



## AMERICAN RED CROSS

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My dearest Katherine:

"The season" is upon us again... it rains and pours, and rains again.. the "red dirt" becomes a sea of mud.. but the flowers keep right on blooming in their tropical splendor.

Well.. its over.. Christmas I mean. Perhaps its a terrible thing to admit, but I dreaded to have it come, as I had a pretty good idea how it would be not to be with you and the children. All things considering, however, I made out better than I had any right to expect.

Had to work Sat - Sunday and Christmas.. but did not mind that, as I was glad to be busy. Sun. eve I caught a bus to town and went directly to Jeans... to a gorgeous party. The in-laws all stopped in to bring the kids presents and have Christmas drinks, and then about the time they cleared out five young Navy officers arrived.. and they were wonderful. They came in eating hamburgers, but that did not keep them from enjoying the whole (cold) roast turkey that Jean had ready for us on a card table. We sang all of the songs in the book.. two of the officers played the piano, and one had a grand voice.. we even got Papa Lennox (Stew's father) going on "Dear Old Girl." etc. We all had a wonderful evening, and Jean looked her Christmas best in a startling red hostess gown. About 10 o'clock Stew's brother and his wife took me down to the hotel, and it was then too late to catch the last bus to camp. The hotel was one howling mob of officers celebrating Christmas. I wound up with Dick Mowrer (Chicago Daily News)... you have read many of his articles. Christmas morning he woke me up.. put a glass in my hand and said, "Drink this.. your going to need it." With that he remarked, "Here it is Christmas and only enough whiskey left to last until noon.." and disappeared out the door. Have not seen him since. I beat it for camp, as I had to be on my station at 9 o'clock.

## AMERICAN RED CROSS

Christmas afternoon John Undercofer, our "ex" field director, who is still sweating out transportation down under, came around and took me calling in a nearby town. Our hostess was the lady who runs the local chapter of ARC. Her colonel made some excellent egg noggs and we all admired the Siamese cats, that are out of this world. They are sort of a buff-mouse color.. but tails, feet, and heads are dark blue.. called "silver tips"... have short hair, and are very clean looking creatures. They act like dogs.. and Santa Claus had brought them dried shrimp, which they ate like popcorn. So on to town. Joe Rubenson and a Navy Commander took me out to the hotel, and we had a marvelous Christmas dinner ... in fact perfect.

Twenty-five pound turkey and everything complete to the pumpkin pie - with whipped cream on it. Oh I forgot.. at noon on Christmas one of the officers who runs the quartermaster mess where we eat called up and said, "Here we have this gorgeous dinner ready and no one is showing up to eat... come on over". Rather than offend the guy, three of us and three ARC gals went over and had dinner. What we had is described in the enclosed menu.. and it was wonderful. Got back to camp last night at 10 o'clock sharp, so stuffed that I could hardly drag myself to bed. Merry Christmas.

It's so wet here tonight even the paper is limp. Don't dare look at my winter uniform.. it would be too much of a shock to see the mildew. The damndest things happen. Yesterday morning a wire came in... "inform so-and-so father died Dec. 19 result of auto accident Dec. 9. service man has no knowledge of injury family bearing up well." Christmas morning.. of all things. I called the CO and asked who was company chaplain. It was a tank outfit and not attached. He said they had no regular chaplain, but to call so-and so (Catholic). I called the little father at his quarters, and he said in effect. "I can't get up there today.. give the message to the CO. I can't be bothered on Christmas." I was so burned up I could hardly talk.. but finally called the CO back and said the father would not function and suggested that he bring the boy to the office and we talk with him. I wanted to call the commanding chaplain on the post, but thought better of it. About the time I expected the officer and the soldier, in came a protestant chaplain, who explained that the CO had called him. so he went out with the message.

## AMERICAN RED CROSS

He said, why did you call Fr. so-and-so-- the boy is not Catholic... Oh me. Such a business.

