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William Vasos Second World War  
correspondence

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## 1945, Unknown

Unknown

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Next time the call comes to make the world safe for Democracy. I'm taking a crack at the Navy. As you know, I was a victim of Class "A". The next time, I want to be in Class "B"----B there when they go and B there when they come back.

I remember when I was registering. I went to the desk, and my milkman was in charge. He said, "What's your name?" So I told him, "August Childs". He said, "Are you an Alien?" I replied, "No, I fell fine". Then he said, "When did you first see the light of day?" I said, "When I moved to Philadelphia from Pittsburgh". He said, "The first of September you'll be in Australia, and that will be the last of August."

A veterinarian started to examine me. He asked, "If I ever had the measles, small pox, or St. Vitus dance, and if I took fits". I said, "No, only when I stay in a saloon too long". Then he said, "Can you see all right?" I said, "Sure, but I'll be cockeyed tonight if I Pass". Then he listened to my chest and he said, "I think you have a wart someplace". I said, "Wart, my neck, that's my button in your ear". The doctor said he had examined 140,000 men and that I was the most perfect physical wreck that he had examined. Then he handed me a card--- Class "A".

Then I went off to a camp, and I guess they didn't think I'd live long. The first fellow wrote on my card, "Flying Corps". I went a little further and a guy said, "Look what the winds blowing in". I said, "Wind nothing, the draft's doing it". On the second morning, they put these clothes on me. What an outfit. As soon as you are in it you think that you can lick anybody. They have two sizes; Too large and Too small. The pants are too tight, I can't sit down. The shoes are so big I turn around three times and they don't move. And what a raincoat they gave me. It strained the rain. I passed an Officer all dressed up with a fancy belt and all stuff. He said, calling after me "Don't you notice what I have on?" I said, "Yes, but what are you kicking about, look what they gave me".

I landed in camp with \$75.00---in 10 minutes I was broke. I never saw so many 3's and 12's on a pair of dice. No matter what I did I went broke. Something went wrong even in cards. One time I got five aces and I was afraid to bet. A good thing I didn't, the fellow next to me had six kings. Finally I said, "This is a crooked poker game". The fellow next to me said, "We're playing pinochle, not poker". Everything was crazy. If you were a livery hand you were put in the Medical Department. If you are a watchman they made you the Officer of the Day. I saw a guy with a wooden leg and I asked him "What he was doing in the Army?" He said, "I'm going to mash the potatoes". Oh, it was nice, five below zero one morning and they called us out for underwear inspection. You talk about scenery--red flannels, BVD's of all kinds. The union suit I had on would fit Tony Galento. The Lt. lined us up and told me to stand up. I said, "I'm up--this underwear makes you think I'm sitting down". He got so mad that he put me to digging ditches. A little while later he passed and said, "Don't throw that dirt up there". I said, "Where are you going to throw it?" He said, "Dig another hole to put it in."



By that time I was pretty mad at myself, so another boy named Jones and myself drank a quart of whiskey. Finally Jones acted so funny, I ran to the doctor and told him, "Jones was going blind". He asked me "what we were doing", and I told him. So he asked me, "If Jones saw pink elephants. I said, "No, that's the trouble, they're there and he doesn't see them".

Three days later we sailed for Australia. Marching down the pier, I had some more bad luck. I had a Sergeant who stuttered and it took him so long to say "HALT", that twenty-six of us marched overboard. They pulled us up and the Captain came along and said, "Fall In". I replied, "I have just been in". I was on the boat twelve days, seasick all the time. Nothing going down, everything coming up. I leaned over the rail all the time. In the middle of one of my best leans the Captain rushed up and said, "What Company are you in"? I said, "I'm all by myself". He asked me if the Brigadier was up yet"? I said, "If I swallowed it, it's up". Talk about dumb people. I said to one of the fellows, "I guess we dropped the anchor". He said, "I know they'd lost it, it's been hanging out ever since we left New York". We had a lifeboat drill and when the boat was being lowered over the side of the ship, it spilled some men into the water. Only the 2nd Lt. and I were left in the boat. The Lt. gave orders to pull the men out of the water by the hair of their heads. I was struggling with the men when one fellow with a bald head yelled, "Pull me out". I said, "Go down and come up the right way".

Well, we landed in Australia and were immediately sent to the trenches. After two nights in the trenches, all the cannon started to roar and the shells started to fall. I started shaking with Patriotism. I tried to hide behind a tree but there weren't enough trees for the Officers. The Captain came around and said, "Five O'Clock we go over the top". I said, "I'd like to go on a furlough". He asked, "Haven't you any red blood in you"? I answered, "Yes, but I don't want to see it". He said, "Where do you want to go"? I said, "Any where it's warm". He told me where to go. Five O'Clock and we went over the top. 10,000 Japs came at us. They all looked at me as though I had started the War. Our Captain yelled, "Fire at Will", but I didn't know any of their names. I guess the fellow behind me fired his gun thinking I was Will. He shot me in the excitement. On my way to the Hospital, I asked a fellow, "Where they were taking me". He said, "Yor're going to the morgue". I said, "There's some mistake, I'm not dead". "Lie down", he replied, "Do you want to make a fool out of the doctor"? Finally a pretty Nurse comes in and said, "Move over"--Oh? that's another story.

Yes sir the next time the call comes to make the World safe for Democracy, I'm taking a crack at the Navy.

So goes the story of "The Bewildered Soldier".