



AMERICAN RED CROSS

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at sea...
undated Pacific war.

My dearest Katherine:

Am sitting on a bench in the troop compartment, where it is hot enough to make your eyebrows crawl, but if I don't get this off to you, the mail boat might go without it, and that would be tragic. This is what you call an enervating climate.. any number of times a day you are tempted to lie right down flat, and in the morning you feel like having been run over by a truck.. my mattress gets soaked clear through.

Once again we are lying off a group of atolls, and once again there is no way of getting ashore. Because of the fact that we have to be ready to move at a moment's notice, no one can leave the ship. Anyway, we are a hell of a ways from the nearest military habitation... although it would be an exciting ride in a small boat. But, as Dorothy Parker says, here we are. There was supposed to be mail here for us, but some sad sack fouled up that detail.. as there is no mail.

Somehow I have the feeling that I have never lived anywhere but on this vessel... even Oahu seems remote and far away... like something I dreamed about. The days go by in monotonous regularity, one much like the other.. you have to stop and think to remember the date and day in the week.. but what matter anyway?

Recently we had communion service aboard ship... I attended but did not participate. It was something however, to watch the line of soldiers, sailors, officers, and marines, walk across that platform at the close of the service and have the chaplain put the sacrament on their tongue.

Garrett took some pictures of the service, and hope to retain one for the record. My article, "Red Cross Girds for Battle" is completed and will go forward thru channels in the



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next few days. Wanted some pix of the boys in combat gear, but when I suggested taking some today they revolted... it was just too hot. Although they will get plenty hot wearing those outfits soon enough. Am mailing a copy of the Poi dog story to the children... and copy to my agent in New York. If she can find an illustrator it might click. But here is always the chance neither copy will get through.

This evening there is boxing and another movie. Most of the latter are lousy, but it is a godsend to have something to do. When we are in port they are held out on deck where it is fairly cool in the evening.

Have been thinking of you and the kintern so much in recent days.. being cut off from the world completely makes me wonder, of course, but it seems to be something much deeper... Perhaps I had to come way out here to this plane that is hot enough to be close to hell to realize what you all mean to me... do you suppose so too? Today a boat came along side that looked like a minesweep... but it wasn't.. but it made me realize that my two year stint will be short compared to the time Nicky has been out here and will continue to be out here.

Today I inspected all the ship's refrigeration equipment. They have three big ships stores boxes.. one for meat (frozen), one for vegetables, and one for dairy products. very fine modern equipment... all GE... will make a good story for Phil, so I will write it up soon and get it out of here.

Wonder if Joe Rubenson has reached Detroit yet, and if so, did he get ahold of you. Also wonder if he got a job with Airtemp... in fact I am wondering so many things. Its time for the boxing and movie.. will continue this later.. to conserve on stamps... they are getting very short and no prospects of getting any... oh me.

When you answer this please send me one or two fabric wrist watch straps... OD, color.., my leather one has rotted in two, and another leather one would do the same thing.. you can put it right in the airmail letter.. flat.. no need for package.



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And this is another day... still hot and still nothing happens. This A.M. we finally did get a picture of some of the boys and gear... would like to send you one, but we are allowed only one piece of photo printing paper per negative.. the damn stuff is so scarce out here. Our pictures and negatives have to be returned to ARC at area office.

This afternoon I washed clothes, then washed myself... when at anchor we have both hot and cold water, such luxury, with only about a hundred officers using the same shower. This afternoon I started to break out with something that can be either heat rash or some allergy... might be the atabrine.. it sometimes does funny thing. Nothing on my midsection, however, so I know its not some latent childhood business, if you follow me. Also has no characteristic smell. Another movie tonight... When this is finished I will be as bad as Bob Malcom.. but it's about the only diversion we get.. picture tonight was a western.. so corny it was funny. Guess I told you, got a nice letter from Bob some time back.

By this time you must have much more news than we get about what is going on in the Pacific... there may be times when you will not get letters for long stretches.. but don't worry... just remember that no news will be good news and that we will be terrifically busy. Our initial work will all be in field hospitals.. and so you can imagine what that will mean.

This afternoon I looked at one of the atolls with field glasses and saw a few grass thatched huts...that is about the closest I will ever get to the south seas on this expedition. Maybe after the war we can go down to Tahiti and Fiji, which is the real thing... as far as Hawaii goes. I don't care if I never see the place again, except as a stop over on the way home. It would be hard to tell you what it was like there.. with all the military congestion and rigid restrictions, but some day you will get the whole story. Once again we were supposed to get mail here, but somehow the deal got fouled up... now it will certainly be a long time before we really have mail call.



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Please send me a package including wool sox, double edge razor blades, brushless shaving cream, two or three flat packages of toilet parer.. the kind they use in hotels... yes, darling, I mean it... then fill the package up with tinned meats, tomato soup, anchovies if you can get them.... don't send candy, cigarettes, or fruit cake. Also enclose latest issue of Time magazine if you can get it in, so I can find out what in hell is going on in the USA.

Perhaps I was a damn fool to volunteer for this operation, when I could have stayed in Hawaii, but now that I'm here there is nothing to do but see it through. The next few months will be the ones, alright.

There is really nothing else important to tell you.. except that I love and adore you, and hope and pray that you and the kintern are making out alright. The days, weeks, and months are going by, paquita, and I am living until the moment I can see you again... am not trying to make any "post war plans" as that seems very foolish at this point.. will depend on what success I have writing out here, and what the economic situation is when we return. Still have my heart set on having my own paper, but much will depend on the home situation before that works out. Its no wonder the orientals place no value on time and never hurry... what would they do with the time they had left if they did hurry.... its all very confusing but the very atmosphere out here is lethargic.... and the climate is distinctly enervating.

Am hanging on to that page from the last letter I received from you, tonight I read the little card you gave me over again... oh darling, wish I could tell you how much you mean to me.... goodnight lover..., your own,