

H.D. Gault

to

Frances Owens

08/24/1942

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Transcribed and Edited by Diana E. New

For ENGL 618: Research Methods in English

Instructor and General Editor: Dr. Brian Gastle

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Introduction to the Series

This transcription and its attendant annotations, explanatory material, and bibliography were prepared by students in ENGL 618: Research Methods in English, the required gateway class for the MA in English at Western Carolina University. The learning outcomes for this class include the following:

1. Conduct appropriate, effective, and ethical scholarship
 - a. Effectively find and use advanced research tools (handbooks, databases, guides, bibliographies, etc.) appropriate to a subject.
 - Students will be able to use a wide variety of such tools and evaluate those tools.
 - b. Find appropriate advanced research (print and electronic scholarship) and apply that research to specific disciplinary questions or issues.
 - Students will be able to find a variety of scholarship, evaluate both the appropriateness and rigor of that scholarship, and incorporate that scholarship correctly and effectively.
 - c. Develop accurate bibliographies and reference citations.
 - Students will be able to annotate, abstract, and cite materials following standard MLA format.
2. Understand the process by which the texts we use are made available.
 - Students will be able to conduct basic editorial work and evaluate the editorial work of others.

All work is presented as submitted by the students. While these students take great care with their transcriptions and annotations, errors are always possible. As these students learn throughout this class, good scholarship requires checking of sources and corroboration by authoritative sources.

It is hoped that the transcription and annotation of WCU Special Collections materials will be useful to the institution, students, scholars, and other patrons and users of WCU's Special Collections materials.

Introduction:

Harry Davison Gault, Jr. worked with Samuel Owens on a submarine tended by the *Canopus* as a Torpedo's Mate First Classman during the ship's time in Mariveles Bay from December 29, 1941 until the surrender of the Bataan on April 9, 1942. Gault was 53 years of age—29 years Owens' senior—and had been enlisted in the Navy since 1918. When the *Canopus* was ordered scuttled and sunk on April 10, Gault and Owens had already been stranded on the fortified island of Corregidor for four months after their submarine was sunk by the Japanese. After the fall of the Bataan, the *Canopus* sent submarines to Corregidor as rescues for their men. The ship was not able to rescue all of their men before its sinking on April 10 and while Gault made it off of the island, Owens had not. After Gault had been rescued, he learned that the Japanese had made it to the island before Owens could be rescued and that Owens was among the remaining Navy personnel who had been taken prisoners of war.

Gault wrote this letter to Owen's mother, Frances Elvira Alexander Owens—Mrs. Steven John Owens—while finishing up his service with the U.S.S. *Otus* on August 24, 1942, one month before his reenlistment. Mrs. Owens had written to her son numerous times after the Attack on Pearl Harbor. Her letters were stamped "Return to Sender by the order of the U.S. Navy" and were postmarked August 1942, so it is likely the letters never made it to Samuel. She received no response from Samuel, except for a letter dated January 5, 1942. In the letter, Samuel indicates he is free from danger and that there is no need to worry. He also states that there is no use in writing him for a while, and that she will be notified if anything bad should happen. Gault seems to have had a close relationship with Owens, and his letter acts as a notification for Owens' mother of her son's capture.

In the letter, Gault describes the time he and Samuel spent on Corregidor. His narrative leads up to the *Canopus*' attempts to rescue their men from the island before its scuttling and Owens' capture as a prisoner of war. My aim in transcribing this letter was to preserve the text of this document with little editorial intrusion. While the document highlights areas of biographical information in the footnotes, the goal in editing this document was to preserve Gault's original text. To preserve Gault's original sentiments this transcription does not clean up obvious errors in text, or regularize spelling, punctuation, or capitalization.

24 Aug. 1942

Mrs. S.J. Owens,

Just a few words concerning your son Red¹. I know you would like to hear a little about him if you could. Can't say too much but I'll try.

The ship Red was on was sunk by our own forces to keep it from falling into enemy hands. I'm quite sure you know the area this ship stayed in peace line². Your son never left this area. He was transferred to a near by fortified island³ where he stayed until the Japs captured the place on May 6th⁴. He worked on a job in connection with his rating⁵. His living quarters were in a tunnel where it was fairly healthful and safe eating two meals a day that kept him going but certainly added no fat to anyone.

During the 4 months I was with him on the island he experienced a large amount of shelling and very severe bombing. During the last 3 weeks he was under constant bombardment from both. He saw over 3 hundred air raids.

When I last saw him on the 10th of April⁶ he asked me to say not to worry about him and that if he got out of it OK he would be home after the war.

All of us liked Red very much and certainly wished that he could have been one of the men that was lucky enough to get out. I'll be willing to bet he gave those Japs a run for their money if he got a chance.

That's about all I can say now. If there is any questions I can answer I'd be glad to do so.

Sincerely yours,

Harry D. Gault, TM 1/c

U.S. Navy

¹ Gault's nickname for Samuel Owens

² Owens' ship was stationed in Mariveles Bay near Manila, General McArthur declared Manila in the Bataan an "Open City," to prevent it from becoming devastated by war

³ Corregidor, island fortress at the entrance of Manila Bay in southwestern part of Luzon Island in the Philippines, fortified with coastal artillery to defend the entrance of Manila Bay and Manila from attacks by enemy warships, troops survived in tunnels that contained the necessities to live: food, kitchens, hospitals, etc.

⁴ Corregidor surrendered to the Japanese on May 6, all U.S. vessels had been scuttled or destroyed or lost to enemy action, most Navy personnel became Japanese prisoners of war

⁵ Owens held the rank of Torpedo's Mate Second Class

⁶ On this day, the Canopus was scuttled and sunk to deny her use to the enemy after troops had been surrendered during the Bataan Death March, WWII. This was also Owen's birthday. He was born April 10, 1918. He was 24-years-old the last time Gault had seen him before composing this letter