

Letters Home From Cpl. Charles Pospisil, Amchitka, AK--Sept. 1945

[Note: Letters as transcribed include many corrections to syntax, grammar, and spelling. Material of a personal nature has been deleted in deference to remaining family members.]

Sept. 1, 1945--The weather has been very nasty--rain and a dense fog. It was so heavy this morning; one of our boys had an accident with his Jeep. Besides that, a plane crashed in the Bering Sea. This, of course, wasn't around our rock, but as I understand it the fog was the cause of it...I just finished the last of your goodies. They sure tasted good and enjoyed them immensely. Still have a bit of tobacco left...I'm enclosing a money order for you. Got a bunch for your coming back from a vacation broke, and this might hold you over until pay day. I'm certain your "Blue Grass" and "Evening in Paris" is low. Got a funny feeling about the Jap surrender. It doesn't smell kosher to me. Time will tell...Can't wait until the time comes when we'll all be going aboard. It's a little farfetched, but the time is coming sooner than we expect. I hope, a hope, a hope.!!!

Sept. 5, 1945--It's even money we'll be in the States by Xmas time--and perhaps by Thanksgiving. It's not official, mind you, but every move made on the Island of Amchitka points to these two facts...Amchitka is the island I'm stationed on and it's as barren as the plains of Texas. Not a tree or shrub on it. All tundra, a soft, soggy layer of mud and grass. At one time we had 15,000 troops on it, but today there are approx. 2,000 of us, plus a handful of civilian help. The island is approx. 30 miles long and 3 to 5 miles wide. The reason for the strict censorship (and I mean strict) was because it was only yesterday I was told to rewrite the letter I had for you or else it couldn't go through, was because we had some very important installations (weather and communication) and secondly we had the Japs armed to the teeth on Paramushiro Island, awaiting a northern invasion of the island (home land). Had they ever discovered we had so few troops, we would have all been cooked...We have about 70 men in our organization, but they're slowly being weeded out on points--age, etc. It's pretty much official we'll be all out of here within 30 to 90 days as of Sept. 1st, which brings us to the end of November...One of the boys in A.A.C.S. (Army Airways Com. System) was telling me of several plane crashes here of late, due to the fog, which of course never gets around to the average G.I. I hope you received all my mail and time will tell very much shortly.

Sept. 6, 1945--I've been receiving your lovely letters and post cards from the ocean side...It's been an awfully wet day-- rain, wind, and then more rain. The latest rumor has us back in the states by Thanksgiving. This rumor changes daily, so I'll keep you informed as I get 'em. We turned (in) our web equipment, sleeping bags, and ruck sacks. Boxes are being made ready to be loaded, etc. I'm of the opinion we definitely will be back in the states by Xmas time...You guessed my work, dear, for I'm patrolling in a Jeep with a 3-way radio. There are 3 of us during the day and 5 from 5:30 pm to 7:30 am in the morning, being divided into two shifts--5 each.

Sept. 7, 1945--Have some good news for you today. An order has been received that we turn in all excess clothing, equipment, etc., which means we will be among the first to be evacuated whenever they start. The opinion is that we'll leave within 30 to 40 days as of today. All our fingers (are crossed)

and although it doesn't do us any good to cross our legs, as it does you women, we have ours crossed too...A U.S.O. show came up and they are presenting the play "Without a Life" starring Henry Aldrich. Fourteen players are in the cast. The boys are really (pardon the expression) pissed off because of it. We feel we'd rather have them send fourteen men off the island and send them home and use the traveling space to get home and not interested in U.S.O. shows that are a lot of malarkey.

