfast food. This morning we had 3 lectures on ships and their ports.
- 10/27/1943 to Willis from Mom Delbert went to the rink with Jr. Chamness. They have a curfew. It is a law that keeps kids off the streets after nine. There are lots of kids running the streets who's parents are working in the defense plants and they get into trouble.

There is a service pin in the jewelry store. It is a little star with a little

chain and a little anchor on another little pin. It is real small and mighty pretty and I am going to get one for my coat. I want everybody to see that I have a son in the service and the anchor is for the Navy. Tomorrow is Navy day so I will listen to lots of programs about the Navy. I suppose you will have some special doings.

Bob Hope is on and he is pretty funny. He is talking to the CB's. He said that when the Marines have landed, the CB's have probably built what they landed on.

10/27/1943	Farragut, ID	Today was Navy Day. They really fed us good, chicken, ice cream and some other good things. Tomorrow morning we go on our first liberty. I was just over to Ships Service and had a malt. I also heard Harry James play his trumpet. It sure was good to hear him.
10/27/1943	to Willis from Delbert	I have been working with Pa for a few days we had off from school. I made \$20 dollars.
10/28/1943	Cour d' Lane, ID	I'm at the USO center and all you see here is sailors. All the eats and everything you want to eat free. This is a real life when you are out of camp. I guess I will spend all my time here. They have some nice pool tables, ping pong tables, card tables. I have a good pal with me, Donald Arbagas from Freeport, Illinois. He is a real swell fellow. (Letter on USO stationery)
10/28/1943	to Willis from Mom	There is a dance at the Crows Nest for the Bradley High on Friday night and I guess Delbert wants to go. There was two sailor boys out by the Bear Brand tonight, they didn't have any coats on and looked cold. They should give you pretty good eats. Because we have to use points to get our eats. So that the service boys can have plenty. They had a parade uptown today to get recruits for the WWCS. Governor Green of Illinois was to walk in the parade.
10/29/1943	Farragut, ID	I really had a good time on my liberty. I got back in camp at 9 p.m. last nite. Some of the other guys didn't even get back yet. They are 24 hrs. overdue now. So they will get tossed in the brig.
10/30/1943	Farragut, ID	I got a letter from Clark Hayes today and was really glad to hear from him. It is the first letter he has written to me and was really interesting.
10/31/1943	to Willis from Mom	Ben worked at the Legion Home this afternoon. I went to a Halloween party at Prairies - just girls and ladies. We played 50 and had a nice lunch.
10/31/1943	to Willis from Pansy	Jr. Wesselhoff leaves the 19 <sup>th</sup> of Nov. He was 4F and they called him again so now he goes. So they will probably call Max again. They had a big parade the other day real nice too. Lots of soldiers. It was suppose to be for WAC's to get more to join but there seem to be a lot of soldiers.
11/01/1943	From Grandma Bennett Hollingsworth	Well I am through with my job, made \$31, not bad for 3 weeks but I am

glad to be home again. They are taking lots of married men, fathers too. Sammy Morgan from South Side went last week. He has a boy 11 years old. His wife works at B Brand.

11/01/1943	to Willis from Mom	Got Orv a shop cap and a carton of Luckeys for \$1.50. They are 18 cents each at Belands. They are daylight robbers on everything.
11/01/1943	Farragut, ID	It sure is good to read the home town paper. How is Deb doing in school, Max at the factory and Pa on his new job.
11/02/1943	Farragut, ID	We are quarantined again for Scarlet Fever. That means we don't go to Ship Services or movies.
11/02/1943	Farragut to Pa	I kind of feel lost up here, you know how it is, you were in long enough. So I always say to myself, Pat took it, so can I. We want to keep it in the family. But you have to learn so much in here your head is always in a whirl.
11/03/1943	to Willis from family	(Card saying "to my sailor boyfriend") Ma just woke me up and told me she had this card and thought it was cute. She told me this would have to do for a letter today. She is too tired to write.
11/03/1943	Farragut, ID	I got a Fireman 3 <sup>rd</sup> Class rating apprentice machinist. A new bunch of rookies came in today.
11/03/1943	to Willis from Mom	Just got home from a VFW meeting. After we went and ate. One of the ladys owns a place in the big 4 so we sat down to tables placed end to end, there was 20 ladys but about 40 at the meeting. Next week the American Legion is going to have a hard time party with pot luck dinner for the members in Bradley. I like Bradley folks better than KKK. They are all nice but Bradley post has a better time.
11/04/1943	Farragut, ID	Boy did we have good chow today stake, spuds, cabbage salad, beans mince pie and coffee. We usually get 3 or 4 good means like that every week. On Sunday we really get good chow. We're celebrating our 5 <sup>th</sup> week anniversary. I even could the hours we have 21 days left, 63 meals, and about 610 hours. So you see how I look forward to getting home. I am going to make that 10 days 20 days.
11/04/1943	to Willis from Mom	I got a new pair of shoes, had to use my new stamp and I also sent your ration books back long ago. But the 18 stamp is good indefinitely if you have one. But we have used all ours and today I used my new stamp.
11/05/1943	Farragut, ID	Got your letter dated November 2. The guys across the isle are having bible study. I get ovr once in awhile. Thre are a lot of Christian fellows in our company.
11/06/1943	Farragut, ID	Thanks for the box and letters. We went back on the rifle range. I got a score of 71 on the 22 range. Tomorrow I go on mess detail and will get all I want to eat but I don't like to work on Sunday. That's our day off.

