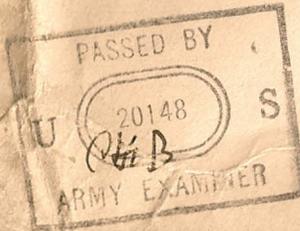
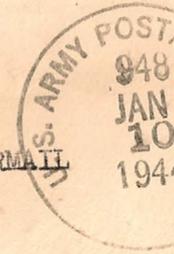


Pvt Edward J Thomas  
ASN 36576155  
Service Co, 153d Inf  
APO 948, c/o Postmaster, Seattle, Wn.

AIRMAIL

AIRMAIL



Mrs Victoria Thomas

17457 Filer Ave.

Detroit (12), Michigan

Aleutians  
January 2, 1944

Dear Mom & Harry:

Here I am again lying on my upstairs bunk, writing and listening to the radio with the wind howling in the ventilator above me like wolves in a girls' shower room. It is Sunday evening, the second day of 1944. Tomorrow is my day off and I suppose I'll finish this letter then. There is a radio play on right now. I believe it's <sup>the</sup> Lux Hour. It's hard for me to tell because the advertising part of it is not broadcasted. The name of the play is "Heaven Can Wait". Do you remember hearing it over your radio? If you do, let me know so that I may have an idea of how long it takes to have the programs rebroadcasted here.

Just a few minutes ago I finished reading one of the Detroit News Sunday papers. It was dated Oct 31, exactly the same paper you saw two months ago. Of course, I am partly to blame for reading it so late because I held it in my barracks bag for a couple of weeks. I still have a bundle of about 15 papers that I haven't read, all of which are dated anywhere from Nov 1 to probably Nov 30. That's one reason why I want to discontinue the daily paper and just have the Sunday News sent to me. These papers come in so late that the news is stale and also they come in such bunches that I can't catch up in reading them all.

My first Christmas away from home is now history. Outside of the gifts everybody sent me, the best one I received was two off-days in succession--Christmas and Sunday--the longest vacation I have had since I landed on this island. I suppose this letter wouldn't be complete without my writing something about how I celebrated <sup>this</sup> /vacation; so I'll

tell you as much as I can.

The morning of the day before Christmas seemed to be the beginning of Christmas for me. I was, of course, working then in the office, but there was a radio there and I heard President Roosevelt's speech reminding me that it was already Christmas Eve for you. This speech was not a rebroadcast but a direct pick-up by the local station here. It was quite strange to have walked through the darkness of morning into the office on the 24th of December and then hear the President saying it was Christmas Eve for him. After you went to bed and slept for several hours, I was beginning to celebrate Christmas Eve. Our Red Cross gifts arrived about 8:00 PM. When I opened mine up I found one of those apron shaving kits with a tooth brush and case, a tube of Barbasol, a bar of toilet soap and container, a hair brush, comb, and styptic pencil. This kit just about replaces the one I lost in Alabama. Also I received a small box containing some shoe laces, envelopes, a notebook, pencils, a fruit bar, and two packages of candy which I could call good if I had eaten them with laxative pills. I still have the fruit bar and will eat that whenever I'll get tired of feeling too healthy. At 9:00 PM, with the help of my parka, goggles and flashlight, I battled the elements to get to the theater to see "Johnie Comes Lately". After the show I remained in the theater for the Catholic midnight mass just to see what it would be like. The movie screen was raised out of sight and a portable organ and altar were set up on the stage. Three priests conducted the mass and a large group of men sang behind the altar. The organ music together with the singing didn't amount to the same thing you would hear in any of the big city churches because the organ wasn't much better than a piano accordion and the singers weren't any too confident of their abilities. The organ

