

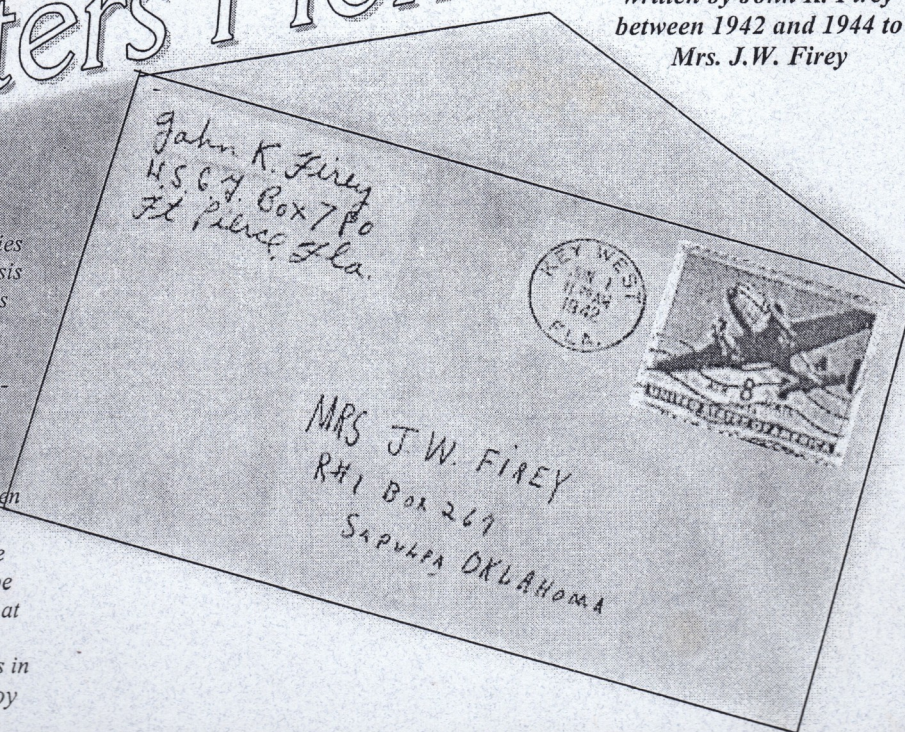
The
2007

Firey Family CALENDAR

Featuring
Letters Home

A sampling of 13 letters
written by John K. Firey
between 1942 and 1944 to
Mrs. J.W. Firey

Note: Most of these letters are deciphered from handwritten copies of letters. Parenthesis are included for words that couldn't be deciphered or for minor words added for continuity. All letters re-sourced from letters copied by William F. Firey in 1993 and given to family members at Christmas. The entire letter collection will be completely cataloged at some future date and will include the letters in this calendar. - Enjoy
- Ray & Diana



JANUARY



UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

John K. Firey Apprentice Seaman
Company V2 - Coast Guard
Training Station
Eighth Naval District
Algiers, New Orleans, LA

March 20, 1942

Dear Mama, Daddy & Folks,

I am now in the training camp on the Mississippi River at a little place out of New Orleans. There is a lot of boys down here. I can not leave camp for the first 21 days as we are on quarantine. I took a Lock Jaw serum and have four more to take. There are sure a lot of big boats on the Miss. River. We are on the east side of the river, everything is green down here. There are lots of pine and palm trees down here. The Coast Guard is just about the same as the Navy. After the 21 days is up, I will go aboard a ship and from there I just don't know where we will go. Well, I sure had a fine trip. I have sure saw a lot of country and I am going to see a lot more because the C.G. sure is a traveling outfit. Tell little Bill hello and to make a good crop for I will probably be coming home this fall. Tell daddy to take care of my horses. Mama, I won't get to send home any more for 3 or four months because I am first making \$21 a month. But just as soon as I get a (), I will send home every penny I can because I would rather send it home than hoop it up down here because that is mighty easy done. When you answer my letter be sure and write the full address and write it plain for some of the boys sure have a time reading them and I might not get it. My company is V2. They (are) Oklahoma & Texas boys. I am sending you a clipping from the Fort Worth newspaper. The Warnock boy is Halley Warnock's nephew. His dad's name is Harry Warnock and he is a half brother to Halley. Well, I have my sailor uniforms and they sure (are) nice). Tell Uncle Earl hello and that the Coast Guard is more strict than the army or navy. Tell him to write to me. We won't be allowed to write very much after a few weeks. Winnie and Gus were good to me, Ruth and Matt were sure (as) well. Tell Kitty hello (for) me. I am sure doing some drilling - we have manual of arms and foot drill. Well, I can't think of any more to write so I will sign off for this time so bye bye. Answer real soon.

