

Originally Processed With FOIA(s):

S

FOIA Number:

2011-2184-F

FOIA MARKER

**This is not a textual record. This is used as an
administrative marker by the George Bush Presidential
Library Staff.**

Record Group/Collection: Donated Historical Materials
Collection/Office of Origin: Bush, George H.W., Collection
Series: Personal Papers
Subseries: World War II Correspondence

OA/ID Number: 25833
Folder ID Number: 25833-003

Folder Title:
September 1944

Stack:	Row:	Section:	Shelf:	Position:
G	35	1	1	2

September 3, 1944

Dear Mother and Dad,

This will be the first letter you have gotten from me in a good long while. I wish I could tell you that as I write this I am feeling well and happy. Physically I am O.K., but I am troubled inside and with good cause. Here is the whole story at least as much of it as I am allowed to relate right now.

Yesterday was a day which will long stand in my memory. I was on a bombing hop with Dlaney as my radioman and Lt. (j.g.) Ted White as my gunner. He did not usually fly, but I asked him if he would like to go with me and he wanted to. We had the usual joking around in the readyroom about having to bail out etc. - at that time it all seemed so friendly and innocent but now it seems awful and sinister.

I will have to skip all the details of the ~~xx~~ attack as they would not pass the censorship, but the fact remains that we got hit. The cockpit filled with smoke and I told the boys in back to get their parachutes on. They didn't answer at all, but I looked around and couldn't see Ted in the turret so I assumed he had gone below to get his chute fastened on. I headed the plane out to sea and put on the throttle so as we could get away from the land as much as possible. I am not too clear about the next parts. ~~Ixx~~ I told them to bail out, and then I called up the skipper and told him I was bailing out. My crewmen never acknowledged either transmission, and yet the radio gear was working - at least mine was and unless they had been hit back there theirs should have been, as since we had talked not long before. I heard the skipper say something but things were happening so fast that I don't quite remember what it was. I turned the plane up in an attitude so as to take pressure off the back hatch so the boys could get out. After that I straightened up and started to get out myself. At that time I felt certain that they had bailed out. The cockpit was full of smoke and I was choking from it. I glanced at the wings and noticed that they were on fire. I still do not know where we got hit and never will. I am now beginning to think that perhaps some of the fragments may have wither killed the two in back, or possibly knocked out their communications.

Fortunately I had fastened all my ~~xxxxxx~~ straps before the dive and also I had left my hatch open, something I hadn't been doing before. Just the day before I had asked the skipper and he advised leaving it open in a dive. The jump itself wasn't too bad. I stuck my head out first and the old wind really blew me the rest of the way out. I do remember tugging at my radio cord which I had forgotten to unplug. As I left the plane my head struck the tail. I now have a cut head and bruised eye but it is far from serious. After jumping, I must have pulled the record too soon for when I was floating down, I looked up at the canopy and several of the panels were all ripped out. Just as I got floating down, I saw the plane strike the water ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~. There was ~~xx~~ 1. In the meantime, I noticed ~~xx~~ 1

a liferaft down in the water. Not until later did I discover that it was mine that was supposed to be attached to my lifejacket. I had forgotten to hook it on, and when I left the plane it had come loose and had fallen into the water. Fortunately, the wind didn't carry me too far away from the raft. The entrance into the water was not too bad. I had unloosened several of my chute straps so that when it came to getting out of the harness I wouldn't have too many buckles to undo under ~~xxx~~ the water. I went fairly deep under when I hit, but not deep enough to notice any pressure or anything. I shook the harness and the wind carried the chute away on the water. The wind was blowing towards shore, so I made every effort to head the other way. The skipper saw me and he saw my ~~xx~~ raft, so he made a pass over it to point it ~~xx~~ out to me. I had inflated my mae west and then started swimming towards the raft. Fortunately, the fall hadn't injured the boat, so it inflated easily and I struggled inot it. I then realized that I had overexerted myself swimming, because suddenly I felt quite tired. I was still afraid that the wind would take me in closer so I began paddling. It was a hell of a job to keep the water out of the raft. In fact I never did get it bailed out completely. At first I was scared that perhaps a boat would put out from the shore which was very close by, but I guess our planes made them think twice about that. A few fighter planes stayed nearby the whole time until I was rescued and you can imagine how comfortable that was. One of them came right over me and dropped me some medical supplies which were most welcome, since I had no idea how badly cut up I was. It turned out to be slight, but did use the iodine anyway. I had some dye marker attached to my life jacket and also there was some in the raft so I sprinkled a bit of that on the water so the planes could see me easily. I took inventory of my supplies and discovered that I had no water. The water had broken open when the raft fell from the plane I imagine. I had a mirror and some other equipment, and also was wearing my own gun and knife.

