

At sea July 3

Dear Ripper:

I just heard some guys talking about skis (those long flat runners) and I remembered the time we got yours out at home. I reckon I never did apologize for taking you so fast behind the car. It's a good thing you're tough. I reckon that would very nearly have killed the ordinary fellow.

How is everything going? Fine I hope. Is Ed Hall still with you?

Our group is in the fast carrier task force. We've been in on everything since the Kyushu raids middle of March. I've been over the Japan mainland three or four times now. The A.A. gets a little thick but so far no fighter opposition. I reckon that will come though. We supported the Okinawa campaign. During that time we got 67 Jap planes. I have two. I sat in the water for about three hours one day after chasing a Jap. I burned up my engine and it finally quit. Another fellow finally got the Jap. It was very quiet and peaceful while in the water. My boys knew where I was and so I didn't have a thing to worry about. A Dumbo picked me up later. They treated me very nicely.

Both the Franklin and Bunker Hill were in our group when they were hit. I saw the Franklin but not the B.H. The latter one was the day I went swimming. (?)

There really isn't much to write about. We hope to be able to come home after one more operation but there's no telling how long that will be. We were out longer this last one than anyone else has ever been. We had quite a rest just recently. It was too hot to really be a rest though. It was very difficult to sleep. The islands were very uninteresting to me. I think