

12 MARCH 1945

DEAR MRS. MARTIN :

NO DOUBT YOU ARE SURPRISED TO RECEIVE THIS LETTER FROM ME, HOWEVER YOU WILL NOT BE WHEN I TELL YOU THAT I SAW AND TALKED WITH JIMMY YESTERDAY. I FIRST THOUGHT I OUGHT TO WAIT UNTIL YOU RECEIVED WORD FROM THE NAVY DEPARTMENT THAT HE WAS WOUNDED, BUT THEN ON SECOND THOUGHT DECIDED A LETTER FROM A FRIEND WAS AN EASIER BREAKING OF THE NEWS THAN A SHORT OFFICIAL NOTE. TO EASE YOUR ANXIETY AS YOU READ THIS LETTER I SHALL TELL YOU EMEDIATLY THAT JIM ISN'T HURT AS BADLY AS HE COULD EASILY HAVE BEEN. HE WAS HIT WITH SCHRAPNEL IN THE SHOULDER AND HIP, BUT THAT COULDN'T HAVE BEEN TOO SERIOUS AS I NOTICED HE HAD FULL CONTROL OF HIS ARMS AND LEGS. HE SAID THE WOUNDS WERE NOT PAINING HIM BUT RATHER WERE SORE. HIS SPIRITS SEEMED GOOD, AND I COULD NOTICE NO CHANGE FROM THE JIMMY I KNEW AT HOME.

YESTERDAY AFTERNOON AS WE WERE LIFTING ONE OF THE STRETCHERS ABOARD OUR PLANE I LOOKED DOWN AT THE FELLOW AND HE LOOKED UP AT ME, JIM AND I RECOGNIZED EACH OTHER EMEDIATLY. IT WAS QUITE A SURPRISED MEETING. NATURALLY WE HAD MANY THINGS TO TALK OF. IN ANSWER TO MY QUESTION HE SAID HE HADN'T HAD A CHANCE TO WRITE TO YOU IN A MONTH AND A HALF. KNOWING THAT PARENTS WORRY I TOLD JIM I WOULD WRITE TO YOU AS SOON AS I HAD A CHANCE. HE ALSO TOLD ME THAT HE HAD BEEN GETTING LETTERS FROM DONNIE QUITE REGULARLY, WHICH NATURALLY MADE ME A BIT ENVIOUS AS THAT BROTHER OF MINE HAS WRITTEN ME ONLY ONCE SINCE HE WENT INTO THE NAVY. HE SAID DONNIE WAS GOING TO SIGNALMANS SCHOOL, WHICH WAS CERTAINLY NEWS TO ME. HA!

WE FINALLY TOOK-OFF FROM THAT COLD, DUSTY, AND DESOLATE PLACE ON WHAT JIM SAID WAS HIS FIRST AIRPLANE RIDE. I NOTICED THAT JIM SLEPT PART OF THE WAY ON THE LONG TRIP BACK. AT THE OTHER END OF THE LINE THE BOYS WERE UNLOADED BY MANY WILLING HANDS, AND WERE PLACED IN THE CARE OF THE BEST OF MEDICAL PERSONNEL AND FACILITIES. WE CREW MEMBERS WENT INTO THE RECEIVING STATION FOR A CUP OF COFFEE, AND JIM HAILED ME OVER TO HIM. HE SAID HE HAD A CUP OF COFFEE AND SANDWITCHES, AND REMARKED ON THE EFFICENCY OF THE PLACE. HIS GOOD SPIRITS AND THE ACCOMPANYING SMILE WAS NO DOUBT THE RESULT OF SUCH A QUICK CHANGE IN PLACE AND ATMOSPHERE. EVACUATION BY AIR OF THE WOUNDED SEEMS TO HELP THE MORALE VERY MUCH. JIM WAS HURT THAT DAY SOMETIME AND THE SAME NIGHT HE WAS HUNDREDS OF MILES AWAY TO A PLACE WHICH IS CLEAN, HAS GOOD FOOD, AND THE FACILITIES TO REMOVE WHAT SCHRAPNEL IS LEFT WITHOUT THE DANGER INCURRED BY DOING SUCH IN THE FIELD. FROM THE RECEIVING STATION THE BOYS WERE TAKEN OFF TO THE HOPITAL, AND JIM AND I WAVED A GOOD-BYE WITH A "I'LL BE SEEING YOU". YOU WILL SOON BE HEARING FROM JIM, AND HIS LETTER I KNOW WILL BE SO VERY MUCH MORE WELCOME THAN THIS AWKWARD NOTE OF MINE. I HOPE TO HAVE EASED YOUR ANXIETY A BIT ANYWAY, WHICH WAS MY PURPOSE IN WRITING.

WELL, I MUST CLOSE FOR NOW. DON'T BE SURPRISED TO SEE ME WALKING DOWN THE STREET THERE SOMETIME SOON. I'M CERTAINLY EAGER TO GET BACK TO SAY THE LEAST.

SINCERELY,

S/SGT FLOYD E. STONE. VMR-353

*Floyd*