

Letters & Poems of a Soldier

(The following are Letters and Poems that were written by my Father during World War II to His wife and baby girl)

Introduction

My dad, Leonard R. Manes, was a soldier during World War II. On the following pages are some of the poems and letters that he composed and sent home to my mother, Frances L. Manes, during his time of service to his country. Now, with both of them approaching their twilight years; dad having just turned 87 years old on May 6th, 2008 and mom having turned 82 on April 25th, 2008, they have graciously given me the honor to put these intimate and loving letters and poems into a book and share them with you. I hope you will enjoy them as much as I have in reading and assembling them together.

As you read these writings, you will undoubtedly be able to feel the gamut of emotions that flow throughout them; from joy at times, to intense loneliness and deep felt sorrow. These are the emotions that all soldiers go through and feel on a daily basis, no matter what war or conflict, or even during peacetime, while they are serving in the military of our great country. So, this book is in Honor of my Parents, and at the same time, dedicated to all of the men and women who have proudly worn, or are currently wearing, the uniforms of the military in service to their country! Please enjoy!

Letters & Poems of a Soldier

Chapter 1

To begin, let me take just a little bit of time to allow you to get to know my dad and mom. My dad was the third son born into his family in 1921. He had two older brothers who both served faithfully and honorably during their call to duty during World War II. He also had a sister who died at the age of 12 due to a ruptured appendix. Plus, in addition, my dad happened to be a twin, having a sister born with him. She, too, unfortunately, died early in life from a ruptured appendix. (If these would have happened with today's medical technology both would probably have survived.) After my dad another brother and sister was born into his family.

My mom was born in 1926 as the youngest of thirteen children. Her birth and survival afterwards is a true miracle of God as she was born prematurely and weighed only a couple of pounds. She was so small that she was placed inside of a shoebox that became her bed for awhile.

Both of my parents, even though they were young at the time, suffered through the Great Depression that engulfed our country during the late 1920s and 1930s. They both learned what the gnawing pains of hunger felt like when there was not enough food to feed the family. And as kids, they both knew full well the deep depth of "lack" that can scar a person for a lifetime! But, they, along with their parents and siblings, survived and became a part of – **"The Greatest Generation"!**

By the time that the Great War broke out and the United States decided to enter the fray, my mom was living in San Antonio, Texas working as a waitress. My dad happened to be stationed at Kelly Air Force Base also located in San Antonio. He had been assigned to the Medical Corps as a medic. One day, as it so often happens and God decides to intervene in the affairs of mankind, my dad happened to meet my mom at the place she was working. He was there with some of his buddies. And as the joyful playfulness of youth sometimes dictates, he made a bet with his fellow soldiers that he could get a date with my mom. All of his buddies chortled and laughed and almost split their pants, and then in one accord, loudly accepted his bet. They then proclaimed that she would not even give him the time of day, much less go out with him. My dad joyfully took their jabbing and laughter in stride as he told them to put up or shut up.

Not only did my mom go out with my dad, but on December 22, 1943, they got married. Not long after that, my mom got pregnant with a beautiful baby girl named Sharon, who was born on October 15, 1944. And like so many of our current soldiers bravely serving at their stations somewhere in the world today, my dad was not able to be home to see the birth of his beautiful little baby girl. He was in New Hampshire awaiting transport orders when Sharon was born. But God in His mercy allowed my Dad to get a furlough just long enough so that he could rush home and hold his little girl dearly and kiss and care for his wife for just a short period of time before he had to leave once again. Joy and happiness knows no bounds or distance, though, and the birth of his little girl set his heart aflame with a love that he would carry with him until he could eventually, with God's grace and mercy, return home to her and his wife once again!

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My dad had to leave his wife and daughter to catch transportation to go to Assam Province, in India, to work in a hospital set up to treat the enormously brave pilots who flew “**The Hump**”, as it was called. The “Hump” was the Himalayan Mountains, and it was the duty of these brave pilots to fly cargo; both men and machines, over these mountains to our troops on the other side. Many, many times, the planes were so loaded with supplies that it was a true miracle for them to be able to climb to the height they needed to clear “The Hump”. And more times than they wanted to count, in the thin mountainous air and with the weight they were carrying, they cleared this hump with only a few short inches to spare.

Then, as they proceeded on with their mission; many times the planes they were flying would get shot to pieces, and it would be another true miracle of God that they were eventually able to return back over “The Hump” to the base in India where my dad was. And many, many times, just like their planes had been shot to pieces, the brave pilots and crew members of these planes were shot to pieces too. It was my dad’s duty, responsibility, and deep earnest desire to patch them back together, just like their planes were, and get them back to duty as fast as possible. So my dad’s job, unlike his two older brothers, who were called on as part of their duty as combat soldiers to “*take*” the lives of other men, my dad’s duty was to “*save*” lives, and he was very good at it!

During the time my dad was stationed in India, he saw the ultimate horrors of what war can do to a man or woman. He saw the dreadful sweat, the fearful agonizing tears, and the bright red of a man’s own life blood spouting and flowing out of him who had their arms or legs or entire bodies mangled and shot to pieces, and inside of his heart, he, too, felt the deep agony and pain that the soldiers themselves were feeling! He also saw the devastating disabling fear that can overcome a person who had just escaped within inches of their life! And he witnessed firsthand the heroic courage of that same man climbing back onto his feet and getting in his plane to once again go conquer “The Hump”!

My dad witnessed the same things that most combat soldiers witness in a war zone. And even though he did not carry the weapons of war that “take” other men’s lives, he carried inside of him the almost unbearable burden of grief, despair, hurt, loneliness, pain, and sorrow, along with very brief glimpses of joy or happiness, that all combat soldiers feel!

This is why I want to share the following writings of my dad with you. Somewhere in the world right now, is a soldier desperately in need of someone telling him, “Hey, I know what you are going through! I have been there, too! And even though right now there are nothing but deep dark clouds of discouragement and sorrow, there is a brighter day a coming! I know! I have been there in your shoes!”

Letters & Poems of a Soldier

"A Soldier's Prayer"

By Pvt. Leonard Jones

Aug. 1942

Every morn when I awake,
I feel so alone and blue,
Because all through the night
I always dream of you.

