

## War Era Story Project 2012

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Age: Not given

The following are excerpts of letters written by my father, George Adams, to his lifelong childhood friend, John Winski. Both grew up in Lima OH. Dad went into the service in 1941 right after Pearl Harbor and returned to the States in November 1945. In the spring of 2007, Mr. Winski found eight letters that Dad had written to him in his attic and gave them to me and my sister. I submitted all of the letters in their entirety to the *Lima News Salute to Veterans* insert in the Sunday Nov. 11, 2007 edition.

Dad never talked about his experiences overseas, but I know he was a good soldier, brave and loyal to his friends and commanders. The letters show a young man trying to stay busy in between battles. He never says where they are, but in the last letter lets it slip that he is on an island somewhere. Dad was an athletic guy and all of the soldiers played sports (horseshoes, basketball, volleyball, softball) wherever they were in order to maintain fitness levels and stay sharp. The first few letters were very quiet in tone, but the longer dad was overseas without any R & R, his letters got angrier and darker. Also, when he complained about his buddies not writing to him, he had no way of knowing that one of those close friends was a POW at Bataan and barely survived the Death March. He found this out when he got home. His friendships with his "buddies" were a big part of his life after the war, and he was an active member of the VFW Post 1275 in Lima until his death. He received a military burial at Gethsemani Cemetery in Lima OH May 1989.

He was 23 when he went overseas, lost his dad a year later and could not even come home for the funeral. He met my mother in May of 1947, married in October 1947 and had two children: my sister Linda and me; three grandchildren and one great grandson.

Dad went to work as a security guard for the Lima Tank Depot on his return and retired in 1971 with 30 years of government service. His work ethic, discipline, and religious values made him a wonderful father, husband, brother and uncle. He valued family and friendship and I feel blessed that we received these letters from Mr. Winski. Dad's slang, so apparent in his use of the words swell, pal, boys and buddies, was a big part of his language even up until the day he died. Getting those letters and hearing his voice from "beyond the grave" was a wonderful thing. It is with gratitude for his life and service that I submit these letters to the Ohio War Era Story Project.

Thank You

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My father, George Philip Adams of Lima OH, was a sergeant with the Ammunition and Pioneer Platoon of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the 148<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, US Army. He saw action in many major battles of the South Pacific, including Solomon Islands, Guadalcanal, Fiji, New Guinea and the Philippines. He received a Bronze Star for heroism during the Battle for Hill 700 at Bougainville for moving through enemy mortar and grenade fire back to the company's ammunition dump to replenish his platoon's supplies. Dad was overseas four years (1941-1945) with no R & R and even could not come back for his father's funeral in 1942.

Dad passed away in 1989, but in 2007 his close friend, Mr. John Winski of Lima, found eight letters in his attic that dad had written to him. He generously gave these to my sister and me. What a blessing to hear dad's voice again in his written words... The comments and thoughts he shared were heartbreaking at times and funny at others. I will share some excerpts of these letters:

**Dec. 7, 1943**

Hi John:

Everything here is going swell. We had turkey for Thanksgiving with all the trimmings. I don't know where I'll be on Christmas but I know I will not enjoy the holiday.

God Bless, Your Pal, George Adams

**Feb. 5, 1944:**

Hi John:

Since I wrote you last, I was promoted to grade of sergeant. Things here are about the same: we have movies every other night. We had a USO show and Randolph Scott, the actor, was here in person. I sure like to receive mail from the boys. I am getting more anxious to get back. I miss all the boys and girls. I haven't seen a girl for 20 months... what do they look like? What does a civilian car look like? We may begin to play ball soon because they are working on a new ball diamond.

May God bless everybody. I remain your pal, George Adams

**March 18, 1944**

We are getting plenty of cigarettes... I got two cartons of Luckys. As you know, I am going on 23 months overseas. I am going to be a changed man. I had plenty of time to think and I am going to make my mother proud of me and have her glad to have a son like me. I still read the Lima newspaper because one of the boys receives it here.

May God bless you and the rest of the folks. Write soon pal. Your pal, George P. Adams

**May 8, 1944**

Hi, Pal,

John, I am now going on 24 months overseas. I have been getting a lot of mail from my buddies. It keeps me busy writing. Last week, we got 18 bottles of beer and six bottles of Coke. It sure was a surprise. Our meals are good, but not plentiful. John, we now got a radio in our tent. We got good dance music, war news, and it sure is nice to have. We also got electric lights in our tent now, too. Last week we played another softball game for first place in our league. We lost 2-1, but it was a good game filled with arguments. I'm still a catcher. We play about three games every week to keep our spirits up in this forsaken jungle.

May God bless each and every one of you, your pal, George Adams

**July 1, 1944**

John, I don't know what to write but believe me, pal, this jungle life is not fit for a dog to live in. Oh yes, pal, the newspapers and radio talks this up swell. If the people only know the truth about us over here... Take me, for instance: many thousands of us have been here over two years and have not seen any civilians. No place to go and nothing do but work and dream. We deserved a break and rest but I guess we are forgotten soldiers. Two whole years of seeing trees, brush, swamps, mud and these darn no-good noises caused by creatures of the jungles of night. Gee, pal, I am forgotten by all my buddies who are left back in Lima. Nobody at the cigar store writes to me; what buddies they claim to be. Here I am, not knowing when I will give my life for those boys so they could live in peace, play cards, run around, making good money, drinking and knowing they are not in danger from bombs or Japs. Still, they won't write. We still have movies every other night. We used to play a lot of softball, but ran out of balls. We can't get recreation equipment. Oh yes, Johnny, don't forget to donate to the Red Cross. They are doing so much for us over here, we think a lot of the Red Cross.

**July 24, 1944**

Hi, John

I appreciate your letter... keep writing pal. Over two years in these jungles and none of us know when we are going to get home. I am beginning to believe we are forgotten soldiers. We got a good softball team, won 8 straight games. I bet we played 50 games since we arrived on this island. Sorry beer is hard to get back home. Maybe it is all coming overseas. We get one case of beer per month and eight bottles of Coke. Pal, a little experience I had: The other day, the boys and me were in our tent writing letters. One boy was playing a harmonica. Out of the clear blue sky, one boy jumps up and yells "SNAKE," and we saw a snake in our tent... We finally killed it. It was four or five feet long and was the fourth snake around our tent in the last month. I would give anything to be home pal. I have had enough of this life.

May God bless each and every one of you, Your pal, George P. Adams