

NAME: Woodrow

RANK: Not Available

ORGANIZATION: U.S. Navy Military Government, Saipan

OVERSEAS WARTIME SERVICE: Asiatic-Pacific Theater of Operations

- The following excerpt is directly from an original wartime letter written by Woodrow. This is one of several letters from Woodrow in the site curator's possession and more will be transcribed in the future.
- The following excerpt is presented under fair use provisions for educational purposes.
- No controversial material has been omitted from the following excerpt. No grammatical or spelling errors have been corrected.

Woodrow writes his sister in the United States:

“3 January 1945.

...I remember the day we landed, it was shortly after ‘D’ day and we were all rather apprehensive. We didn’t know whether we would be met by armed resistance on the beach or not. We were all crowded to-gether in the hold of a landing craft. In addition to full packs, belts, canteens, gas masks, rifles and leggings which weighed about 80 pounds we had all our personal gear in our sea-bags. We knew that we would not have a chance to buy razor blades, candy and such so we were well stocked and the bags were quite full. I don’t believe I am exaggerating when I say my bag weighed well over a hundred pounds.

The day of disembarkation was one we had been looking forward to for many days and it dawned bright and early with our destination a mere speck in the distant horizon. When we finally dropped anchor around noon there was experienced by all of us a peculiar sensation. We observed all the ships firing away and answering bursts of smoke and flame bursting from the shore, but it didn’t seem like we were actually in a battle zone. The feeling of it all not being real prevailed over all of us. It was more like a glorious show and I felt like I was setting in the first row of the audience.

Finally word was passed to get ready to land – of course we had been ready for hours but another long period passed until finally the landing craft pulled up alongside and a foot wide plank was laid from deck to deck. We had to navigate this plank with all the above mentioned gear while both ships were being tossed about, It was a rather difficult job of navigating but we all managed without a ducking.

We were then told to make our way below decks. If you can imagine going down ladders with all the above mentioned gear and crawling thru 2 ft. sq. hatches you can readily see the job in store for us. The second one I went thru I got hung up by my blanket roll and had the whole line blocked while I was vainly reaching for the ladder as I swung back and forth. Finally a couple good hearted fellows gave me a hand and unhung me and the procession started again. All was quiet during the trip to the beach, each had his own thoughts and memories and every one respected the others silence. Finally there was a slight grinding as we cleared the reef followed shortly by a shudder that shook the whole ship as we ground to a stop hard aground.

Everyone was breathless as the huge doors opened and we got our first glimpse of our home for the next months. We found that we would have to wade about a half mile in water up to our necks, but they were good enough to have am-tracks to carry our sea bags, but being what I am I didn't walk – I guess I'm just naturally lazy.

It was just getting dusk when we finally got ashore so we immediately pitched our pup tents and set down to a hearty 'K' ration which tasted very good, or so we thought, but we all revised our decision for many months was over.

Shortly we discovered we had camped in a bad place as directly behind us were some large guns that fired rather continuously and we got the concussion as well as the hot muzzle blast, but we were to get used to that in the next few weeks. Not many slept that first night.

The next morning we started moving toward the front and finally came to our camping place for the next day or two. It was an area that had just been taken the day before so we covered the ground quite thoroughly looking for duds and hand-grenades. We didn't get much sleep for the next several nights as 'One Lung Charlie' spent most of the hours of darkness strafing and bombing and we consequently spent a good share of the hours of darkness in a fox hole...

...Well take care Sis & the best of luck

love

Woodrow"

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- It is not known whether or not Woodrow made it through the Second World War.
 - **For visual context, this link connects to an original wartime newsreel in the public domain that covers the Battle of Saipan which Woodrow participated in (viewer discretion advised):**
https://archive.org/details/1944-06-30_Saipan_Is_Ours
 - **For additional detail, this link connects to the Wikipedia article that covers the Battle of Saipan which Woodrow mentions in his letter (reader discretion advised):**
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Saipan