You know Darling, I love you,
And want you to be mine.
Until we meet again, Dear,
My heart will always pine.

Last night I said a little prayer,
And hoped that you would hear,
And ease my lonely and aching heart
By saying, I love you Dear.

Why can't we start all over,
And begin our love anew.
I'll always keep you in my heart
and sling along with you.

(Transcript of wrinkle lines)

"I'll always keep you in my heart
and sling along with you"

Letters & Poems of a Soldier

Our Restriction

I had made my plans
To go to town tonight,
But when they had inspection,
It was an awful sight.

My barracks was the best one,
My bed was clean and neat.
My shoes were shined and polished.
My locker was at my feet.

The others were very dirty
So we all have to pay.
I did my best, and yet,
There is nothing I can say.

Now we are restricted
For things we left undone.
We have to stay at home tonight
And watch the setting sun.

- P. F. C. Leonard Mares
Aug. 1942

Letters & Poems of a Soldier

Our Freedom

Our restriction has been lifted
And once again we are free.
It makes me very happy,
As tonight you will probably see.

We'll go to town and celebrate
Until the early hours of morn,
And get up in the morning
When the bugler blows his horn.

After this I really believe
We'll strive to make sure
Our barracks are kept neat,
I think we've found our cure.

Lieutenant Franco has been very nice,
And it only goes to show
Always obey your orders
and he will let you go.

- P. J. C. Leonard M. one
Aug. 1942

Letters & Poems of a Soldier

Was My Face Red

Till Thursday I knew the sweetest chap.
Learned to like him like a pal.
Even thought so much of him
I'd let him date my best gal

We would go out on nights we had money
And do things up in style
Eating hamburgers and soda pop
Laughing all the while.

Saturday was always the best
After we had had a nap.
He'd come home so tired up
He'd sleep in his new cap.

You'd like to know what he does,
This guy of which I write.
He gives out clothes to Army men
Who have to dress in white.

Letters & Poems of a Soldier

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We walked to work each morning
Just for exercise and fun.
For if you've ever met him
You knew why our friendship begun

Then that fateful Thursday
He asked me a letter to write.
I responded with a few lines
Thinking I was doing right.

I made it up in verses,
Lines two and four to ~~of~~ rhyme.
All about love in spring
And the good ole Summer Time.

Then in he came a running
With a grin upon his face.
Handed me a piece of paper
That put me in my place.

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For there upon the pages
In words brave and bold -
He showed me how it was done,
New and in days of old.

Now what his point was
In asking me to pen
A poem to any girl
About the good in men.

But this he did accomplish.
He really showed me up,
And I've moved into the dog house
And act just like a pup.

He wasn't satisfied with one rhyme
But by the score he writes,
Keeping my face in blushes
Of which he does delight.

Letters & Poems of a Soldier

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Lesson now is learned
Always keep your neck in,
Cause you never know what people can do,
Until once they do begin.

P.F.C. Leonard Maner
Sept. 1942

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The Army Air Corps

This Army life is quite the thing,
With airplanes buzzing 'round.
But as for me, I really believe,
I'll take the solid ground.

The men who fly these planes
Don't seem to have a care.
To see some of the stunts they pull
Would really raise your hair.

These are the kind of men we want,
Strong, good-natured, and brave.
We need them to win this war
And this great country to save.

We owe these men many praises
For all the things they've done,
They fight for this great country
By singing the "Rising Sun".

- P. S. C. Leonard Manes
Aug. 1942

Letters & Poems of a Soldier

Medical Soldiers

A disturbance was a popping up
In all the lands we know.
We even heard of it
Here in New Mexico.

The fight, it got so bad -
Uncle Sam had to take a hand.
So they sent out a call
For all the men in our land.

It wasn't long before
I had my duty call.
So, into this band -
I right away did fall.

And in the Army was inducted -
It was a bitter pill,
But it didn't take long,
My duties to learn to fill.

I did a lot of marching,
Got up at the break of day.
Did a lot of exercise -
All in the Army way.

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They called it Basic Training.
To me it was a lot of work.
But I knew better -
I had to try and shirk.

I always thought a soldier
Was one who toted a gun.
But I've learned better now -
Work you mix with fun.

It takes a lot of things
To keep these men all fit -
So I was put in the Indies
To do my part of it.

You learn to do the mopping
And care for all the sick -
And when they demand it,
You'd better be right quick.
Another will call for a pill,
So you fulfill your task
To help them over the hill.

cont. - next page

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Some don't think the Medics -
To be called soldiers is right -
But we got to keep them well
So they can go out and fight.

And when they feel a pain -
They to the hospital do come.
Even with such a thing -
As a scratch upon their thumb.

So if you've anything to say,
Against our Medical group -
You better say it running hard,
And head back to your troop.

It's not much fun fellows,
To listen to all your grief.
What I've here for Buddy,
Is to give you quick relief.

- P.S.G. Leonard Manes
Aug. 1942

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They've Met Their Doom

As long as I've been in the Army,
There's one thing I can't understand.
Why Hitler and Hirohito keep trying
To whip this mighty Band.

They have already met their downfall
And are only stalling for time.
They just as well give up now
Because their life isn't worth a dime.

You should have known in the beginning
To stay on the right track,
But instead, you took the other course,
And stabbed us in the back.

All I have to say is,
Now that you've met your doom,
I don't expect anyone
To put roses on your tomb.

- P. F. C. Leonard Manser
Aug. 1942

Letters & Poems of a Soldier

My Last Letter

I've written these few lines
In hopes you would understand,
And someday, once again, dear,
You would let me hold your hand.

You may think them rather silly
And may never read them all.
If this should ever happen,
My bridges would surely fall.

I've stayed up many a night
And tried so hard to make sure,
That everything which I have said
Would make our love more pure.

And now in closing dear,
I hope you see my view.
I have one last thing to say,
And that is, I love you.

- P. J. b. Leonard James
Aug. 1942

Letters & Poems of a Soldier

Sgt. L. K. Mans - 38166064
Med. Det., Sta. Hosp.
Sherman Field
Manchester, N. H.

