

John S. Lee ^{3/3/44} Describes a Pacific Atoll

**Writes His Mother About the
Marshall Islands; Finds the Na-
tives Quite Friendly There**

Private First Class John S. Lee, United States Army, in a letter to his mother, Mrs. Ed Lee of Newton, this week, tells of the assault of the Marshall islands recently. It was the first word she had received in three months. The letter dated February 20 follows:

"I suppose you have been pretty anxious to hear from me, knowing that I was in the Marshall campaign. There was really nothing to worry about as the Naval Air Corps took care of the big end. The whole thing was just a maneuver compared to Attu. I wish Wayne and Mud (his brothers) could have seen the naval and aerial bombardment. It was really something to look at.

"I don't know if you can picture an atoll correctly or not. According to the example I've seen, they are a group of small islands placed in an irregular circle forming a lagoon in the center. Ours was one of the largest, hence it had such a large lagoon that from one island I could not see the opposite islands, contrary to my former ideas of atolls.

Few Channels

"At low tide we could wade between most of the islands without much trouble. There are very few channels where ships can pass between the islands into the lagoon. The islands are of coral formation and have the usual cocoanut palms, pandanus and breadfruit. There were no mosquitoes, no vermin, but lots of land crabs

"The boys found one little monkey, no doubt imported. It looked not unlike a Jap. We found a hundred or so natives, several of whom could speak English. The natives were friendly and not a bad looking race, especially the men; the women look a little hungry. One of the older men claims to have been to San Francisco. There seems to be few old people. The G. I's started right in teaching the little girls American expressions."