11/07/1943	Farragut, ID	Just got out of mess hall. I was there for 12 3/4 hours. I done everything from swab deck to boil spuds.
11/07/1943	to Willis from Grandma Bennett Hollingsworth.	Have been busy knitting and have six doilies to make - \$1 each. Red Skelton is playing at Paramount. I pray for you every night.
11/08/1943	to Willis from Mom	Sending you a box of fruit. When we think of all the destruction this war is causing to the poor innocent people overseas - how they tear up towns and homes are destroyed. We are so well off in this grand country.
11/08/1943	to Willis from Mom	You know they are sure going to town in the war right now. They say Germany may crack up any day. Because when we take their oil fields they will sure have to holler "uncle". And they are unloading tons of bombs on them now.
11/08/1943	Farragut, ID	Got up at 4:30 and went to the rifle range. I was really sloppy. I guess I wasn't cut out to shoot a gun. We had 30 cal. rifles and 45 cal. pistols and I like to stay as far away from that stuff as I can. We only have 17 days left.
11/09/1943	to Willis from Mom	Letter from Marjorie. I am taking typing and a sophomore now. I'm going to work at one of the dime stores here as soon as they call me.
11/09/1943	to Willis from Mom	So now you have a red stripe on your sleeve. You got a fireman 3 class rating - apprentice machinist. Glad Delbert is in school. He may be dumb in studies but has a personality that people like. He's too young to be in a factory.
11/09/1943	Farragut, ID	Today we had a lecture on 3" guns and then we had a little practice on loading them. I guess we go back in quarantine tomorrow. We just got out yesterday but two more guys got scarlet fever.
11/10/1943	to Willis from Mom	If they give you a little bible, you read it. I love to read mine. It helps to make us better people but you have to want to be better, to understand the bible. Tomorrow is Armistice Day, Nov. 11. We will all face the east tomorrow at 11 and there will be no school. There is no gas and only 10 shells to a customer so there won't be much hunting done.
11/11/1943	Farragut, ID	I got a card from Grandma Bennett today with a dollar in it. Dhe sure is a good old sole. I get a letter from her every week. Took an obstacle course, had a lecture on machine guns, got hair cut and had another drill period.
11/13/1943	to Willis from Mom	Went to Legion party and Ben won the door prize which was a chicken. I wore my service pin you sent me and Glen's wife had one just like it.
11/13/1943	Farragut, ID	I sure want to see Art when I get home. He and I have been buddies for about 5 years.

11/14/1943	to Willis from Mom	Art was over and he and Orv have written you a letter. Delbert spends most of his time at the rink. So let him enjoy his self. He may have to go soon enough. Just think how fast time flys. And if Orv is re-examined he may go, then you will all be in. I sure hate to think of it but I'm mighty proud of my boys.
11/16/1943	Farragut, ID	We have bag inspection again tomorrow so we get up at 4 o'clock again. Tomorrow we have a test on seamanship and knots. I hope I pass. I get paid \$55 and I have \$25 so that means I will have \$80.
11/17/1943	to Willis from Mom	So learn all you can and be good and grow strong & husky for whatever may be before you. And always thank the Lord for any good things that come your way.
11/18/1943	to Willis from Mom	I hope you have the money for your ticket home. Will send at least \$10 to spend on the train. Someone said the eats are very high on the train and you will be on for 2 or 3 days. Haven't seen Art for a few days. He is driving cars for Romie Hames in and out of town.
11/18/1943	Farragut, ID	Got our company picture today. We got another hair cut and it looks like they put a bowl over your head and cut around it. We take our final swim test tomorrow. Hope I can get home for Thanksgiving. Last year I had to work on Thanksgiving at David Bradley and it was cold outside. I worked outside all day. We just took up a collection for a married man with 2 kids who didn't have enough dough to get home on. We really got a good bunch of fellows up here.
11/12/1943	Farragut, ID	Received a letter today with a dollar in it. Boy I sure needed that buck. I'm down to three but the chief has \$25 saved for me. If I get \$50 from the government I will have plenty to get home on. It costs \$45.75 to Chicago and \$1.83 to Kankakee and 65 cents cab fare from Kankakee to Bradley. Our chief tells us our company is the best in Camp Waldron.
11/16/1943	Farragut, ID	We leave here on the 25 <sup>th</sup> . Got a lecture on how we get home but they told us not to tell anyone. We only have 9 days left.
11/20/1943	Farragut, ID	I will be home the 27 <sup>th</sup> if they don't keep me in the hospital. Have a cold and a temp of 99 so I ain't bad. Today we took a ride around the lake in a motor boat. I sure had a lot of fun. I rode up front with the fireman from what he tells me I will like to be a fireman.
11/21/1943	Farragut, ID	I'm still in sick bay but hope to get out tomorrow. The only way you get milk up here is to go to sick bay. I hear milk is rationed at home. Is that right? You should see the nice little service mans paper the K3 news? sends me. It has pictures of all the guys and about three pages of funnies and a lot of brief local news. They don't send it to all of the guys up here just me.
11/21/1943	to Willis from Mom	Art goes to Chicago Monday to take his physical so he will be here when you get home.

11/23/1943	Farragut, ID	I'm still in sick bay but the Doc said I get out tomorrow and I sure hope he's right. I still would like to go with the boys from Cicero.
(No date)	to Willis	Thank you letter to more than 12,000 Sears employees in the armed services of our country. Enclosed is \$10 in merchandise certificates as a expression of comradeship from the Sears family.
12/14/1943	Barricks 11, Farragut ID	Was a little down when I left home but OK now. I met two guys from Kankakee and one from St. Anne. The two from K3 are Red Suprenant and Jay Rapilar. I also met most of the guys from my old Company but Red and Herb. They left just one day before I got in.
12/16/1943	Farragut, ID	Christmas Card to folks
12/17/1943	Farragut, ID	I'm a little tired after my hard days work on the coal pile for 7½ cents per hour. I went to the show "Salute to the Marines". I ran into a fellow I worked with at Bradley's, Walt Dominic. Got pay today and \$35 bought some clothes and have \$28 left. Will send some money home so you can get a few things for Christmas.
12/18/1943	Farragut, ID	I guess I'm going out of Farragut at last. They won't tell us where we are going but they said it will be a 3 or 4 day trip. One week ago today I was on my way to Chicago. Will you tell Max to keep out of here and be proud of his four F card.
12/17/1943	Post Card from Ft. Sheridan, IL, from Art to Orville Bennett	
12/19/1943	Farragut, ID	Suppose to leave tomorrow. I may have a Marine uniform on in a few weeks. About half of the firemen are being changed to the Marines. I even believe it's commando training and that's at the Marine Base in San Diego.
12/23/1943	Shoemaker, CA	This is better than ID. There is an air school, See Bees, Marines, Waves, Navy, Coast Guard and Commando all out here. We are 40 miles from Frisco, 28 from Oakland and we get every third day off.
12/26/1943	Shoemaker, CA	I had liberty yesterday and when I got that ten dollars from you it was one of the best gifts I could ask for way out here. I only had \$2 ut you need 5 to go out the gate. When I got back I still had \$9.65 so that was a cheap Christmas. We had a big Christmas show in the mess hall and we got a big bag of nuts, candy, oranges and apples and they even gave us a pack of cigs.
12/27/1943	Shoemaker, CA	I am going to sick bay for my feet. If they can't fix them well I suppose you know what will happen and they are pretty flat. I sure hope they can't fix em.
12/30/1943	Shoemaker, CA	Today I got to see Mickey Rooney, George Burns & Gracie Allen. It sure was a good show the put on. Got a letter from my girlfriend, it's the first letter since I got back from leave. A letter really makes a guy

