

Callaghan

Phillipine Islands

February 8, 1945

Dear Mother:

Just found time to write a few lines. I really have plenty to tell but time is short. We have been very busy and haven't written in quite a while. We arrived in the largest city in the Phillipines and it isn't the place it used to be. It was almost completely burned down.

We just finished putting up our bridge in the heart of town and it really was plenty tough. We were being constantly shelled by Artillery, mortar fire and plenty of sniper fire. We completed our mission.

I was informed that the Americans had received the American prisoners from the Japs. Curiosity never killed the cat and I took off to see if I could find out any information concerning my Uncle and Aunt and their three daughters. From one place to another I went. Now and then snipers would fire but I was certain I was going to find someone who had information about my Uncle and Aunt. I was told by a nice fellow that they were here somewhere. Being a large place, I finally found out that they were in a college nearby. Off again with much faith in finding them. They were guarded by American soldiers and I finally convinced one to let me in. I saw the higher-ups and was told by a friend of Sanford's that he knew him well and called him Sam. I finally was able to see him and being such a long time since we met, I didn't recognize him.

I said "Francis Callaghan from Chicago". Boy, he just hugged me all over. Who was behind him but his three daughters dressed in bright yellow dress and beautiful blonde hair. He was informed through Red Cross letters from Kit and a few others, that I was in the Phillipines, but didn't have the slightest idea he would ever see me. I talked with him a little over two hours and he told me Cele was in the hospital but was getting better. Tickled pink to see me and I was to see them.

I went today and just happened to locate Cele and was she surprised. She said she heard of me being there and wanted to see me. I was sure glad to see her and know that she was all right. She didn't know what to say and was speechless for about five minutes. Her first words were "was I all right and by the Grace of God we were meeting each other." She hoped and prayed hard for me and wondered where I was. She said after seeing me she felt one hundred per cent better and just seeing me helped her a lot.

I told her I talked to Sam and how wonderful her three daughters were. They are the most wonderful people I ever did know and most kind. As I came up to her bed in the ward, she said "one of the Henry's." Here me dressed in combat clothes (fatigue) steel helmet, canteen belt, first aid kit and rifle. We talked a long while and she was so happy to see me she let me do all the talking. She introduced me to several friends of hers and they were so happy to know me. She was so happy to know that we got together. She talked a while and told me all the experience they went through. I had a few of your letters telling news of the family and I let her read them.

She cried when she knew that her Mother had died but I changed the subject and started telling her how pretty her three little daughters were. I finally had to go and she was sorry. I must try my best to go again. I must sign off now.

Love Fran

P.S. A friend of mine hasn't had too much time to write. Call his wife. He is OK.

Mrs. Black, u
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Look in papers for write-up on 530th Engineers and Chicago fellows.