Sept. 9, 1945--Well, nothing new is happening. Everything is about the same as when I wrote you Friday night last. Saturday evening the boys in the hut broke down and we all went to see the U.S.O. troupe present "What a Life" stage show. Well, it was better than expected and most all of us enjoyed it. Of course, it wasn't spicy or risqué, but it was different from the ordinary dance and song program they usually put on...Tonight (Sunday evening) the show is presented first and later a movie, which I'm going to go see--the first in a long time. "G.I. Joe" is the name and I'll give my report perhaps tomorrow...One of the men captured a couple of fox that are on the island. Of course, this is prohibited because they are supposedly private property, but anyhow they tamed them quite a bit and these pictures are the result: 1) Bill Larson from Chicago--trained with him in Camp Robinson. Been together ever since. He's parts man in our motor pool garage. 2) Larson and Powers, the guy who sleeps next to me in my hut. Says he's Irish, but Pollack is written all over his face. 3) Hartledge (Heany for short). He's one of our cooks and who made these a gift. A Swede and reminds me of Anderson, Dad's friend. 4) This is what our Jeeps look like up here, with a cab. This was the incident I believe I wrote about last week. It was damaged beyond repair and headed for the scrap dump three days later. Cause of accident: fog. 5) Side view of one of Jeeps; number seven. 6) Powers holding the two pets. 7) Close up view of wrecked Jeep. 8) Heany the cook and damaged Jeep...Hesitating in sending you a picture of meeeeeee. Getting out of shape, old and droopy, pudgy and gray...really gray. Expect a few more pictures that you were promised, of the U.S.O. troupe that's here. You've got to see them.

Sept. 10, 1945--Well, everything is about the same, with little or no change to speak of...Went to the show last night; seen "G.I. Joe," with Burgess Meredith, and the criticism ran for and against. In my opinion, so far as entertainment goes, I believe "Lilac Time" and "All Quiet on the Western Front" were equally as good, if not better. However, it was a good show, and let's say a bit more realistic...The highlight in today's news is your lovely letter of Sept. 3rd. It brought news of your safe homecoming above all. It worried me a bit because of the traffic and with the bad tires people are using there's no telling what could happen. What with our luck, it would just be the unluckiest...Sorry to hear about your work, and it was as much a surprise to me as to yourself. Didn't think the steel business would go that quick. But grin and bear, that is war. Now, may I suggest your next move? It's a little food for thought anyhow. No more agencies, no more hunting for jobs in private business. As of the receipt of this letter, go down to the civil service office in Newark, located on the north side of Newark city hall (it's a side entrance) and ask for the monthly employment sheet and look it over. If there is nothing you qualify for this month, stay home and take it easy. Things will be rough for at least six months (at) home and you'll be knocking yourself out looking for something worthwhile. There will be lots of inexperienced help wanted, but little, if any at all, of Class A or reliable jobs that you would like. Take it easy and everything will turn out best for you...Your editorials are very interesting, and to answer a question for you, I doubt very much my being used as occupational troops, although I have only 34 points. Ha. ha, ha. I believe my

age (not that I'm an old fogey) will help me get out. They have sufficient numbers to serve as occupational troops and all the propaganda about troops here and there is a lot of malarkey...Happy to hear you received the money order O.K. I was a bit worried because it would mean a lot of trouble trying to collect it around here, and since these places go down every now and then it kept me wondering.

Sept 11, 1945--It's a beautiful day out here, with a mild wind. However, driving a Jeep today and the sun beaming through made it warm for me and very comfy...Nothing new out here, dear, but there was a surprise awaiting me when I finished work. Yup...two lovely letters, those of Sept. 4 & 5th. They had everything I wanted to know...Enjoyed the pictures of V.J. Day that Vin sent. Thank him a lot. Is that snow flakes in Newark? Gee, they're big!...Speaking of pictures, give me your thought. I have five pictures taken of some fox here on the island. A photographer spent one whole day taking these films of two foxes. They are nice, but one is a little different and a little naughty. Ha, ha, ha. Should I take the privileges of sending 'em to Dad or Vin? I'll wait for your answer. They are rare shots and only one of the five is a bit naughty...To tell you something of my post-war plans, it goes something like this. I expect to be a civilian around Xmas time, a month or so one way or the other. Either before or shortly after...As of March, \$35 a month has been sent home through allotments. Including December, this should bring \$350 for ten months, less insurance. Upon discharge I will receive three \$100 discharge payments, one each month. Then I'm almost certain I can furnish another \$100 between now and Xmas. Of course, whether we had anything left in the till when I left in January I don't know and if there was that, too, we can we can add...Just received word that I'm off work tomorrow, Wed. Every now and then they break down and give you a day off. You see, we work seven days a week and it's rough riding Jeeps on rough roads, but don't worry, I'm aware of its consequences and do as little patrolling as possible. I might do a little fishing for some relaxation tomorrow, off one of our wharfs.

