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1953-06-14, Walter to Shirley

Walter Edward Smith

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1953-06-14, Walter to Shirley

Keywords

June, 1953, 1953, navy, naval vessel, wife, women, women at home, correspondence, job, duty, fuel, wounded, casualties, injury, death, burial and graves, pilot, Sasebo, Japan, aviation, aircraft, airships, aircraft carriers, USS St. Paul, USS Princeton, USS Lake Champlain, USS Boxer, USS Philippine Sea, accident, explosions, bomb, bombardment, naval war, naval combat, USS New Jersey, destroyers, destroyer, artillery, military leaders, communications, military operations, operations, Chinese, luck, radio, helicopter, crash, medical personnel, medic, medical services, funeral, tragedy, family, mother, money, finances, food, soldiers' slang, rest, gifts, love

Identifier

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U.S.S. Platte A.O. 24

14 June 1953

Dear "Skirl",

We fueled the task force last night until 1 o'clock, I had the 4-8 watch, so you can see how much sleep I've been getting. This morning we fueled the St. Paul, a cruiser. Lately we've had a great many reminders that this is still a shooting war and that people do get hurt out here. The St. Paul transferred a dead body of a pilot to us this morning for return to Sasebo. Last night on watch the planes were flying thick and fast overhead. We now have 4 carriers out here in action. The Princeton, Lake Champlain, Boxer and Phil Sea. The Lake Champlain had an accident a day ago and was on fire etc., it was a bomb burst or something similar to the Boxer explosion.

As I'm writing right now, The whole ship shudders with each salvo fired by the New Jersey. The shore bombardment seems to have been stepped up quite a bit of late. The destroyers are too numerous to begin to name and they all blast the beach.

Commander Task Force 77 came out with a message this morning congratulating the replenishment group for the excellent support of operations enabling Task Force 77 to make a new record number of strikes against the Chinese etc. We've been fueling them at night in the dark with practically no lights. I don't know if you can imagine what it's like to have ships alongside at night. You can't see lines coiled on deck etc. a mistake and somebody gets hurt. We've been lucky though, no trouble at all.

It seemed rather pathetic this morning

when that poor pilot was brought aboard. I heard his whole death story as it happened the day before on the voice radio. We could hear the carrier report him down and the Wonsan helicopter unit get orders to pick him up.

As it turned out a crash boat picked him up and reported him dead.

I heard the doctor request permission to embalm him right away. He didn't die of wounds, he died of being tangled in his parachute in the water and drowning. Enough of this dreary stuff!

In your latest letters, I received the track results - Thanks!!

My Mom and your Mom both wrote nice letters. Mine sent \$35 to add to her dishes and to pay for what I'd bought.

Well by the time I get this off and shower, it will be time for dinner. We fuel again tonight so I should get

some sleep this afternoon. We'll probably get some "tin can" this afternoon to keep us awake. Oh well, it looks like it's almost over now anyway.

All my love,

Watt

P.S. - I'll try to buy the ash traps you requested - I think they have them. I also intend to purchase a 93 piece set of Pine Cone for us.

All my love (again)

Watt

[WALTER EDWARD SMITH CORRESPONDENCE – JUNE 1953 #2]

[Page 1 – Letter]

U.S.S. Platte A.O. 24

14 June 1953

Dear “Shirl”,

We fueled the task force last night until 1 oclock [sic], I had the 4-8 watch, so you can see how much sleep I’ve been getting. This morning we fueled the St. Paul, a cruiser. Lately we’ve had a great many reminders that this is still a shooting war and that people do get hurt out there. The St. Paul transferred a dead body of a pilot to us this morning for return to Sasebo. Last night on watch the planes were flying thick and fast overhead. We now have 4 carriers out here in action. The Princeton, Lake Champlain, Boxer and Phil Sea. The Lake Champlain had an accident a day ago and was on fire etc., it was a bomb burst or something similar to the Boxer explosion.

[Page 2 – Letter continued]

2.

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[Page 3 – Letter continued]

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shower, it will be time for dinner. We
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[Page 4 – Letter continued]

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All my love,

Walt

P.S. – I'll try to buy the ash trays you requested – I think they have them. I also intend to purchase a 93 piece set of Pine Cone for us.

All my love (again)

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