

August 23, 1945---This was a red letter day for all of us at the Allen household. About eleven o'clock, I was busy dictating to my secretary, Marjorie Dinsmore, when the phone rang and Mrs. Allen informed me that Major Fenlon Durand, U.S.M.C., 2nd. Amph. Trac. Bn., FMF, Pacific, c/o Fleet Post Office, San Francisco, California, was at 801 Louisiana with his personable and lovely wife, Katie. "Fen" has seen everything, even up to the last invasion of Okinawa. Perhaps no man in the service has seen any tougher "go" than Fen, and yet he is still that grand fellow with an innate modesty so characteristic of Fen. When he was here at the University he established a Big Six record in the javelin and was one of the forwards on two fine Kansas Varsity Basketball teams. Kind, courteous, and forceful, Fen Durand has aged somewhat, but he is not the least bit "hard", nor does he impress you with all the honors that he has won. He and Mrs. Durand were here on their way to "Mrs. Fen's" girlhood home in Fayette, Missouri. It is wonderful to have Fen back with us after he has gone through fifty-seven different kinds of hell, and yet be unscathed in body and soul.

I was scanning a letter that Fen wrote on June 26, 1945. "I have been negligent in writing lately, due primarily to the fact that our censorship has been rigid. A few days ago, however, restrictions were lifted and now I can write of my activities of the past few months."

Fen tells about his leaving Saipen and ready to support the main landings on Okinawa. Since the initial landing was comparatively easy, they returned to Saipen for another few weeks, then re-embarked and landed on Theya Shima and Aguni Shima, which are small islands off the west coast of Okinawa. They embarked again and came back to Okinawa proper.

"We participated in the tail end of the fighting before the island was declared secure on June 21, 1945. At the present time we are camped on a beach near Naha, the capital city of Okinawa, which formerly had a population of 75,000 and in which not one building is intact now. It is difficult to visualize a city approximately the size of Topoka completely leveled by bombs, artillery fire, and flame throwers. Even these people out here played basketball, as evidenced by some remains of basketball courts, gymnasiums and equipment. Dana is still in Europe with the 7th Army. He was hospitalized for about two months with shrapnel wounds in his right leg, the result of an enemy mortar burst. At the present time he is back on duty and undoubtedly will remain in Europe for some time, since it has been indicated that the 7th will remain there.

"Two issues of your "Rebounds" just caught me here on Okinawa. They certainly make excellent reading and they are the only media for keeping up with what many of my buddies are doing. Give my kindest regards to Mrs. Allen, your family, and Coach and Mrs. Shenk."

Lt. (j.g.) G. K. Barkor, U.S.S. LST 792, c/o Fleet Post Office, San Francisco, California, writes from Okinawa on the 28th of June, that he and an old Ottawa "buddy", Dave Laury, who is attached to a marine outfit as a doctor, during the discussion found that Dr. Laury's C.O. was Major Fen Durand. They set out in quest of the Major, missed him, but on the second try, contacted Fen. What a bull fest they had! Gerald said, "You can well be proud of that boy Fen Durand, Doc. He is every inch a fine officer and a gentleman. He looks fine and hasn't added any excess weight to that sinewy frame. I found out he is highly respected as a man and officer, and as one of his junior officers related - 'Major Durand is one officer who became a C.O. and didn't cease to be a human being.'"