Via Air Mail



Mrs. Frances L. Mans
Gen. Del.
So. San Antonio, Texas

Letters & Poems of a Soldier

Greiner Field, N. H.
October 17, 1944



AIR TRANSPORT COMMAND

Dearest Mommie + Sharron,

Here goes for just a few more lines tonight to let you know they are still trying to figure a way to give me a furlough. Baby, if you can get around 60 dollars I am pretty sure I can get the furlough in just a few days. If you can get it, please have someone wire it to me. The Commanding Officer here is really swell and he sure is trying to help me.

It will take me about four days to get there and maybe by that time you will be out of the hospital and I can be your little nursemaid. Baby darling, I'm sorry for some of the things I've done in the past to hurt you. I will do everything in the world to help you. Please believe me angel.

I have just worked the floor today hoping to hear from somebody down that way. They always say that no news is good news but I still worry about you and Sharron. I know you are getting along alright but it's just that I love you so much and want to see you.

Darling, have you seen Capt. Epstein yet? I know he will take good care of Sharron and you.

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AIR TRANSPORT COMMAND

I wrote my Mother and Dad last night and told them about the baby. Did you have any body send them a telegram? I hope you did because Mother was almost crazy when she heard that I had shipped out. She wanted to be with you so bad darling.

Did your Mother get to be with you? I hope you weren't afraid of anything darling. Is Sharon perfectly normal in every respect? If she has your looks and my brains, won't she really go places! She will have to carry a club to keep the boys away.

I was just talking to my 1st sergeant and he says the C.O. may be able to get me a plane ride part of the way down there. I wouldn't save any ~~time~~ money because I would have to buy a round trip ticket but I would save quite a bit of time and that is the main thing.

Well baby, I guess I must close for this time. If you can raise any money please have someone wire it to me. I hope to see you real soon.

Goodnight Baby or should I say believe

Love to both of you,
Daddy Boy

Letters & Poems of a Soldier



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Clavis, New Mexico
Wednesday, 8 Nov.

Dearest Mommie + Sharon,

Here I am with my folks again so I decided to write just a few lines to let you know I'm fine only I miss you very much.

How are my two little babies? Take good care of yourself and the baby too.

Baby, the folks were sure glad to see me only they thought you and Sharon were coming too. They were really disappointed when you didn't. They want you to come just as soon as you possibly can so please do. They are just dying to see that baby of ours. You and that darling of ours is all we talk about.

Darling, I couldn't make good train connections out of here so I have to take the bus all the way. I don't like that but it's the best I can do. I go on through New Mexico, over into Arizona and then up to Salt Lake. I have to leave tonight and I get there Friday afternoon about 3:30.

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Coming out of San Antonio over by
Fredericksburg there was a soldier and his
girl friend ran off the road in their car
and just about killed both of them. Our
hus was just behind it so we had to
stop and I was the only medical man out
of the whole bunch so I had to take
charge. There were three nurses right together
so each one had a first aid packet so I had
to bandage them up. The girl just about
had her right leg cut off and her left ankle
was broken. Some teeth were knocked out
she was cut about the face. He just had a
bad cut on his forehead and it really kept
me busy for a while. They both were in shock
and I was really worried about them. We
sent for an ambulance and sent them on
into Fredericksburg to the hospital. I really
got blood all over me.

Behy, I paid your insurance and
I also took out insurance on Sharon. It
cost 25 cents a week for her. I just worry
about her so much.

I am also going to send that train ticket

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in so I can get that refund.

Did you ever get your check? I went by Mr. Casio and I couldn't find your check anywhere. I looked through all the drawers too. He had already gone home so I thought maybe he had mailed it on to you. I hope so.

My bus left at 6:45 P.M. instead of 7 so it was a good thing I left this when I did. I hated to leave you there crying darling. I just couldn't hardly control myself. I hope you didn't take it too hard.

R. Lee and I caught us a ride pretty easy into town so I stopped at the hospital. Capt. Epstein was at a meeting so I didn't get to see him before I left.

Well darlings, I guess I will close for this time and send these tickets off.

Baby, Dad wasn't the one that sent those legs for the bassinette. They don't know anything about it. It must have come from Vera because we got them the same time we got the blanket. Mother still has the bassinette and we were just trying to figure out a way to get it made up. I'll see you

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Well Anpls, as I said before, I guess I
must close for this time. I will try to
drop you a card on the way to Utah.

I love you both and God bless you.

Daddy Boy

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U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES

Hearns, Utah

Nov. 17, 1944

My Darling Wife + Baby,

Just a few lines tonight so as not to spoil my perfect record. I thought for awhile I wasn't going to get a chance to write you tonight because we were on duty late and when we get off we had to clean up our barracks and stamp all our clothes for tomorrow's inspection. I don't have to stand a personal inspection because I am on KP again tomorrow and we get out of it. I am really glad in a way. After all KP isn't bad here, just long hours. I sure hate to get up at 3:30 on these cold mornings. The sun has actually shined for the last two days but it is still cold.

Well darlings, I have been here one week today and I guess I will be here about two more. I will go from here to the Port of Embarkation and land up somewhere in the Pacific. No one knows where yet but don't worry about me. Everything will be alright. They will probably start censoring our mail pretty soon. They usually do I hear.

The news sure sounds good so I think we will be home before too much longer. Just keep praying for me. Angel.



Letters & Poems of a Soldier



U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES

Darling, I didn't get a letter from you or Sharon either one today. I sure am getting anxious to hear from you both. How is little Sharon? Does she cry for her Daddy very much? Kiss her once for me and tell her I will see her again soon.

Baby, I think I am finally going to get my transportation money tomorrow. I probably can't send any home until Monday because I can't get off KP long enough. I don't know how much I will get but I will send all I possibly can. I hope you are making out all right. Please darling, don't hesitate to contact me immediately if anything goes wrong. If nothing goes wrong, just keep that sweet little chin up and just make the best of it until I get home.

