



With the Colors

12/5/44

Mother's Medal

I left her standing at the train,
Smiling through tears of grief and
pain;

My striped collar showed the trace
Of tears from that beloved face.

I wondered then why she showed
fright,

For wasn't I prepared to fight
For victory, freedom, peace and love,
Protected by my God above?

For days I saw her standing there,
Her smiling face, her graying hair,
'Till God helped me to realize,
The mystery of those tearful eyes.

Dear mother, your's is the hardest
fight,

For your's is misery and sleepless
nights;

And dragging in the house alone,
Watching the mail and the silent
phone.

And when at last peace reigns o'er
all the world,

You'll stand at the station,
Your flag unfurled,

To receive the medal you have won:
The loving smile of your homecoming
sons.

Seaman First Class Roy E. Richey, who is in the Philippines, writes his mother, Mrs. Roy Richey: "I will drop you a line or so to say hello and that I love you mom. You are the best mother in the world. Mother, I was not in the invasion that Eugene was, but I was in the Leyte invasion. It is a small island in the Philippines.

"You know I told you in another letter that war is hell. Well, I believe all hell broke loose out there in that Leyte invasion. I saw things I never want to see again. I think those japs are all crazy from the ones I have seen. You see I have spelled japs with a small "j". You can do the same as far as I am concerned.

"Well, mom, pray for me and all the other soldiers, sailors and marines that are still living to come home to the ones they love. I will have to say good-bye and good luck. May God bless you all.

Another son, Corporal Paul Richey, writes from India: "I will try and answer your most welcome letter that I received today. I sure was glad to hear from you. Hope this finds you enjoying the best of health. I am just fine. I work at the group hospital now and have I got a snap. We only feed around twenty-five men.

There isn't very much work to do so that is really up my line.

"It won't be long until I have a birthday. I am getting to be an old man now. Don't worry as nothing ever happens here. I am not even close enough to hear the guns fired."

The boys are sons of Mr. and Mrs. Roy Richey of Effingham, formerly of Grove township. Roy Edmond Richey is on a destroyer and Paul is a cook for a Bomber Maintenance squadron.

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Mrs. George Bickers of Willow Hill received her first letters from George in three weeks, Tuesday. They were all written before he left the ship. She received a cablegram November 22 stating he was fine. He seemed to be enjoying his trip.

In one letter he said: "This is the seventh day out at sea, and everything is going swell. It sure is a lovely sight to see. I just came in off of deck. The sun is shining and it's very comfortable out.

"There are ships all around us, tossing around over the waves. We're in a convoy just like you see in the show. I didn't know shows could be so real until after I have seen the real thing, and the shows just show things as they really are.

"Several of the boys got awful sick the first two or three days, but they're all taking it pretty good now. I guess they got used to being on the water. I haven't been sick so far, but I keep my fingers crossed."

In another letter he said: "Everything is so crowded and the old boat is rocking so I can hardly stay in my bunk, let alone write. Our bunks are five high and I'm in the very top one. And there's only about two feet between me and the ceiling. I'm just feeling fine, but think this will be my last day on ship for awhile."

12/5/44

Reading, Pennsylvania,
November 27, 1944.

Editor Press: Find enclosed a poem
which was published in the Reading

Eagle. I think this poem is a big
question mark which will challenge
the patriotism of the American peo-
ple.

Very truly yours,

Jesse Wells

If It Isn't Too Much to Ask

Stukas and bombs and shrapnel—
Hell through the night and day—
Muck and the blood of buddies—
Grief in the awesome fray—
Struggle and thirst and torture . . .
These are not asked of you;
All that is asked is painless—
Buying a bond or two!
Mine field and trap and pillbox—
Into the jaws of death—
Giving your all, and hearing
Many a pal's last breath
Anguish and heat and hunger—
None of these must you face . . .
You are but asked for money—
Dross from some hiding place!
Hand grenade, gun and mortar—
Sweat with a crimson hue—
Death in a field in autumn—
This is not asked of you!
Eyes that are blank and sightless—
Wounds that will ever burn—
Who can call duty buying
Bonds at a neat return?
Kids on a distant beachhead,
Dead where the waters lap—
Fliers in burning airplanes—
Boys in a booby trap—
This is their patriotism . . .
Why are we free to choose
Merely a safe investment,
Knowing we cannot loose?
"Get at that pillbox, soldier!"
"Mop up that nest there, Joe!"
"Bayonets! On the double!"
These calls you will not know;
Merely some songs, some music—
Merely a slight request,
"If you can spare the money,
Mister, will you invest?"

L'Envoi

Sacrifice? Courage? Duty?
How can we call it so—
Helping a bit with silver—
Lending some lousy dough.