With lots of love,
Your Son,
Apprentice Seaman, Kenneth Firey

P. S. I saw Gene Autry at a stock show in Fort Worth, Texas. I sure like to talk to him.

FEBRUARY



UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

New Orleans, LA

April 4, 1942

Dear Mama,

I got your letter yesterday. I sure was glad to hear from home. I got a letter from Kathern and Laliah. I was glad to hear from them. Mrs. Wynn wrote to me, she sent me a Testament. I sure was glad to hear about Big John getting saved. Have Bill to write to me when he gets time. I am marching in a U.S. Coast Guard parade in New Orleans Monday. We cross the river on a ferry boat. It costs 3 cents each to cross. I get liberty Sunday. I have been here 16 days. Payday was today. I have three dollars in the clear. I am sending you two of them. Does Bill and the boys get to go to the show on Saturday nights? Is daddy making those tire payments every month? I won't get to send home much money the first 4 months because I don't get but 21 dollars a month. If I don't go out on a boat I will probably be home in July or August. I sure would like to come home in time to go to the reunion in (May). Tell daddy to drop me a few lines if he gets time. I will have to close as I can't think of any more to write.

Answer Soon

Love, Kenneth Firey

P. S. Tell Betty and Bill hello and for them to write a few lines next time you write.

MARCH

Seaboard
RAILWAY

AIR-CONDITIONED TRAINS THE YEAR 'ROUND



John K. Firey
A.S.

U.S. Coast Guard
Station - Key West, Florida

April 23, 1942

Dear Mama

I left New Orleans two days ago. We went through Mississippi, Alabama and are in Florida now somewhere between Jacksonville and Miami. It sure is pretty country. There are orange trees in places as far as you can see. Alabama sure is a pretty place. It is flat country - every once in a while we came to a lake. I never saw so much pine trees in all my life. I am going to Key West, Florida and from there I don't know where. Don't even think of me coming home for at least three years. You can look on the map are see some of the big towns I came through. We went from New Orleans to Gulfport, Miss to Mobile, Alabama to Pensacola, Florida to Jacksonville to Miami Beach to Key West. I have saw a lot of country and I will see a lot lot more before I get home. I sure wish you could see Florida. I will be almost three thousand miles from home - that is a long ways. I have taken all my shots until we get to Key West. We will have to take three Yellow Fever shots. I will probably get to go to () or Cuba or some island off the coast of the U.S.A. Key West is 168 miles from Miami, Florida. It is a narrow strip of land. There isn't many white people there except tourists and () men. I will write again as soon as I get there. I will have to close for this time. Bye bye and answer as soon as you hear from me.

With Love,

Your Son, Kenneth Firey

P.S. Excuse my writing - I am on a fast bumpy train.

ROUTE OF THE ORANGE BLOSSOM SPECIAL AND SILVER METEOR

APRIL

Key West, Florida

May 30, 1942



Dear Mama

I got your letter yesterday. I was glad to hear from you. I guess you and daddy got the pictures that I sent you. Yes, there (is) plenty going on down here. I am ok. I hope you all are the same. I got a letter from Brother Keen yesterday. I have not changed boats. I am still on C.G. 10. You can address my letters, John K. Firey; USCG 10; Key West, Fla. I got your and daddy's letters the other day but due to the blackout, I have not had much time to answer. Mama, I will make Seaman Second Class in about three weeks. I will be making between 36 & 46 dollars a month. If I come home on the bus on my leave it will cost \$42 for the round trip. If nothing happens I will get leave in August. I will not get to send home much money until after my leave. I will make Seaman First in about three or four months after I make Seaman Second. The pay for Seaman First is fifty four a month. I haven't went to town but two times since I have been down here. I have my debts up at New Orleans all paid. I will send you five dollars my next pay day which is on June 5th. We get paid on the 5th & 20th of each month. I would like to get my debts paid back home before I come home on leave. I hope you folks make a good crop this year. I was glad to hear about Kathern getting a job at the cotton mill. I hope Bill gets over his cold. Does daddy have a garage built for my car or does he put it in the old garage. I hope he don't let it just sit and rot down. Well and well, I have to close as it is getting dark.

