

Nov 13, 1944

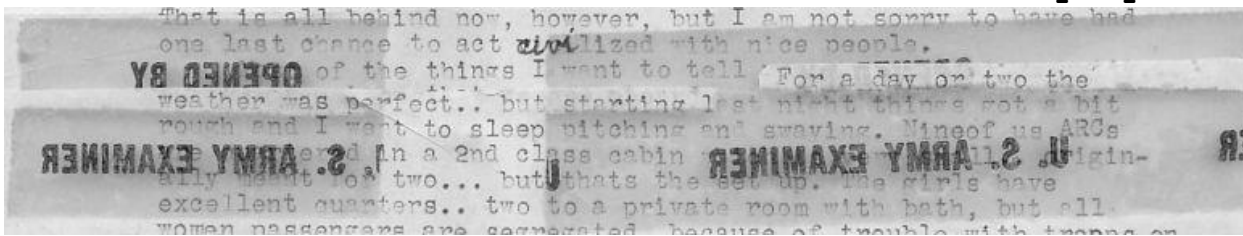
At sea... somewhere in
the Pacific

My darling Katherine:

Your letter of Nov. 4 was delivered to me just before we embarked... also two letters from father... who seemed very much disturbed. Please write him often darling, and if you do not send him all of my letters, be sure to let him know when you get them.. so he will not worry.

Things went swell on the west coast at Seattle Wash. We were quartered in casual officer's barracks at a fine camp.. and while it was a bit rugged to build a fire in the stove on a cold morning, we made out alright. One of my refrigeration friends took me to the local athletic club, and I obtained a temporary membership in the local press club... so there was plenty of good food and lots of scotch.

That is all behind now, however, but I am not sorry to have had one last chance to act civilized with nice people.



One of the things I want to tell (censored) For a day or two the weather was perfect.. but starting last night things got a bit rough and I went to sleep pitching and swaying. Nine of us ARCs were quartered in a second class cabin (censored) all originally meant for two.. but that's the set up. The girls have excellent quarters.. two to a room with bath, but all women passengers are segregated, because of trouble with troops on previous trips. Only about half the gals showed up for lunch this noon... to give you some idea of the weather.

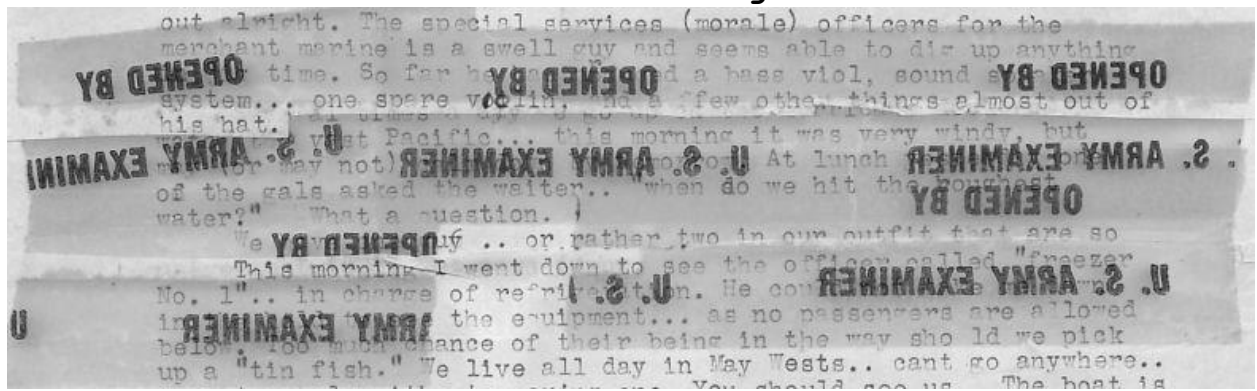
After we came aboard we had a chance to watch the troops load through the long evening before we sailed. It was just out of this world... They came aboard in single file, carrying full gear up the gangplank.. helmet, rifle, duffle bag.. which has all their worldly possessions including blanket roll. Some groups were singing.. others strangely silent... It was my first composite picture of GI Joe... the American soldier you

read about. I am already convinced that he is... in the mass.. the greatest guy in the world. We have a group of young officers, like Dint aboard... troops are under control of the army, the ship is operated by the merchant marine.. with naval officers in charge at the top. Some set-up.