Sept 12, 1945--As for myself, had the day off, so I slept until 10 am. Had early chow at 11:30, packed good and warm, and headed down for the wharf and fished until 3:30 pm. Yep, I hit 100% average--one bit, one fish. A Japanese perch is the brand. Their flesh, or meat, is a bluish green and when they are prepared they turn the regular white. The reason for it, we believe, is the fact that the water being so cold. Ha, ha, ha. That's the only explanation...Came back and showered and prepared for some more chow. Had fresh ham and Virginia style mashed potatoes, butter beans, cake, and coffee. Not a bad day....Well, darling, news was red hot today. A bulletin came out stating all excess equipment to be turned in on Friday the 14th. Rumors have it that we are one of the first outfits to leave the island, which will be sometime in October. That's good, heh!

Sept 13, 1945--No news that's new. The rumor still persists that we'll be out of here by Oct. 15th. Oh, yes--heard that 14 vessels will be up this way in the next eight weeks. That's quite a sum for up here. The weather has been excellent the last three days, with the sun playing hang-go-seek with the clouds all day. That's what we have to consider good weather...Today one of the men brought another dog into the hut to stay. That makes two. She's a brother (sic) to the one we have and they are so familiar and look so much alike we believe they are twins. Ha, ha, ha...Enclosed are a few pictures. No. 1 is a sign directing you to our area or orderly room. Civilian word=police station. No. 2 (small card) is my membership card for the masonic club we have on post. No. 3 and 4 are charter miniatures given each

chartered member, me being one. One is an honorary card...I have a few post cards I managed to get on the way up here and will enclose them one at a time in each of my letters.

Sept 14, 1945--Another beautiful day, for it's the talk of the week. Haven't had this kind of weather since we took over, and an old timer will vouch for that. An old timer up here is called a sourdough...Well, today we turned in most of our excess clothes and the rumor still persists (that) we'll be out of here by Oct. 15th. Sounds too good to be true. We will know as soon as we are put on a Class A alert, which we expect at any time...Nothing else is new; no letter, but then I didn't expect any because they were all on time through the mails...Enclosed is a picture of the boat I left the states in. That trip was almost like a pleasure cruise, except our sleeping quarters were in the whole (N.B. I assume he means 'hold') of the boat. The civilians on board had occupied most of the state rooms, which were nothing to brag about. Our meals on the boat were excellent. After we left Alaska and headed for the Aleutians, why the water was so rough that waves and sprays washed over the deck. We had to have all hatches closed. When the stern of the boat rode a wave (stern is rear), it came down with such a bang one would think it was falling apart. All in all it wasn't a bad trip and someday I'll be able to tell you more about it.

Sept 15, 1945--The weather has been splendid--almost phenomenal. Guess that's how you spell that word...Managed to take few pictures today and as soon as I develop them I'll forward them to you...scenery shots and mug shots...Nothing new today and everything is about the same...Received your letter of Sat., Sept. 8th from P.P. The mails were sure on the ball...A new U.S.O. show arrived again. Don't know much about it, but a report will follow. Supposed to be some dames and a couple of N.Y. hipsters.

Sept 16, 1945--A beautiful day indeed and, to complete it, two lovely letters arrived...Speaking of beer, the kind we get up here is terrible. We pay \$2.40 a case of 24 for it, but it's too green to drink and the civilians offer me \$10 a case for it, so I let it ride. I drank the first case, on my first issue, and it didn't go well with me, as with others, so when we get an offer of \$10 BINGO goes the cash register. I'll wait and drink my beer up at Paul's...Tonight, in our mess hall, we seen a good movie and if you haven't seen it as yet make it a MUST. "Weekend at the Waldorf" with Lana Turner, Van Johnson, Pidgeon, G. Rogers, and a good many others. You'll enjoy (it) for sure. Has it played at home as yet? Expect to see "Blood on the Sun" tomorrow and a few more of the coming movies. They seem to be running fairly good again.

