

c. 1943



State of Minnesota
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
Saint Paul
HAROLD E. STASSEN, GOVERNOR



Dear Harold:

Not having had a chance to see you before you left, I thought I would write to you and tell you how very proud I am to be your sister.

When you told me that day what your plans were, I didn't know whether to cry or be happy, and the whole thing didn't really register, but as day by day goes by I just get the funniest feeling about your being in the Navy and sacrificing so much that wouldn't have had to be sacrificed. I try to fathom the deep feeling that you must have had to make the decision, and I think of what a grand, brave little person Esther is, and it just doesn't seem real. When I hear comments and read mail bag letters against you, it just makes my blood boil and I would just like to meet the person and tell them how real you are.

Very few people are born with such an unselfish attitude toward everything and everyone. I wish you would have left a little of that character for me, who was born six years later.

Love,

Lizet



Commander South Pacific Force
Staff

Dear Father

I have wanted very much to talk to you about the future. The news from the mainland which I have received in the form of clippings has caused me to think not only of decisions I may have to make in the coming months but also of the years ahead & what kind of life we might lead. Not very long ago I was with you at Seattle & we have always been so close that I want you to know what is going on in my mind now.

After the war the two things that will be most important will be to be near to and happy with you and Glen and Kathleen, and to be of constructive service to the people particularly in world relationships. Other things seem of small significance in comparison, altho of course many factors have a bearing on these two. What then should our tentative plans be?

The one question that was decided in my letter to the Secretary of the Navy seems clearly to have been correctly answered. The possibility of it coming about are of course very remote. If it did happen then the need would be to plan how we could live a full life together notwithstanding the impact of this position. I am certain we can do this when we place it in its proper importance and plan for it. Obviously too the second objective I have would be answered to an extreme degree ~~if~~ if I were to be nominated.

On the other hand I do not feel that I should accept a Vice Pr. nomination. I do not feel that I could be of as much constructive service on world policy that way as I could without it. I would be tied in to a campaign that will be conducted on a rather bitter attacking basis that I would not approve of. I would be restricted by position both in a campaign and in the office if successful as to the frankness of expression of my views as they should not be expressed then in conflict with the views of the Pres. I have not minded being completely silent now under these war circumstances, but I would not be happy to be able to speak but not frankly and openly. Either winning or losing I believe I would lose the solid respect and confidence of a considerable number of people which is the foundation on which I will be able to have the greatest effect on the future policy of our country.

What then should we contemplate doing after the war? What would you think of this. Spend the first year or



Commander South Pacific Force
Staff

two somewhat leisurely. We travel together some. Study and write and speak on the subjects of national and world policy. Perhaps finance ourselves entirely this way or perhaps practice some law or accept the presidency of some college or university. They would be years we would have to truly live together, you and Glen and Kathleen and I, and to prepare for future service, while having some immediate influence thru speaking and writing and conferring. We could go to Boston, as an example, and spend some time on the Cape and some time in sessions with the Harvard faculty exploring ideas and principles. I think I could have sufficient speaking and writing requests to meet a reasonable budget.

This may then lead at a later year to running for President or it may not. It may lead to other public or international position or it may not. It may result rather in positions in the educational field.

I will also want to spend a part of my time in religious activities such as I have followed in the past years.

I suppose another way of saying some of the above is to say that I do not have any driving ambition to get into business and make money nor to drive toward any certain public office. And on the other hand you and the children mean even more to me than ever and the course of our country and of world policy in its effect upon peace and war and living standards thruout the world mean more than ever.

What is your reaction to all this? Write to me your thoughts and questions. If we can think thru these overall questions many more immediate problems answer themselves rather easily.

Will close now by simply saying, I love you very much and am so proud of you.

July 12, 1943

Dear Glen:-

I received your scrap book today. It certainly is very good and I was very happy to get it. Some of the other Navy Officers also looked at it and they thought it was very fine too.

I also was happy to receive the pictures of Mommy and Kathleen and you. I am very anxious to see you again. I will be home in less than two weeks. I will get home late at night on July 23rd.

You must have a very fine tent.

I am sending you some airplane cards. We learn about all of these different airplanes.

Love Daddy

August 4, 1943

Darling Esther:

Have arrived at my new station for duty. Had an interesting trip and am feeling well.

Have also been assigned to my new work and am sure that I will like it.

The war news continues to be good. I hope Italy is entirely out of it by the time you receive this letter.

Will look forward to hearing from you. Hope you are all well. I also will enjoy receiving small clippings of news of interest.

I will write to you frequently but you will not receive the usual news about what I do etc as the rules of correspondence from here naturally do not permit comment on what we do or see.

Darling I have thought of you and the children a great deal.

Love.

Note the new abbreviated correct address.

