

W. H. Knowlton,
American Red Cross,
Hdq. Tenth Army
APO 357 San Francisco

30 April 1945.

My dearest:

Wrote you a letter this noon, but decided to tear it up... I was so damn low in my mind because all sorts of little things had been going wrong. Even to losing my beautiful fountain pen, which I have since found again. I left it at the AGs office where I was signing some mimeographed stencils. Seem to be unlucky in the little things, but very lucky in the big things and thats what counts.

One thing that makes the world look black is that we are all so damn weary we can hardly see straight. We work from 7 A.M. until evening, and then the damn Japs come in at dusk and sometimes stay all night. Now and again they come in force, bombing and strafing all night long. We sit in our cold damp foxholes and curse. Then about 3 A.M. "Junior" opens up with his little cannon and the big shells sail in. Bombings are one thing, but those damn shells give us the willies, as there is no place to go and no way to dodge. In the event of a hit... thats it.. pau.

Also, have lost my fine tent mate, John Reed of New Hampshire, who is a swell Yankee. Now am playing wet nurse to one of our men who is slightly battle happy...what's more he is Yiddish, and so nervous he drives me mild. The first thing he did was throw all my stuff in the dirt to make room for his own.. racial characteristics, aggravated by awful fear. I really feel very sorry for him.

Our CP is shaping up pretty well. We have the tents in good order, now have a telephone, the use of two jeeps, and have put up a canvass fly over our cook tent where we have meals when we don't feel like going to the mess. The PRO gave me a can of sliced bacon this morning, bless his heart, but the "sweet potatoes" in the field that I planned to cook turned out to be taro root, used to make poi and I hate poi.

-- Please, darling, please send me a fabric wrist watch strap. I have my watch strapped on with adhesive tape, and am afraid I will lose it. Send it in envelope air mail.. use heavy

envelope. You are still using that thin air-mail paper and many of your letters look pretty dog eared when they get here and I doubt if I am getting all of them, as you must be writing more than once a week. We will not get packages delivered until fall, or thereabouts.

Methinks I'm a bit homesick, for the first time in my life. Would give most anything for the following in this order: a soaking bath, a good stiff drink of scotch or bonded bourbon, a good dinner, three bottles of cold beer, a night's sleep in a comfortable bed, and the hours at dawn with you.... that's all I will ever ask of this world.. believe me.

I would get Ann's birthday and Henry's mixed up, when I wrote you the last letter from the ship, which was undated. Did the children get the package sent from Oahu, with the two shirts for the gals and the shorts for Henry? Please let me know. Did you get the ARC medallion and Tenth Army patch?

The other night a Jap zero fell 20 paces behind one of our warehouses, and the boys inside were asleep. Some mess... it was in a million pieces as was the Jap. A medical colonel sitting nearby was uninjured, although blown 100 feet through the air. Whatta war.

The night raids are very spectacular. Our ack-ack looks like hundreds of Roman candles, and the colors are beautiful, orange and white. When they get a bomber in several search lights and then bring him down it's a real thrill; but in the meantime we hear the dull thump thump as he drops his eggs, its a nasty feeling. This may go on for months as we are within easy reach of three Jap strong points... the homeland, China coast, and Formosa.

Things I have learned lately: you can't get clothes clean by simply boiling them with mild soap.. they look dirtier than when you put them in; you can make almost anything out of bamboo and string by knotching the bamboo and lacing it together; ice cream mix is damn good mixed up with a little water.. tastes like malted milk, sort of; Jap machine guns are very light, sound like a string of small firecrackers, ratta tat tat; some of the things the little bastards do don't bear repeating.. they are full of tricks; best way to fill a lighter is dip it in the jeep gas tank; tropical chocolate bars and hot water make good

cocoa; you can trade cigarettes for most anything, but where are the Camels.. not here.

How is your cigarette shortage; what about food prices? Honey please send me Free Press page 1 and edit page... air mail. Just tear them out and put in envelope.. it would mean so much out here.

Had my picture taken the other day in a Shinto Shrine.. located in a deep cave, with stalagmites hanging from the ceiling.. bats flying overhead.. with a weird looking Jap pagoda affair in the middle and plenty of idols. The Okinawans worship all kinds of images and animals. Some of the boys are sleeping in the place for protection from shelling.. but its damp and smells bad.

Offered candy to some small Okinawan boys the other day and they nearly swamped me. Crawled all over the jeep and all over me, and almost pulled me apart. They certainly are strong little devils, and as greedy as animals.. they are certainly not "underfed". We also saw four young native women walking down a road carrying a pig in a net, the corners over their shoulders. The men march behind and boss the job carrying their staffs. Watching for habu no doubt. By the way, have yet to see one although a few Marines up north have been bitten.

Considering lack of sleep and everything else the ARC boys are for the most part pretty good natured and taking it well. Right now we are planning the future operation here, and getting ready to bring in females in a couple of months, or longer, depending. They make fun of me for sitting in a foxhole reading a detective story by flash light, while the Japs blast away.

Have received your letters Mar 18th, Apr. 1-3rd and 10th.. only mail since leaving Oahu in March. Have a damn good idea of what has happened to some of it, but please, as I have asked you before, give me dates of several previous letters when you write, so I can tell what is missing. Sure hope there will be mail tomorrow.. none in 4 days.

Keep your chin up precious, and I shall try to do the same.. am so happy that your love letter got through, and was not one of the missing ones. Can't tell you I will go to sleep in your arms tonight, as many nights we do not go to sleep at all. Remember I love you and am with you always...

Your own

Henry
Henry,