Sept 18, 1945--Dropping just a few words of chatter...Just a fair day and it's beginning to get colder. A lot more wind and even the ocean is getting rough...The news is about the same and still rumored for us to leave some time in October. The very latest, sometime during the end of October. Won't that be wonderful? Just came back from the movies tonight and seen "Captain Eddie," a story based on Ed Rickenbaker's life. A historical picture and not bad at all. Lynn Bari, who played his wife, reminded me of you so very much...Don't know how we'll come back, but believe it will be by boat. They are flying a good many of the men daily, those that are being discharged with 80 points to their cr(edit)...The reason for no mail during early Sept was for the fact every day we expected the censorship to be lifted, but the Alaskan dept. is one of those theaters of operations that are different and wish I could tell you more about it. It will have to wait...Say, not only are your letters sweet, but they smell sweet. Tell! What brand

is it? Enclosed is another picture I thought you might like (N.B. The two Juneau, Alaska postcards were in the envelope). We stopped at this port while on our way up, for a few hours. Beautiful scenery and while traveling the inland water route, it was more like a pleasure cruise. However, after we left the mainland (Alaska), it was different.

Sept 19, 1945--Not too nice today--cloudy with clouds of fog and heavy winds rolling in on us. Typical Aleut weather and it's really rough...Nothing new in the line of rumors, but this Friday coming we are looking forward to a lot to happen. Like something definite. Time will tell...No mail today, but I had your Wed. letter of the 12th and kept reading it almost constantly, in the Jeep with me.

Sept 20, 1945--Well, nothing new out here. The weather is simply lousy. High winds and rain and getting colder...Managed to get a few of the pictures one of the boys took here, so here they are. Be careful--the guy in the picture is aiming to get you, by hook or by crook. Someday I'll explain 'em all. A few more will follow in tomorrow's letter...Had no mail for several days now (2). All planes have been grounded. It makes the days so long without your sweet nothings, love, and kisses...Received, or rather heard, a broadcast that by mid-winter all men with 2 years of service will be discharged. Little by little it's all adding up to what I wrote. Expect to be home for Xmas and a civilian by Easter. Maybe a civilian by Xmas. Oh, yes...I understand the P.O. got their raises and now their base pay is \$2800, or is it \$3000?

Sept 21, 1945--Nothing new in the line of news, although I thought something would have come up today...The weather is just awful, with plenty of winds and rain, which in turn grounds all mail planes. Hence no mail again today, but neither did anyone else receive any, so it's O.K...Enclosed are two more postcards, which you might enjoy (N.B. Enclosed were postcards of Mt. Edgecombe and reindeer transportation). The scene of the mountain is an example of the scenery we seen on our way up through the inland waterway. Simply beautiful...The next picture is typical of Alaska travel and believe it is a scene from Ketchikan, one of the stops we made, although it (doesn't?) state so...I have several more snapshots, which I received today and will mail them in tomorrow's letter...I hope so much that I (will?) be able to be in the states for Xmas holiday and possibly home, so that for a Xmas gift I could engage you with a beautiful ring...It stopped raining...whoa! But not for long. The moon is peeking through the heavy clouds and it's so full.

Sept 22, 1945--The weather is simply awful and even all navy boats are laying anchor, waiting until it clears up. No mail since Tuesday and it's a rough deal without word from you...Enclosed are a few more snapshots I promised. Hope you like 'em. Ain't I getting heavy-- too much in the middle. The other few are scenery shots taken near the two docks we have up here.

Sept 23, 1945--It cleared up today, but too late for any mail to come. Almost a blue Sunday if the sun didn't come out at 5:00...Had some good fried chicken for supper tonight, with all the trimmings. It tasted good. Was thinking what Krueger's must taste like with chicken...Nothing new in the line of news, but things should start cracking and popping beginning this week. The 11th fighter squadron is leaving tomorrow for the states...I made several good predictions around the company area and the boys think I know somebody and now they're asking me, "Well, when will we leave?" so I say, "If transportation

don't hold us up, we'll be out of here by Oct. 15th. That is according to my schedule. So far everything looks rosy toward that date. Anyhow, it can't be much longer.

