

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

Okinawa  
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Dearest Barbara:

Your letter of May 20 mailed May 22 arrived here tonight.. 7 days. Time for some one to say, "its a small world.. don't you think." And I was SO GLAD to get it as have not heard from anyone for five or six days and that's a long time out here.

Wish I could have attended your annual May Music Festival.. it must have been lovely. I take it you like the whole program much better than at Vandalia. Did I ever tell you that Mr. Stump, who taught at Vandalia, and who lived with Fritz and Rob, is out here in the Pacific with us (Red Cross...) - don't know exactly where he is located now but I spent some time with him in Oahu before we sailed.

Father (grandpa to you) sent me one Detroit Free Press, and it had a review in it of an opera in Cleveland.. I take it you did not get to go.. or did you? I know how you would love it.

There are some wonderful musicians in the army, and now and then I get to hear some of them. Not long ago I visited one of the hospitals and heard a good strolling troop.. guitar, trumpet, bass violin, and accordin.. how the soldiers loved them. Hospitals out here are tents, with 12 to 16 men to the individual tent, and each cot is equipped with a mosquito bar. There are a few army nurses here now, and 5 Red Cross girls, and they are the only white women we see. A week ago Sunday we were entertained in our office by a negro quartette.. and they were wonderful, sang spirituals for about an hour. During the program someone was blasting nearby and a big piece of rock came through the tent, landing on my desk chair. You should have seen them roll their eyes, but they kept right on singing.

For the past few days I have been at a different location, helping out with our communications. It's like working in a Western Union office, only the office is a tent, and I have my cot in the corner. We have several phones, and use boxes for desks.. big packing boxes. Right now I have the typewriter sitting on an ammunition box...(the "all clear" siren just

sounded so we can relax for awhile). Its really not bad considering. We are now in the "rainy season" and it simply pours... last night it felt like the rain was being pushed down against the tent and how the wind blew. We have not had one of those special Okinawan typhoons as yet, but we have all been instructed what to do. It said, "anyone not busy holding down tents should take cover from flying debris."

Poisonally, I tink I shall stick in de hole tru de big wint. Sure would have some time running this communications if all our records blew away and they were all lost.

Those little yellow fellows have been making it interesting for us of late... as you may have read in the papers. We now have to carry guns everywhere we go.. also knife. Am getting so I feel like a cowboy in a western meller drammer, with my trusty side arms. If they had a cocktail bar here I suppose we would have to check our guns with our helmets at the door. Every few nights the Japs put on a show for us, and now and then we happen to get ringside seats.

In the communications office we have electricity; so we have a radio, and we now have a station "Radio Okinawa" which is on several hours a day and until 9 in the evening, except during air raids. All the programs are sent from the States on records, but we get the feature programs, like Blondie and Bob Hope... sure is a treat.. never knew I could enjoy a radio so much. Tell Henry we do not have the Green Hornet and I miss him.

Our food is good, that is, substantial, but we get awfully tired of it. We get lots of tinned beef, navy beans, and dried peas, that taste like field peas. They use dehydrated onions in things that make them taste better. We do have good meals in the morning.. hot cakes, bacon, cereal, bread, and coffee. But would I love a half a grapefruit, or some fresh shrimp, or a steak, or even a pork chop.. or some lettuce.. it makes my mouth water. The military found that the Okinawans were nowhere near self supporting as to food.. much rice was shipped from Japan. All cement was also imported to build the huge tombs that dot the hills.. and cement has been a government monopoly in Japan, so the natives had to pay through the nose for it. Don't know if the censor will permit me to tell you about Tokyo Rose or not. She has been written up many times in the States.. most recently in connection with a Red Cross girl in "Esquire"

called A Lady Versus Tokyo Rose. She broadcasts in English, and tells us all sorts of frightful things.. then tries to make the boys homesick by playing good American records, and telling the soldiers their girls are all out with someone else. The boys just laugh at her and I think she keeps their morale up, instead of tearing it down.<sup>1</sup>

The army is wonderful.. so many funny things happen. A few weeks ago the Colonel next door to us came over and asked us to take down a wire clothes line we had strung up in some trees. Said he wanted to put up a tent in that very spot. We took the wire down to make room, but the next morning a sergeant arrived who said he had orders to build a latrine. His men immediately started to dig in the place where the Colonel wanted to put his tent. The sergeant was an old gold prospector from California and quite a character. When the Japs struck Pearl Harbor he left the dirty dishes on the table in his cabin in the hills, and went to town to join the Army.. never to go back. Well, when the boys got dug down about 2 feet they struck solid coral rock. So they started in to drill and blast with dynamite which was great fun, especially for an old miner. The old sergeant would stand up on the hill and yell "Gung Hoooo" and "get in your holes"... and then the blast would go off, showering our area with rocks. After about a week of this, the Colonel came along and told the Sergeant to fill up the hole.. he wanted the area for HIS tent. The old sergeant told him to go fly a kite.. the map says put it here.. and kept on blasting. Next day they stopped digging and blasting and it looked like the Colonel was going to have his way. After about a week the men came back and finished the job, and now we have a very elegant latrine.. six holes with covers. It sure took them long enough.

Last night a mosquito or bug or something got in my eye while I was asleep and woke with it hurting like anything. Could not find a mirror, as I don't have one of my own, and when I did get one my flashlight was too weak to see anything. After fooling around for a couple of hours I went back to bed, and decided to sweat it out until the doctor opened up this morning. But when I woke up the bug had crawled out or something and it had stopped hurting. But the thing that made me think, was the trouble that could be caused by not having simple little things,

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<sup>1</sup> See also <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/ford-pardons-tokyo-rose>.

like a light and a mirror, which we so take for granted at home.  
C'est la guerre.

Tomorrow is Memorial Day and it brings so many memories.. marching in school parades when I was little... in Boy Scout uniform when I was Henry's age.. and in recent years taking you children to the Zoo all day, when mother went to Carson.. I wonder if you will go this year. We, the Red Cross, are putting flowers on some of the graves here tomorrow.. of the fine young Americans who died in battle. There will be brief ceremonies at each cemetery.

Please write again and tell me all about Dinah... tonight I saw a Doberman riding on an army truck, and although he was a trained WAR DOG..K9 Corps...he did not look very happy, as the road was terrible bumpy. There are a few Poi dogs here that the boys brought from Oahu.

Tell mother the moustache is gone, and my face is clean again. Could not stand it any longer. Hope I hear from her again soon, as it is no fun without mail.

All my love to all of you....

*Daddy*