

**NAME:** John

**RANK:** Not Available, Chaplain Corps

**ORGANIZATION:** 172nd Infantry Regiment

**OVERSEAS WARTIME SERVICE:** Asiatic-Pacific Theater of Operations

- The following text is directly from an original wartime letter written by John. This is the only letter from John in the site curator's possession.
- The following text is presented under public domain provisions for educational purposes.
- No controversial material has been omitted from the following text. No grammatical or spelling errors have been corrected.

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**John writes a soldier's wife in the United States between late 1942 and early 1943:**

“172<sup>nd</sup> Inf.  
A.P.O. 708  
c/o Postmaster  
San Francisco

Dear Mrs. Smith:

Your good husband Sgt. Smith has asked me to write to reassure you that he is safe and well, on this beautiful island somewhere in the Coral Sea. I am Chaplain X who arrived here recently with the 172<sup>nd</sup> Inf...I have been saying Mass for the 182<sup>nd</sup> and using your husbands tent for confessions. He has been wonderful to me and his good example has a powerful influence on the men under him. Honestly, I've never seen such Faith as these boys practice. They recite the rosary together every night and receive the sacraments every chance they have.

You can be sure the Good Lord and his Holy Mother will protect them and return them safely to their loved ones. Keep on praying and trust in God. With a wife like you the Sgt really has something to fight for so write often to encourage him and be assured he is very well –

Fr. X”

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- John made it through the Second World War and passed away in his 50s. When Sergeant Smith passed away is unknown.
  - **For visual context, this link connects to an original wartime period film in the public domain that covers the above time period and John's organization (viewer discretion advised):**  
<https://archive.org/details/WingedVictoryOnFoot>
  - **For additional detail, this link connects to the Wikipedia article that covers John's wartime organization, the 172<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment (reader discretion advised):**  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/172nd\\_Infantry\\_Regiment\\_\(United\\_States\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/172nd_Infantry_Regiment_(United_States))