Today we did a lot of marching and drilling and we had to go through the gas chamber. We went through tear gas first and took our gas masks off inside and ran out. He sure did a lot of ~~crying~~ crying for awhile. Then we went into the chlorine gas chamber. It is deadly poison but I made it alright. One boy had to be taken to the hospital but he will be alright. Monday we have to go out on the firing range. I haven't had a gun in my hand in the Army but I have to go anyway. We are really getting



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U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES

ready for something. The training is pretty rough but I guess it has to be. I had a bunch ships out they all march to the train with their full packs on and a big band leading them. They pass through a big arch over the road that says - "Through These Gates Pass The Best of Armed Soldiers in The World".
~~I'll tell you darling, when a soldier leaves here, he is one of the best.~~

Have you been to town since I left there? Be sure and go see Capt. Epstein every chance you get.

Well darling, I guess I will close and write just a few lines to my folks before going to bed. I have only written them once since I've been here. I am ashamed of myself but it was all I could do to write you a few lines every night. Baby, if I ever do miss a day, don't worry because it will be because it was just impossible. I promise to write every chance I get.

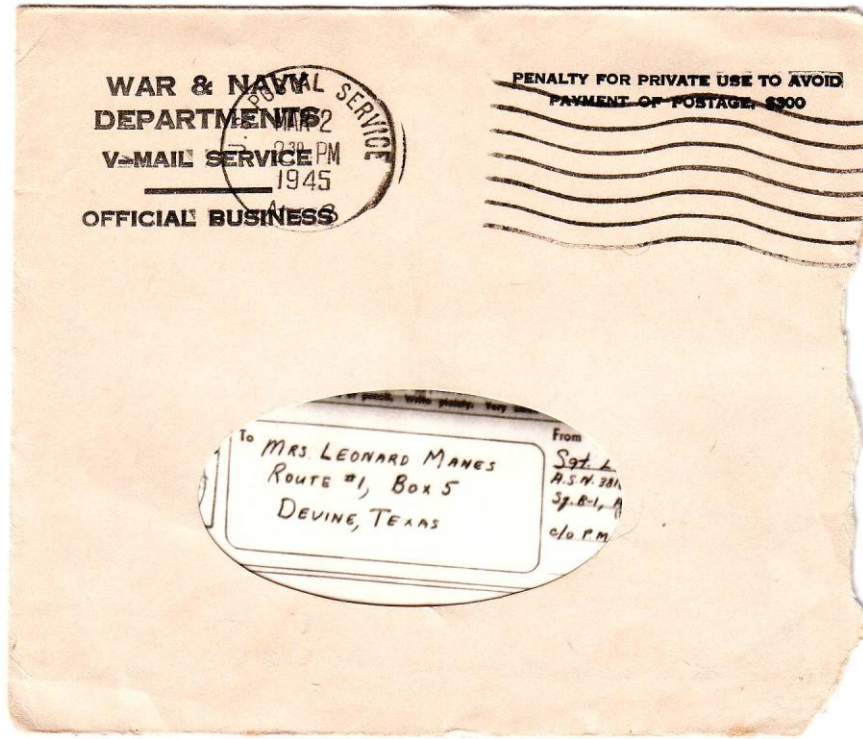
Good night sweet babies and pleasant dreams.

Love to you both,
Daddy



Letters & Poems of a Soldier

The following Letters were written via V-Mail while at sea on my Dad's journey to India




26th day at Sea

Letters & Poems of a Soldier

Print the complete address in plain black letters in the panel below, and your return address in the space provided. Use typewriter, dark ink, or pencil. Write plainly. Very small writing is not suitable.

No. From

 Sgt. LEONARD MANES
A.S.N. 3372225
Sp. B-1, A.P.O. 16854-B
(Soldier's address)
c/o P.M. New York, N.Y.

To: MRS. LEONARD MANES
Rt. #1, Box 5
DEVINE, TEXAS

(Date)

26th Day at Sea

My Darling Wife & Baby,
Here it is just another long, lonesome day
has passed again so I will try to write
a few lines to the sweetest wife and baby in
the world.

I didn't realize this world was so big
until now. The just travel and travel and in
the morning when we get up it looks as if we
are in the same spot because we never see
anything but water.

I hope darling that by the time you get
this letter you will have some pictures of you
and Sharon to send to me.

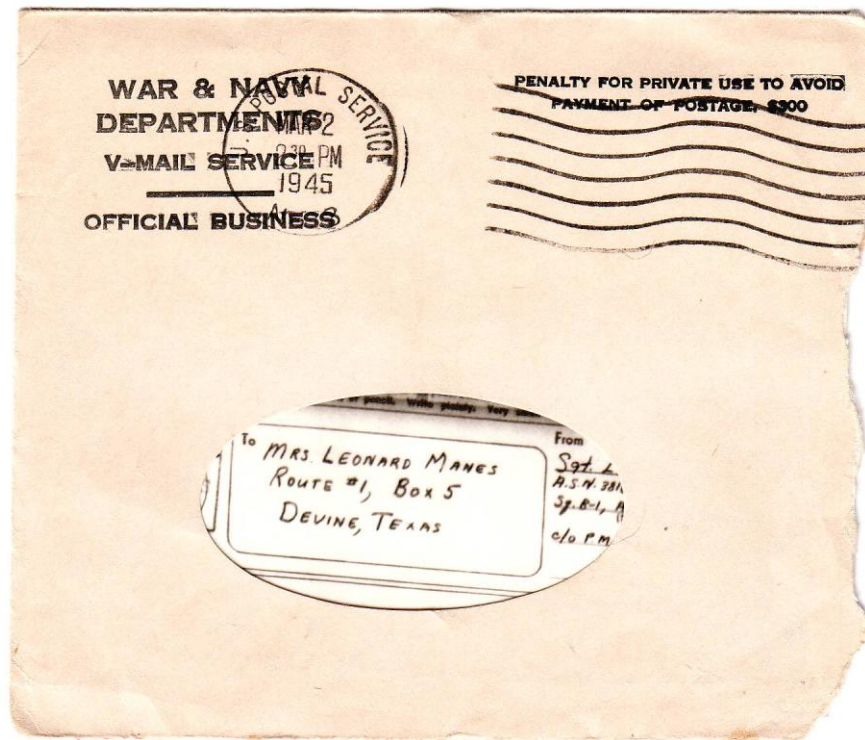
It sure looks as if the war with Germany
might be over by the time I get to my destination.
The news sure sounds good to me. I am ready
to come home just any time now but I guess
to Japs come first.

