

# BETWEEN THE COVERS RARE BOOKS

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## Roger Hertz

### WWII-era Navy Letters

Reading, Pennsylvania / Sampson, New York / Parks Camp, California / Okinawa: 1944-1946

\$850

A collection of 181 letters between Berks county, Pennsylvania educator Dr. Roger Hertz and his family during his tour with the Navy between 1944 and 1946. All letters are very good or better with age toning and tears from opening.

Roger Hertz joined the Navy after completing High School in 1944. He was shipped to Sampson Naval Training Base in Sampson, New York in September of that year. "Yesterday we shot airplanes on a screen that flew just like real ones when they dive, etc. and then we shot at them with a 50 cal machine gun but it shot tracer bullets, which showed if we hit it – not real bullets, movie bullets. Boy it sure was fun." Hertz followed his father, a former Navy recruit, into that service and was happy with his choice saying, "But I am not sorry I took the Navy. That's one good thing. The Navy is OK."

A few months later in November of 1944 Hertz was sent to Camp Parks, California where he was assigned to the 4th Platoon. His company spent the end of 1944 preparing to be sent in to the Pacific theater. In a letter dated January 26th, 1945 he writes, "Today we got all our overseas gear, helmets, special sea-bag, etc. It is quite a load....Also all leaves and liberties are canceled as of 7:15 tomorrow morning!...Well I have one consolation I'll sure appreciate home a lot more when I come back if that is possible." Once en route Hertz's mission was kept quiet by he censor he writes, "I didn't write before because I didn't know what the sam hill to say. We have a big order which tells you what you are allowed to say and what you are not, and boy you can't say anything." He goes on to say, "This is a kinda small boat but it is plenty crowded. There are army personnel on board, merchant marines, Navy fliers, Navy armed guards, and us....This is an Army troop transport."

By the time Japan surrenders in September of 1945 Hertz has found himself in Okinawa awaiting the news that the war is officially over. "Well this is one day we'll never forget and neither will my children. I sure pity them because they will have to study about the campaign...Well it was officially proclaimed V.J. day here on Sunday and back home it was Saturday. There was no celebration whatsoever here. I bet old Reading was really a buzzing again." He goes on to say, "they broadcasted the signing of the treaty, president's speech, MacArthur's speech on our loudspeaker system as it came on the radio...It kinda makes you feel extra special that the whole thing is really over but there is only one thing on our minds now and that is where do we go from here?" Hertz spent another year with the Navy at Okinawa until his tour of duty was up at the end of 1946.

