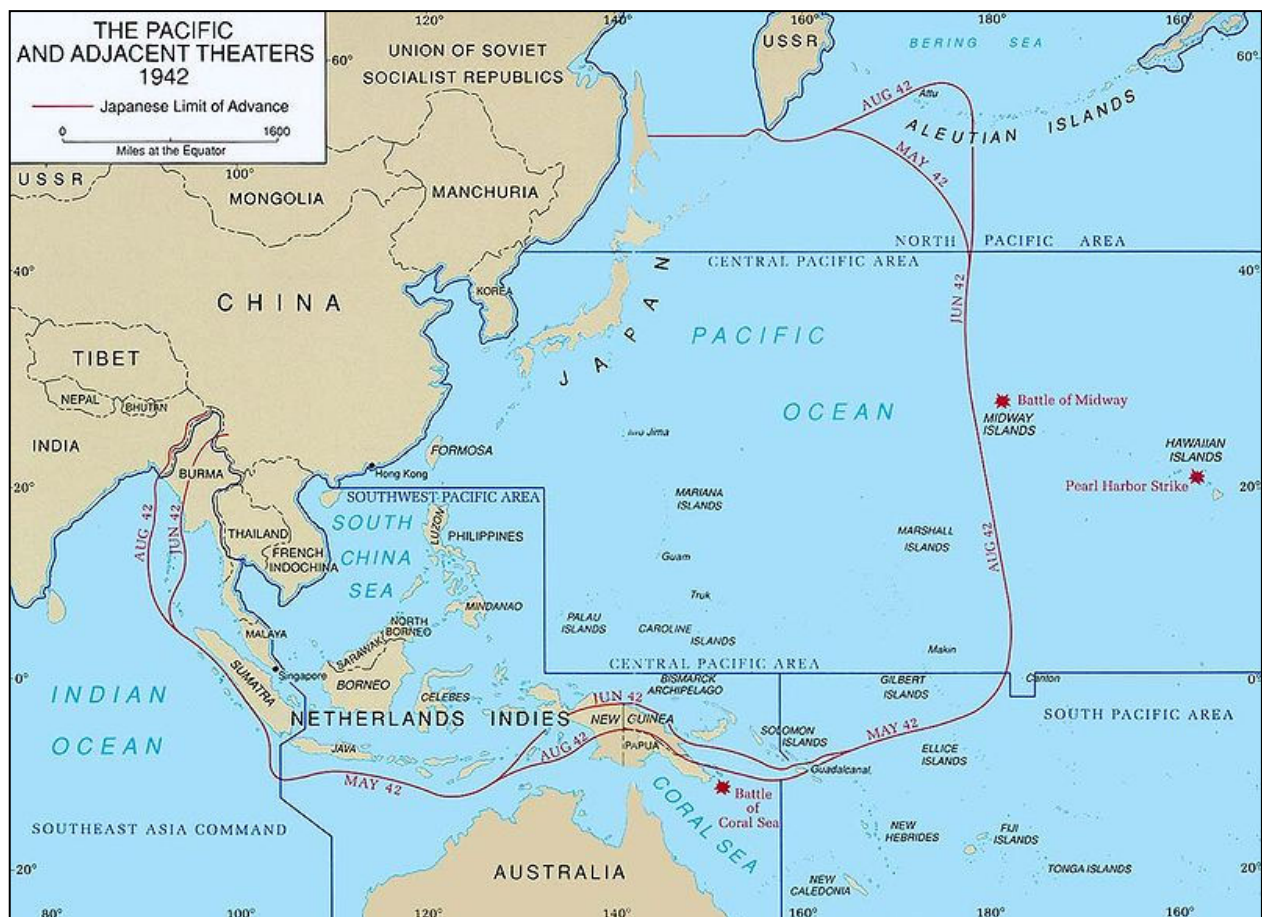


World War II Letters from "Chuck" Pressentin

Guadalcanal

Dec. 1943 to Nov. 1944



Guadalcanal is in the Solomon Islands, northwest of Australia

Chuck's battalion arrived on Guadalcanal on October 21, 1943, well after the Battle of Guadalcanal.