Harold

UNITED
STATES



NAVY

8 Aug, 1943

Darling Esther: -

This is Sunday afternoon.

I would be telephoning you now and talking to you if ~~it~~ ^{it} were possible but there are no telephone connections from here. So I must just imagine what you are doing & what you would say & write how much I love you & think of you.

We work out here on Sunday as well as every other day as everything must keep moving along. However I took time off this morning to go to church. The Army Chaplain here conducted a joint Army Navy service with an Army Navy Marine choir. It was a nice service.

Hope to receive your first letter within the next few days. Am looking forward to it.

Love
Harold

(over)

P.S.

You may have noticed my initials on the letters for the censors stamp. As a member of the staff I censor my own letters - and of course will lean over backwards to respect the letter and spirit of the censorship.

I broke my watch by bumping it & am sending it back to Les Bedges to be repaired. I miss it as I became very accustomed to it.

Harold

Dear Son Glen:-

How are you?

This is Sunday here and I was wondering what you were doing. Probably you are out playing with Kitty Kelly + Ronnie + Jerry. I will bring you some souvenirs when I come home next time.

Love Daddy.



August 6, 1943

Sweetheart:-

Am endeavoring to rapidly learn my new job and get acquainted with officers I work with.

I am pleased with my assignment here. It is interesting & keeps me busy. I worked late the first night to get familiar with the procedures and methods.

They have a fine staff of officers here and also a fine group of men.

I have your picture (you & Betty) on my desk - rigged up a sort of a frame from a cardboard box & it works very well. It is so good to be able to look at the three of you when I glance up.

We receive the news in general
from home by radio.

The postoffice method
which is used so that all the
mail for any place in the Pacific
goes thru the Fleet postoffice
at San Francisco & is forwarded
by them to the right location.

The Com So Pac is abbreviation
for Commander South Pacific.

Indications are that I
will be at this location for
quite a while & will not be
moving around.

I have a comfortable bunk
and good food.

I hope Glen is continuing
with his reading and arithmetic
so he will easily step into the
third grade.

Love Darling
Harold



Aug 10, 1943

Darling Esther:-

Have been here a week now & am getting a fair understanding of my work. It is very interesting & is a position I know you would like me to be in.

Yesterday the local representatives of the press associations who are attached to this area found out I was here & so the Press Officer of the staff made a brief announcement & I met the press men. I suppose the stories on it have reached you long before you receive this letter.

I am looking forward to your first letter. I hope it will arrive soon but realize that it will take quite a few days for

mail to reach me here. Hope
you have received my ^{first} letter by
this time.

I am bunking now with
six officers in what is called
a Quonsett hut, which is a small
prefabricated building which is
erected for various purposes
at headquarters of this kind.
It is comfortable + clean.

One of the officers on the
staff showed me yesterday a
picture of his 4 months old baby
which he had never seen + which
his wife mailed him from Virginia (State)
Another officer has the footprints of his
newly arrived baby which his wife
recently mailed him from the hospital
in California. They all talk of their
families quite a lot!

I wrote to Doc + Walter yesterday.
will gradually fulfill my correspondence
obligations to others. Love + more Love Harold



13 August 1943

Dearest Esther:-

It is late afternoon and my work is cleared up - at least temporarily. I have been quite busy the last two days.

Tomorrow is payday & have just learned amount I will draw. Apparently there are some extra allowances for being here so will be better off than I thought. Furthermore it costs very little to live here. Meals at the officers table are only \$10. per month. Are you receiving the \$200 checks from the Navy Dept? Did you also receive the 200+ some dollar check that I mailed from San Francisco which was my travel allowance? If you need I believe I will be able to allocate some additional to your checks. - or perhaps I will let it accumulate in the pay off so we have a little special

money for my next trip home. It will probably be quite a while before that comes - but when it does it will apparently be 3 weeks or a month of vacation. Won't that be grand.

Have been meeting quite a few officers from Minnesota. Both army & navy. They hear that I arrived & drop over to say hello & introduce themselves.

Don't forget how much I love you. I remember you & the children every evening in my prayers. I just looked out the window at the sun and thought that the same sun shines on all of you back home. Makes you seem not quite so far away.

When you find interesting articles in papers or magazines I would enjoy having you mail them out to me. Remember to use air mail.

Love
Harold.



Sunday Aug 15, 1943

Queridita: -

This is a happy afternoon for me. Your two letters - mailed Aug. 4 & 6th both arrived a few minutes ago just as I was having an afternoon cup of coffee at my desk. You cannot realize how pleased I was to receive them. I read them thru twice, then looked at your picture on my desk & then started this letter.

