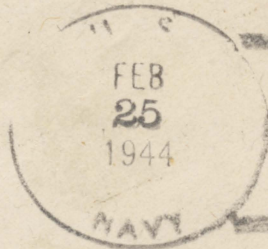


1/1 Sgt. Y. Shibata, Hy Co
1st Mar Div FMT
Fleet Post Office
San Francisco, Calif



Miss Yuri Domoto
6 F 5 C, Granada WRA
Auraria, Colorado



T/Sgt. Y. Shihata, Hq. Co.
First Marine Division, FMF,
c/o Fleet Post Office,
San Francisco, California

21st Feb. 1944
Monday

Dear Yuri:

"Silence is Golden" at times, but I guess it doesn't apply in this case...especially, when I owe you four letters. Yours of Oct. 24th, Nov. 12th, Dec. 2nd, & 14th reached me as I was sitting out an air raid. It was good of you to remember me on my birthday and on Christmas with a double header....liked the Little Neebo card with the note. Somehow, short notes with cards seem to be your trademark....I enjoy them 'cause they're simple and brief and yet seem to capture and convey your mood and thoughts of the time.

Your guess that the "1" in the Guadalcanal Patch stood for the 1st Marine Division was correct. Yes, this is THE DIVISION that hit the headlines daily during the dark days following the successive advance of the enemy. Used to think that the "Guadalcanal" affair was over-publicized by Tregaski but after seeing and being with them in this campaign, I know why they rate all the glory that can be given to them. They're marvelous fighters as they cooperate with each other to the Nth degree. Sort of does your heart good to see them in action....reminds me of the systematic and cool way in which Joe Louis used to fight. And even though I'm an army personnel, I'm not afraid to say that this Division is in a class of its own.

Hearing of Hayward sure reminded me when I went there in May. As Toichi wrote, it truly has changed. Your mentioning about the "Cottage Dining Room" brings back a savory memory...recall the filet mignon and the oyster we had. I'd pay a fortune for a dinner and companion like that. (notice I place dinner first) Milton's little coffee shop is another place I miss. It was almost a joke the way Min and I used to haunt that place with you. Heard from Mr. Blanks last week too. He says it isn't the same town we used to know. Wrote that they had a strong wind which didn't do the greenhouses of the vicinity any good. Mentioned three of Danny's, one of Kinoshitas, and Minami's going down. Didn't say anything about ours but I have my hunch. (Speaking of Danny, is he a minister yet?)

With each letter your love for the beauty of nature always show up...I'm glad you're not here to see what changes undergo at this spot. Trees especially, are innocent bystanders, and if the author of "Woodman Spare That Tree" could take a "look-see", he'd probably go batty. Practically, all of them have been hit by

bomb or by shell. Takes on the appearance of a burlesque queen at the end of her act...she, the trees, are really stripped. No leaves, no branches, no bark, and many times no trees. So much for nature. As for the beauty of the sky, the southern one at night is truly beautiful. The stars appear to be more bright and more carefully scattered....the milky way is more vividly seen. And the moon, can't forget her....we more or less pray that it doesn't shine so bright....as with it there comes a visit from the "sons of heaven". Can't say the moon is romantic out here.

The pictures you sent arrived with one of the letters too....sure good to see familiar faces. Kair seems to have gained much more weight, but Min still looks the same. Had some of yours truly taken also by the Marine Corps photographer so will reciprocate. Thanks too for yours....you're still you. Also, I'm enclosing a few shots of my new girl friend...you'll like her "personality I'm sure. Mother sent some photo of the family from Melrose Park too. Judging from the height of my sister she seems to have gained a good six inches since I saw her at Tule. Brother writes that the little gal is growing up to be quite a lady..she insists on selecting all her dresses and etc. as well as the hair-do. Makes me feel like an old man.

You asked if I hear from Min? Yes, occasionally, with a card or two. He sent a large box of pine nuts so my tent deck is just covered with shells. Judging from others' letters, he hasn't changed too much. Hope not cause I liked his personality which was typically his own pattern. We'd have fun if he were with us in this area.