What Occurred on Guadalcanal Before Chuck Arrived

The Battle of Guadalcanal was fought between August 7, 1942 and February 9, 1943 on and around the island of Guadalcanal in the Pacific theater of World War II. Fiercely contested on the ground, at sea, and in the air, the campaign was the first major offensive launched by Allied forces against the Empire of Japan. It can be argued that the Allied victory at Guadalcanal was the first step in a long string of successes that eventually led to the surrender of Japan.

Perhaps as important as the military victory for the Allies was the psychological victory. On a level playing field, the Allies had beaten Japan's best land, air, and warship forces. After Guadalcanal, Allied personnel regarded the Japanese military with much less fear and awe than previously. In addition, the Allies viewed the eventual outcome of the Pacific War with greatly increased optimism.

Several Japanese political and military leaders stated shortly after the war that Guadalcanal was the decisive turning point in the conflict. Said one Japanese leader, "As for the turning point [of the war], when the positive action ceased or even became negative, it was, I feel, at Guadalcanal."
--from [Wikipedia](#) "The Guadalcanal Campaign"

Guadalcanal Letters

Dec. 18, 1943

Postmark on the "air mail" pre-stamped envelope is dated Dec. 20, 1943

The envelope has a stamp "Passed by US Army Examiner 25790" and written initials "GWH" [Apparently Chuck's letter censor is still "George W. Hightower."]

Dear Pongee, Al, and Family,

Well, much to our Censor's dismay! I'm writing like mad to make the rounds once more of the whole family. It keeps me busy keeping up with everyone. As long as the letters keep rolling in I'm happy so I want to keep it that way if I can.

So far tonite, I've written 10 letters. It's now 2 o'clock but it's Saturday nite so I'm really on a letter jag. Seems funny to spend a Saturday nite in a tent like this. I've gotten used to the idea all ready so I'm just making the most of everything.

I had a nice letter from Lucille C. in Portland. Her husband was killed in action over Germany last March. She gave birth to a baby girl Oct. the 1st. She's had quite a time getting her allotments out of the government. Pongee, I wonder if you could drop in and say hello to her for me. I know she'd be glad to see you. Her folks have corresponded with me ever since I've been in the service. They are all nice friends and I think a lot of their friendship.

I sent her \$5.00 for a little Xmas present. Wished now I'd let you pick out something for her. She's really in good spirits though even after the way her whole life was turned upside down. She's living with her folks at the old place. Go straight out Sandy to 47th you can see the Studio sign from there. I'm enclosing her address for you.

I've got some pictures that a gal friend is sending the folks from Waterbury, Conn. She's having some prints and enlargements made for the family. Don't say nothing to Mom and we'll let them be a surprise. They are the last pictures I had taken.

Well I hope you had a nice Xmas. Things are fine here. I feel good—never miss a meal and just wait for letters from home. So for now, Love to all, Chuck. [Postscript]: Please drop in and see Lucy. I'll bet her baby's cute.

Guadalcanal Letters

Jan. 4, 1944

Postmark on envelope is dated Jan. 10, 1944

The V-Mail has NO censor's stamp

Dear Pongee, and family,

What's happened to you folks. Shucks! I've been expecting some news from down your way for quite awhile. I suppose you've been busy over the holidays. I haven't heard yet whether you all got home for Xmas.

I sent Mom a hand carved wood comb today. Also a book from Australia. Believe they'll like it. The last week has been a poor one for mail. Nothing's been coming through.

I moved into my new permanent home today. It's a tent built way up off the ground, has a front & back porch. Screens all the way around for walls so we don't have to worry about mosquitoes at night. We have a fancy wash stand in the back yard so you see things are really looking good for a change. I also picked up a brand new mattress so I'm really fixed up. I'm going to make me a set of springs soon out of inner tubes then I'll have a real bed. All I need is a blonde now and I'd be happy.

Love to all. Chuck

Jan. 26, 1944

Postmark on envelope is dated Jan. 31, 1944 The V-Mail has NO censor's stamp.