feel one hundred percent better.

31 Dec 1943

It's New Years Eve and I am in camp. Had liberty tonight but didn't take it. It's been 19 days and I am getting a little impatient but I can't speed the mail up any.

## WILLIS (BILL) BENNETT LETTERS FROM 1944

All letters are addressed to Willis' parents, Mr. & Mrs. Ben Bennett, unless noted otherwise but the exchange is mainly with his mother. References to Delbert are made in several letters and he's Bill Bennett's brother.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Highlights</u>
01/01/1944	Shoemaker, CA	It's New Year's night and still no letter. How was New Year's Eve at home. I'll bet the bells rang, whistles blowed and Pa shot his old shot gun.
01/02/1944	Shoemaker, CA	Today is my last day in Shoemaker. I guess I go out to Treasure Island tomorrow. I lost Paul - he got shipped out today - where I don't know.
01/03/1944	Shoemaker, CA	After 24 days I finally got a letter from you.. Tell Max he'll never know how much that ten bucks meant to me. I got to go out Christmas Day and had a good time. Think I'll go to a show tonight. It only costs 10 cents and they are the latest. I guess we're going to some air base here in CA
01/04/1944	Shoemaker	You said there was no snow for Xmas, well I didn't have any either. If you don't hear from me for awhile, don't worry, I am going to Pearl Harbor. Saw "Paris Underground". They have two shows every night, one at the Blue and one at the Red and both are ten cents. All I think of is poor old Ray Erzinger, Roy Clovais, Wally and some of those guys in Africa, England and some hot spots.
01/11/1944	V-mail	I'll bet it's cold at home now. Last year I had to drain my Ford every night so I wouldn't screw up the works.
01/11/1944	V-mail to Delbert	I'm in Hawaii now and feel fine.
01/11/1944	V-mail to Parents	It didn't take me long to write as soon as I hit Hawaii.
01/13/1944	V-mail	Finally got a ship and a nice one at that. This address I have now will be my address for some time so give it to all and tell them I could use a few letters.
01/4/1944	V-mail	Is Max still working at Bradleys? Has Delbert gone to work yet? Has Pa gone to work yet?
01/18/1944		I would like you to get me Ray Erzingers, Donald Davis, Jr. LaFontain's addresses. I can't tell you anything about the ship, weather or where I am.
01/19/1944		Say Mom if you had any more pictures made save me a few. I have some girls I would like to give one to.
01/20/1944	U.S.S. Boston	Art hasn't written to me yet.
01/20/1944 (Postmark)	to Delbert	V-mail asking Delbert to write him.

01/21/1944 (postmark)	V-mail	It didn't take me long to write as soon as I hit Hawaii.
01/28/1944	U.S.S. Boston	Say how is the chances in you sending me a picture of the whole family. I sure would like to have a nice size one with Pop in it. He is the only one I don't have a picture of.
01/28/1944	U.S.S. Boston to Delbert	Have you gone to work yet? Well as I told you before don't quit school. Tell the boys at the Pool Hall hello and don't drink all the booze.
02/02/1944	U.S.S. Boston	It has been almost 2 months since I last heard from you. I would like you to answer this letter promptly and tell me how long it took for it to get there.
02/12/1944		Have you done any work on the house since I left? When I get home I want to see it all finished, the perfect specimen of beauty.
02/14/1944		When I write I can't tell you about the ship, where it is, the weather and about ten other things.
02/21/1944	U.S.S. Boston	Well Pop I have a little time so I'll drop you a few lines to let you know I am feeling tops and hope you are the same. Do you still go to Stoops and the Legion home?
02/24/1944	U.S.S. Boston	Boy this new pen sure is a fine job. You can't hardly tell you are using it. In the states it costs \$12.50 and I think I would even give that for it. Sheaffer's Lifetime Triumph is the name of it.
02/25/1944	U.S.S. Boston	I sure hope I get some mail soon. Did you ever get those pictures made you said you were going to have done.
02/29/1944	V-mail	Here it is the last day in Feb. and still no mail. I sure would like to be back at Bradleys. That is sure a good place to work. Tell Max to keep his job because after the war I am sure that place will keep working and I'll bet I go back after I get out of the Navy.
03/01/1944	V-mail to Delbert	Today is your birthday so I'll drop you a few lines.
03/03/1944		So Pop is working at the Easy Way. Well good for him. If he stays there till I get out of the Navy I'll join him. If not, I'll go back to Davids. You know Bradley is the best place in town I think.
03/04/1944		If you haven't already done so will you please give May Wolff one of my pictures and tell her to send me one of hers. I sure would like to see what she looks like again.
03/05/1944	U.S.S. Boston	They have good food here and take a lot of time to prepare it. We have nice clean mess halls and a clean galley. I'll say it is cleaner than most good restaurants you can go into.
03/05/1944	V-mail	Are you getting my bonds? You should get one a month. There should

be 3 home by now. When I get out I should have a nice roll.