Sally's sister Kimiko wrote about Toichi's visit to Hayward also. Seems as if Mr. and Mrs. Fujii miss the friends they used to know in peaceful yesterday. Remember in particular the way Mr. Fujii used to laugh... sort of made you feel good to hear him. The family seem to have been surprised to receive a Christmas Card from me. Can't picture Kimiko except that I used to see her riding a bike to school. She seem to have grown up along with the "youngsters" of Mt. Eden. Seem that many are married already. Let me reiterate, I must be getting old.

Your asking about the overseas Red Cross, had a comical twist a few weeks ago. Active isn't the word to describe them. Due to someone getting their wires crossed, a couple of Red Cross women came to this island by mistake and if you could see this place, you'd agree it's hardly a pleasant atmosphere. When they came, there were still corpse here and there waiting to be buried by tractors. Speaking of burials, the Marines started a cemetery for the enemy dead. (Mostly unknown soldier) Guess they figure that a ~~soldier~~ soldier who gives up their life for a country, is entitled to a decent burial even if they were trying to take our lives.

Y. Shibata

Perhaps, I've given you the impression that we're indifferent to death as we see so much of it. Not plain death but one which makes those hit by trains look tame. The truth is that we're not immune to such. We may become hardened to a certain extent like medical students handling "stiffs", but we have our soft spot yet. It still gets me when I visit the front line and see some fellows I used to know being carried out. One day in particular I recall. I saw some of these tough marines feeling pretty low cause someone they knew didn't come through. The funny part of it is that they're all willing to talk about it. They'll tell you how it happened in detail. This Hollywood Idea that a fighting men that have been thru hell just sit and stare into open space and refusing to talk is a bunch of balooney. Unlike the last war, I'm sure these men will tell just what they've been thru when it's all over. You just can't erase from your memory the uncensored scenes you've seen. After being bombed, strafed, and shot at, you take a different attitude about war. It's an experience, Yuri, that I for one will never forget.

The philosophy and outlook on life you inherited from your dad are things I envy....your letter all have a clear cut outlook on the problems that relocation and evacuation brought. In fact your letters are the only ones that I can read between the lines without getting the feeling that all is not well. For those persons who have a chip on their soldier, always give me the impression that they're cynical even though it's not in black and white. Instead of looking forward they glance back at the injustice done. Thinking of it is not harmful in itself, but most of the times it gets the better of them. And that's what we nine men often discuss. They who have families in relocation centers is afraid that those at home will never get over this feeling.

In a way, I believe that all this ties in with the problem that's confronting you. Relocating or staying to help the residents. Perhaps by now, you've reached a decision, but since you asked for my viewpoint, here it is. With your background, I wouldn't hesitate about relocating. From where I sit, it looks as if this war will continue for years yet. Those who are still undecided about leaving needs your persuasion, but I think they've had ample time to make up their minds. Those who have burned their bridges behind them are those who were able to see ahead. It's just too bad that more don't try. Will admit it's a hard thing to do as sitting back and letting the tide carry you is easier. I believe strongly that though the residents need help now, they'll need it more in post-war days. With millions being discharged from the army, and many leaving defense jobs, there will undoubtedly be a social problem. It'll be harder than ever for people to relocate or return to their former home if they had one. That's when they'll need a lot of help. So till that time, I'd stay on the outside to find all the channels which may lead them out when they really need it. Just how well or what members compose the "Relocation Committee" that you mentioned I don't know. But if you stay and help them now, you may not be so energetic later on. I know it's hard for "welfare worker" to look away when there's so much to do....it's the spirit that all welfare worker have. When you make your decision, I'd like to hear from you. Your reason too, because my opinions on the subject are only that of an outsiders....that has got a glimpse of the problems of the centers thru letters and recruiting. But whatever your decision may be, "A lots of luck, Yuri".

Have much to write about the experience I'm having, but will wait till the next time. Also, will you ask Kan if he'll be interested in getting metal from "Zeros" to make bracelets, etc. He used to like that sort of things didn't he? So much for this time. Yoshita







L to R

S/Sgt. Dick Yamane....New York

S/Sgt. Toshi Ogawa....Oakland, "UC"