With Love,

Miami, Florida

July 12, 1942



Dear Mama

I received your letter a few days ago and was glad to hear from you. I got Bill's letter ok and was glad to hear from him. I guess you got the money I sent to you. Sure hope you did-I have a receipt on it. What is Roy Bileau and Goldie doing now. What is Moody and Dorothy doing. Send me Moody's address and I will write to him. I would sure like to hear from that old scrapper. Ha Ha. Send me a rodeo bill-I would sure like to see one. I am getting along fine. I will be going back to Key West soon, that is maybe. It was too bad about Mr. Monday. How is Mr. Baldridge getting along. What did you ever do about Jim Henderson? I guess Betty is mad at me because I never wrote to (her) like I should have. Ask Bill about the picture he was going to send me. I hope he got a shed built for my car. I don't get my mail from Key West very often so you may not hear from me as often as you should. I haven't heard from Kathern and Laliah for a long time. Have they moved yet or do you know? Did Charles ever get in the Air Corp. Well, I am running out of things to write, so I will ring off for this time and will write more next time.

With Lots of Love,

Your Son, Kenneth Firey

MAY



UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

Miami, Florida

(Postmarked) July 26, 1942

Dear Mama,

I got your letter today and was sure glad to hear from you. I will wait until I see that I won't get any leave-then I will send you the money. I may get it and I may not. It would just be my luck not to get to come home. I got a letter from Uncle John and he said that when I wrote to you folks to tell you to write to him-that he would really enjoy hearing from you folks. He said that Daddy never writes to him anymore. I told you that he sent me five dollars. It was really good of him. I am ok now but have been sick for about a week, guess it must have been a touch of malaria. I wonder if daddy will have enough feed to feed my horses this winter. If he don't, I will have you and Bill to buy some soon because it will be hard to get (there) winter time. Did the frost do very much damage to the crops up there? How much is cotton selling for this year? I got a letter from Kathen and she sent me a picture of Joe Pattrick, the boy that got killed in the Solomons. I was too bad-I used to run around with Joe in High School. He was really a fine boy. How long do you think that Big John will stay with you folks. It would be good if he would stay all winter and help little Bill. I sure hope that the family allowance come through that I signed up for. I won't get any pay until the middle of November because they are taking out the 22 dollars that I put with the Government's 28 dollars for back pay up until June. It might come through and it might not. It is hard to say. Well, Mom, I can't think of much to write about this time, so I will close and write more next time. Tell Bill and John to be good boys and write to me when they have time. Does Big John ever hear from Lawrence McCord? I wrote Uncle Earl a letter tonight. I'll bet he will be surprised to hear from me. Well, I will close and write more next time.

Love, Your Son

Kenneth Firey

JUNE



UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

Captain of the Port
MIAMI, FLORIDA

Miami, Florida

July 26, 1942

Dear Mom,

I finally got your letters from Key West, I thought that they was never going to send our mail to us. I was glad you got the money ok. I am going to save my money to come home on leave, but if I don't get leave, I will send it home. I am going to see to it that this is one fall you don't work out. I can send you thirty five or forty dollars a month. And that would be a lot more than you could make working. Well, I am getting along fine. We will be going back to Key West in a few days. I am sending you a picture of me in a Royal Dutch Navy uniform about a Dutch ship. I have lots of Dutch friends. So if I get any letters from Argentina or Dutch West Indies you can send them to me as I gave them my home address. How is everything up there by now? I got a letter from Jess Thompson the same time I got your letters. Have Bill and Betty to write to me as soon as they can. I hope you folks get the tombstone for Grandpa and Grandma soon. Would like to send you more money but if I come home, I don't see how I can do it. I am sending Betty a dollar to buy something for her birthday and Bill a dollar to go in his billfold. Well, I am running out of things to talk about so I better close,