Julian's phone call to you was very considerate & yet it did the very thing that I wanted to avoid by not writing from the time I left San Francisco until I arrived here. In other words I thought that letters received by you written while I was "enroute" would only stimulate anxiety until you heard that I had arrived. Thus I decided not to write from the time I left San Francisco until I actually arrived at my continuing duty station here at headquarters of the South Pacific. Thus I immediately wrote my Aug 4th letter on arrival which you have no doubt received before this - but I hope you did not worry ~~from~~ ^{between} Aug 5th ^{the date} until you received my letter.

I also met Staff King at one of the islands enroute here. He was well & quite excited about seeing me. I had heard at the preceding stop that he was out here & was pleased to see him. It's a small world after all.

I went to church again this morning to the same combined Army Navy Marine services that I wrote you about last time.

Am happy to hear that you are well & the children also. You are so courageous & wonderful. Glen & Kathleen & I are so fortunate to have you for a mommy & a sweetheart. I think of you all a lot even though my job keeps me quite busy. You can be sure that while I will always try to do my part I will not be reckless or careless and I look forward to happy days with you again.

Was surprised to hear of W E Nolan's death. He seemed so well when I last saw.

Glad to hear you went to Joe Ball's meeting & were going to lunch with Mrs Chubb. Hope you continue to engage in activities & recreation of various kinds.

Am feeling fine. I do miss milk, however, as we have none here. I have always tried to keep my calcium well up as a safeguard thru the years and drank quite a lot of milk partly for that purpose. I wish you would ask Dr Geer or Miss Bergman what other foods are high in calcium. Or perhaps you could get them some Calcium tablets - pack them securely and send them out air mail. (I want to keep in good shape so I can keep up with you in every way when I get back home.)

Darling, will look forward to your letters.

Love
Harold.

21st Aug 1943

Dearest Esther:-

Your third letter dated Aug 11th + enclosing the newspaper account of my appointment here arrived this morning, making this a happy day. You cannot imagine how thrilled I am to receive your letters. This one was especially interesting as you included so much news about yourself + Glen + Kathleen.

It apparently takes about ten days for an airmail letter, so as I figure it out you should have received my first letters within three or four days after you wrote the one you mailed on the 11th, as I wrote you from here on August 4th.

I am glad the newspaper story came thru as it let you know that I had safely arrived + was O.K.

I have been busy every day since and like the work. This is the headquarters for this very active area of both Navy + Army + their airforces but it is a secure location. I was naturally very surprised

to meet Staff King as Mrs King told you.
We had an early morning breakfast while
I was travelling. Tell Stone Elliott to
read me the address of his son John.

The war news continues to be good,
we seem to be steadily increasing our
air strength over Europe. This is a
good sign. They also are getting the
upperhand over the subs in the Atlantic
which means more supplies & ships for
operations over there & less loss of life.

By now you have decided on the
war bond drive chairmanship. Use your
own good judgment on these things. If you
feel they are interesting & worthwhile go to it.
Do not doubt your ability to handle them as
you are a good chairman & secure amazing
help from others in various things & seem to
assign them things to do very well, which is ^{you give them credit}
the real test of executive ability. I have been
very proud of the way you handled the Waves
drive - the Legislative women - the other activities.
Repub women etc. But do not take on too much
so as to get too tired. Keep rested and do things
you enjoy.
(I sound more like a dutch uncle than a loving husband
when I write these things - but you know how I feel)

23 Aug 1943

Darling Esther:-

Your letter of Aug 8th arrived yesterday - a few days after your letter of Aug 11th. In other words the earlier letter arrived later. This will probably happen frequently in both directions as it makes a lot of difference within a particular letter gets in a mail bag on a particular plane & whether it goes all the way thru or not. Am very pleased that you kept writing letters even when you had not received any as in that way I have now had 4 letters from you. I did the same thing & so when ^{my} ~~your~~ letters to you one start arriving they should continue every few days.

As I recall I wrote you a letter on Aug 8th also - and remarked how much I wished that I could telephone you on that afternoon as I used to do.

Yesterday was Sunday. I went to the evening church services as we were very busy in the morning & could not go then. Had a nice letter from Father Nolan, formerly

of Hastings who is now a Navy Chaplain. It was forwarded from New York.

I see that the occupation of Kiska by our forces has been announced now so I can write about it. This is good news & clears the Aleutian islands in the northern Pacific of all Japs. After where Al Lindley is is the nearest advanced base we have to Japan itself.

I met Capt. Lufkin - the young son of Sam & Mary Lufkin - friends of Balls recently. He came in the office not expecting to see me & was surprised & introduced himself. I did not recognize him but of course know about him when he identified himself. He is in the Air force.

Am getting fairly well acquainted with my work now & moving along O.K.

