

The Cover Story

Mail Home from World War II, Part I

by Phil Fettig

One of the most important aspects of life during wartime is a simple letter, either to or from home. Travel time for a letter during World War II easily might take a month or two, causing concern and grief for the homesick service member as well as the heartsick mother! The following items are just small tidbits of information taken from a sample of mail during WWII. With some of these items we have no way of knowing how things turned out. However, like life itself, the stories will range from happy to sad.

Figure A1 on front cover. Private Dudley Geiger, U.S. Army Air Corps has started his great adventure and this April 16, 1943 postcard informs his Grandmother of his long train ride to his first training field in Texas.

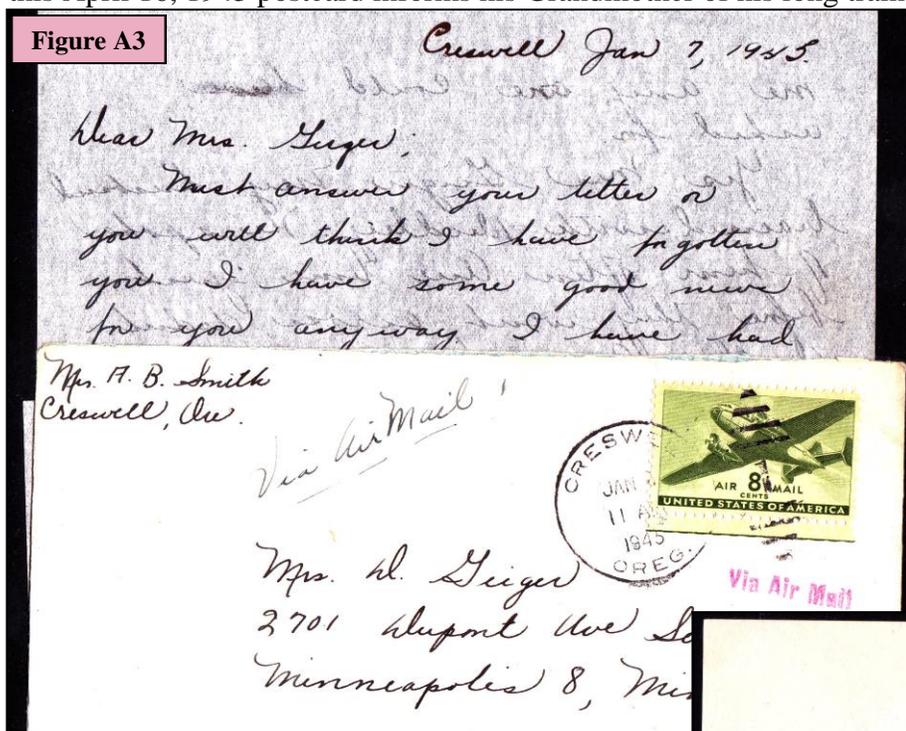


Figure A2 on front cover. Now a Corporal, Geiger writes his mother from Georgia with details about his training and pending transfer to a Processing Unit, presumably prior to heading overseas in the war effort. He mentions a box of personal belongings he also sent home for others to use, including 5 cent packs of cigarettes. He closes with details of a training flight to Cuba.

Figure A3. Letters stop until information is received that in the spring of 1944, Sergeant Geiger's B-25

Bomber was shot down over Germany. In time the family realizes that the crew are safe, although now being held in German Prisoner of War Camps. This letter from the husband of another crew member tells Mrs. Geiger that she received a 6-month-old letter from her husband and that all the other crew members are fine and being treated good.

Figure A4. The war is over in Europe and Sgt. Geiger is writing his mother that he is not sure when he will be returned to the U.S., however he is "having fun" in England.