Good night darling I love you both.
Leonard

V - MAIL

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28th Day at Sea

Letters & Poems of a Soldier

Print the complete address in plain black letters in the space below, and your return address in the space provided. Use typewriter, dark ink, or pencil. Write plainly. Very small writing is not suitable.

No. (CENSOR'S STAMP)

To **MRS LEONARD MANES**
Route #1, Box 5
DEVINE, TEXAS

From **Sgt. LEONARD MANES**
A.S.N. 2182004
Sp. 8-1, A.F.O. 1254-2
(Sender's address)
c/o P.M. NEW YORK, N.Y.

(Date) **28th Day at Sea**

My Darling Wife & Baby,
I managed to borrow some more paper so here goes for a few more times. If it don't paper, it is broke. I just had to borrow some.

There is still no news to write about but I just don't feel right unless I write a few lines to let you know I'm still alright and you have nothing to worry about. I just hope everything's alright at home. I am always thinking of all the good times we have had together and get to wondering if we will ever be able to have such happy days again. If everything keeps going like they are here that day shouldn't be very far off.

We have a lot of fun arguing here on ship. We argue about everything from the Civil War to religion. There is a good one going on now about women. Such thing to argue about. I will keep out of this one. Am out of space so good night my sweet babies.

Love to both,
Leonard

V - MAIL

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1918. 20-28248-4

Print the complete address in plain black letters in the space below, and your return address in the space provided. Use typewriter, dark ink, or pencil. Write plainly. Very small writing is not suitable.

No. (CENSOR'S STAMP)

To **MRS. LEONARD R. MANES**
ROUTE ONE, BOX FIVE
DEVINE, TEXAS

From **Sgt. Leonard R. Manes**
(Sender's name)
1347th AAF BU Area "A"
(Sender's address)
Bengal Wing-IGD-ATC
470-229, 78th, New York, N.Y.

(Date)

My darling wife and baby,
This is just a little Easter greeting that they gave us to send home. I think it is pretty nice. I hope it gets there by Easter.

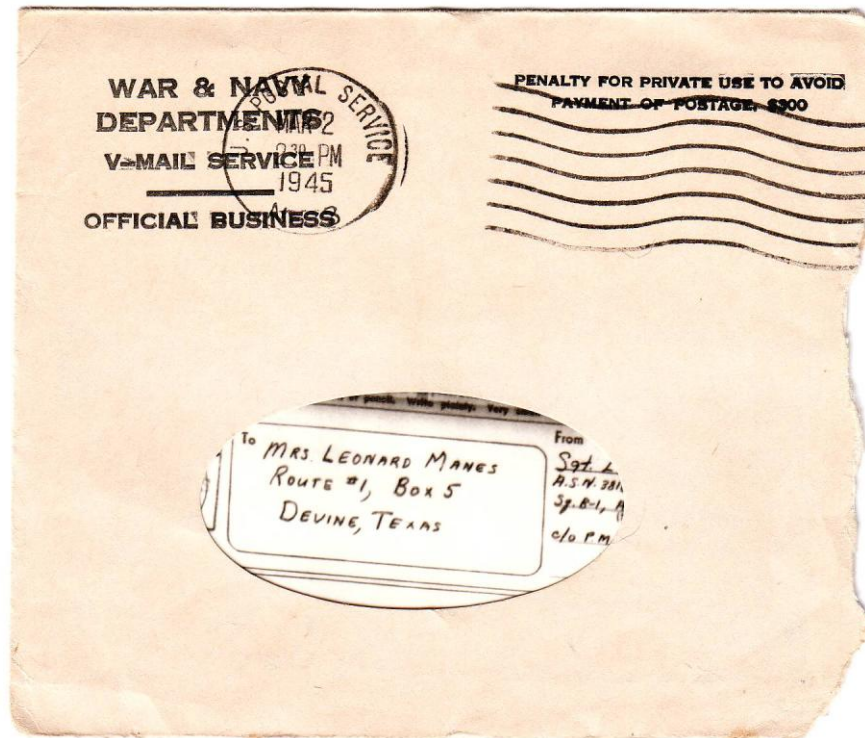
Love always,
Leonard

Easter Greeting

V - MAIL

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT PERMIT NO. 1

Letters & Poems of a Soldier



34th day at Sea

Letters & Poems of a Soldier

Print the complete address in plain block letters in the space below, and your return address in the space provided. Use typewriter, dark ink, or pencil. Write plainly. Very small writing is not suitable.

No. _____

To Mrs. Leonard Manes
Route #1, Box 5
Devine, Texas

From Sgt. Leonard Manes
A.S.N. 3810000
Sgt. 1, A.P.O. 1454-A
[Sender's address]
c/o P.M. New York, N.Y.

(CENSOR'S STAMP)

My Darling Wife & Baby, 5th day at sea
 Hell darling, I'd bet you think I never will
 but land by this time. I had begun to think so
 myself but maybe I will some day soon. I
 hope so anyway.

How is little Sharon getting along? I can
 hardly believe that she is almost four months
 old already. I'd bet she is getting prettier every
 day, just like her mother. I will be looking forward
 to getting some pictures soon after I land. I hope
 I have a big pile of letters waiting for me also.

