6-21-1947

1947-06-21, Melvin to Mary

Melvin

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June 21st, 1947

My Dearest Aunt,

I received your letter a few days ago and was very glad to hear from you. In one of Mom's letters she mentioned that Robert was buried here on Guam. I have been down today and found Robert's grave just fine. He lies in a very beautiful cemetery and the graves are sodded all over with green grass. They are flat and the grass looks like a blanket of velvet. His grave is in a corner of the cemetery in a very beautiful spot...there are flowers surrounding the entire cemetery...a kind of flower that blooms the year round. They look a lot like honeysuckle, but are a larger beautiful flower. There are some red and some pink, a very beautiful flower. His grave is next to the flowers in the rear corner, left side of the highway that leads you by the cemetery. They have keepers for the cemetery that work there daily, mowing the grass and trimming the flowers and shrubbery. If I can I will try to take a picture of the cemetery and his grave. I don't have any camera, but I believe I can get one.

Here are some clippings I cut out of the Navy News and I thought that you might like to see them.

I will say this, Aunt Margaret, his grave and all the others couldn't be taken care of any better. Even you couldn't give it daily attention the way they do here. I also believe that he couldn't have been buried in a nicer place. I guess that is about all I can say to you and I hope it helps you to know that his grave is being cared for. It is a pleasure for me to help you in any way.

Sincerely yours,
Melvin

(EXCERPT FROM THE NAVY NEWS)
(This is a part of the speech given on Memorial Day by the Governor of Guam.)

And now turning to a more pertinent phase of this Memorial Day, I wish to say...it is not my purpose or privilege to question the personal wishes of the next of kin of these brave lads who landed, fought, died and were buried here on Guam, nor to question in any way the official acts of the Government of the U.S. with respect therewith. What I do say is this: that nowhere on earth are the American war dead more highly cherished than here on Guam and for good reason. The Guamanian people saw them land, prayed thanks, and rejoiced. The Guamanian people witnessed the ensuing fight and recapture, and assisted. The Guamanian people saw them die and some died with them. The Guamanian people saw them buried on Guamanian soil along with their own loved ones.
Thus we realize why July 21st is also Memorial Day here on Guam, in fond memory of the landing of the Marines at Asan and Agat beaches on July 21st, 1944. They and we would not be selfish about this matter of disinterment; God forbid. But be it known, that each one of these graves means much more than just a grave. Somehow, they seem to still have a mission and a purpose here in peace and death...as they did in life and war. Their graves are a constant reminder to every visitor and passer-by that we must get on the job, stay on the job, and to make Guam strong---strong from within and strong from without. Yes, they are more than welcome here. Attentive and affectionate hands will care for their resting place always, as long as they remain with us.

There were also two picture sent me which I had to return. One of them showed the 24th Marine Fighter Wing flying over the cemetery at Agat and tipping their wings in salute.