



## AMERICAN RED CROSS

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at sea.. somewhere in the pacific

My darling Katherine:

We have long since passed our first port of call and I got my first, last and only glimpse of the south sea islands... and being how we were several miles from shore, you can learn much more about them in the National Geographic. As a matter of fact 25% of the personnel were permitted ashore... they took every fourth name on the list and you know my luck. The island visited was one of a string of atolls, now devoid of trees, after the fighting last year. Nothing but Quonset huts and a few tents. The atolls which were not touched are covered with vegetation so they look like floating bunches of bushes. What I did not realize is that these coral formations only rise 12 to 14 feet out of the water, making you realize how "The Hurricane" would be possible. The boys who went ashore got a snoot full in the officer's club and came back with nothing else to report. It seems the natives have all been segregated on outlying islands, so there are no longer any dusky beauties around. Since the natives have been deprived of most of their food supply they now are fed by the army... if you can imagine such a thing.

Have my membership card in the "Order of the Golden Dragon" signed by the skipper of the ship. You get that for crossing the international date line. Or have I told you that before? I get so damned mixed up... we set our clocks back all the time and then lose a whole day somewhere. Don't know whether I will be joining the Ancient Order of Neptune (equator) or not, as they don't tell us very much.

Last night I went topside about 11 and had my first glimpse of the Southern Cross. It is made up of four stars.. the bottom one always points south at the horizon. It comes up at your left, slowly rises through the night until it is vertical, pointing straight down to the South position, then continues to rotate to the right until it disappears below the horizon again. There is also a "false cross" that can be seen in these waters, and you have to know which is which.



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The other night we got a false report that the war in Europe was over, and as we were at anchor, all the ships in the vicinity let loose with with rockets and what not. Just like the fourth of July.

Am gradually getting acquainted with the ship's crew and they are a grand lot. Have met the chief carpenter, the Bosn., executive officer, Chaplain and some others. Its strange how little things become important in a situation like this... being invited down to the Chief's galley for coffee in the middle of the morning is really something.

One day is much like another... they go by with monotonous regularity... our food continues to be good, we have drills and more drills, orientation lectures; then there are the countless little things that take up time, like washing clothing, taking showers, shaving, etc. We are now on atabrine every night, but I have not started to turn yellow yet. When it comes out on you, you look like one of the Nips.

Today Cole made a sketch of me as a "field soldier", and will send it along to you in a magazine .. so if you get a magazine in the mail be sure to look in it for the picture. Hope you like it, as he took a lot of time and pains with it, and it was drawn from life.., so is much better, I think, than the one Eloise did from a photograph.

Have been re-reading "H. M. Pulham, Esq." and enjoyed it very much... about a Boston guy who came from a "good family" and tried all his life to break the pattern, without success. In my case I am afraid the pattern was broken for me and there is no temptation to attempt to reurn to my parents way of life. Am now reading "until they eat stones" by Russell Brines... much of which traces the pattern outlined for me by Cress, and has many details about politics in the orient.

By the way, I asked you to send me some pictures... please be sure to include the one of you at the Lincoln Memorial.. as its one of my favorites. There is always a chance that my stuff will get lost somewhere, but I would like to hang on to a few things like that as long as I can. You have undoubtedly read about what happened to a few of the correspondents on Iwo, which should give you an idea.



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The temperature is not so high.. only about 90, but the humidity is very high and the combination is tough. On top of that the sun is extremely hot, much more so than on Oahu where it was hot enough... so out on deck at mid day everyone crawls under life boats and into any available shade of any kind.. in fact you just can't stand the sun at all. To give you an idea.. we soak our candy bars under the stream of water out of a water cooler bubbler to get the paper off. But I have never particularly minded extremes of temperature, thank God.. though this afternoon I did go to bed for two hours.. just too lethargic to move.

We expected mail at our first port of call... but no... there was not a bit. Hope there is some at the next stop, as after we leave there it will be a very long time before mail service is restored.

There is really nothing much to tell you.. one day is much like the next, and I usually have to ask someone what day in the week it is... and I have lost track of the date entirely. It is enough that there is no overcrowding on the ship, that the food is excellent, and that all of the officers and men are for the most part very patient. I had really dreaded a long voyage, but aside from the fact that everything gets filthy dirty, we really have a fair deal.