Our mess is far better than you could get in most large hotels.. in fact it is about the best I've ever eaten anywhere except a place like Hot Springs, Va. Last eve for example we had good soup, celery, olives, lettuce and tomato salad, roast turkey, good dressing, sweet potatoes, brocolli, ice cream (choc) with cake and beverage. This A.M. had roast beef hash with egg, large orange juice, excellent Danish pastry made on the ship, and lots of coffee. Will get fat as a pig.

Up to now my mail was flown across the country by ARC and delivered without censor. From now on it will go through censor, so do not put "Opus so-and-so" on the letters, but date them... and if you can remember when you wrote last, refer to the previous letter by date. Nothing that even may appear to be a code or a code number can appear. Also, write on one side of paper only, as if they cut anything out I don't want to lose what is on the other side.

Already we are busy on ship. I am helping organize a show that will be put on for the GIs. One for the officers, and then, if the weather is good, on deck for the ARC and the civilian females. We have the best part of an excellent orchestra on board... which was shy a piano player, of all things... so last night I sat in with the rehearsal with a 14 piece dance band.. what a thrill. Got lost a few times in some of the complicated special arrangements, but managed to make out all right. On the show we have the band.. two good hillbilly bands with singers, one baritone, one excellent musician complete with regalia, Charlie Plumb is doing a chalk talk.. etc. etc. it should work out alright.



The special services (morale) officer for the merchant marine is a swell guy who seems to be able to dig up anything in no time. So far he has found a bass viol, sound system... one spare violin, and a few other things almost out of his hat.

(censored) vast Pacific. This morning it was very windy, but may (or may not) (censored). At lunch (censored) one of the gals asked the waiter.. "When do we hit the roughest water?" What a question.

¹ This morning I went down to see the officer called "freezer no. 1" in charge of refrigeration. He could (censored) the equipment... as no passengers are allowed below. Too much chance of their being in the way should we pick up a "tin fish". (end of censor's tape, shown above)

We live all day in May Wests².. can't go anywhere.. even to meals without wearing one. You should see us. The boat is very fast however, and no underwater craft could possibly keep up with it. So there is little chance of damage unless one of the subs was actually lying in wait.. perish the thought.

Please have Jeanette pick up my boots at the airport.. Send her the shipping order... and take them to ARC mail section.. 930 "H" St Washington, and they will tell her how much postage to put on so they can be sent on to me.. if they ever catch up with me. Somehow I lost my old civilian shoes in Wash. in the hotel and while these officers low quarter shoes are very fine, they are hard to break in and my feet are plenty sore. And they are all I have with me... wish to god I had some Bass moccassins or something soft to wear. Also picked up a nasty cold on the mainland, while in camp, but will get over it soon, I am sure. One of the ships officers gave me some Kleenex, which is about the scarcest thing in this war.

Somehow I do not feel that this whole thing was any mistake. In the first month I have lived at least two full

¹ [Note: This whole section had a large censor's sticker (shown above) taped over it, so what is left is what we could read through that. Not much paper excision had happened yet, and they did not then do any blacking out (redaction). -- <https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/redaction> One section may have been excised. One wonders whether censors left stuff undeneath semi-translucent tape because they did not really think the Japanese could or would bother trying to read it.]

² A May West was a life jacket (giving the wearer a larger bosom).

years... I do not expect all this glamour later on, as there is a lot of damn serious work to be done, but it certainly has been some experience so far.

Have not written to any of the boys at the factory.. there just does not seem to be time. Will have to get a note out to Blackie or Andy in the next day or two. By the way.. overseas airmail is 6¢ per 1/2 ounce.. so put 12¢ on letters, unless there is some other regulation in Detroit.. better look it up.

Hope your deal with ARC works out the way you would like. I know you would enjoy it and it would give you some of the extra income you are sure to need. I have sent a couple of stories to PBR, but it may be months before a check catches up with me. Oh, gosh.. but I would like a little dough to spend where I am going to be on the first stop.

Sometime soon Isobel should get some word from Jean, and I hope she gets in touch with you immediately, as I know you will be waiting for some word about that little situation. Be sure and send her your address.

Tell the children, and also Dinah, that I am thinking about all of you every day, and already planning for all of us to re-trace this route someday when peace is here again. I know you would love it.. Dinah particularly. Tell Barbara that the ship's dog is the sweetest thing imagineable.. but I can't figure out what kind.

Under security I can tell you some of the places I have visited (previously) but cannot dislose where I am at the time, so may soon be able to give you a better account of the trip. Tell the Jaques hello.. and the rest.

I love you all my precious ones..

Yours own,



Nov. -18 -

Starting - we are here!