

[Senator Joe McCarthy: Audio Excerpts, 1950-1954](#)

Excerpt Title: War story: writing letters to families of deceased, 1951

Date of recording: 1951-05-05

Audience: Young Republicans of Marathon County

Location: Wausau (Wis.)

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TRANSCRIPT OF EXCERPT

Senator McCarthy speaking:

When I see this picture in the Pacific, of which I had some slight experience myself -- when I see the vast efforts put forth by important segments of our government to make sure that we lose the victory -- it takes me back to an evening about which I've told some of you before, but it covers it so well I would like your indulgence while I relate the story again.

I was with a Marine dive bombing squadron and one of my tasks was to write letters home to the young wives, the young mothers, after we'd lost a number of pilots and gunners. I recall this one day particularly -- one night -- it was after one of our attacks on Hospital Ridge, a strong Jap anti-aircraft emplacement, and a great number of letters had to be written that night. As I sat in my dugout struggling over them -- it was a difficult task -- as I sat in my dugout struggling over them I didn't know that night especially -- I had so many to write -- what to write to those young women, what I could do to be of some benefit. Whether I'd be helping them or whether I'd be merely digging and probing into a wound that would be better left to heal. You'd perhaps write and tell that unfortunate young woman that her husband had been great Marine pilot, a great Marine gunner. You knew that wouldn't mean much because that young man was dead now. And if, as was often the case, his body was lost over the Pacific, then you had to explain why his grave would remain forever unmarked. You'd perhaps write and tell her that his headstone was the great, vast, moon-swept, wind-tossed Pacific -- the greatest known to the mind of Man and the greatest any fighting man could hope for. You knew that wouldn't

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mean much either -- certainly not much to a mother who was denied even the right to kneel at her son's grave.

I recall as I was working over these letters the chaplain entered, and I said, "Chaplain, what can I tell these young women? What can I tell them that will be of some benefit?" He said, "McCarthy I'll tell you what to tell them. You write and tell them -- you tell them that we the American people, 150 million of us, make them the solemn promise that not one drop of blood will be wasted." He said, "You tell them that we the American people make the solemn promise that that young man died for something really worthwhile." He said, "You tell them that when this whole gory, sorry, bloody mess is over that then there will arise a new world, a world that is to at least some extent cleaner and finer and more decent." And he said, "You tell them that wherever that young man is, that wherever that young man is, when that day comes, his will be almost the divine joy of being able to say as he looks at this new world: all of this I saw, part of it I was, and much of it I am." I thought that was an excellent idea and I wrote many letters like that that night and many before I left the Pacific.

But as I see as I see what has been happening over the past five years, ladies and gentlemen, as I see men who've been given the highest position this nation has to offer, as I see the Secretary of State a year ago last January -- getting up in what he thought was a secret session -- describing the communist victory in Asia, describing the sellout, if you please, of 400 millions of our allies into atheistic communistic slavery -- as I hear him describe that, and these are his words, "As the dawning of a new day." As I hear his top advisor, the architect for the Far East, referring to it, referring again to the communist victory as "the opening of limitless horizons of hope" then I can't help, I can't help but hope and pray that none of those young women have saved any of those letters, because God knows we have certainly, hopelessly, and miserably failed to even remotely attempt to fulfill a promise which they certainly were entitled to think was made to them in all decency and honesty.