Dear Pongee, and family,

Well I hope you are all back on the up and at them list. Last letter I had from the folks they mentioned that the flu had been raising havoc with your household. Guess nearly everyone had a touch of it. At least that's something that hasn't bothered me over here. So far the only trouble I've had since I've been here is a few days of too-regular bowel movements. In fact I spent most of the two days just sitting. This happened just when I first hit here and since then I've been feeling fine. I've been busy as the dickens this month. We've all been trying to fix up our area to make it more livable and it's really meant a lot of hard work. Lots of shoveling gravel and hard common labor. Our efforts are showing though and we are now living as civilized people should. Anyway it's good for over here. I'm going to send Noel a set of my stripes which you can sew on his play overalls. We might as well make him a Sgt., that is if he's been a good boy.

Love to all,

Your Brother, Chuck

Guadalcanal Letters

Feb. 7, 1944

Postmark on the "air mail" 6-cent pre-stamped envelope is dated Feb. 8, 1944.

The envelope has a stamp "Passed by US Army Examiner 25790" and written initials "GWH"

Dear Pongee, and Family,

What's this I hear about you guys all being under the weather. I've been expecting to hear from you but since I haven't I'll just be patient until I do. I'm sure I'm a couple of letters up on you now. Things are still the same here. I've now got my work all set up so it's just more or less of a daily routine. Of course little things pop up now and then to interrupt my schedule but that's to be expected.

Lucille C. sent me a picture of her baby. Looked just like a little doll. The Baby was only 18 days old when the picture was taken.

From the folk's last letter it seems Grandma [Wilhelmine v. Pressentin] has gotten over another stroke. She's sure got lots of grit hasn't she. It's been a hard, tedious job for Mom though, looking after her.

Pongee, I want to ask a favor of you. I'm enclosing a money order with which I'd like for either you or Al [Pauline's husband, Al Kemmerich] to order and have sent to Lucy a nice bouquet of flowers. It's for no special occasion, just that I'd get a big kick out of surprising her like this. Shucks! She's just a good friend and this I'm sure would really surprise her. It probably sounds silly to you but if you were sitting here in my tent tonight I'm sure you would see my side of it. You'd be surprised how helpless and insignificant an individual can feel after being stuck in a spot like this.

Gosh! I've always been one that's always enjoyed doing little things like flowers, hankies and etc. but it's really a problem from way over here. I carry on a big correspondence because receiving letters from home and other friends is really all I have to look forward to. Just address a card and sign it: For Lucy and Jane from Chuck on _____ and you know where I'm at now.

Violets or carnations would be swell. I'll bet you don't get Al to do this for me. Still he ought to get a kick out of pitching a bit of woo for me.

*Well guess I'll play a little poker. Got nothing else to do the rest of the evening.
Love to all, Chuck*

Feb. 21, 1944

Postmark on envelope is dated Mar 2, 1944 The V-Mail has no censor's stamp.

Dear Pongee,

Can't understand why I haven't been hearing from you. It's been over a month now since I had a letter. Did Noel get his chevrons O.K. Hope the censor let them go through. I figured he'd get a kick out of them.

As usual, I'm still busy as the devil. Been doing a little bit of everything: carpentering, plumbing, cement work and now every other evening I run a movie projector and put on a show for our outfit. I'm getting to be a jack of all trades. Let me hear from you. I'm a bit worried because I haven't heard from you. Love to all, Chuck

Guadalcanal Letters

Feb. 28, 1944

Postmark on envelope is dated Mar 1, 1944
The V-Mail has no censor's stamp.

Dear Pongee,

Believe I've received all your letters with the exception of the one with Noel's picture enclosed. It will probably show up one of these days. I received four letters the other day which dated clear back to the 1st of Dec.

The flowers arrived just in time for Valentine's Day. Was happy the way it all worked out. Was the only Valentine remembrance Lucy received this year.

Phil Taylor [Charles' uncle, brother of Jessie Taylor v. Pressentin] wrote me a nice letter last week. Also had letters from Alice Pressentin and Ruth Pressentin. I sent the last two on home to the folks.

Boy! I really carry on a correspondence, don't I. Hope you've all licked the darn flu and etc. Guess it's really been raising hell.

*Thanks again for sending the flowers.
Your brother, Chuck*

March 25, 1944

Postmark on envelope is dated Mar. 28, 1944 The V-Mail has no censor's stamp.
Charles was 30 years old on Mar. 4, 1944 Chuck has a new rank: First Sergeant

Dear Pongee and family,

Received your V. letter today. Have been meaning to write you, but I just haven't had time.