was played by a man who sleeps in a bunk next to mine. He has a very good ear for music and even plays over the radio here on this island. Coincidentally, I am hearing him over the radio right now. It was about 2:00 in the morning before I retired. I awoke at 11:30 Christmas morning and went to the mess hall for a turkey dinner. Two packages of cigarettes were given to each man as he stood waiting in line. This dinner was about the same as Thanksgiving's with the exception that we had the chance to admire two scrawny Christmas trees at one end of the mess hall, crape ribbons and bells hanging from the ceiling, and a tall lighted candle on each table. After the dinner was over I was fortunate enough to have the chance to do some skating. I had had a pair reserved for myself and had done some skating Christmas Eve in a high wind. I was more of an ice boat than a skater because it wasn't necessary for me to move my legs; all I had to do was stretch my arms out and scoot along the ice with the wind. On Christmas day, after dinner, I went out skating again and took some photographs which I may be able to have developed some time in the distant future. It is very hard to find good developers who are willing to work. Money doesn't seem to be much of an inducement here. The small lake I skated on is the same one that was partly shown in some of the photographs I have already sent you. In the photographs that I may mail in the future, you will see the same lake as it appears in winter.

Before finishing this letter I must not forget to acknowledge receipt of some of the packages and letters I received. Immediately after sending out my previous letter to you, I received a package which contained four rolls of film, gum, some very precious cold tablets, and a large can of peanuts. The peanuts were really appreciated because they were the first I've tasted in many months. I was sorry, though, that you had to give up your gum which is so very scarce in the States. Just before

your gum arrived here, I purchased a carton at the PX. The PX had received a shipment and I lost no time in buying <sup>this carton</sup> ~~some~~, not knowing that in a few days I would have enough gum to keep a herd of cattle chewing happily for the remainder of their natural lives. To make the surplus situation even more critical, I received another box from you which contained more sticks. Well, that's the way matters are here. The supply and demand every once in a while go out on a wild spree like lumberjacks on pay day.

To give some more examples, I received that can of peanuts from you and a couple of days later the PX began selling them and I stocked up a quantity in my locker. What do you think happened next? I received a large carton a few days later and in it I found 12 cans of peanuts. At first I thought it was from you, but I accidentally looked at the label on the package and found that it was from Stanley. Now I have enough peanuts to keep a battalion of monkeys contented for the duration of the war. I am not telling you this because I don't like to be over-supplied. I merely want to point out how funny conditions are--one day I have nothing of what I want and the next day I am swimming in it. Anyway, I really appreciated the gift Stanley sent me because peanuts are not always available and I'll have some on hand for a while when they are hard to obtain.

Supply and demand also ran riot in regard to the Readers' Digest magazines. At one time it was hard for me to obtain up-to-date copies. After I asked you to order a subscription, the PX here began selling them. As there was a delay in my subscribed copies coming here, I bought the PX Readers' Digests. When the subscribed copies arrived, I found myself surrounded by several duplicate copies because others had bought them too and discarded them for anybody's use.

I was very pleased to receive your fine letters of Dec 6 and 15. Also I enjoyed reading Izzy & Mac's letter of Dec 8. Let them know that I am trying my best to answer it. If I hadn't made this letter so long I probably would have had the time to do so. Eventually I will anyway.

I noticed you saw "This Land is Mine" and "Dixie". I have seen "Dixie" about a month ago and don't know what is detaining "This Land Is Mine". For your information, there is one movie play I've recently seen which beats all of the pictures that have so far come to this island and that is "Claudia". If you haven't seen it, make sure you don't miss it. It's even better than "Holy Matrimony". Other pictures I have seen since which are very good are "True to Life" and "A Kingdom For A Cook".

From what you say about the storm windows, it appears that all that time we lived without them we were missing something important. I know how cold the rooms would get whenever there was a wind. If the storm windows make it easier to keep the rooms warm during windy days, I would say the improvement is worth more than the money paid for it.

Apparently Harry, Mac, and I are having a race to see who can raise the most beef. Mac is well in the lead with 180 lbs. I am a poor second with Harry right at my heels at 166.

You probably received the wrong impression about my Thanksgiving dinner by thinking that my food was better than yours. The Thanksgiving food I listed sounded pretty appetizing but it was far from tasting like the Thanksgiving dinners I had at home.

I managed to save up another \$80 and I am sending a money order with the letter for this amount. You may put it in my account or use it as you see fit.

Your fast becoming Aleutian native now thinks it's about time to say

So Long  
Eddie *Eddie*