



## AMERICAN RED CROSS

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at sea.....

My own Katherine:

Once again we have left a port of call and here we go again. It is late afternoon, and the sea is running, after some days of almost flat calm... It's pleasant to be at sea again after the stifling hot days at anchorage. At least if your shirt soaks through in the troop compartment you can go on deck and the breeze soon dries you off.

While we were anchored in the atoll, one afternoon I was snoozing in my bunk, and who should wake me up but Charlie Plumb. He had just been assigned to a station out here, and had managed to come out in one of the water taxis that run around the anchorage. So had a good visit. After he had left, Mr. Cole suggested that we meet him aboard to entertain the troops. We put it up to the recreation officer on ship, and then it was necessary for us to go ashore to see Charlie, so that's how I got on an island. We traveled about two hours in a small boat in a very moderate sea, and came to the headquarters island, about 3/4 mile long. You could throw a baseball across it. The island was all crushed white coral, no grass or bushes, and the sun shining on the ground blinded you. The buildings were all quonset huts and tents. We had lunch at the officer's mess, which had a sign reading "all war correspondents are the guests of this mess", so no charge. Then we looked over the officer's club, which was two quonset huts set together at an angle, with a bar in the middle. The bar did not open, however, until 5 P.M., so no dice, as we had to return to our ship early. The island did have a few coconut trees, but that's all in the way of vegetation. The officers club looked out on a little coral beach, with the most beautiful blue-green water I have ever seen... it would make Barbara catch her breath. Incidentally, some little time back the club was visited by a group of war correspondents, who staged a wing-ding party. Present were two photographers from Life, and I imagine the pictures will appear in "life goes to a party at the so-and-so-club" as it is a very famous place. There should be one pix of Ernie Pyle, Charlie Plumb "and friend." stayed on the island several hours, were treated to ice cold budweiser by the seabees... and ...oh god was it



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good; a supply officer gave us two suits of Navy fatigue clothing each, some paper, on which I now write, and a sea chest, which will be used for extra gear. Also bought some Pepsodent toothpaste, and brushless shaving cream, which I needed badly. Charlie came back with us, and we put on the same show which we staged before on the way to Hawaii. It went over fine, and at the close of the program Cole drew a caricature of the skipper and his seven chins, which put the audience into hysterics. Charlie returned to his station at 8 P.M. and seemed very reluctant to leave us. Can't blame him, as he is sure stuck in a godforsaken spot, if I ever saw one.

Garrett has taken quite a lot of pictures aboard, but can't send any to you as we agreed with the ships supply officer only to make one print from each negative, because of the great shortage of photo paper on board. Some of them will go out, however, with my ARC article, and you may see them somewhere. The dark room is hotter than hell, but I have been helping him develop and print pictures. It's good fun and kills a lot of time.

Found out that my breaking out is caused by some mild fungus which grows in these here parts, and gets on your skin out of the air. They tell me that if you suddenly go where it is cold, it is something of a mess, but here it is not bad at all. Itches and burns a little and that is all. There is nothing to do but keep powder on it. There are many kinds of rash aboard, ranging from prickly heat, to "gang plank fever" which is what the boys call the hives. When they get too nervous they break out in those awful welts. You are undoubtedly getting the news faster than we are... and it all seems to be uniformly good... hope it keeps up... and hope we are lucky, as that is about the size of it now.

Have written an article about the ship's refrigeration system, and today we got four good pix to go with it.. one of the machines in the engine room, one of interior of a big freezer, one of sailors unloading food, and one of the ship's supply officer. You might call Phil when you get this letter and see when he gets the story... if ever.

Once again there was no mail for us in port... looks like our rear eschelon fouled up the deal again.. although I did hear of one mail bag getting missent, or something... anyway, we don't have it.



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Like the GI writing home, its a little difficult to write letters when I can't tell you where have been, where I am, where I am going, or what day it is. Anyway, I'm here. And you know how much I'm thinking of you, and the kintern, and your job, and everything at home. By the way, in recent letters I have asked for packages. Now understand that no packages will be forwarded to us for a long time... so just send one, and when I get it, will let you know, so you can then send another one. I hope that later on our mail communications will be better established, so we can get word from home in a month, at least. Send everything airmail, please.

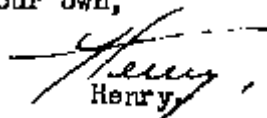
If you can't send the 8 x 10 pictures I wanted to send a few of the 4x5 prints that you have around.

We have very rigid inspection of bunks and gear every day. Yesterday one of the ARC boys put a note on my bunk saying "clean up this ferret's nest before tomorrow" or something like that. I had worked like hell trying to set the bed straight, which is almost impossible after you have slept on a mattress cover for a long long time, and it gets soaked ..every night. Anyway, I thought it had been left by the colonel, and was mad as hops.. started for the troop commander's office before they broke down and told me it was all a hoax. Hate to think what would have happened if I barged in on his nibs with a phoney note in my hand. There would have been some fireworks right.

The sailor just marched into our troop compartment yelling "how now" so here we go to eat again.. Salami and potato salad no doubt, as we did have a swell roast chicken dinner this noon... made me think of the newspaper line, "the prisoner ate a big dinner.... before..." Scuttlebutt has it we soon hit the target so wish me luck darling, and remeber that I love you more than anyone or anything in the world... and always will.

(Give the kintern a hug and kiss for me... and keep your fingers crossed.)

Your own,

  
Henry