With Lots of Love,

Your Son, Kenneth

JULY



U.S. NAVAL STATION
KEY WEST, FLORIDA

Key West, Florida

August 1, 1942

Dear Mom,

I got your letters ok and was glad to hear from you. I sent Betty & Bill a dollar each. Tell Betty not to get mad at me for not sending her a present too, but I just didn't know what to get her. We was in Miami six weeks and am leaving on a trip now so f I don't get to come home in September I will come home as soon as possible. Don't look for me until you see me coming. I sure do hope Bill's ear gets better. I got a letter from Goldie. She said that Roy was in Kansas. Mama, you don't need to send me anything because I have most anything I need. I would rather you buy something for yourself. Tell Bill to see after my car & horses and I will make it right with him. Be sure and give Bill all of my clothes and he can wear my suit any time he wants to because those clothes won't do me any good. Did Bill ever get that suit that he was going to get from Stone-mans? I went to the railroad depot and found out what it cost to go home. It cost \$43.00 for a round trip ticket from Key West to Tulsa. Well, I had better close for this time.

With Love,

Kenneth

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AUGUST

Key West, Florida

November 4, 1942



U.S. NAVAL STATION
KEY WEST, FLORIDA

Dear Mom,

I got both of your letters and was glad to hear from you. I thought that I never was going to get my mail. We are back in Key West now. We were in Miami for almost a month. Mom, I have been disappointed so many times on getting to come home that I just don't know when I can come home and don't look for me until you see me coming. On this boat, you never know what you are going to do ahead of time. We have got so much work lined up now that we will be busy a long time, at least that's the way it looks. You should be getting that money most any day now if you haven't already got it. I sure hope that I still have the \$50 that I was going to come home on and if and when I find out definitely that I don't get a leave, I will send it to you. If you get the government check, you should get two hundred & fifty dollars. I am glad that you got that insurance policy. I got worried and asked the paymaster about it and he said that it took about six or seven months before my parents would get it. It got my letters from Uncle Earl, one from Shepherd Field and one from Chicago. I got Bill's letter. I am getting along fine and hope all you folks are alright up home. Tell Bill and Betty that I will write to them real soon. Mom, when I got back here to Key West, I had twenty letters - sure was a stack of them. I am writing to you first as I always do. Manuel wrote me a letter and asked what I would take for old Babe. You find out what he will give for her and if you and daddy think you can get what she is worth, sell her because she is getting kinda old and I believe Manuel would take good care of her. What ever you folks think she is worth-it will be ok with me. If it was possible, you could trade her for one of those colts of Daddy's and Uncle Henry's. Well, anyway you just do what you think is best. In case anything should happen to me, I want you to have them horses of mine. Well, it is getting late and I had better close for the time.

Love,

Your Son, Kenneth

SEPTEMBER



UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

(Couldn't Make Out Location??)

January 10, 1944

Dear Mom,

I got both of your and Betty's letter today. I like it fine here. I expect to be here three or four months at least. But I might not be here that long. I was down in Ft. Pierce for the week end. It was my first weekend off since I have been in the service. Do you think that Bill will get to stay on the farm. I sure hope so and from the way the papers read he will stand a good chance. I got Uncle Earl's package and also Betty's too and sure do appreciate everything. It is kinda cold here now and we are right here on the beach and the ocean breezes sure hit us. Well, Mama, I can't seem to think of any thing to write this time. How are my horses getting along. Daddy never said. Well, I'll close for how.

Love,

Kenneth

OCTOBER



UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

Ft. Pierce, Florida

May 9, 1944

Dear Mama,

Well, Mom, I just got my orders to leave Saturday, May 13th, to either Curtis Bay, Maryland or Brooklyn, New York to go to Water Tender School. So don't guess I will be home for some time. The school will last three months and I will get a leave then. It will be around the first of September before I can come. But in case any of you should get bad sick, be sure and wire me and I think I could come home on anything like that. Well, I'll write you again before I leave here. Tell daddy that I'll write him soon. Well, this is just a note to tell you that I can't come home. Say, Mama, did you get the card and pillow top that I sent you for Mothers Day? That was about all I could find. Well, I got to go now so I'll write you soon. This leaves me feeling ok and sure hope you all are the same.

Love,

Your Son, Kenneth

P. S. May 13th, am leaving here on 11:30 a.m. train-Saturday morning for Curtis Bay, Maryland. Will write before I go. Sorry I can't come home.