Sept 24, 1945--Just a word to let you know all is well and hope you are able to say the same...No mail for over a week, but since no plane, no mail...There was a lot of brass coming, or, rather, came from the Alaskan Dept, from 3-star generals down to 2nd lieutenant. Honestly, it seems as though there is more brass than privates in this army...Oh, yes, we have a new company commander and I almost forgot to tell you. Our first one was rotated out on points, been up here on the initial landings back in '42 and '43. Our new one hails from PA and is a former state trooper. A real flat-foot. A regular guy who knows police work and how a police department operates and backs his men up to the limit. Our old one wasn't a bad fellow, a former salesman, and National Guardsman, but more or less a yes-man and somewhat a diplomat. They both are good men, but two different types...The 11th fighter detachment, about 80 men, left today by plane. Lucky guys. Hope we can fly home. It makes it so much easier and faster.

Sept 26, 1945--There is so much that happened today that I don't know which way to start. The news is not alarming, but so much mail came in the first (plane?) in over a week. Oh, I'm so overjoyed...Time passes away so fast I don't even keep track of important dates anymore. I forgot all about Ma's birthday, so please send her my best wishes for her continued good health and an extra big hug and kiss...Didn't write yesterday for there wasn't any news and I did go to the Masonic club meeting and by the time I returned it was late and the lights were out...However, the club had a theater party and we just had a short meeting and went to the Williwaw to see "On Stage Everybody" with Jack Oakie and Peggy Ryan. Simply stunk and cross it off your list. Had coffee and hamburger later and got to bed after 12 midnight...Today, well, it was a happy day indeed. First I received your letters of 14-15-16-17-18-20th. Won't answer them all tonight, but just tell all that happened...Next I received a box of goodies that my mother sent many months ago and never received, so after sending a memo here and there it finally arrived. It was a Loft's canteen package...Next was about five issues of the Irvington Herald, which I read through in the early part of the evening...And now the next you won't like to hear, but it happened. Somebody--don't know who--sent a box of Seidenberg cigars. The package arrived without a sender's name. Don't know who to thank, but to be honest I enjoyed two of them tonight. Just a lovely evening reading my mail and puffin' a good smoke...One of the boys here comes from Wisconsin and gets a newspaper with this picture enclosed (N.B. The Mrs. America pinup article). Don't know how he missed it. Got a solid leg, but the mug...whoa!...Enclosed is also a clipping from our own D.D. (Duration Daily), a newspaper that we publish up here. Looks like the G.I. knows what he wants...It cleared up a bit yesterday, but still no mail, but today was the day it seemed like the entire post took a half day off to read and deliver their parcels...It's getting a lot colder with a sharp wind blowing constantly. Hope they decide to get us out of here before long...Nothing new in the line of evacuation up here. But something will pop up before long. I'll let you know just as soon as we get word what the score is...Gonna read all your letters over once more before retiring.

Sept 27, 1945--Another day, another dollar, and so it goes, but where? Nobody knows. Do hope all is well and all things going your way...Nothing new in the way of news. Same old stuff...Me, too, is happy

that censorship has been lifted. Is it any wonder we quarreled in our letters? Thought you would have realized it's impossible to write everything without the company officers knowing all about you. About the only thing they didn't know would be when you reported to a latrine and even then you'd meet 'em...See, can you blame me for wanting to go on maneuvers with you when the whole male world is wanting to go, too...Yes, I'm able to get the slip on sunglasses. Understand they are rather expensive in the states. Please find out and if so I'll stock up on a few pairs for you while they last up here. Won't get any from the Army once I hit the states. Will two pair do you, case and all?...Well, it's getting late and time for the lights to go out.

Sept 27, 1945(2)--(Sent to "Dear Pop and Vin"--the girlfriend's father and brother) Taking the privilege of dropping you a few lines, along with a few rare snapshots that have a little story attached to them...Hope you are all feeling fine and things (are) going your way...Things are beginning to crack up here and believe it won't be long before we get back to the states. Definitely by Xmas and a civilian shortly after...Hope your strike at Suminons' (?) is settled by the time this letter reaches you...Guess things are pretty much the same with you, Vin, with little or nothing new...Glad to hear you were able to enjoy the bungalow a little more than usual. Say you like it a bit more now--just one time, Buddy...These pictures enclosed (N.B. Of the foxes alone), men, were taken by a civilian who is up here on a construction job, (and) whose hobby is photography. He spent one whole day, from day break to dusk, trying to get these shots, which are unusual. He made a bit of change on the deal, by selling a set of them for \$1. Sold several hundred sets...Hope you enjoy them and don't think me too vulgar or whatever you may call it...And for safety's sake, don't let them give you any ideas...They couldn't do any harm up here, because there just ain't any women...Well, folks, take care of yourselves, the best of everything to you all, and I hope it won't be long before we get to see each other.