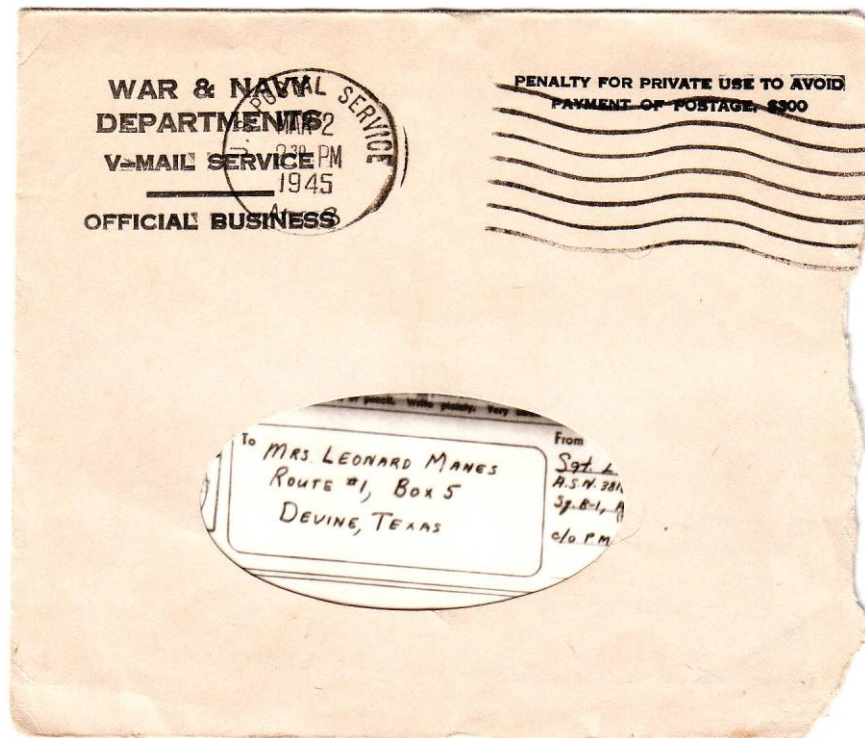
We had K.P. again yesterday but I don't
 think we will get it any more. I sure hope not.
 I also put out a lig washing the other day. It
 reminded me of the time I washed all of Sharon's
 things for you. I will be glad when I get
 the chance to do that for you again.

Hell darling, no more space so I must close
 for this time. Write me real often.

Love Always,
 Dadby

V - MAIL

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35th Day at Sea

Letters & Poems of a Soldier

Print the complete address in plain letters in the panel below, and your return address in the space provided on the right. Use typewriter, dark ink, or dark pencil. Faint or small writing is not suitable for photographing.

TO: MRS. LEONARD R. MANES ROUTE #1, BOX 5 DEVINE, TEXAS	FROM: Sgt. Leonard R. Manes P.S.N. 3876604 42nd C.F.C. 16884-B C/o P.M. New York, N.Y.
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SEE INSTRUCTION NO. 2 (Sender's complete address above)

35th Day at Sea.

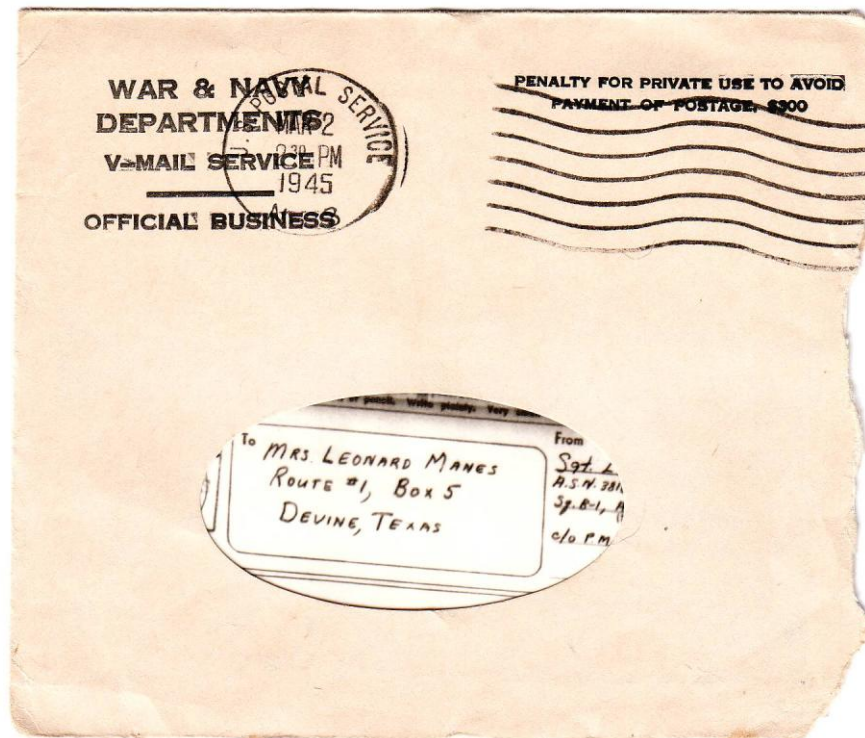
Darling Wife + Baby,

After so long a time our trip is gradually coming close. I have been on this boat a long, long and I'm a long, long way from home. I am glad it is nearly over because you can't see how tiresome but is and uncomfortable it is, a few days I will be able to tell you re about this trip and possibly give you an idea where I'm at. I always thought a man could almost sail around the world this length of time. I guess I have gone half way around. Maybe when I come back I will come the other way and complete circle.

I am sure looking forward to receiving your letters when I reach land. This will be one happy day. I must close baby because of space but you will hear from me quite regular from now on. Love always
Leonard

YOU FILLED IN COMPLETE ADDRESS AT TOP? **REPLY BY V-MAIL** HAVE YOU FILLED IN COMPLETE ADDRESS AT TOP?

Letters & Poems of a Soldier



At Port

Letters & Poems of a Soldier

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PASSED BY
U.S. POSTAL SERVICE
POSTAL EXAMINER

(CENSOR'S STAMP)

TO

MRS. LEONARD MANES
ROUTE #1, Box 5
DEVINE, TEXAS

FROM

Sgt LEONARD R. MANES
U.S. ARMY
Sg. B-1, P.P.O. 16854-B
C/O P.O. NEW YORK, N.Y.

(Sender's complete address above)

SEE INSTRUCTION NO. 2

My Darling Wife and Baby,
The Chaplain on this ship gave us this U-mail paper so I will try to write another few lines to let you know I'm still feeling fine.

Well darling, we finally get a chance to get off the ship and stretch our legs for awhile. We were in port for a couple of days and it was really a relief to set foot on something solid again. I hope it won't be long until we reach our permanent destination. While in port we bought lots of magazines and newspapers and I collected a little money as a souvenir. Maybe when I reach land again I can send you a few things. We got paid 5 dollars this payday but that is more than we can spend.

Darling, as soon as I can get some more paper I will write you a nice long letter. I hope you are feeling fine and I miss you and our darling baby very much. Tell your folks hello for me and give them my love. God bless you and little Sharon and please don't worry about me.