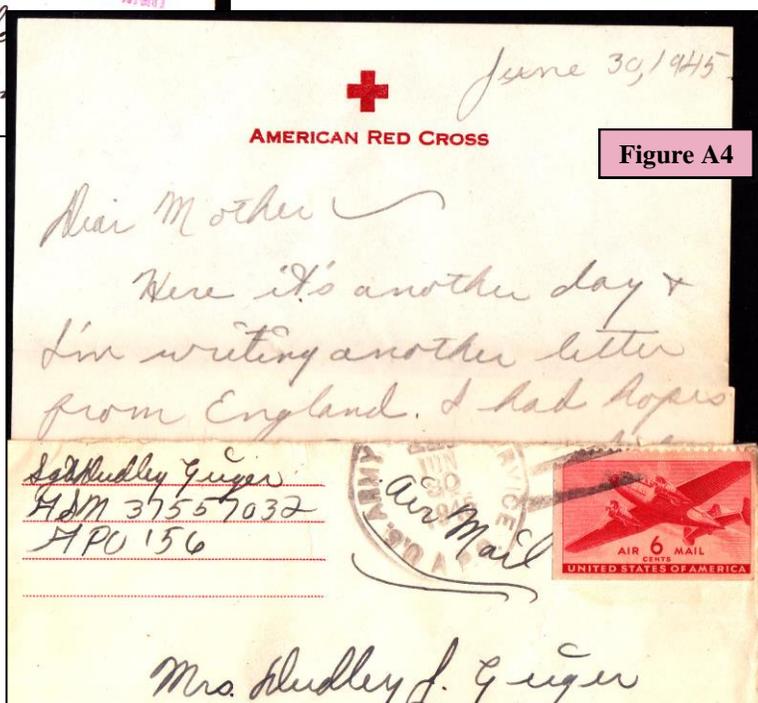


Figure A5

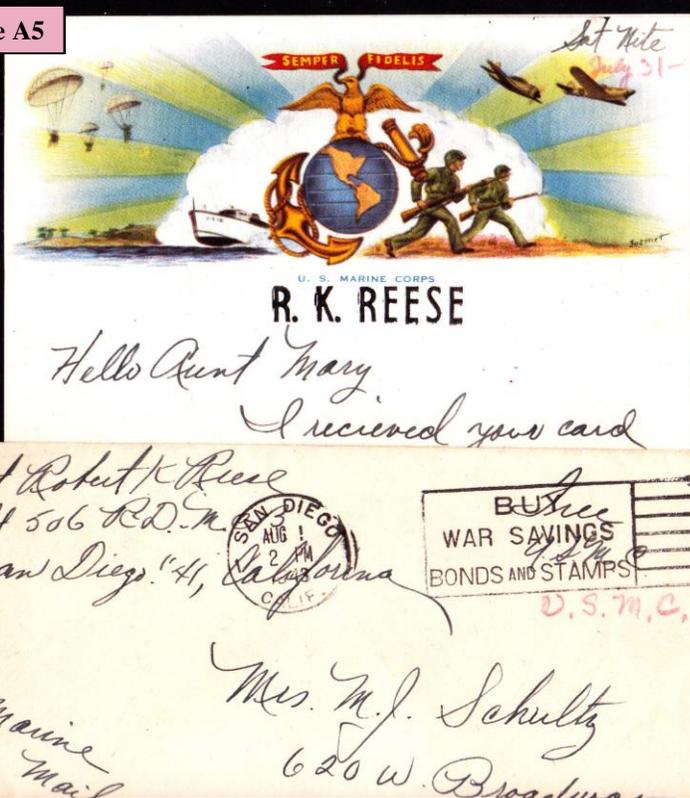


Figure A5. Marine Corps recruit Private Robert Reece writes his Aunt that “I love this training and will re-enlist after the war. (NOTE: Private Reece's Aunt is also Sergeant Geiger's Grandmother.) Now a Private First Class, Reece writes his Aunt on March 7, 1944, from somewhere in the “Southwest Pacific”. He tells her “it is raining now, and I am getting some water to wash in tomorrow.” In another letter in May 1944, PFC Reece's thoughts seem to be changing with his statement “I'll certainly be glad to get this war over.”

Figure A6 & A7. On January 25, 1943 Army Air Corps Sergeant Novotny shares with his mother about the nice warm weather he is enjoying in this little southern town where he is receiving his training - “The City Beautiful” Orlando, Florida!

The story continues in the March *Philatelic Missive* - Mail home from a WWII Sailor serving on a Destroyer.



Figure A6

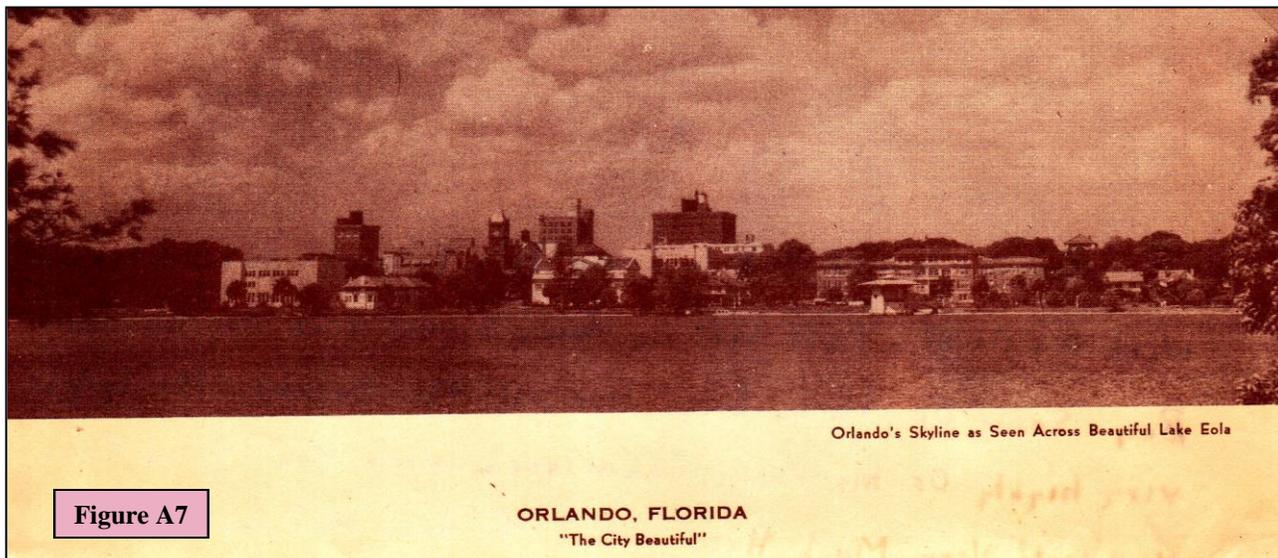


Figure A7