

Knowlton ARC.
Tenth Army
APO 357
San Francisco

Okinawa
20 Apr. 45

Dearest Katherine:

Since I wrote that "general letter" the other night in the press tent.. this is the first time I have had a chance to breathe. Have finally moved into our ARC administrative headquarters area, which is a hell of a lot nicer than many places where I have been, and reasonably secure. You know damn well I can't give you any military information.. but you can read that in the papers but I can tell you a good bit about what I have been doing.

Night before last I went up to a division headquarters, and spent the night in our warehouse there. Actually it's not a warehouse as you know it, but just a native building with the roof on.. most of the sides blown away. Apparently it was elaborately furnished, and quite a place at one time. We found bales of printed folders, like Xmas cards, and when we had them translated found out they were invitations to Japanese officers to visit the house and sample the Geisha (polite expression for cat house).

(Time out for three hours while I have been running around the area looking for of all things, a rake. Its the damndest thing when you can't find the simplest tools or things to work with. We are trying to clean up the area, which was formerly a sweet potato patch.)

Anyway, a whole group of correspondents was gathered at regimental headquarters in order to be on time for the show in the morning. "Junior" which is our pet name for a certain Jap gunner, was shelling the area, and when he would get close we would dive in a cave. Someone produced a gallon of good raw corn whiskey, and that took the edge off things for a few hours. Finally went to sleep in the warehouse, which was right in the center of a whole hillside of our guns, but went to sleep in spite of the terrific noise. Guess you can get used to almost anything.

In the morning the regimental PRO took us out to an artillery outpost of a regiment in the center of the line. As it turned out we were in a bad spot to see much and in a worse spot from the standpoint of enemy fire. There was an artillery barrage lasting about 45 minutes and "short ones"

would come in behind us and scare hell out of us. We were in an open trench on top of a hill and not protected from the flying earth and stones that landed on us when the shells exploded. We watched the infantry advancing against the fields below.. the terrain much like the Skyline drive in Virginia.. very rugged indeed. There is a series of ridges running across the island, and we were overlooking one you have no doubt read about.. the GIs now call it "tombstone ridge".¹ We would also watch tanks advancing and deploying to their positions for battle. When the barrage let up and we could move again we got in our jeeps (those damn things will go anywhere) circled the hill and went ahead across the valley to an infantry regiment command post. We were within a stone's throw of the Japs and the fire was terrific... the battalion had by-passed a machine gun and every so often we would get it from behind. I squatted behind a little ridge and talked to the surgeon on duty. After a time things got so hot the camera men could not either set up their cameras or stick up their heads to run them, so we got in our jeeps and beat it... as fast as we could go. Dead Japs look awful and smell worse. We were up front for a total of about 5 hours.. plenty for me. I don't see how those poor devils stand it... day after day. On the way back we saw tanks coming along to reinforce others we had seen moving across the valley in front of us. Under stand the boys who went out with another regiment along the coast had a marvelous view of the battle, but they had to go up the night before, and put in a very rough night indeed, particularly when an ammunition dump blew up in front of them.

When it was all over I was so weak I could hardly wiggle.. takes all the strength out of you to go through something like that... came back to our Hdq. unit in the afternoon... filthy dirty.. the dust has been horrible.. and took off my clothes for the first time in many days. It started to pour down rain, and we all took cakes of soap and went, out and lathered up.

Stood guard to midnight and then snoozed.

Today I worked up my first report to the army on the ARC operation here. We now have nearly a hundred men working... all hospitals are staffed, we have canteens running on the beaches where troops land; other canteens in operation; two rest camps going for combat troops; canteen on the air

¹ Apparently there were a lot of ridges in Okinawa. The story of *Hacksaw Ridge* has been made into a Hollywood film, but *Tombstone Ridge* was different, and part of a different battle. See <https://history.army.mil/books/wwii/okinawa/chapter8.htm>

evacuation center, and so on. Most of the men have worked like hell and are doing a real job. As you know, the divisions here are veterans, and so are the ARC men with them. They really know how to get things done. Am going to write my lead story on the invasion tomorrow A.M. and send it on its way. Yesterday, I guess it was, the head army psychiatrist said that the presence of ARC men in the front lines had a stabilizing effect on the troops. That was some statement, if I can hold him to it.

Tonight Gibson is writing area requesting that I be given full army and navy credentials as a correspondent, which would make me a field grade officer. You do not know in the states what rank means... not around Wright Field... here everything is divided into company officers (lts. and capt) troop officers, who command combat teams, field grade officers... maj. to col (full) and generals. It makes me smile to walk by a pup tent marked "general's latrine."

Yesterday our incredible Slim got his Jap. He was driving down a road in a forward area and a soldier came along and said he had found a sniper and wanted help. Slim was scared stiff.. but finally agreed to go along. They came up behind the sniper as he was digging a hole and took him in hand... walked him down the road, minus clothes, to an MP. The MP did not want him and could not leave his post. Also the MP said don't shoot him or I'll just have to bury him and that's one hell of a job in this rough dirt. They finally found a place to dispose of him.

Another queer one.. some boys in a tank outfit were eating breakfast when a Jap above lost his footing and fell right into their campfire. You know what they did to him... and then finished their breakfast.

None of us have seen a habu yet, but they are tropical animals, and no doubt stay under cover in this cold weather. Temperature here is chilly now, and very cold at night. Lots of livestock roaming around that the natives have not picked up yet. There is a mamma pig and her brood a short way from our tent and several horses... goats galore. Also have some kind of field mice or rats that are tame... run right over your feet.. Barbie would love them.

Don't know whether the Pyle business has been released in the States or not, but assume it will be before long... we all felt terrible about it.. the correspondents here felt he pushed his luck a bit too far. The GIs loved him and he did

wonders for their morale. Hope it wakes the people up to the fact that have a very serious proposition out here and it is no picnic.

My current bunkie is a taciturn guy from New Hampshire.. we have tent to ourselves, but understand we have GIs coming tomorrow to help around headquarters, and they will no doubt move in with us. They are OK but get a bit sick of their foul language; seems to be habitual. Sam Summers has been made an FD with corps.. which means he will work with combat troops. My job suits me just right, although it means living with the prima donnas in hdq, who wrangle among themselves endlessly.

Don't send anything more in boxes, as they won't come through... Send in heavy flat envelopes, airmail.. wool socks, and wrist watch strap. Don't need anything else. We unpacked a Coleman gasoline stove and Silex tonight.. good coffee now..yum.

Love and adore you darling... don't worry as will do my best to stay out of trouble and not pick up a stray one. Will be going in and out of the lines right along, but nothing like yesterday when battle was in full progress.

Good night precious.. you will be here tonight... I know...

Your own,
Henry

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Henry". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name "Henry".