Sept 28, 1945--Heard a good rumor today, for our C.O. made the statement that tomorrow would be our last pay on this island. He might have been pulling our leg, but every little thing adds up to his statement. Personally, I predicted we'd be leaving by Oct. 15th. So time will tell now...No mail today, but I have several of yours as yet to answer, so it makes me very happy about you...Remember the day all the brass came in? Well, one of the men took some pictures of the planes on the field and sold 'em at \$1 a set. I purchased a set and here you see the real Chas in action. I was unaware and very much surprised when I looked 'em over...No. 1--A clear picture of me in action, keeping curious people away with cigarettes and prohibiting inside inspection. Incidentally, this plane seen two missions over Japan and is now convoying troops; No.2--Me to the extreme right, once again in action. First plane is a B29, the largest bombing plane made and second only to land on this field, followed by two B24s, I believe; No.3--A close-up view of No.1 picture. The bombing missions are identified by bombs painted on the plane, just below the cockpit...The balance of seven I'll send in a separate envelope and will follow this letter...So, until tomorrow this makes the news for the day...P.S. Ran short of stamps, envelopes, and almost everything.

Sept 29, 1945--The weather has been on the better side today, but no mail. Still have three or four of yours to answer...No, dear, no accident with me. Been pretty lucky driving up here. I'll admit I'm a bit reckless, but can't afford to be paying for smashed-up vehicles when I want to get (married)...Expect

that by the time we get to the states they'd be discharging us as fast as we come in. I hope-a-hope. You folks don't know about it, but Elinor's husband, if he is in the regiment that was supposed to go to India, all went A.W.O.L., so for punishment all of them will have to serve an additional six months. Don't recall the number (#) of the regiment, but there was one scheduled to go and they somehow refused and went A.W.O.L. So the story goes...Trying to decipher E.D. and W.D. for you, but don't remember what I was trying to tell you...Enclosed are a few more snapshots that I promised. No.4--Close-up view of B29. What a boat; No.5--Rear close-up view of B29; No.6--Front side view of B29...The remaining four will follow tomorrow.

Sept 30, 1945--An ideal day to spend indoors. Yep, with a hard wind blowing, one that's cold and full of rain drops, the best place is home...Just noticed that I mailed the remaining pictures to you, instead of those that I marked 4-5-6. You'll find it confusing until these arrive...Nothing new, except they're stalling now and telling us we'll be here for another month. Hope not. Time will tell...Made myself a little valise and guess how. Recall those portable phonographs well down at the dumps, where 1000's of dollars are being wasted on new u packed materials, equipment, etc.? I found one, so I threw the insides out, put in a retaining wall, with a latch lock and I'll have a valise to come home with. One reason I made it is that I have a brand new Kersey(?) jacket, worth at (least?) \$10 in the states, I'd like to get home. They are so strict in seeing one doesn't take excess clothing home that it will have to be smuggled in. It's a crime as to how a lot of this surplus equipment, etc., is being fired and decamped. That's what you buy war bonds for. Boy, I'm telling you. Anybody speaks politics to me will get a short "not interested" answer...Our mails are very irregular because of the weather, both coming and going. I believe they will be that now that the high winds are setting in, making mail planes out or grounded...Haven't any idea how many huts there are, but they sleep anywhere from eight to ten men each. Ours at present, because of men leaving and being discharged on points, have only the six of us. Yes, there are approximately 2500 to 3000 men on the island and looks very deserted...Don't remember telling you, but I sent the fox pictures to Dad and Vin. If I get into the dog house it will be up to you to bail me out...The moment I get word of shipping you'll hear about it. Should get some word in the next two weeks...Well, this brings to a close the chatter west of the nation.