There was no sign of Del or Ted anywhere around. I looked as I floated down and afterwards kept my eye open from the raft, but to no avail. The fact that our planes didn't seem to be searching anymore showed me ~~xxxx~~ pretty clearly that they had not gotten out. I'm afraid I was pretty much of a sissy about it cause I sat in my raft and sobbed for awhile. It bothers me so very much. I did tell them and when I bailed out I felt that they must have gone, and yet now I feel so terribly responsible for their fate. Oh so much right now. Perhaps as the days go by it will all change ~~xxx~~ and I will be able to look upon it in a different light.

I floated around for a couple of hours during which time I was violently sick to my stomach, ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ and then the planes started zooming me, pointing out my position to my rescuers. You can imagine how happy I was when I saw this submarine hove into view. They pulled me out of the raft and took me below where they fixed me up in grand style. As I write this I am aboard the sub -don't know how long I will be here, or when I will get back to the squadron.

As I said physically I am O.K. The food aboard here is unequalled anywhere I have ever seen. I am getting plenty of sleep and am even standing watches so that I will get the air occasionally. My back ached as did my leg last nite, and also my seat was a bit sore from the chute straps, but the pharmacist mate rubbed me down and

today I feel much better. Last nite I rolled and tossed. I kept reliving the whole experience. My heart aches for the families of those two boys with me. Delaney had always been a fine loyal crewman. His devotion to duty was at all times highly commendable and his personality ~~was~~ most pleasing. I shall most certainly write to his family after I am sure they have been notified by the Bureau.

As for Ted White, I have spoke of him several times in my letters before. He was the fellow from Yale, one class ahead of Stu Clemat. He comes from St. Paul Minn, White Bear Lake to be exact. Perhaps Dad, you know the family. If so do not write them until you get the word from me or elsewhere that the family has been officially notified. There is a possibility that they parachuted and I didn't see them, but I am afraid ~~xx~~ it is quite remote as we received a message aboard here last nite saying that only one chute opened. All in all it is terribly discouraging and frankly it bothers me a good deal.

As time goes by, I shall add bits to this letter and will mail it at my earliest possible ~~convenience~~. I shall do the same by Bar, but shall not go into detail like this over my experience so ~~xxx~~ please read her the parts of this letter which might interest her. It's a funny thing how much I thought about Bar during the whole experience. What I wouldn't give to be with her right now. Just to see that lovely face and those beautiful eyes and to know she was by my side. ^{lovely & reassuring} Right now I long to be with you so much. To be with you both ~~xxxx~~ and to be with Bar is my main desire—at least it won't be too long, the time is going by quite rapidly. I

Please excuse all my misspellings—they are caused not from ignorance but from carelessness in operating this machine.

Much much love to you all,

your ever devoted and loving son,

2-11-41

Bush Library Photocopy
Preservation

Sept 5th

Dear Mom and Dad,

I have just finished writing Bar a long letter so I will add a bit more to this one for you. I did tell Bar all about what ~~xx~~ happened so disregard the part I wrote in the first part of this concerning that.

I ~~xx~~ am now standing Junior officer of the Deck watches and I really love them. I am not in any way a qualified submariner as you can well imagine, but armed with a pair of binoculars and dark glasses if I need them I can sweep the sea and skies pretty well. After my griping about the security watches aboard the ship it may seem funny my enjoying any watches, but here it is different. These watches afford me a good chance to get up topside and grab some of that fresh air. When we are submerged, I am utterly useless to them, but when on the surface I stand two watches a day - 6-8PM and 4-6AM. just a nice length.

