

IWO JIMA

Notes by: Pfc. Paul Rodocker

A Zanesville marine on Iwo Jima has written a vivid account of his trip to the island and his battle experience on the "eight square miles of hell." He is Pfc. Paul Rodocker, whose wife, Margaret, lives with their two children, Mary Margaret and Paul Jeffrey.

February 17, 1945

Please excuse this writing if it is hard to read because I am writing under very poor conditions. I'm on a ship and it seems like we're riding a roller coaster at times. The boat I'm on is headed for a big "party". I guess you know what that means. In this outfit, it means someone is going to get hurt. By the time you get this, the papers will no doubt have all the details for you to read. I can't tell you where we are, but I can say it's a hell of a lot farther from home than I care to be. We have been aboard for over a week now and are really getting the "itch" to put our feet on some solid earth - even if we do have to dig a hole in quite a hurry to enjoy it more and longer.

Ever since I joined the corps, I have wondered how I would feel when this time finally came. I thought I would be unusually nervous and fussy, but I don't believe there was ever a time in my life when I was more calm or composed than I am now. Maybe it's just the lull before the storm. After it's over with I'll let you know if it was or not. All the fellows are taking it good. One would think we were just going out to enjoy a day of deep sea fishing to hear the guys cutting up. Everyone of us knows that a lot of marines are going no further than the beach, but I guess we

all figure the same way, that it will probably be some other "Poor Joe" and let it go at that. Anyway, if a guy lets himself dwell too much on that angle, he'd crack in a hurry.

The weather had been treating us rather kindly, but this morning we ran into a few squalls. We sleep out on the open deck and at nights it's quite cool, but wonderful sleeping. The only thing you have to do is to keep your fingers crossed that you don't get conked on the head by some heavy object that lets loose with the roll of the ship.

We're eating very good meals. I can't understand why they are feeding us so well. I know it's not because they like us. Ha! Ha! (We are on a navy ship). All joking aside though, we got plenty of respect for our navy and without them to protect us while we make the landing, it would be impossible.

While we lie around and wait, we have some nice poker and dice games. When I say nice, I mean if you are lucky enough, you can win yourself enough to buy a home in one afternoon.

February 28th

Well, gang, here I am back again and the worst is over... I hope! I'm well secured in a foxhole while finishing this letter and believe-you-me, in your foxhole is one place it pays to stay. In the daytime it's not so bad, but when night falls you can expect most anything to happen. The first couple nights were really hell and everyone of us

thought it would be our last. The damn mortars dropping all around our hole really makes me want to pray. That's where these Japanese really get dividends and they sure take advantage of their skill. We don't consider rifle fire anything, it's the heavy artillery and mortar fire that keeps you sweating.

I'm on Iwo Jima, one of the Volcano islands, very close to Tokyo's front yard. On one end of this island is a volcano. It's mostly black sand and easy to dig but not very good protection once you do get a hole. I sure hope this volcano doesn't start acting up. I'm afraid the Marine Corps couldn't do much about that, but I'll bet you couldn't make the Japanese believe that. The other night, Tokyo Rose said that "Japan didn't declare war on the Marine Corps, anyway she declared war on our Army and Navy." We sure got a laugh out of that one. All joking aside, though, we all know that one is just as important as the other.

I had my hands on lots of things I would like to bring back, but I got so damn much gear of my own that I can't take advantage of the opportunity. Well, gang, hope this find you all OK. When I get home you are going to see one of the most satisfied guys on earth.

Your buddy,
RODIE



Driving Specialties Ltd. & The Mobility People **Together with THE BRAUN CORPORATION**

Serving The Mobility Needs Of Central Valley And Bay Area Vets Since 1975

- Hand Controls
- Scooter Lifts
- Raised Roofs
- Raised Doors
- Driving Aids
- Wheelchair Platform Lifts
- Electronic Gas & Brake
- Sensitized Steering & Brakes
- Power Transfer Seats
- Automatic Restraint Systems
- Wheelchair Accessible Full Sized and MiniVans •

Over 30 Years Experience With VA Forms and Procedures!!!

Two Locations To Serve You:
Fresno: 2563 N. Fordham (559) 291-2563
Vallejo: 215 Commercial St. (707) 553-1515

Crazy?
Crazy is cooking your own meals
and doing your own laundry.



You don't have to do chores.
At Fairwinds - Woodward Park Retirement Community we do most of them for you. That way, you can enjoy yourself. Travel. See your grandkids. Jump out of an airplane. If that's your thing, of course. Call now to schedule your complimentary lunch and tour.

 **FAIRWINDS**
WOODWARD PARK

— & A LEISURE CARE RETIREMENT COMMUNITY —

9525 N. Fort Washington Road • Fresno
(559) 434-6444 • www.leisurecare.com

LIC#10720156 