03/05/1944 V-mail to Orville Hoping to hear from you soon. Tell all the gang hello and drink one for me.

03/06/1944 We just picked up some music on the radio. Boy it sure is good to hear music from the good old USA. Here's what I heard "miss you" "Please give me something to remember you by" "I'll be around" and then it went off.

03/12/1944 U.S.S. Boston I got a big boil on my arm and it sure hurts. As soon as I get a chance I am going to sick bay and see what they can do about it. I sure hope they don't go carving on me I don't like that. It sure is hard to think of anything to say that will pass the censor.

03/14/1944 to Delbert In your letter you said you are proud o your brother in the Navy. Well I am proud of you too kid. I want to see you finish school and get a good job. If you haven't got high school after the war you won't be able to dig a ditch.

03/14/1944 I'll try and send Delbert the money to get a suit fo Easter. I got some letters dated ever since last year. Some were new and some were old.

03/15/1944 I'm going to send home some money. I want Delbert to go uptown and get a whole new outfit and then have his picture taken and send it to me. I want him to be one of the best dressed kids in high school.

03/17/1944 Would like you to send pictures of everyone. A fella needs pictures as much as letters. That way when he gets a letter he can look at the peoples faces whom write.

03/18/1944 Am a mess cook and it's the same as K.P. in the army only in the Navy you get three mos. at a time. Don't mind and when I get off mess cook I am going up for fireman first. I sure hope I make it that will being my pay up.

03/18/1944 U.S.S. Boston to Delbert So you still want to join the Navy. Well as I told you before wait till you get drafted. I know lots of guys who say they are sure sorry they didn't wait.

03/19/1944 U.S.S. Boston Would you put newspaper clippings in your letters of the big news. And I don't want war news we get all that over the radio. We just picked up the "National Barn Dance" from the 8<sup>th</sup> St. Theater in Chi.

03/21/1944 Received your No. 4 letter last night. It takes some time for your letters to get here. I am growing a mustache again.

03/22/1944 U.S.S. Boston to Delbert I sent the money I promised. All I want out of it is a nece picture of you. I sure hope you get a good suit.

03/22/1944 U.S.S. Boston I got to go ashore again today. It sure seems nice to hit solid ground.

But I will feel one hundred percent better when I keep my keep my feet on the good U.S. soil. Paul Altmire is thin as a rail. I'll bet he lost 15 lbs.

03/26/1944 U.S.S. Boston I will soon be 19 and in the Navy six months.

03/28/1944 U.S.S. Boston Six months ago today I left for boot camp. I'll bet if you would see me now you would think I changed a lot.

04/02/1944 at Sea Sure hope Delbert is still going to school.

04/05/1944 at Sea - to Delbert When you get that picture taken I want you to send me one. No don't forget I am waiting for it.

04/05/1944 U.S.S. Boston at sea It has been about 3 weeks since I heard from you. I sure hope we take mail on board soon and I hope when we do get mail I get some pictures. Did I tell you to send one of my pictures to Miss Jean Francouer Notre Dame Academy? She sure wants a picture of me.

04/08/1944 U.S.S. Boston - to Delbert So John has a 36 Olds now. Do you have your suit yet? I want you to be the best dressed kid in school. And most of all I want you to finish.

04/08/1944 U.S.S. Boston - to Dad All the chow I want, plenty of fresh air, no beer, ain't that a bitch. Well I guess I can get along without that for now I have a job to do. Do you see much of my old flame Eileen?

04/08/1944 U.S.S. Boston to Max I received a letter from you and am glad you write as often as you do. You know a letter from home is worth more to me than a ten dollar bill. About that knife you said you are making for me. I sure can use a knife, most every guy on the ship has one. I would like to have a nice picture of you and Delbert also so don't forget that. When I do get home I'll have as many company bars as Deneau. I already have a few with stars on them too.

04/08/1944 U.S.S. Boston In the past few days I received about 50 letters. I heard from most everyone I know. Send a few air mail stamps every once in awhile. I can't get them all the time. And you can send pictures I sure enjoy them.

04/09/1944 U.S.S. Boston Don't bother to write about news of the war - we get a newspaper every day and have a special news broadcast on our ship.

04/09/1944 Easter Sunday Got a small picture of an old girl I used to know. Boy I sure like to see the faces of the folks at home.

04/11/1944 U.S.S. Boston I'll soon be 19 and in a few months I'll be in the Navy a year. Last night we saw a movie "Silver Queen". They let us go swimming over the side of the ship the other day. It sure is fun to dive from such a high point and it is a long way to the water.

04/13/1944 U.S.S. Boston I sure miss my old pal Art. You know I think a lot of him. Sure hope he got his leave.

04/17/1944	U.S.S. Boston	I only remember seeing one fish and that was a flying fish. Did you ever hear of them? I didn't believe there was such a thing till I seen them with my own eyes. I got your last letter in 7 days.
04/21/1944	at Sea	I'm sure glad you sent that picture of the parade on St. Patrick's Day. I have it un my locker and sure looks good to see the old main drag every time I open my locker.
04/23/1944	at Sea	They cut us down to writing one letter a day. I'll try and write every third day. You know I like to write Art, Ray and a few girls.
04/25/1944	at Sea	Old Longton really has been around but I've been over the Equator just as many times as he has so I guess I am getting salty. I also seen most of the places he seen and I haven't been in nine months yet.
04/27/1944	at Sea	So Delbert is working at Bradley. I hope he doesn't quit school. I have sure seen some beautiful sunsets since I've been out here and you should see how beautiful the moon looks when the water is nice and calm. Before the war people paid thousands of dollars to see what I see free. But I would rather see gold old "Broadway & the Pool Hall".
04/29/1944	V-mail	I am still on mess cooking but hope to go back on my old job soon. I really like my work I am assigned to. You know how I used to work around machinery all the time. Well that's all my job now and I love it.
04/30/1944	at Sea	We can only write one letter a day now. Mom, don't send any more stamps now that they are eight cents. We will get them for six for some time now.
04 May 1944	U.S.S. Boston	This is one of the best ships in the fleet and I am really proud to be on it.
04 May 1944	to Delbert	Glad you got your suit. I'll bet you look nice in it.
05 May 1944		Say you should hear the band we got on the ship now. Boy is it hot! The piano man was with T. Dorsey at one time. We will now hear some of the new tunes you at home hear. I am really anxious to see you. Hope to get home again before the war is over.
06 May 1944		I got to go ashore today. I found a few shells and picked a few coconuts off the ground. I also had four bottles of beer. That was the first I had in about two months. Sure tasted good. And did I get sun burned. You know its almost summer out here and twice as hot. Tonight was the first time I heard "Mairzy Doats". Kid of cute but a little silly don't you think so? Last night say "Madame Curie, you know the lady who discovered radium. It was marked 4.0 or to you 100%.
08 May 1944		Say I sure liked those clippings you sent. That was a laugh abut those 23 Kankakee kids going to Bradley to tear the town up. I'll bet they wouldn't have started if the old gang was there.
09 May 1944	U.S.S. Boston	Say Mom you can tell Pansy I am getting the paper now. I have gotten