Stan the Doughnut Man is leaving tomorrow. He will spend a couple of weeks in town ordering supplies and before long will head down under to establish clubmobile. Hate to see him leave, as his high good humor is the only saving grace in this set up. Charlie Plumb is at a nearby station but has almost killed himself drinking, and has been much in the hospital of late.. getting barium ex-rays. Will tell you more about that little business when the war is over. Christmas morning Stan said, "Well, Santa Claus is not the only guy that didn't come this week-end." Christmas eve he spent with the GIs out in the brush.. bull session, songs, cracker eating contest, and all the gags they love. He knows how to do it. Yesterday he went to a reunion of the 100th Batallion.. the Jap-American boys that had the wonderful record in Italy, and who are all his friends. About 30% died, about 30% are in hospitals, and the balance are casualls scattered around the island, so they can be near their homes. They had a magnificent record in Italy. At one time they were advancing so fast they almost took Rome all by themselves, but were ordered to sit down in the mud and wait. That was Christmas, last year. Don't blame them for wanting to be known as an Hawaiian group.

Mail has stopped again. I think airmail has been coming out on boats, as it shuts off for a few days and then lands in a deluge.

Letter in today from father quoting from a letter from Mr. Dawe, who still hands out the old malarkey by the boatload... If it helps father its O. K. with me. His set-up sounds like Hawaii.. it rains, and the sun shines .. except in the rainy season here... now it just rains.

Hope to have a letter from you soon telling me all about your Christmas.. sorry the package did not get to you on time.. but it was one of those things... someday I really am going to send you something besides a purse.. but beggars can't be choosers this year.

The other day I brought home a whole ham from the commissary store and the boys thought I had lost my mind. Baked

## AMERICAN RED CROSS

it with sugar and stuff ..and it has been just wonderful.. Swift's. Tonight we (4 of us) had another meal off it.. cold ham, American fries, stewed tomatoes, string beans, cheese, pickles, bread, and butter, very welcome change from the officer's club, where the food is not bad, but as Dint said, its "always the same."

Have not started keeping the journal you suggested.. but know I should do it. Now that I have a full load of case work at the office, and I mean full... I find little time there to do anything. We get back to the house about five. Gab for a while.. go to the club for dinner and two or three nights a week a movie.. fights, etc. etc. Then, the evenings we have are short, and it does not pay to stay up late. Tonight, for instance, I should write to the folks, Jo, Dint, Orme Cheatham, and write some copy that has been kicking about in my head for days. What I really need is a mimeograph... but could never use it for you... what I should do is get out a "news bulletin" of activities, and supplement it with personal note.. how about that?

The other night in the hotel Mowrer had a Jap skull, all covered with autographs.. and had it tied on his head.. then he wrapped a bed skirt round himself and carried an enormous Jap parasol. He was going up and down the halls wishing all comers a Merry Christmas. What a guy.

Do you really have serious plans about leaving Detroit? Let me know what you have in mind, as I'm truly interested. Another thing I want to know is how you are getting along, because if the going gets too rough for you and the chicks you know damn well I would come home. It will be a number of weeks before I get an assignment forward, and during that time I want you to let me know what I should do. Consider that once I leave here I may be 45 to 60 days on the water, and it may be four months before you have as much as a letter.. and then will have no idea where I am. This place is a deluxe whistlestop in the Pacific, and as you may have gathered has more of everything available than you have in Detroit, or any place I have seen in years. Going down under, however, will be an entirely different matter from many angles, particularly that of communications. We get two dozen letters a day in the office, "We have not heard

## AMERICAN RED CROSS

from Pvt. Smith for 6 months.. 8 months..a year" We either find that he went down under and has not been heard of since or is back here somewhere in a hospital. This war is no picnic. We seem to be catching holy hell in Europe right now, from what I read in the daily Honolulu papers. While the Pacific war is "going well" it is still one hell of a mess. So let me know, darling, how you are, and how you feel about everything.. before I take off for parts unknown.

Have been reading a bit of "Barefoot Boy With Cheek".. a satire on college life at the University of Minnesota. Not too well done, but being familiar with the campus I have enjoyed it no end. The guy is not a top notch humorist yet; but he is in his twenties and may have the making of one. Also reading Menckens "Heathen Days". Would give my left ear for any Dec. 1944 issue of Sat Eve post. Why don't you mail me one now and then?

Think the ban on packages will be over now that Christmas is past.. don't let them give you any guff at the post office.. People here get packages every day that have been sent in recent weeks.. Small packages, wrapped, first class mail.. plenty of stamps and they seem to come right through. And please let me know which of my letters that you receive.. and when you get them.

And here's a good night kiss for you my sweet.. and one for each of the kintern... oh darling.. the going has been rough the past few days.. but we can't admit that.. can we. I love you so.

Yours  
Henry.