

LETTER NO 3**USO**Sunday
again:409747.
A.P.C. Rowley Res.
Aust. Postal address 353
R. A. A. F.
Aboard.

Dear Glenda,

I am writing to you to vary things a bit: continuing this letter from the last 2. (Hence the number). It is about 3 weeks now since we have sighted land and just on a month since came aboard. As you can imagine I am getting heartily sick of the boat, the lurching sea and everything connected with it. However in a day or two we shall strike our first sight of terra firma again, at our port of call. I shall probably not be allowed ashore - however just as it is again will be checked. I am quite a bit of news since I finished up the last letter and handed it in to be censored. There was a 2 day boxing tournament and quite some talent came to light in the various weights. They made a paper ring etc on one of the hatches, and all lectures were suspended while the tournament was being run off. I was beaten on points in the grand final of the heavy weights by Bill Moore (ex Richmond footballer). However was disgraced as very close and I was cornered but nearly a stone and fair bit of reach and height. He was a bit too long in

(2)



USO



arms.
 Yesterday King Neptune went regina
 supreme and after a grueling run
 now a member of the honorable order of
 shellbacks. However things didn't go
 off without a hitch, and culminated
 in a hell of a row about lunch time
 and looked like the captain suspending
 King Neptune's activities. Just as the
 proceedings were about to take place
 and the shellbacks ^{raising} party (in sherry
 full regalia) were pounding up a
 few potwogs (us), there was a false alarm
 of man overboard. The ship turned round
 and everybody rushed on deck to see
 what was going on. In so doing the
 shellbacks got split up into two and two
 and some bright wog had the idea
 of capturing them and locking them
 in the brig (cells). They captured a
 few and bore them off struggling, and
 locked them up. However in no time
 there was a pitched battle with pillows
 or anything you could lay your hand
 on, which wouldn't hurt too much, all
 over the ship. There were fire boxes grab
 and burned on every where over the ship
 by the leaders of the two factions. However
 the weather is hot and we only had shorts
 and shirts on so a bit of water was
 nothing. She developed into a fight with



USO



power nozzles - and as there a force in one of those 1 1/2 nozzles. Will knock you flat if it hits you properly. A shell back and wog patrol opened up on one another with ones each below decks and that's when the fun started. A warrant officer and flight sgt happened to get in between and stopped the lot in their clothes too. In one of the sorties ~~the~~ a wog courier captured the doctor (a flight lieutenant) and an officer of the American navy and locked them in the brig. One wog member was seen parading round the ship with the junk officers cap on. However these two prominent captures from the shell back took it very well, and enjoyed the fun. However bedlam was looked down below decks where the battle raged with fire hoses. The W/O and flight sgt. returned full of water, a passage of cabins were flooded but there was 6 inches of water in the passag besides what went down the hold on to some four beds. Throughout the lot there were excited gibbering philippine stewards rushing every where trying calm the boys in about 6 languages, and more often than not getting in the danger zone and stopping a jet of flying water. However hostilities gradually ceased, I don't know whether because of a threat



drastic action by the captain from the bridge, or because everyone had consumed too much water. There was one hell of a row, and looked very much like King Neptune being cast overboard. However they decided to carry on after dire threats to anyone who started "mucking" about again.

King Neptune's Court was held in on the aft promenade Deck Hatch in full dress, and regalia. We had to come up in turn, the Court & physicians administered some medicine. King Neptune pronounced sentence, and I had to kiss his foot. Was then put in a chair and some sticky stuff was painted on face and neck and then sprinkled with flour. We then had to run the gauntlet of fire hoses down the side of the promenade Deck. Also some shellbacks armed with brasses to belt you along if you weren't making too good headway against the flying water. Officers and all went through clothes and all. Even our nukes went through the lot. Have never seen so many half drowned humans before. After the day I think there was more water above the ship than below. When the last one had gone through the boys got the hoses again and King Neptune and all his Court were hosed off the hatch. They finished by suddenly



USO



burning it on the passenger deck above where there were many passengers & officers leaning on the rail enjoying the fun. However it all came to a happy conclusion after that and we retired & got some dry clothes on. I think mine had been wet all day. I don't think I have ever laughed so much before. There are quite a few on the ship won't forget the ~~trip~~ they brought the "Aussie's" over. The Phillipinos reckon we are savages. Well must go to bed now. My turn has come ^{round} for washing dishes. I think I have left gallons of perspiration in that scullery every meal time, as we have suddenly come out of winter into equatorial heat - and it is hot below decks. We are all right for sleeping now as we are sleeping on the promenade deck on bunks there. I shall add some more to this later on. Cheerio for the present.

Shall finish this off now and resume in a later letter. As will say. Cheerio for the present. Give my regards to everybody.

Yours,
Reg.