about five in the past two or three days. Tell Pansy I really enjoy them.

10 May 1944 Still waiting for knife and pictures and suppose it will be some time since you sent them second class mail.

11 May 1944 I sure like that picture of Clark. Thank him for me and ask him if he won't drop me a few lines to let me know how things are with the "4 Duce Boys". I'll bet it is dead without all us guys around with our cars. I remember how Art & I used to sit in front of Krizons till 3 or 4 o'clock just raising h—.

13 May 1944 Tomorrow is Mothers Day, May 14. I would like to send you some little thing if only a card but it is impossible. All I can do is send all my love so that what I'm doing.

14 May 1944 I sent you the "Bean Pot" yesterday. It had a piece in it about our new band and it also had a little piece in it about the "Black Gang". That's what they call the Div. I'm in.

20 May 1944 at sea Does it seem to you I've been over here almost six months already. Boy that time really went fast. Well it shouldn't be long now till I make F 1/C (firemen first class). And hope to make water? tender 3/C before I get back home. I hear from Ray Erzinger most every time we hit port.

31 May 1944 I got the song hits and Bradlean. Thanks a million. Sure glad you sent me that clipping about Eileen. I know I made a fool of myself while I was home on leave. I never knew she was that kind of girl. I'll give you my word if I get home again before the war is over I'll stick to Mae Jean or Doreen, the girls I write and ones I knew before I came into the Navy.

21 Jun 1944 at Sea I may have to write V-mail from now on. We don't have any air mail stamps left on the ship.

28 Jun 1944 So Delbert got a car. Well I hope that doesn't keep him from going to school next year. I want him to go as far to school as he can. Tell him I'll send him money to spend on his car if he goes back to school.

28 Jun 1944 We have a news broadcast every night at 6:30 and get al the news of the world. We also get a newspaper every morning.

05 Jul 1944 at Sea Yesterday was the 4<sup>th</sup>. Did they have a big time at Waterman's this year? I sure had a big time there last 4<sup>th</sup>.

06 Aug 1944 Port Got to go to the beach. It's the first time I've been off the ship in four months. Got 3 cans of cold beer - boy did it taste good. Saw "Uncertain Glory" and "Home in Indiana".

07 Aug 1944 Port I hear Speed Birr is back in the States. You know I've been out here 8 months and still Fireman 2<sup>nd</sup> Class.

30 Aug 1944	from Jean	By that letter you wrote me I didn't know whether to believe you or not. But now dear, I do. I also hope you will never stop loving me because I love you very much.
17 Sep 1944	at Sea	I want you to tell me if Grandmas Willis & Bennett get the flowers I sent for Christmas. I hope to be home before Christmas but if I don't make it, don't feel bad.
27 Sep 1944	at Sea	I took a test for Fireman First and sure hope I passed it.
29 Sep 1944	Port	For Christmas I can use white socks, Esquire Mag. & Movie Mag. and your letters. Do send that Song Hit Book every month.
01 Oct 1944	Port	Thanks for the candy and comic books. Met a fellow from LaSalle. He used to work at Elwood the same time I did.
29 Oct 1944	Port	So the Bennett Family had their yearly get together. That's two I've missed. I sure hope I'm home for the next one. So Delbert quit school. If you let him join any branch of the service until he's 18 I'll never forgive you. Make him stay home. Please.
30 Oct 1944	Port	If you can get any of my old pals addresses that are out here, please send them. I haven't seen a sole I know in almost a year.
31 Oct 1944	Port (letter to Dad)	Don't think it was a very wise thing for Delbert to quit school. Don't worry because I know I'll make it home.
10 Nov 1944	at Sea	On Pay Day I drew a check for \$100 which I am enclosing in this letter. If I can save all my money I'll have quite a sum when I get out.
18 Nov 1944	at Sea	Mom you know most guys look for a letter from their girls, wives and pals but the one I always open first is the one from home - for a good reason, it's always best.
19 Nov 1944	South Pacific from Art Pasel	Gosh Mom, I don't know just how to express my thoughts enough for the swell box I received from you. You know how a person feels after he has been away for awhile. He wonders if things are changing fast. If people whom he hasn't known long will still remember him and all little things. But after you sent me that cigarette case and my brand of cigarettes, why I'll never worry anymore.
20 Nov 1944	at Sea	What do you think of Bill Bowker. I heard he was in Pearl Harbor long ago.
22 Nov 1944	at Sea	Glad to hear Max is out of the hospital and getting around on his own.
26 Nov 1944	Port	Just got back from the movie "Follow the Boys". For the first time I heard some of the songs popular back in the States.
29 Nov 1944	Port	Tomorrow I rate liberty so I'll go get my two cans of beer and lay in the sun for a few hours - that's about all a fellow can do on one of these

islands. Send white sox and gum. You said in your letter that cigarettes are hard to get back home. We get plenty of them out here. You can get any kind - Luckys, Camels, Chesterfield & Philip Morris for 5 cents a pack.