The food continues to be excellent, with steaks, ice cream, chicken etc in abundance. You actually can't believe how good the chow is. Of course they have a much smaller complement of officers to prepare for, but still the food is so much better that there is no comparison. As for sleep, I have been "claiming more than my fair share". I usually sleep all morning and also all night until my watch comes up. The bunks are comfortable and so darn inviting. I'd love to see "The Big One" trying to get in and out of some of them. Dad, you just couldn't do it. All the beds are fine once you get in - that is until you have to get out. I sort of get half way in and then have to pull the rest of me in like a worm. The boat is now over crowded, having three extra officers aboard. But since two men are on watch all the time there is always a bed for everyone. The fellow coming off watch just crawls into the bed which his relief had been sleeping in. That continues on till morning. Oh yes, they even have movies aboard every other day. They show them in the crew's messing compartment which is the largest (but still tiny) gathering place. They have a miniature screen and it is just as good. All the people love this duty. It is a very happy boat to say the least.

One of the officers showed me all around and tried to explain the equipment to me. I'm afraid I must have seemed like an egg-head, but I did get the general idea of the operations. So far diving and submerging haven't hurt my ears at all, and everything about this life agrees with me. I think I would still prefer flying, since you are out in the open so much more, but this would be my second choice.

All the officers, and crew too, are just as nice as they can be. The Captain is ap each. He eats his meals with us in the wardroom and is just as good a guy as you'd want to meet. Yesterday I got a hunk of liferaft and stamped the name of the ship and the date on it and then all the officers signed it. They also took some picture the day they brought me aboard which I will try to get hold of to bring home. Will quit now
much love, *Bar*

September 8th

Dear Mum and Dad,

Back once again, I have just come off my early morning watch and breakfast won't be ready for a while so I shall write a little more. I have taken to sleeping even more than when I first came aboard. I now sleep for three hours in the Am and then try to sleep at least two in the the afternoon. I don't usually get in the sack at nite before 10 or 11 so I have to make up for it all in all. I try to get about 8 or 9 hours of sleep a day.

Haven't been doing a great deal out of the ordinary- just daydream the time away. It is such fun to think about getting home, the wedding and all that. I find myself busting forth into song up on the bridge. I am not sure the others up there appreciate my efforts too much, but if they ever complain I am going to tell them that my mother feels I am potentially a second Caruso- and I don't mean Frank Caruso either.

My eye has completely healed, save for a tiny scar and, the worst part, one chunk of eyebrow is missing. It is sort of a laugh, but I do hope it grows back in. There is just skin where there should be eyebrow.

One thing I do miss aboard here is my daily shower which I loved aboard the ship. Water cannot be produced as abundantly aboard this boat, so naturally we have to conserve whenever and wherever possible. One shower per week is the ration. Tomorrow I can take mine- wow do I need it (unattractive) The shower is in a tiny little room but by being very cagey about it you can manage to get well cleaned up. The clothes situation is far from serious since all we wear is sandals, undies and pants- no shirts, just undershirts for meals.

I hope you have not been worrying up till the time you received these letters. This may be the first you have heard of my experience, I don't know. I try to think about it as little as possible, yet I cannot get the thought of those two boys out of my mind. It is so different, reading about people getting killed etc. Even when Jim and Dick Houle were lost, though I did feel it deeply, it did not affect me ~~ix~~ as this has. Oh, I am O.K. - I do want to fly again and I shall not be scared of it, but I know I shall never be able to shake the memory of this incident, and I don't believe I want to completely. They were both such fine people.

Well I smell the breakfast cooking so I will secure this for now. ~~ix~~ Much love to you all,



Saturday Sept 16th.

Dear Mum and Dad,

Several days have slipped by since I last sat down before this machine- days not without excitement, but unfortunately the details will have to remain unrelated for the present.

Gradually I am becoming more used to this life. At first I missed my daily bath but now I am used to my weekly one. I will say that I certainly do look forward to the day when my bath is due. Today was the big day. Water is precious, but soap is plentiful, so I soap and soap and finally rinse. It is amazing how much better I feel after this weekly pleasure. With my bath comes a clean set of clothes. I hate to have to borrow other people's things, but unfortunately I came equipped only with pants, drawers and flying jacket. They have a laundryman aboard which helps some.

I have been on the mid watch for the last few days. That puts me on watch from 12-2 at night and from 12-3 during the day. This way I get a little sun once in awhile. If we are submerged I don't stand a watch for obvious reasons.

There is a fellow aboard here named Jerry Redmon. He graduated from Harvard in '42. They live right next door practically to the Lovetts on Long Island-Glen Cove I believe.

The food continues to be excellent. I have not been sleeping as well lately, and I am sure it is because I never get any exercise. I could take calisthenics I suppose. I better start soon because I really do feel sluggish and rotten without at least a trot down the old flight deck.

