

Forty-Five Letters from a World War II Sailor: How to Fulfill Your American Dreams

Robert W. Bradshaw, Editor

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Forty-Five Letters from a World War II Sailor is a real testament to Frank Bradshaw's service.

History buffs can read textbooks until they're blue in the face, but nothing gives more credence to a past event like a primary source. In *Forty-Five Letters from a World War II Sailor: How to Fulfill Your American Dreams*, Robert W. Bradshaw puts together a compilation of notes that his father, Frank B. Bradshaw Jr., wrote to his "Dearest Mother and Daddy." This series of letters results in an eye-opening account through part of the Second World War (and after) from December 1944 to September 1946.

During this two-year tumultuous span of time, Bradshaw encountered a lot, and his letters are quite fascinating to read. Beginning his letters in Pass Christian, Mississippi, and ending them in Galveston, Texas, Bradshaw paints a portrait of one of the most dangerous eras of history, one where the ships he was assigned to were constantly making treks across the ocean and back again. Promises made to him by higher-ups were often broken, and he never seemed to have a planned sense of where he would go to next.

Each letter is only a few pages long, easy to read, and set up in exactly the same way. Frank's words are his words, so it's impossible to comment on the writing quality. However, Robert, the editor, enhances each note greatly by adding a world map; in this way, Frank's journey from city to city can be seen at a glance.

The cover features an image of a handwritten note from June 10, 1945, but it seems odd that Frank's name isn't listed anywhere on the cover as being the author of the letters. Only editor Robert Bradshaw's name is listed on the front. Robert ends the book with his own three-part conclusion, but the first two parts don't have much relevance to what the rest of the book is about and are a bit jarring to read. In part 3, he returns to relating the conclusion to his father, and it is a nice wrap-up. The appendix is a heartwarming ending to Frank's legacy of service, with a thank-you note from President Truman and an acceptance letter to—and subsequent graduation program from—Cornell University.

One doesn't have to be a history aficionado to enjoy *Forty-Five Letters from a World War II Sailor*. It is a real testament to Frank Bradshaw's service.

KELLY THUNSTROM (December 1, 2015)

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