03 Dec 1944 Port

Saw movie "Swing Shift Magic".

20 Dec 1944 At Sea

Got a letter from you dated Nov. 30 and you said Max still can't work. Hope his leg is OK soon. Today is pay day but I didn't draw any money. I want to save for my house. That was too bad about Wayne Hayes - guess everyone has his time to go.

## WILLIS (BILL) BENNETT LETTERS FROM 1945 & 1946

**All letters are addressed to Willis' parents, Mr. & Mrs. Ben Bennett, unless noted otherwise. References to Delbert are made in several letters and he's Bill Bennett's brother.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Highlights</u>
01/02/1945	at sea	Thanks parents for letters. Still hasn't received Xmas box yet. Belands went out of business in Bradley.
01/15/1945	at sea	Has a feeling war will be over soon.
01/26/1945	in port	He and Art not seeing any action.
02/14/1945	from Mae Susan Wulff FPO San Francisco	Willis' brother Delbert joined Navy. She's still working at Bradley factory where there was a big lay-off. She's engaged to sailor from Bradley, Eddie Honzik.
02/19/1945	to Willis from Mom	Got picture of Delbert in boot camp.
02/21/1945	to Willis from Max FPO San Francisco	Girlfriend Faith Giroux next to Bob Martin's house. He's still at Bradley as electrical maintenance man.
02/23/1945	to Willis from Mom FPO San Francisco	Delbert had typhoid shot. All the places of amusement in all USA going to close at midnight - regular curfew - to save manpower and lights.
02/28/1945	to Willis from Mom San Francisco	Delbert gone 4 weeks. Going to Chicago soon to see him. He's 18 years old tomorrow and will be out of boot April 3.
03/01/1945	to Delbert	Today is your 18 birthday. I know a lot of guys who go over the hill and they think its smart. But it don't pay.
03/03/1945	to Willis from Jean Francoeur (girlfriend)	Went to movie "Casanova Brown".
03/07/1945	to Willis from Mom	Easter Card
03/29/1945	Southwest Pacific	Orval got married.
04/01/1945	M/M Orville Bennett	Post card with Army soldier that says "I'm see'n the country - but that's nothing to seeing you!"
04/19/1945	FPO San Francisco	Going to see Aunt Grace on weekend pass.
04/16/1945	U.S.S. Boston	Had wonderful time when he was home; met friend from Kankakee stationed on another ship.
04/30/1945	Long Beach, CA	Found a girlfriend out there who came to CA with her sister, wife of buddy Ed Bolles from Bradley. Feeling better since Doctor gave him something.

05/1945	Long Beach, CA	Mother Day card to his Mom.
05/08/1945	Long Beach, CA	Gets liberty 2 days out of 3 but will be out to sea soon. VE Day. Bad news about Butch Klognowski - boyfriend of Doreen Birr? Sent picture of himself & girlfriend Betty Manchester.
05/31/1945	In port	Letter to Max & Faith. Liberty days over and hoping the war will be over soon. Girl he dated in CA good kid but too far behind time. Wishes he wouldn't have fouled up with the little chick from Bradley.
06/01/1945	In port	He sure would like to spend his 20 <sup>th</sup> birthday at home. Delbert was looking all over Frisco for him and he was about 450 miles away. Thinks he'll be leaving soon.
06/02/1945	At sea	Found an old letter he forgot to mail to Mom and apologized.
06/18/1945	In port	Will be sending pictures soon. Tell Delbert to write.
06/19/1945	In port	Saw Everett Denoyer out there. Had a ball game & got sunburned.
06/20/1945	In Port	Wishes he could be home to help his mother with the garden. Tell brother to write - his new wife can't keep him that busy.
06/26/1945	APO San Francisco	Got paper Mom sent on VE day.
06/29/1945	In port	Didn't look up Aunt Grace. Haven't heard from brother Delbert for a long time. Had a photograph taken of "B" Div.
07/04/1945	FPO San Francisco Letter from Reynold	If his girlfriend will still have him, he plans to be married.. Was swell that Billey & Delbert were home at same time and Orval becoming married.
07/1945	FPO San Francisco	Birthday card to Mom- hope to be home on your next birthday.
07/09/1945	From Delbert to Mom	V Mail written from chow hall and it's hot. Just about every day it rains.
07/10/1945	In port	Faith is going to have a baby. Gavin? Clark died.
07/16/1945	At sea	Japan is really taking a beating isn't it? I bet we won't even have to invade.
08/03/1945	At sea	Got a letter from Art and he says he's in the Philippines now.
08/06/1945	At sea	Included a page of the Domei News from Tokyo, Japan, dated Sept. 29, 1945.
08/18/1945	from Art Pasel, Luzon	War about over but peace hasn't yet been signed. I've only 15 1/2 months overseas but sure would appreciate a few days at home. Plans I made back in the States now seem foolish and like kid stuff. This island sure is a mess. I'm sorry I didn't get the chance to go into Tokyo.