Leonard

HAVE YOU FILLED IN COMPLETE ADDRESS AT TOP?

REPLY BY

V-MAIL

HAVE YOU FILLED IN COMPLETE ADDRESS AT TOP?

Letters & Poems of a Soldier



Letters & Poems of a Soldier



G. A. L.

UNITED STATES ARMY AIR FORCE



Assam Province, India
April 8, 1945

My Darling Wife + Baby,

I will try to write just a few lines tonight to make it two nights in a row. Darling, you told me to address my letters to box 26 and it should have been box 23. Last night I wrote you and my folks and I put box 26 on the address. You had better check on it because I want you to get all my letters.

I just got back from the show. The name of it was "Bowery to Broadway" with Jack Oakie. It was pretty good but nothing like I expected. The next picture is "My Pal Wolf." It's about a dog, not about me. (ha ha).

Baby darling, I got two sweet letters from you today and one from Mother and Dad. Dad wrote me a nice letter and I sure like to hear from him. He doesn't write very often. They are sure all up in the air about you coming to see them. They said Elsie Mae was coming too. You should have a swell time together but you just behave yourselves and don't do anything I wouldn't. Another thing, you

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UNITED STATES ARMY AIR FORCE



watch Sharon or she might jerk Kay bald-headed. I'll bet she could really do it too. Gosh, I wish I could be there with you.

It looks as if mother & Dad have a pretty good deal there in the laundry. I hope they can make a go of it. Mother says she will get you to help her with the bookkeeping. You can be my little bookkeeper when I get back.

Oh yes, Darling, in your letter you mentioned something about the pipe I was going to buy your Dad. Well sweet, when I went to buy one they were all gone and I haven't seen any of them since. I'm sorry I had to disappoint him.

Well Baby darlings, tell everyone hello for me and remember I love you and miss you so much. I will try to write again tomorrow night so until then "Good night Little Sweetheart." God bless you.

Your Loving Husband & Daddy
Leonard

Letters & Poems of a Soldier

Shamshernagar, India
August 5, 1945

My Darling Wife + Baby,

I'm afraid darling this won't be much of a letter tonight after writing you a fine page letter last night. I don't know much of anything to write about. I didn't get any mail today but there wasn't very much came in. Maybe I will hear from you again tomorrow. I surely hope so. Yesterday I got a letter from Dorothy and I sure got a big kick out of it. She was telling me about the women who came in the laundry and about how their slips shewed. She also said she bet I wished there weren't any Red Cross girls here so I could run around in my shorts. It sounded funny coming from her. I guess she is getting grown up now. I am going to try to answer her letter tonight if I have time. There is another S.S. show tonight and I want to see it. The last one we had wasn't very good but maybe this one will be. Tomorrow night we are having an all Indian stage show. They say it is pretty good. It has a couple Indian girls in it so I guess I had better go. Ha.

Say darling, did you ever have those pictures made you were talking about. I am just dying to have an

Letters & Poems of a Soldier

enlargement of you and little Sharon. I am starting me a picture album because I can't carry all my pictures around in my hili fold. In this hot weather I sweat so much and the pictures stick together.

Boy, I can just picture Sharon in the little jacket I bought her. Its the cutest little thing I ever saw! I hope she will like it. I will probably be home by the time she is big enough to wear it. I suppose she will soon be walking won't she? That is something I would like to see. He could teach her to walk together and love her up when she would fall and cry. It would be heaven if I could only be there but I guess I will just have to sweat it out.

Baby, darling, how is that sweet mother of yours feeling now? I hope she is up and about by now. Keep telling her that I send her my love and will see her soon. Also, how is your Dad getting along? Tell everyone down there hello for me. Has Blue Eyes heard from Curtis yet? Its sure didn't take him long to get overseas did it? I hope he doesn't have to do any fighting but hes in the Infantry so no telling where he will wind up.

Darling, do you realize, in three more days it will be nine months since I've seen you. That's a long time darling and Im sure getting anxious to see you. I

Letters & Poems of a Soldier

to put a little fat on you. Ha. I'll bet you wouldn't worry about anything if I was to walk in on you would you? Maybe one of these days I will surprise you.

What do you know darling. Here I am on my third page. I'm getting better all the time ain't I sweet? I wish I could write you at least a half a dozen pages a night.

Baby darling, did you ever get the package I sent you about two or three months ago? It had a nice bill fold in it and a little "sit up" set. I hope it wasn't lost. You should have got it by now. I hope I can send the little sweater by air mail. I wouldn't lose it for anything in the world.



Well Sweet Baby, I guess I must close for tonight and go see what the show is all about. I will write again tomorrow night. Good night sweet babies. God bless you. I love you.

Your Loving Husband & Daddy,
Leonard

Letters & Poems of a Soldier

Karachi, India
Nov. 26, 1945




My Darling Wife + Baby,

Please excuse this paper darling but it is all I could find and I just had to write you a few lines. It seems so long since I wrote you last but this is about the first chance I've had. I had a hard time getting here and I'm going to have an even harder time getting out. I will be here at least two or three weeks so please darling just sweet me out a little while longer. At least you know I am on  my way home. Next month we are only getting about 6 ships over here and right now  we have about 15,000 men here waiting to go home. There is a ship leaving the 3rd, 8th, or 19th. I might make

AMERICAN RED CROSS

CHINA-BURMA-INDIA COMMAND

the one on the eighth but if I don't I will have to wait until the 19th. Anyway, I should be home sometime between the first and fifteenth of January. I have finished all my processing and we don't have a thing to do but sit around and read news. We might catch R.P. about once while we're here but it isn't too bad.


Oh yes darling, I am going to be discharged at Camp Gannin, Texas. I tried to get them to discharge me at Fort Sam but they can't do it. They say it's too close to home. I guess they thought they would have a hard time  keeping me away from you long enough  to discharge me. They probably  would too. Gosh darling, I'm getting so anxious to see you and little Sharon. Have you told her that her daddy is coming

AMERICAN RED CROSS


CHINA-BURMA-INDIA COMMAND

Letters & Poems of a Soldier

home? I can hardly wait to get both of you in my arms again and squeeze you real tight.

