

LT. RICHARD D. WILEY
O-708600

371 Bomb. Sq
307 Bomb. Gr.
A.P.O. 719 1/2 P.M.
SAN FRANCISCO, CAL.

not used



MR. + MRS. GEO. O. WILEY
1025 PITKIN AVE.
AKRON, OHIO 44310
U.S.A.

Richard D. Wiley

Aug. 12, 1944
7:00 A. M.

Dear Folks:

Finally found a good time to write a letter to you. Were in the air now and there isn't much work for me. It's only about a three hour hop - were ferrying some equipment + personnel.

I've been getting your mail pretty regular - surely by now you've received my letter telling you what happened to us. Let me know if you got my letter of July 1st the letter from the hospital. As it I gave the whole story. If you didn't get that letter I'll tell it to you again. Otherwise I won't write about it anymore as I'm trying to forget!

I'd like to see those dopes of Georges - but they are "zooty". Wish I could be wearing clothes like that again. You know, if he thinks he has to join something the air corps might be the best

deal. It would take at least
15 months to get commissioned.
If the war isn't over by then or
damn near it, I'll eat my hat.
I know he'd get pretty damn
tired of life in the chalets
but I think it did me a lot
of good and apparently he's
leading a life similar to the
one I led before I came in.

I got myself a pretty nice
sunburn yesterday. I took my
air mattress out on the ocean
and paddled around for a
couple of hours. I've made
up my mind to get a real
tan for once in my life.

The other day we caught
the darnedest looking animal
in a tree down on the beach.
It had a face like a monkey,
a body like a cat and a
long red tail. Its body was
cream colored with dark
spots. It had two long
teeth on its lower jaw. The
body could figure out what
it was. We finally let the
crazy looking thing loose.

Did Mrs. Callaway send
you a telegram. She wrote a
letter to Kizer and said she
got in touch with the parents
of all the old crew. I just
wondered cause you'd never
mentioned it.

Boy, when you talk about
that good fresh food from Pop's
garden it almost drives my
bully. I'm really going to be
an eating fool when I get
home.

Were flying along here
about 8000 feet with the
sun coming up behind us. ~~It~~
(Ran out of ink here - am continuing
this book at base.) 4:00 P.M. That
sun coming up over the water and
making rainbows on the clouds
is a beautiful sight.

I've got the answer to my
question about the letter of
the 18th. I have your letter of
the 4th now. I'll repeat the
story once more. It's pretty
guesswork, but it's all over now.

We were on our way home from our first mission as a crew. We also had an extra man a photographer along. We were very happy as we had not had any trouble to our knowledge over the target even though we were intercepted by zeros. That telegram was false in saying we were refueled over the target.. Well, about 2 1/2 hours out from home our engines started going out one by one. We figured we were going to have to ditch (water landing) so we started making the preparations. I fixed up a position report for the radio operator to send in, grabbed my equipment that I wanted to try and take out - then

3
went back into the waist
and helped throw stuff
overboard in the hope
lightening up the ship
and making it sit. It
was no good - so Kizer
gave us the word to get
in our crash belts. We
all did and then we hit.
You will never be able to
realize what it is when
you hit the water going
100 mph and then come
to a dead stop in a
matter of seconds. Red,
Patla, and I had planned
to go out thru the tail as
we had an open gun
position there and were
in the rear of the ship.
As soon as we hit I unsnapped
my safety belt and started

for the tail - here I was very discouraged because the tail was going down like lead. I thought to myself this is a heck of a way to die, then I remembered having a lecture once where they said get to the top of the plane and there is air space. I started to do this and then I saw that the reason the tail was going down was because the plane was breaking in two. I then went up and climbed out the waist window. As soon as I came to the surface I inflated my "mat West". Then I hustled to paddle away from the plane as it was drifting towards me and I was

apaid of the section. Kizer made a wonderful landing and we all got out alive. His landing was witnessed by another ship who was following us - they said it was perfect. Well - the sea was so rough that we couldn't all get together around life rafts. I was drifting and drifting till I saw three other boys clinging to a raft which wasn't inflated. I reached this and we found out the valve was broken. We were tickled pink though that there were four of us together and we did have at least something to hang on. Everything went fine

until I suddenly saw a shark over behind one of the boys. We all kicked like mad and he went away. By the way the other three boys were, Ashby, Erickson, and Gilbert the photographer. A few minutes after this episode I turned around and here was the shark coming in belly - up, on my leg. I screamed bloody murder, cursed, and started kicking - we all hit him several times as he was good and mad now + came right on in. Finally though, he left again. We then knew that if we were to last we would have to get that raft

5.

inflated. We started in to blowing it up, with our mouths - finally after about four hours we got the thing up high enough to get into. The shark came around once more while we were inflating the raft, but this time he was more cautious and we got rid of him pretty easily. For our stay on the raft I can't say much - we had two canteens about $\frac{1}{2}$ full of water and that was all. No oars no sail no food, no tarp - no fishing tackle, no flares no sea marker, etc. I know that about all I did while I was out there was pray. I tried to keep the water

boys morale up as they had
all been sick the first
nite from swallowing salt
water & didn't know why
it didn't affect me. Our
raft had holes in the
bottom of it and was always
about $\frac{3}{4}$ full of water. We
did try to bail it out
with our shoes, but that
didn't do any good.

We were picked up after
two days and nights
by a Navy Catalina. I
was so happy to see
it that I cried. They
fixed us food and a place
to lay down. After they
picked us up they towed
a few miles and picked up
Kizer who was alone in
another raft.

It was just one month ago today that this happened. I mean John Weiss said it was on Sat. the 15th not the 14th as the telegram said. Since it has been a month I think the censors will let this letter thru.

There is still no word of the other boys, but I'll never give up hope since I know they got out of the plane all right.

I only got a few small cuts out of the crash. My face was pretty badly burned, but everything is well healed by now.

For my friends who want to know what happened you can let them read this letter.

I don't intend to write
or say anything more about
it. The best thing I
can possibly do is just
try not to forget - otherwise
I know I'll crack.

Don't worry about me.
Even I've got faith in
God that I'm coming
home to be a white-
haired daddy.

I'll close for now
this is a pretty long
letter for me.

Love
Dean