NOVEMBER



UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

Curtis Bay, MD

May 15, 1944

Dear Mama,

Well, I got here this morning and had a nice trip coming up. I will be here in school for three months and back to Florida for assignment to duty there. I hear that we will get a leave when we get out of school so it won't be too long until I will be home. Well, how is everything up home by now? I don't know how I will like it here but think it will be okay. We are about 50 miles from Washington DC and about 500 from New York City. Have Bill to write me when he can. I will write you again soon. Tell Betty I will write her too. This leaves me okay and hope it finds everyone the same.

Love,

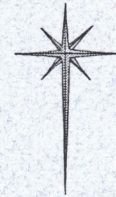
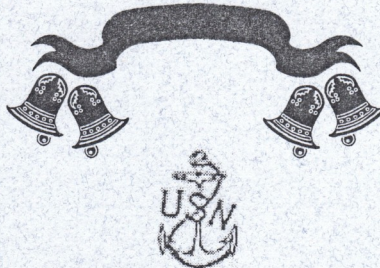
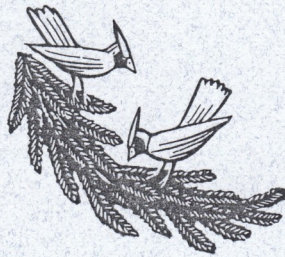
Kenneth

P. S. Mama, this is my address although it may change a little later on:

John K. Firey, SC1 530-133
US Coast Guard Training Sta.
WTS Barrack 113
Curtis Bay, Baltimore, 26, MD

(I am going to Water Tender School)

DECEMBER



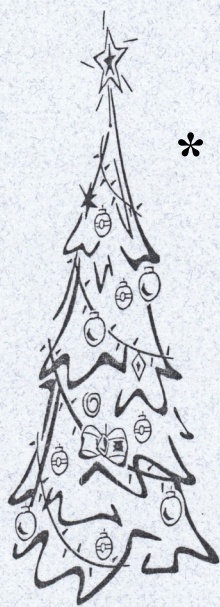
Key West, Florida

December 22, 1942

U.S. NAVAL STATION
KEY WEST, FLORIDA

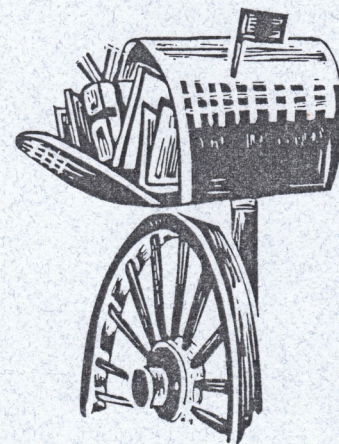
Dear Mom,

How is everybody up home by now? I got the wrist watch & thanks a million. I received your and daddy's letters ok and was glad to hear from you. I am alright and hope things are the same at home. I was glad that you got the house fixed up. I'll bet it is



*

sure cold up there by now. It has been awfully cool down here the last few days but is getting warmer now. Mom, when you write to Cynthia Read, get James' address and I will write to him. I will also write to Cynthia if you send me her address. Did you get your December payment from the government?



You didn't say in your letters so I just wondered. I hope that Betty's cold is better by now. I hope little Bill does good hunting this year. Mr. and Mrs. Stoneman sent me a good box of home made candy for Christmas and it was really good. I have got a lot of Christmas cards this year. Thanks a lot for the Christmas cards - they are sure good. Well, Mom, I will

thank you again for the watch, it is the best present I ever got and I am proud of it. I am going to have some pictures made next payday and send you a large one of me in my blue uniform. I don't get any money any more but think I will be getting some soon. Have Bill to write when he has time. Here's wishing you all a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

* **01-21-21 Note: In this letter, Kenneth asked for cousin James Read's address. James was later killed on 5-11-45 in the Battle of Okinawa, the last major battle of WW2 (4-1-45 thru 6-22-45). There was a recent major movie called Hacksaw Ridge, a true story centered around a true account of this battle.**

Love and Best Wishes,

Your Son, Kenneth

Those Killed: Americans 12,520 Japanese 110,000 and 40,000 to 150,000 Okinawa citizens