Glad to hear of you going to White Pine with Elmer & Mary. ~~Hope~~ Mary Kelly gets along alright. They did not have much time to get acquainted did they?

Love

Harold

29 Aug 1943

Dealing Esther:-

It is Sunday afternoon & I am working, except that just now I have caught up for the time being & so am taking time out to write to you. My thoughts have been turning your way for the last hour particularly - perhaps because I used to look forward so much to telephoning you on Sunday afternoon.

I had a pleasant dinner last evening with two officers who were from Vicenza. One is a navy Dr & one a line officer. I also got some calcium & vitamin tablets to round out my diet. Have feeling fine & hope to keep that way by anticipating problems. Also have acquired appropriate clothes & get plenty of rest even though we do put in long hours. If you have not already forwarded the calcium I can get along O.K. but if you have sent it I will have that much better supply for the future.

I attended the joint church service again this morning. Had communion service today. Also a different chaplain preached today - Was a good sermon.

The war news continues to be good. You have read by now that all the Japs are out of New Georgia island & we have a firm hold on Vella La Vella island.

It always is a little strange in writing because all of the real news about what we are doing and what we know is secret and cannot be written in letters.

I was glad to receive the miscellaneous clippings. They all interested me and I like to receive them.

I do not believe there are any clothes that I want sent out. But if Elmer (Brother) could pack up a box of slightly unusual foods it would be welcome. In other words - such things as a fruit cake, some cheese, some filled cookies, etc. In other words, food suitable for evening snacks before going to bed. We get plenty of good staple food but do miss the unusual things. They would have to all be in cans and in a strong wood box. They would probably take about 6 weeks getting out here. I would share them with some of the officers I am staying with.

The correct shipping address would be —
(I will have to check up on this shipping address & will write it in next letter.) Love Harold

It will be quite an experience & treat for
Gretchen Lindy to have a baby while her
husband is gone. I have been surprised at
how many of the Navy wives have babies
while their husbands are away - that is I
mean furnish having babies then - not start!!!
Many of the officers show pictures of babies
they have not yet seen personally!

I must have been quite an
experience for Glen to go to market. I hope
he writes me about it. I can remember
doing it as a small boy too. Dad ^{mother} likes
to have the grandchildren out there. It is
also a good thing for Glen to be interested in
live animals etc & take care of them -
even a turtle.

I wish you would send me a
picture of yourself & a picture of Glen.
I have the picture of the three of you on
my desk & the picture of Kathleen near
my bunk - so would like to add you &
Glen alongside of Kathleen. Put a stiff
cardboard with it & send air mail. It will
cost about 60¢.

I received a letter from a good friend who
is on the staff of the 15th Army in
Sicily. He had read the Saturday Post second
article & wrote me to New York & it
was forwarded out here. It was an
interesting & encouraging letter. Will look
forward to seeing him after the war. He
has been working on a joint staff for months
with British officers & said they have
been discussing the Post article together.

Also received a letter forwarded
from Father Nolan - formerly of Hastings
& as you recall a good friend - who
is now a new Navy Chaplain.

Love darling

Harold



Commander South Pacific Force

Letter # 25

Oct 8, 1943

Darling Esther:

It is midafternoon.

I have just cleared my desk of pending matters waiting when I returned here, so I looked up the smiling picture of my three honeys you + Glen + Kathleen, & decided to write you a note.

How are you? What did you do this morning? What did you do yesterday? What are you doing now? Wish I could verbally ask these questions and have a real visit with you all!!

Am feeling fine and the news continues to be good. Hope the Russian + Italian fronts continue to bring good news. Hitler can't stand too many months like the last two. The fewer the better!!

One of the prominent Doctors out here
is a friend of Russ Bennett and Henry Krigman.
He received very nice letters from both
of them after he had written of meeting
me aboard ship one day. He let me
read them both & they were exceptionally
kind in their references to me, so I do not know
where the idea of Walt as to Russ' reaction
could come from. Maybe Russ was just a
little more realistic about developments that
might take place. Furthermore he is not one
to exhibit optimistic enthusiasm.

Some of the older officers here
have sons in service in different parts of
the world. It is interesting to note how
eagerly they receive letters from them.

I read that the traveling Senators
have had quite a bit to say since their
return to Washington. It's about what would
be expected. Most of their remarks are not
very sound. They started out with certain
ideas & the trip is a background for their
remarks.

Have you started your Art classes?
I hope so. We'll expect some samples of
your work in a few months. Love Sweetheart
Harold



MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Copyright in this digital version belongs to the Minnesota Historical Society and its content may not be copied without the copyright holder's express written permission. Users may print, download, link to, or email content, however, for individual use.

To request permission for commercial or educational use, please contact the Minnesota Historical Society.



www.mnhs.org