Did you notice my new handle in the upper corner. Yep! Your brother finally got to the Top. It all happened rather sudden-like. Some of the boys got in a little trouble and the next thing I knew I was called in and promoted.

Guess will have to send Noel some new stripes now. Do you suppose he's ready for them yet. These promotions are coming too fast and easy for him. Let me know if he's ready for them. I'd sure like to have a snapshot of him in his coveralls with the stripes sewed on. How about it?

*Well must get back to my work.
Love from Brother Chuck*

[Postscript] Boy! I'm starting to get tough on these guys.

Guadalcanal Letters

April 23, 1944

Postmark on the "air mail" 6-cent pre-stamped envelope is dated April 24, 1944

The envelope has a stamp "Passed by US Army Examiner 25790" and written initials "GWH"

South Pacific

Dear Pongee, and Family,

*Things have certainly been happening at home, haven't they. Gee! It was surprise enough hearing about Tink [Charles' sister, Caroline] but then to learn that Emmy [Charles' sister, Erma] had also up and done it. Well I just wasn't expecting it. Guess you feel the same way. Too bad the family couldn't have been at Bunk's wedding.***

Just had a nice letter from Poly [Elwin Dameron, husband of Mildred v. Presentin, Charles' older sister]. He's now T/Sgt. Sure didn't take him long to get up there. Well he's entitled to such a break. It will sure help to be making that extra money. He'll be able to send Tudy at least \$100 which will help keep up the payments on their home.

Pop wrote yesterday. Says he's telling them all to go to hell on evening and Sunday work but I'll bet he's still doing it. [Charles' father was a plumber in Sedro-Woolley, WA] He'll never change.

I've had several letters from Pat Kane (Patty Glover) and Lucille. They are living in Los Angeles now. Pat's grown up into a beauty no kidding.

I'm getting pretty well squared around in my new job. Now that I've got it, I mean to hang on to it. Lord! I've got to keep ahead of all these brother-in-laws now. Competition is getting keen.

Just had a phone call—wanting some men and a truck to pick up some lumber so I'll say goodbye and scoot. Write darn it.

*Love, Chuck**

*Chuck's sister, Caroline married Fred Chatterton in Bremerton, WA on Mar. 18, 1944. His sister, Erma, married Marion Follett in Bremerton on April 7, 1948.

Guadalcanal Letters

July 6, 1944

Postmark on the "air mail" 6-cent pre-stamped envelope is dated July 7, 1944

The envelope has a stamp "Passed by US Army Examiner 25790" and written initials

South Pacific

Dear Pongee, and Family,

Gee! I'm getting to be one heck of a brother aren't I. It's been at least a month and a half since I've written you. Well! It just seems like I can't keep up with my correspondence since I made Top. I'm really not working any harder than I did before but I do have many more responsibilities than before. There's always things that must be tended to. KP details, construction that's going on, inspections and etc. As long as I'm in the area someone always has troubles or things that I'm supposed to see to it that they're straightened out. It's my job to see that all the enlisted men are on the ball and doing their jobs.

We had quite a party here for the men last night. The Red Cross girls are now here on the Island so my BC made arrangements to have five of them come down for an evening. They had chow with us and took part in a little quiz show we put on. Was a four piece band from another outfit and believe it or not we also danced. We wound up the party with ice cream and cake. Everyone had a wonderful time. Guess you can see how the fellows appreciated a chance to talk and dance with a girl after 10 months of bachelorhood. At first some of the men were a bit shy but it didn't take the girls long to make them get in the spirit of the party. These few girls have been doing wonders to boost the old morale around here and are entitled to a lot of praise. I still think this is no place for a white man, let alone women.

Well Pongee, guess the folks keep in pretty close contact with you. Jesus, how I wish I could telephone the folks. See, you're very lucky. I hope Pop gets over this back trouble he's having. I don't like the sound of it. You kids make him quit working, at least for awhile.

So for tonight—

Love to all from you brother, Chuck

Guadalcanal Letters

August 16, 1944

Postmark on the "air mail" 6-cent pre-stamped envelope is dated Aug 17, 1944

The envelope has a stamp "Passed by US Army Examiner 25790" and written initials

South Pacific

Dear Pongee,

Received your V letter of the 9th today. Believe it's the fastest one of them has ever gotten here. Usually they take 10 days.