I am certainly eager to get back to the squadron now. It seems like ages since I have been back. I can just picture the letters on my desk and I long to be able to tear into them. I haven't heard from Bar in almost a month now. Did I tell you about my goatee. It started off beautifully, but gradually developed into a joke-sort of like Gruff's moustache, so today off it came. If worse came to worse K, however, I am now convinced that I could grow ~~xxx~~ a fairly presentable goatee, given plenty of time. Most of the enlisted men aboard here have big full faced beards. It is indeed quite a sight.

I have been doing quite a bit of reading lately. Retreat From Rostov; and Dos Passos's "Number One" plus "Captain from Connecticut" and now "The Robe". The latter appeals to me a great deal. So far I have only read a hundred pages or so but it has been deeply absorbing.

I wonder if you have seen Bar since you have been back from Maine. I imagine so if she didn't go back to college. By now Vance is undoubtedly back at college and Buck and John

PHOTOCOPY
GB HANDWRITING

September 24th

Dear Mum and Dad,

Another week has slipped by since my last letter. Not a great deal has happened, and we are still at sea.

I am more anxious than ever to get back to the squadron, and am hoping that it will not be too much longer. You should be getting this letter before too long.

Today is quite rough and I find that this type vessel can really bounce around. So far I have not been seasick - I hope this continues. I am now back on the 4-6 watch, after a week or so on the midnite job.

*The type-writer has been taken
so I will continue by hand.*

*The world news continues to get
better, and I wonder just how long
the Axis can last. Seems to me the
Germans should be there by now, but
then I know very little about the
situation over there.*

*I loved "The Robe" - it really was
marvelous. Since then I have read a
couple of more novels.*

*Have been sleeping a good deal,
too.*

*The other day a bird came up
and landed on the bridge. We caught
him and took him below. I guess he*

was so tired he couldn't escape.
He was a baby seagull I think -
After a brief rest in the wardrobe,
we turned him loose. Also one of
the numerous flying fish in these
waters came aboard. They are
pretty and graceful, and though I have
seen them continually for the last 6
months I never tire of looking at
them. That's all the news!

From the news broadcast to it
seems that Jimmy's boys have been
having quite an exciting time.

This is a sad letter.
I miss you all very much and
can hardly wait to get your letter.
Much love to all,
Pop

Sept 27th

Dear Mum and Dad,

This will be the last installment before mailing - I shall continue to write while we are at sea, but we will get an opportunity to get this off soon so I shall seal it up and get it ready.

Today was really rough- excellent Tomboy weather to say the least. I am afraid the poor Tomboy would never have been able to weather the waves we had today though. They would break over the bridge and we would immediately duck hoping to let them pass over us. My stomach has not bothered me today thank heavens. Remember the Bermuda trip when we were sick. I think perhaps I could weather it a little better now, having been at sea more; however, I still get that horrible feeling every so often.

I am most anxious to know what the bosses will do with us when we hit port. I am hoping that I will get back to the squadron. If not I may get stuck in another outfit which would be terrible, but then too I may get sent home which would be perfect, even though I would have to travel in a barrel and without a sign of a record or a paper with me. Actually I do not have any idea what they will do with me, so it is not worthwhile speculating. I am hoping to get either back to the squadron or to get home of course, but for love nor money could I say what the outcome of this little adventure will be.

I shall look up Pressy's father in law in a few days, may not see him but will get in touch with him if at all possible.

I think you had better not mention the fact that Ted White was with me to anyone who could possibly let it get to the Whites unless for some reason you know that they have definitely been notified by the government. As soon as I find out that they have been notified I shall write to them. They will probably receive the word that he is "missing in action" so there too we will have to be tactful.

Well, I shall stop for now. I hope this letter does not worry you. You have told me that you want to know everything that happens, and I too think it is by far better than just getting "the day is fine" letters. I am now fine and am in all respects ready to finish up with the squadron. I have not forgotten what has happened, but then I never shall completely forget about ~~the~~ it; however, I am no longer as troubled by the tragic mishap as I was at first.

Much much love to you all. I shall write you soon again. With much love to all the family and to my Barbara girl,

your ever devoted Pop

Lt J. G. W. Bush
VT 5,
FPO
San Francisco, Calif



Mr. Mrs. Prescott S. BUSH
Grove Lane
Greenwich, Conn.



PHOTOCOPY
GB HANDWRITING