Boy darling, this place I am in now is sure awful. It is right in the middle of a big desert and the dust is ankle deep. I can hardly breath. I'll bet I've seen two hundred guys here that I know already. It is here and a lot of my old buddies that I come overseas with. It sure is a good feeling to see them all again. I also met Allen Hall here from Farmington. I was surprised to see him because I  thought he would be home by this time.

AMERICAN RED CROSS

Darling, I am  sending you a little piece of paper explaining why I won't be home for Christmas. It's about the dirtiest trick they could

play on us but that's the way things are. There is going to be a lot of trouble when all these boys over here get home.

Well sweet baby, I will close for this time as I have to write mother & dad a few lines. I guess they probably think I am half way home by this time as it has been so long since I've written them.

I will write you again soon and give you the latest dope on everything. I wish I could hear from you but that  is impossible so I just have to make the best of it. I'll be seeing you real soon.

AMERICAN RED CROSS

CHINA-BURMA-INDIA COMMAND

Your Loving Husband & Daddy,
Leonard

Letters & Poems of a Soldier

Chapter 2

After the war ended, my dad returned home to my mother, and by now, his little toddler. After a brief foray to New Mexico where my dad was originally from, and where another beautiful little girl, named Linda, was born to them, they eventually returned to Texas and settled in a little town called Big Spring in the dusty and parched lands of west Texas. My mom had moved there to live with her parents while my dad was overseas. My grandparents had moved there and were trying to make a living owning and running The Lone Star Trading Post. During the following years while living in Big Spring, two boys were eventually born to my parents by the names of Tom and Steve.

Now before I go on, I would like to take just a moment and declare something right here; my belief is that the word “HERO” is way overused in today’s society. This word has recently been widely used to describe sports figures, entertainment figures, politicians, etc.. And, yes, some of these people can rightfully be called heroes because they have put their lives, and/or their money, to helping other people survive the chaos that is present in our society and our world.

But another kind of hero is one that has dedicated themselves to take a stand against tyranny, discrimination, crime, intolerance, terrorism, and any other form of atrocity toward their fellow man, and declared that through their sacrifice of time, distance, hard work, or even the ultimate sacrifice of death, mankind shall be set free. This is the “life” of the United States military soldier; a real HERO! It does not matter if the soldier is a combat soldier who lays his or her life on the line on a daily basis, or if their duties are to be a medic to help heal the wounded and dying, or even to be a cook, clerk, transportation specialist, or any other of the thousands of occupations that is vitally necessary to the full functioning of our Armed Forces! All are HEROES! And in addition to these heroes, are the true and faithful spouses that wait diligently at home praying day and night that their loved one will get to come home safe and sound. These faithful and sacrificial spouses are every bit as much of a hero as their dedicated soldiers are!

Now, with all of the earnestness I can muster, I want to declare that my dad and mom are a part of these HEROES! During my dad’s time of service, he saved the lives of many, many people, including injured, diseased, and starving civilians in India, in addition to saving the lives of his fellow soldiers. To me, this makes him the ultimate hero! And my mom, who diligently and faithfully sacrificed to keep her and her precious little daughter alive and well while my dad was overseas fulfilling his duty to our country and to all of mankind, was just as much of a hero as my dad! And I could not be anymore proud of them than I am!

But, my parents did not end their heroic duty just because the war ended. From the time my dad returned home and reunited with my mom, both of them placed forth every effort they could muster into making sure that they raised their four kids in a heroic fashion. Why do I say this? Because they lived their lives everyday to the best of their ability to be GOOD parents, while at the same time being GOOD people to the rest of

Letters & Poems of a Soldier

society, and they dedicated themselves to raise GOOD kids, faithful to God and mankind, just like they are to this day! Just like my parents were heroes during the Great War, they have been, and continue to be, heroes in parenting!

My parents had four children, two girls and two boys, and they raised them “good”! From these four came fifteen grandchildren, who were raised “good”! From these grandchildren, as of this writing, have come twenty eight great-grandchildren, and they have, or are being, raised “good”! This dynasty of 47 kids, grandkids, and great-grandkids has never been in trouble with the law or anyone in authority. Only one or two of the 47 can claim that he has attained wealth in material goods, but all 47 can claim that they have attained the greatest wealth that can be measured, and that is the wealth that comes from being “good” people to their fellow man.

This makes my parents as great of HEROES now in the waning years of their lives as it did during the war time years. By the way they have continually lived their lives in front of these 47 offspring by continuing their lifetime calling to “*SAVING*” lives, I can honestly say that my parents have fulfilled the requirements to be called HEROES! The Manes clan is so proud to be the offspring of our HEROES, Leonard and Frances Manes!

With all of our LOVE to you, Mom and Dad,

Your kids, grandkids, and great-grandkids!

Letters & Poems of a Soldier

Chapter 3

Following are Three Poems my Dad Wrote in 1995 that Sums Up The True Heroic Nature of Both of my Parents

In these last days
It pays to be bold,
For some day soon
We shall walk the streets of Gold

Oh how beautiful
Heaven must be
When we cross over
That Crystal Sea.

Come Holy Spirit
We need you so much.
We long for your presence
And the feel of your touch.

Although I'm quite
and don't have much to say,
Just lead me and guide me
And keep me, I pray.

Written by Leonard Maner
Nov. 24, 1995 Age 74

Given to me as I lay in bed between 11 pm + Midnight

Letters & Poems of a Soldier

I thank you Dear Lord
For your Wonderful Grace,
For giving me the strength
To finish this race.

I thank you, dear Lord
For making me whole,
But most of all
For saving my soul.

I thank you Dear Lord
For your precious blood.
For covering me when the enemy
Comes in like a flood.

I thank you Dear Lord
You are always there
When we come to you
In Earnest prayer.

Leonard Manis
Nov. 24, 1995 Age 74

Letters & Poems of a Soldier

When upon this earth
I finish my race,
I will stand before Jesus
And see him face to face.

Your word declares
You are always the same.
You healed yesterday
And you still heal the lame.

We love you dear Jesus,
Your coming is near.
We are saved by the blood
So why should we fear?

Some day you will take us
and lead us by the hand
Over the grassy meadows
Into our own Beulah Land.

Written by Leonard Maner
Nov. 24, 1995 Age 74