

U.S. Flagship Ohio,

At sea, June 3, 1905

My dear grandfather

Yesterday morning the U.S. Army Transport Sherman came into Manila Bay and brought us mail from the States, and I was lucky enough to get a letter both from you and from Father. Your letter was dated Apr. 27, and that of Father's, Apr 29. I was very glad to get them and

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to hear that all were well, we have been living of Cavite since our arrival and nothing very important has happened except that the admiral has transferred his flag to the Ohio.

Yesterday afternoon our battleship and cruiser squadron, consisting of battleships Ohio, Wisconsin and Oregon, and cruisers Cincinnati and Raleigh got up anchor and stood out of Manila Bay for a week's cruise.

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About noon today we sighted, close to the land, three warships and as we got closer we made them out to be Russian cruisers and so far as we could judge, one was the flagship Aurora, one the Oleg and the other by her shape was a sister ship of the Novik. They fired a salute and we answered, and they continued on their course towards Manila Bay, with our squadron right after them to see that strict neutrality is observed. They were close into the shore, within the 3 mile limit, so as to be sure to be on U.S. territory in case Japanese ships were following. They passed close by us and we could see that the Aurora's foremast was shot away and a great big hole in her stack. We could also see that the other ships were damaged more or

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less. If they stay in Manila Bay more than 24 hours, we will make them get out or be dismantled. If the Russians are wise, they will stay and save their ships. Grandfather, I can't understand how the Russians were beaten so badly in that naval battle.

Sunday, June 4th. I left off last night where we were following the Russian ships into the Bay. The Russians anchored off the breakwater off Manila with the

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Ohio in close company. The other ships of our squadron were sent to Cavite to their old anchorages. This morning when it was light enough, all hands were up to get a look at short range. They were certainly battered up, and one, the "Oleg" besides having a shot hole beneath the waterline, had eleven large holes in her starboard side – besides, all of them were marked all over with patches where shell had struck. They three ships were the Aurora, flagship of Rear Admiral Enqvist, the Oleg and the Zemtchug [Zhemchug], all fast cruisers.

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At 8 bells when we hoisted our colors, we played their national air and fired a national salute with their ensign at our masthead. The Russian national hymn is without doubt the most impressive national air that I've ever heard. Somehow or other, the "Star Spangled Banner" does not sound impressive enough to suit the needs of such a great country as ours. Think of the of [sic] the French and German national airs, and the amount of feeling they display. But that's getting away from the subject. The Russian admiral with his aide came aboard the Ohio this a.m. and was welcomed with all the honors due his rank. He and our admiral Train over in consultation for a long time and when he left we heard that they asked to stay here two weeks to make necessary repairs and to make the ship safe for sea, all of which is perfectly allowed

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by neutrality laws – just as long as they do not increase their fighting efficiency. The chances are that they will remain here after that time to be dismantled because the Japs would get them the minute they got three miles off our coast.

A British squadron and a French squadron is reported to be near here and we surely expect a Jap squadron

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in the Bay within 48 hours. They will be free to enter and leave as much as they please provided they don't stay for 24 hours. As it is now we midshipmen will have to spend all our time night and day, out in boats, patrolling the Russian ships to protect them from fanatic Japs here in Manila – who would blow them up in a minute if they had a chance. There are thousands of Japs here who would like to do the trick and

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I haven't the slightest doubt but what our young Jap boys in our steerage mess would like to do it willingly. So we must be careful when we have some of the younger Russian officers over to dine with us.

They have 120 wounded aboard and they buried quite a number at sea on the way down. Our doctors went over to lend assistance and they are now being transferred to the hospitals. The doctor told me that some were cut up badly, some with limbs shot away, etc.

It doesn't seem possible to think that here we are sitting on the quarterdeck of a happy ship, and down there not more than three hundred yards away, are three ships all shot up, with so much suffering aboard. But all that goes to prove that they didn't toe the mark, or less they would have inflicted more damage and received less in return.

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Inside breakwater

Manila, P.I.

June 7 – the Russian ships went inside of breakwater yesterday and we followed [??] today. It seems that the President is going to have us keep them here because his orders were to have them dismantle or leave within 24 hours. They cannot leave, therefore they will have to dismantle.

I don't know whether I mentioned in my last letter or not, but I will tell it again. I've received my first real

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good assignment just the other day – as torpedo officer of the Ohio. My work and responsibilities are greatly increased but I console myself with the fact that it is as important a position as any in the ship, and besides, it's very interesting to me. I allways [sic] did have lots to do; whenever the navigator wanted anything done, such as charts corrected, buoys planted, etc. he would send for me and ask "are you busy or merely resting?"

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to which I would invariably say "merely resting." I learned a great deal about navigation, little points, etc. which I picked up. Our navigator, MacDonald, is a great big six-footer, and he is fine. I've heard it said by several people who had been on this ship that never before in the service had they found a ship with such a good, agreeable set of officers.

June 8th; I will close this letter now in order to get it off on the mail which leaves tomorrow morning. My best love to Mother, father, brother, sister and all the rest.

Hoping to hear from you before long I am your affectionate grandson

[signed]

Chester W Nimitz

c/o U.S.S. Ohio

Postmaster, San Francisco, California