
Rest Camp USA ?

Editors Note: Until member Andrew Lopez gave me a copy of the order shown below at the 1997 reunion in Washington, DC, I had no idea that 30 day leaves were given for rest at home in the USA before a tour of duty was completed. The letter shown here is an authentic reproduction of the original.

HEADQUARTERS
UNITED STATES ARMY AIR FORCES
MEDITERRANEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS
A.P.O. 650

14 July 1944.

SUBJECT: Return to the United States for Rest.

TO: S/Sgt Andrew NMI Lopez, 16148777.

1. Under a policy which has been approved by the Commanding General, Army Air Forces, you are being returned to the United States for a minimum of thirty days for a well earned and well deserved rest because of your long and excellent combat service in this theater. This plan was recommended and has been approved because of the belief that the Service will benefit by giving you a period of rest at home. I personally am delighted to see you get this fitting reward for the skill and courage and success you have had in this theater.
2. The Air Force Commanders were told by me to select the most deserving members of their organization for the initiation of this program. The fact that you have been selected among this number automatically places you high on our list of outstanding combat crew members deserving this privilege. Despite the fact that you are returning home, a great responsibility rests upon you This theater and all of the Air Force Officers and men in it whom you leave behind and their work will be Judged by the impression you make on the officials and the people at home. If you show evidences of poor training, or exhibit personal characteristics which are not the marks of an outstanding soldier, all of us who remain behind and have the responsibility for continuing the battle will suffer. What is even more important, this program for rest and rehabilitation of combat crews is being tried out; you can Jeopardize that program by loose talk or improper conduct. On the other hand, you can assure that the program will be a success by prompt and cheerful compliance with orders and by exhibiting at all times the outstanding characteristic of a well trained, hard fighting American Air Force combat crew member. I Wish you would think this over and take it very much to heart and, by your deportment en route to the United States and in the United States, convince all the officers and men with whom you come in contact, and the civilian populace as well, that you are a representative member of an excellent military organization.
3. I am happy that you are getting this opportunity to see your home, your friends and your loved ones. You have performed able and efficient services for the Air Force in the Mediterranean Theater of Operations and all of us who remain behind wish you well on your Journey and are looking forward eagerly to the time when you return to help us in the battle.

IRA C. EAKER,
Lieutenant General, U.S.A
Commanding