

Snyder, Harry A.

# Marine's Letters Describe How It Feels To Be Shelled, Bombed

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What it feels like to be bombed again and again and to hear shells whistling overhead while crouched in foxholes in Jap-infested areas is told in letters arriving home from men in the armed forces.

While not intended particularly to spur War Bond purchases, some of the letters carry a vital message and indicate how much the men doing the actual fighting go through, as compared to the "discomforts" on the home-front.

Excerpts from a letter written by recently promoted Pfc. Harry A. Snyder to his wife, Lorraine Hess Snyder, 1405 Chelsea Avenue, tell an interesting story when pieced together.

He is with the U. S. Marines and has been in service since Oct. 5, 1942. He will be 22 years old Feb. 12 and has a nine-months-old son he hasn't seen.

Excerpts from his letters follow:

"Christmas Day of '42 was spent aboard ship at Panama Canal. New Year of '43 we crossed the Equator and for that time of the year it was hot as could be. Two weeks later we landed at Samoa, Pago Pago Harbor. After spending a couple of months there we boarded ship again and landed at Noumea Harbor at New Caledonia. After spending about four months or better there, we boarded ship again, this time landing at the Canal.

"That night we started for the Russell Islands. About four o'clock that morning we could see the Russells getting bombed by the Japs. And the next thing we knew there was a Jap plane diving on us. Thank God, he was a lousy pilot for his egg landed about ten yards from our barge. We spent about a month in the Russells getting bombed quite frequently.

"In the meantime the New Georgia campaign started, and since we are a supply outfit, up to New Georgia we go. Up there the bombs fell at night, and in the day time the Zeros would come over. It's really something to see a dog fight. That's 200 more planes trying to shoot each other out of the sky. And our pilots are pretty darn good at it. But naturally we're bound to

be moonlight, which the Japs like. They never fail to try and get in and bomb us. As I was saying about the second night, the moon was up and over they came. At that time we didn't have any cover over our foxhole, we lay in there and pretty soon we could hear them falling. Every one sounded like it was going to hit in our foxhole. The closest one hit about ten foot from it. It nearly blew us out of our foxholes. Shrapnell flying every which way. Even in our foxhole. All of it right above our heads.

"The next day we got busy and cut trees down and put them over our foxholes, and sandbags all over the top and sides.

"In a foxhole like that all one has to worry about is a direct hit, and if it's a light bomb it won't even hurt it.

"After a bombing we get out of our foxhole and laugh and joke, and curse those yellow \_\_\_\_\_. Some nights your lucky if you get any sleep, and what you do get is in a foxhole.

"One thing that's bad is being shelled. You don't get any warning whatsoever except the whistle of the shell when its passing and then the burst of the shell which really has a bang behind it.

"I, myself, would sooner go through a bombing and take my chances, than be shelled. For if a shell lands anywhere close by the concussion will kill you. Even though I've only been in two shellings, both lasting about an hour and a half. And none landed close enough to do any damage. I'll still take the bombing. Maybe it's because I'm used to them. I've been in so many I haven't the slightest idea how many actually is that I've been in."



PFC. HARRY A. SNYDER

lose some once in awhile. And at night we were not allowed any lights. That was so if there were any Jap planes in the sky they wouldn't know where we were.

"After we weren't needed there anymore we went back to the Canal and got a couple weeks' rest. Then we were Bougainville bound. Land-

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