I can't understand what happened to my last V. letter. It must have been damaged when it was photographed.

Say I like that. Did I receive your last air mail letter of a couple of months ago? Of course I did. I answered it twice, didn't I? Come on Sister, catch up with me.

What's this about Neil Dameron? Give out with some more details. It's the first I've heard. Where and how was he killed?

It's now supposed to be winter down here. The climate here now is about like that of Underwood [WA] in June. It's still too hot to suit me. Lord! I sweat 24 hours a day but so far I seem to be taking it as well as any of my boys.

I had a nice letter from Lucy only last week. She's now ticket agent for United Airlines in Portland. She checks all passengers in and out of there. She's stationed out at the airport now. It's really an important job.

Guess I mentioned before about corresponding with L. Glover. Here lately, her daughter has even been writing. Between the two of them I'm getting caught up on all the Underwood scandals. Do you ever hear from Clover?

Well, Pongee, you haven't a thing on me. It's been 26 months now that I've been away from home. From the looks of things now maybe another year will see everything wound up. Never thought when I was inducted that it was going to be such a hunk out of my life. Oh! Well it's quite an experience.

How about a snapshot of you and Al and Barbs and Noel. I'd like that.

Love to all, Your Brother, Chuck

Guadalcanal Letters

Sept. 23, 1944

Postmark on the "air mail" 6-cent pre-stamped envelope is dated Sep 25, 1944
The envelope has a stamp "Passed by US Army Examiner 25790" and written initials

Same old place

Dear Pongee,

Well how's my big sis feeling these days? The reports I've been getting from home haven't been too good. We'll have to do something about that. How about some vitamin pills to perk you up a bit.

Things here are rolling along fine. I really haven't a complaint to make unless it's that life here is beginning to get a bit monotonous. It will soon be a whole year now since we set up and started in on this routine job. Wasn't so bad at first because it was pretty rugged. Now it's just the opposite. It's too damn civilized. There's just one inspection after another. It's nearly as bad as being in a camp back in the States. Any day now they're apt to say we'll have to have a pass just to leave our area. Perhaps I'm exaggerating a bit, but sure wish we'd move on up closer to action. I'm tired of being a mosquito commando. I'm not bucking for a Purple Heart but I certainly want one chance at those yellow bastards before this mess is over. I've got to have some satisfaction for 2 ½ years of this Army life.

Here's a picture for you. Can't take any more so I want to be sure you get this. Do you think I look the same? Betty Meiggs passed away a couple of weeks ago. Had an awfully nice letter from little Patty telling me all about it. Guess there was oodles and oodles of flowers at the funeral.

Lucille C. has been writing quite often. She's now one of the head gals at United Airlines terminal at the airport in Portland. She sent me some swell pictures taken of her on the job where she works. She looks cute as heck in her uniform. Don't see how she keeps away from Hollywood. I think she could put a lot of Hollywood gals in the backseat if she wanted to take a crack at that sort of thing. She's a smart gal.

A friend of mine was going to stop in and see you. He's from Oregon City. I'm wondering if he's visited you yet. Well guess I'd better roll in. It's past my bedtime by hours. Love to all, Your brother, Chuck

Nov. 4, 1944

Postmark on envelope is dated Nov 10, 1944 The V-Mail has no censor's stamp.

Dear Pongee and Family,

Received your V letter of the 27th today, so here's one right back at you. I'm certainly glad about Brownie stopping in to see you. Imagine you must have had lots of fun asking him questions.

About the \$5.00 cup of coffee. Brownie had a Silex perker at his tent and I used to stop in for a cup whenever I passed by his area. Just to pass the time we used to play one hand of showdown poker for a dollar. Well the last few days Brownie was here, we were playing for \$5.00. Brownie was lucky three days in a row. Guess you see now what he meant by \$5.00 cups of coffee. It was damn good coffee though and nearly worth the price.

Things are starting to open up a bit over this way. Have hopes of seeing lots of new places in the near future. Maybe in another year I'll be able to poke my nose in your back door. Love to all, Chuck