08/29/1945	Sugamai Bay	Arrived after 47 days at sea. The Boston was one of the first ships to enter the bay. The homes and business buildings look somewhat like those at home. They have a very nice quiet peaceful looking country & I can see why they put up such a fight for it.
09/12/1945	Tokyo Bay	Took a little trip up to destroy the suicide boat base at Katsinero Naval Base.. We have returned to Yokohama now. Haven't been ashore in 9 weeks and haven't stepped off ship in 2 ½ months. It's going to be a long time before I get out and even longer before Delbert does. The Boston has occupational duty here in Tokyo. Our first opportunity was that suicide boat base. We took them out and sunk them. We picked up guns, rifles, torpedoes and most everything you can think of.
09/18/1945	Off coast of Japan	We're playing around with a typhoon with the center of it around Tokyo Bay. The Div. Officer told me I was going up for second class the end of this month. If I do I'll make about \$120 a mo. Boy I can just see my new car when I get home.
09/20/1945	Tokyo Bay 2 letters	I went up on the signal building today and got the dope on the Guam. I don't know if Delbert is still on her but she's gone back to the States. She had too much trouble keeping up with the fleet. Fleet left for the states today. God only knows when the Boston will go back now.
09/22/1945	Coast of Japan	Won't be long now and I'll have 2 years in the Navy, Sept. 28. I was sworn in Sept. 21, 1943, how well I will remember that date.
09/25/1945	Tokyo Bay	Mom I can close my eyes and see everything you tell me. You should have been an author! Can't get decent cigarettes.
09/27/1945	Tokyo Bay	Got a letter from Delbert and he said he seen the Great China Wall. Heard we're supposed to go back to the States Oct. 10 but don't believe it because we're getting an overhaul. I seen that old Jap battle wagon that they're going to use the atomic bomb on in a few days. Looks like a 22 would sink it.
10/02/1945	Tokyo Bay	Read on war bonds and mustering out pay. It said if you have six mo. Overseas you get \$300, states \$200. Today had to take a boiler stop out and it's about twice the size of a V-8 engine.
10/07/1945	Tokyo Bay	Typhoon season and mail being held up. A lot of guys leaving the ship tomorrow. I guess they all have 3 kids and they are young to be discharged.. Hope they get down to me soon.
10/09/1945	Tokyo Bay	Went on liberty yesterday. I now have a rifle, helmet, coat hangers, fans, chop sticks, ring and other little things. I seen the old Jap battleship today the Nagada. It's the one they're going to use the atomic bomb on soon.
10/12/1945	Tokyo Bay	Heard orders were to sail home Nov. 30.

10/15/1945	Tokyo Bay	Had a hard day cleaning fire sidars. That's about the same as a chimney sweep. Have to get inside the boiler and brush the soot off the tubes with a wire brush.
10/23/1945	Tokyo Bay	Had tooth pulled Friday. That was a good piece in the paper about me. I 'll bet the people at home think Halsey is a boy scout. I'm glad you bought the lot. You can take my war bonds to pay for it. I want to build a house right off the lot. I know I'll always be able to rent it. Now about my work when I get out. I think I'll go for cement finishing. That's \$1.95 an hr. Sounds pretty good to me. Chief in charge of firerroom said I had orders to get his boiler ready to steam Nov. 10 and be ready to get under way Nov. 15.
10/24/1945	Tokyo Bay	Took his test for second class today. The Div. Officer told one of the guys that all four of us who went up made it. But I won't know for sure until about Friday. 140 questions on boilers - when I went up for third we only had 97 but they were harder than these. I'll be home around Christmas.
10/26/1945	Tokyo Bay	We're going out for target practice pretty soon so my mail will fall off for a few weeks. We're going to fuel today and make preparations for getting under way. So it won't be long now.
10/27/1945	Tokyo Bay	Today is "Navy Day" and people are celebrating.
10/28/1945	Tokyo Bay	I guess I made second class so I'll make \$115 a month now.
11/02/1945	Sosebo, Japan	Don't know if we're going back to states or not. We picked up an admiral off the Wichita and his time isn't up out here yet.
11/03/1945	Sosebo, Japan	Had a visitor - Reynold LaFontaine. He had 35 points but is regular Navy and won't get out until after Jan. He's on a sea plane tender and is leaving for the states very soon. His captain says they're going to leave Nov. 5 so I don't think I'll be able to see him again.
11/06/1945	Sosebo, Japan	Don't plan on me coming home because the Navy changes its mind too often. Haven't been over to Sosebo but they can give Japan back to the Japs and use an atomic bomb on it.
11/09/1945	Sosebo, Japan	We're going to Nagasaki. I'm just dying to get back to that little place on Forest Ave. I'll make it look like a palace.
11/10/1945	Sosebo, Japan	Your letters told me all about the party for the GI Joes at the legion. I wish I could have been there. It makes me feel good to think that I might get out some day & mostly that guys are really going home for good. It's like a dream. I can hardly believe that the war is really over. Pansy told me we're going to have a Radio Station in Kankakee and a new super highway out Aroma Park. I made second class not doing any work. I let the Firemen do it. Don't even get my fingernails dirty. I never dreamed I would get as high as I am. We get programs on the radio from home - even heard a band from Blue Island the other night. We don't have liberty anymore because it's not safe here - too many

guys getting sick.

11/12/1945	Sosebo, Japan	Glad you got the lot. I sent you \$200 to start to pay on it. We're leaving for Nagasaki at 9 tomorrow morning.
11/17/1945	Tokyo Bay	Getting cold here but 98° down here. Only time I get topside is to see the movies at night. Sat in the library tonight so I get to hear the radio. Listened to the "Hit Parade".
11/19/1945	Tokyo Bay	Received the great news that I'm an uncle about a mo. late. Did some shopping in Yokohama. Took 7 pkg. of cigs over and sold them for 20 yen a pack or \$1.34 a pack.
11/24/1945	Wakayama, Japan	I guess we'll be in Nagasaki about Nov. 29. Would like to have a camera.
11/29/1945	Kau, Japan	Drove around Hiroshima for 3 hours. We were about a block from where the bomb exploded. It went off at about 1800 ft. & demol-ished everything for 9 miles square. About 10-12 buildings were left standing & rest were flat. The bomb weighed 450 lbs. & had about 8 lbs. of atomic power in it (about as much as you could put in a tea cup). It's hard to believe that one bomb could do so much damage but it did. Talked with a Jap who said about 150,000 people were killed instantly & about 10,000 died later. The Japs in that area don't like us at all & I don't blame them a bit. Their once beautiful town isn't any more.
12/01/1945	Nagasaki, Japan	We leave for Sosebo tomorrow. The Army took over all jap radio stations and broadcast just like ? with no advertising.
12/03/1945	Sosebo, Japan	War was over Sept. 2 and most of the ships I know of have gone back but us. We have more gold on her now than they had in California at one time. I'll bet we have more gold and less brains than any other ship or station anyplace in the world.
12/04/1945	Sosebo, Japan letter to Dad	Tomorrow I'll have almost enough to pay my lot off. I figure I'll have about \$700 in bonds and mustering out pay and if I'm able to save a few hundred more I'll get myself a nice car and have a lot too. Not bad for two years. Sure hope you're saving me a seat at the table.
12/04/1945	Sosebo, Japan	I stay in the darkest & greasiest spots on the ship. I'm third in charge and the guys above me are 4.0. All I want is a home & car & a good living. I'm willing to work for it too.
12/05/1945	V-mail	Picture of mountain with U.S.S. Boston in Japan and Merry Christmas message.
12/05/1945	Sosebo, Japan	We're eating worse now than we did when we were at war.
12/07/1945		The time when the Houston got hit and I was 31 feet below the water level in a compartment dogged down water tight. If we ever would have been hit we wouldn't have had a chance.

