

# Words of the Silent

By Heather Anderson

5th June 1943

The weather here is different, not like the cold wet of downeast or the humidity of the south. It's something altogether different. It must have to do with the currents or how close we are to the equator, but one thing I know for sure is I was not built for this weather.

I'm not saying I miss the heavy wet snow of Maine, but it could cool down a little. Be more like Florida and less like the misery I'm sure is closely related to Hell.

At least it's not the excessive rain we've had the last few weeks.

I was informed by one of the officers that we are right in the middle of their monsoon season. That means we should enjoy the sun while we have it, because otherwise it'll only be rain again.

I definitely won't miss the rain or heat.

I'd take the chill of Maine back any day.

23rd July 1943

I finally discovered a library here and although the selection is poor there are 2 or 3 books that will occupy my attention for a while.

Most of the books are a "Gift from the people of the United States to the Armed Forces" - as the little note reads.

They were secured through the Victory Book Campaign. The people must not consider the soldiers very intelligent, or else they merely cleared their closets and attics of all the old trash they didn't want.

I picked up one book entitled - "Things Japanese" It looked very intriguing until I noticed the date - 1890.

Edward W.

12th October 1944

I continue to be amazed by the contrasts of war.

A few miles behind the lines one would never guess that a battle is raging ahead. The countryside looks so lovely and peaceful, and you can see the Okinawans digging sweet potatoes in the green fields or driving their goats & pigs along the road.

This is some of the most beautiful country that I have seen and the war has left most of it untouched. The towns are in ruins, but the poor farmers will come through pretty good.

According to the books the women in the country are supposed to dress only from the waist down but I guess they haven't read the books & much to our disappointment. They are all fully clothed, except for shoes. The young girls wear slacks. They have nice smiles too, and some of them offer you sugar cane or rice cakes.

Unfortunately, in Saipan, many of the Okinawans retreated with the Jap soldiers & were killed with them or killed themselves.

These people, however, have gotten out of the battle areas & do not appear to be afraid of us at all—or hostile.



9th August 1945

There were planes everywhere. The hum of the ships engines couldn't dwarf the sound. Water lapped over the edge of the ship splashing onto the decks. The waves rocked us into our neighboring soldiers.

We weren't just any soldier though, we were the newly formed Marines.

They assigned us an infiltration mission to Nagasaki. This would end the war for good. Well, end the last few combatants after the bomb in Hiroshima that is.

We had done countless training maneuvers and were ready to fight.

Well, we were ready until the ship turned around. The only thoughts I had were, Had the Japs given up? Was the war already over? Were we retreating? These questions raced through my mind as I watched the shore get smaller and smaller.

That's when I saw it. The large bomber flying over head with a heavy payload. I recognized that plane from our post drop training.

They were going to bomb Nagasaki. They were going to blow the Japs sky high.

The men around me started to cheer as the plane neared the coast. The cheering continued as we watched the bomb fall and the cloud mushroom up. The cheering stopped after that. There were almost invisible waves blowing across the land and water.

We were luckily far enough to not be effected by the blast but the Japs weren't. The cities were gone now. The people with it. The men remain silent as we watch the bright cloud slowly settle. I could barely hear the murmurs of the men around me saying it was over.

The war was over and I could finally go home.



Keith S.

March, 8 1943

I never realized how rough the ocean could be. I've been out on the boat before, but this was nuthin' like that. I've puked more times than I can remember, and the doc said it was maluria malaria. I have no idea what that is, but it must be bad because they have me here in the med area and told me I couldn't watch as we crossed into the Pacific.



I've never been to the west before. Well the west or the 'far east', never been one for travel. The good ol' downeast was enough for me. I knew nuthin' good would come from traveling, what with this illness and all.

The nurse just said my fever was rising. Must say, I've never had a fever like this before. The kids back home would get a fever and if it didn't break by night they were a goner. Mine has been pretty long now. Any longer and I might not make it to the war. Not such a bad thing. I'd rather not have to meet any of those yellow bastards.

September 9, 1943

Today I went native. I just had a lunch of coconuts and bananas and corn.

This morning we fixed our shelters, which had it pretty rough last night. It rained like the dickens and there was a awful wind.

I was on patrol last night an

It was so dark you coul

nails against my raincoat.

July, 15 1944

Why am I here again? Was it just to kill these Japs? Was it to be ridiculed for being different? I'm no better than them negros.

I have nuthin' against them though. They are some of the finest soldiers here.

My momma said that God's always watching over us so we have to follow his rules. Isn't one of them to 'Do un to others as you would do un to yourself'?

These jerks I work with musta never scene a Bible before cuz they ain't followin' God's rules.

I'm on latreen duty again with the negro fella named Jim. We haven't been on patrol in ages, not that I'm complaining. I'd rather not shoot people.



# Dwight W.

February, 4th 1944

Our own artillery had been firing all morning and when I heard the explosion I assumed it was caused by the firing of one of our guns.

I continued digging.

A few seconds later another explosion was heard. This one was much louder and much closer. Someone yelled, "They're going the wrong way!" (Meaning that it was an enemy shell and not our own.)

Everyone hit the ground.

I crawled into my very inadequate fox-hole and hugged the ground, in spite of the 4 inches of water in which I was lying. Not too soon either.

A third shell landed and a cruel, razor-edged piece of shrapnel came bouncing over the ground, landing about 5 yards from the fox-hole next to me.

I thought to myself — "So this is it, this is war." At the same time I cursed the ancestors who were responsible for the long nose which made it difficult to get closer to the ground. It seemed to make such a difference at the time.

My heart was pounding violently — threatening to tear itself loose it seemed.

Although my face was flushed and hot, I was shivering — whether from the cold or from fear I cannot say.

It was probably fear, because the intense cold was completely forgotten.





November, 10th 1944

To say that this was unexpected is an understatement. Here I am, in the U.S. Navy fighting the Japanese. I never realized how well off we were in the world until coming here. The U.S. has it wonderful, even with all the rationing I've heard about.

I know my mum wasn't happy to not be able to bake as often. That's what she always did to relax. Now she must be doing the wash more often. Her linens must be spotless.

I worry that I won't be able to handle the selfishness of everyone when I go home. Being here, in this hell, has taught me to stop taking things for granted.

Mother won't understand, but my schoolmates should. I believe they are all over here now, mother has been writing me updates on everyone.

May, 15 1945

We have been busy helping to build up this camp, like pioneers.

Yesterday I was on a detail clearing brush and pitching tents.

Every body works here, including 1st Sgts. I may even be on patrol one of these days for the 1st time in years. It's a small price to pay for approaching my discharge day.