A few minutes ago the bugler played taps... which I like best and before that "tattoo" which comes 5 minutes before taps, which I like next best. The "voice" just said over the speaker, "All hands, turn in your bunks.. keep silence about the deck... the smoking lamp is out in all berthing compartments." About 10 times a day the voice says, "Sweepers... man your brooms, clean ship fore and aft... take all trash to incinerators... sweepers... man your..." I could say it in my sleep. But still the most beautiful ceremony in either the army or the navy is "retreat".. when the colors come down at night... everyone on deck stands at full salute, facing the flag as it comes down. Very impressive.

Am wondering what you could be doing tonight ... it will soon be spring in Michigan and Ohio and the red bud will be out on the Stillwater... but I can't let myself think of that now. bThere is work to be done, and we must do it. No matter what happens Katherine....I am sure I have found myself... and in so doing found you... you can know that I will be serene in my mind, and steadfast in my love for



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you. When you write please let me know if the sick-headaches continue, if the dining room table is fixed, if you see the Jaques; if Bruce Fuller is still around and have you seen him; does the house need painting; how are you getting along for money, and all the other things I want to know. We may not be paid for one hell of a long time, but when I do get paid perhaps I can send you some money as I doubt if I will have much use for it. The boys have kidded the hell out of me for coming aboard with 35¢ which I spent 25¢ for haircut and 10¢ for ice cream.

We were permitted to bring \$15, but I did not have it, but I don't owe a dime to anyone on Oahu, either.

Am going out on deck for a few minutes before turning in... it is gloriously cool at night and many of the GIs sleep outside. Will say a prayer for you and the kintern... out underneath the Southern Cross.... here's a good night kiss... darling girl... I love you... and I almost forgot to tell you... that I adore you.

...

Still at sea... this morning it poured down rain and I had my first view of what is known as a "torrential tropical downpour". It was suggested that army personnel take fresh water baths on the decks, but before I could get started with a bar of soap, it stopped. We expected heavy storm, but up to this writing it has not come off although we may hit some heavy going before tomorrow.

[censor tape covering up discussion of rot and mould -- watch strap rotted through, clothing, blankets being treated, etc.]



They told us not to take oranges and such stuff out of the mess all, and I...

This noon, for dinner we had good roast pork, dressing, asparagus, beet-salad, raisin rolls, ice cream (made aboard) and coffee..



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definitely a fine repast. But about three mornings each week we have beans for breakfast... how would you like to look at a nice big plate of baked beans with thick tomato sauce poured over them first thing in the morning?

Scuttle butt now has it there will be no mail at next port of call.. great old guy, skuttle ... seems to know everything. Have finished my article about our preparations for this deal, but don't think can get it out for some time to come. But it will get out eventually. The Bosn's whistle is squealing again; when it has a lot

of double drills and gimlet twists it means its time for the GIs to have chow.

You should see the pair of pants I cut off and made into shorts... am not the seamstress you are, my sweet, but the job did get done. Caught hell for wearing them today, however, as we have to wear regulation uniforms, sun tans, or fatigues, no matter how hot the weather. Fatigues are made of a double weight herringbone cotton, and after being impregnated you might as well wear three pair of coveralls, one over the other... they are so hot.

Have not found a magazine yet to n,e for mailing the picture... but I will... the ones we have around are read until they are dog eared... at least most of them are. Did not realize how much I have read in past 10 years until I try to find some book to read... have read most of them at one time or another.

There is really nothing important to tell... can't tell you any of the things that are really important... so to speak...this is no pleasure cruise, but it is still not bad considering everything, hope to et ashore at next port, but have given up hope of getting mail.

Went to church on board ship...the service was worderful.. the strong voices of the young men the simple message of the ship's chaplain, the quiet moments of prayer... they have Mass every day for the Catholic boys, and Jewish services as required.



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Must do a washing tonight, and then to sleep in my little puddle of sweat... this morning I believe my mattress was wet clear through... I know how you love hot weather, but baby, you can have this... I don't want it.

Please write often, even though you do not get letters often... they will all catch up with me sometime. Tell me about your job, and what you are doing 'n everything.

All my love to you my sweet.... your own,

Henry