12/10/1945	Sosebo, Japan	We got word we get relieved January 20 and will leave for the States about Feb. 5. I'm glad you signed me up in the Bradley V.F.W. I would love to be a charter member.
12/14/1945		Japanese Christmas Card to parents
12/15/1945	Wakayama, Japan	I got the little paper the factory puts out and it had a little item about me. We're going home after the first of the year. The U.S. Atlanta is going to relieve us and leave Long Beach roughly January so should hit the States about Feb. 10. I have 23 months overseas now. I seen ships get hit and they really get a hole. The record is the Intrepid, an aircraft carrier, she took 7 hits and still made it home.
12/18/1945	at sea	Having a white Christmas even if it will be is Sosebo.
12/18/1945	Kau, Japan	Got a little more work done on my teeth today. Doc trying to get me a false tooth so I'll be all set to get out when my time comes. We have a "knife specialist", a "family doc" and a dentist so I feel safe at all times.
12/21/1945	Kau, Japan	I guess I'll get out in the spring. We're out for a big Xmas on the "Boston". We're going to deck her out in cool class. I have an idea will make the papers so don't be surprised if you see the picture in the Chicago Sunday? We're putting a large star on the radar screen made of holly and more lights than you can imagine.
12/25/1945	Sosebo, Japan	We're supposed to leave for West Coast on Jan. 20.
12/28/1945	In port	Thanks a million for all the Christmas packages.
12/28/1945	Sosebo, Japan	Got a letter from Art & he says he has 49 points & will be out before long because the Army is down to 50 now. I have about 30 but I need 38 to get out. If I get first leave and Delbert gets second we might get home about the same time.
12/29/1945	Sosebo, Japan	Got a letter from you dated Dec. 18 so 11 days really isn't too bad for about 10,000 miles is it?
01/04/1946	At sea	Maybe by the time you get this letter we'll be on our way to the West Coast. (Also letter to Max & Faith)
01/09/1946	Tokyo Bay	Received the letters you wrote New Year's Eve in 8 days. Delbert got home for New Years. The Atlanta is in Pearl now & we hope she hurries up and gets out here. I'll soon have 2 years on this ship & all that time I've been in No. #3 Fire Room. Newspaper clipping from home said we're in the 19 <sup>th</sup> fleet now and all the ships in that fleet are going to be taken out of commission. Said they'll all go to Washington so I guess I'll spend a little time up north.
01/10/1946	Tokyo Bay	Still waiting for Jan 20 and sure hope we leave when we supposed to.

01/15/1946	At sea	Would sure like to see Delbert. If he's still in New York when we hit the West Coast I'll be able to see him before he goes out to sea again. Orders have been changed - not going to leave until Feb. 1. Atlanta broke down outside Pearl Harbor and had to return. She arrive at Tokyo Bay Jan. 31.
01/20/1946	Kau, Japan	We put the Admiral off & tomorrow we put his staff off. Then we fuel & head for Tokyo Bay to pick up troops and take off for San Francisco.
01/23/1946	Kau, Japan	Told that Monday with 28 <sup>th</sup> is the day for departure.
02/27/1946	Chicago	Hit Chicago OK. Will be in San Francisco Sat. 10 a.m. Hope to see you soon. (Post card of Chicago Stadium)
03/04/1946	Frisco	I now have charge of #3 fire room and do I have a racket. (He obviously had been home of leave.)
03/07/1946	Frisco	Saw Aunt Grace and her husband.
03/13/1946	Birthday card to Dad	
03/18/1946		Looks like I'll be home before too long. They say they're going to drop the points to 24 in June and I have 31 3/4 now. It costs a lot of money to live out here. A stake is \$2.50, Chicago \$2.50 and so on. Beer is 25 and 35 cents and Budweiser and Schlitz is 40 cents most places.
03/20/1946	San Francisco	Today was pay day and I drew \$55.00.
03/22/1946	San Francisco	The ship is going up to Seattle, Washington, to be taken out of commission. We leave here on March 26 and should be in Seattle by the 31 <sup>st</sup> . Went up & seen Harry James last night and danced to his music.
03/30/1946		Looks like we're going up to Seattle Wednesday. Guess I'll get out of the Navy about May 15 so will be home for my 21st birthday. If I get myself a good job & a nice little car that will be all I ask for. I have my lot & a few bonds.
04/01/1946	San Francisco	Had visit with Aunt Grace and she showed me a lot of pictures of you, Grandma, Aunt Bessie, Anabelle, etc. They were all taken about 1926.
04/07/1946	Seattle	My name is on the list for discharge May 2. Like Seattle much better than California. A steak is only \$0.85 up here and in California it would cost \$2.50.
04/17/1946	Seattle	Haven't been ashore but will go over Sunday, that's Easter. I want to take a few pictures with colored film.
04/18/1946	Seattle	Two of my pals were discharged in Seattle & bought a '32 Plymouth to drive to New York. The car cost \$345 & they sure got robbed. It took them 72 hrs. to go through Sep. Center & they were handed a discharge & over \$300 apiece. You get 5 cents a mile to your home & you only

have to pay 1½ cents a mile on the train so I'll make close to a hundred dollars.

04/27/1946

This is the last time I'm gong to write you from the Boston. I'm on a draft for Great Lakes May 2 but may have to lay over in Seattle for a few days. Glad Art's home - haven't seen him since I left to go back to Boots about 33 mo. ago.