



U. S. MARINE CORPS

my address
福国梁若松市
源所一六六
鈴野光雄
平田春次

Fukuoka-ken, Nakamatsu,
Fukamachi, 1616 Bancho,
% Mr. Mitsuo Yarino
May 25, 1946

Dear Mr. Gundersen,

Flash! At 7:22 P.M. on May 20, 1946.
2100 cases of fine grained powder (similar
to black powder) exploded in powder
magazine number four of Yamada
Amusement Park. About twenty dead found.
Thirty to forty Japanese - men, women,
and small children - still missing -
half or more probably dead. Seven
injured being treated with medical
care in Japanese hospitals. This
is what happened here the other day.
The day after the blast I went
to Yamada Park to the place of
explosion. It ~~is~~ was horrible.
I seen policemen haul and dig out
dead bodies and pieces of bodies.

You could see the brains jutting out and the guts oozing out with dirt and gravel mixed. Broken legs or arms will be dangling from the main body. Pieces of arms, legs, human flesh and skin, hair with some of the scalp on, meat burned to a black crisp, and all stinking like only human flesh can smell like. The gruesome scene made me sick and dizzy. I think in one single explosion all this could happen. The place was supposed to have been guarded by Japanese police but about sixty Japanese from Yubata went into the ammo park (ammunition park or dump) to steal lumber and most likely powder to start their fires with. A piece of concrete ^{from the exploded magazine} about one yard in diameter was thrown up a hillside about four or five hundred feet from the scene of the explosion. That's how strong the blast was.

The explosion shook houses and broke



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window panes for several miles.
The explosion itself was heard for
miles. It was lucky we had just
finished cleaning out Yamada Amno
Park a few days before the explosion
because if the explosion had occurred
about two or three months ago, Kokura
(city) might look like the atomic bomb
had struck it. We destroyed ^{over} 1800 tons of
powder and explosives and a countless
number of projectiles, fuzes, rockets,
mortars, etc. This was in a period of
about 3 months. We are now hauling
powder and explosives out of a new
powder magazine at Tomino, Otaru.
The magazines there are beautiful master
pieces, but I don't care to examine or
even gaze at them until all of the

powder and explosives are cleared out,
if that place blows; I don't want to
be there or even near it.

I will enclose a picture of myself
that was taken at the place of work
where we burn powder and explosives
(Kitsugata Racetrack). It came out lousy
and, I nearly broke the camera when I
took it.

Please give my best regards to
all and say hello to any of my friends
if you see them for me.

Sleep is calling me so I'll have
to answer him quick.

Sincerely yours,

Juji Hata

P.S. Please excuse my writing and
grammar as I hate to re-copy and
reread my letters because I find too
many mistakes and could never write.
Laziness is my other half - you know,
Juji.

U. S.
MAY
27
1946
A.



VIA AIR MAIL

Mrs. M. P. Gunderson
c/o Mrs. C. E. Bennett
4054 Oakmore Road
Oakland 2, California