

w h knowlton
american red cross,
apo 357
san francisco.
hdq. tenth army

31 May 1945.
Okinawa.

My own Katherine:

After typing wires, and lists and envelopes and stuff all day I don't feel much like pushing the typewriter in the evening.. but must talk to you a little while. Darling, darling, what's happened, to the letters... last one in from you was written May 4th... then fine letter from Henry Kaye about the 12th and a "mothers day" greeting from Ann mailed the 22nd. But nothing from you. Oh yes, and a beautiful letter from Barbie, with a note on it saying "what a busy week end..." and that you would write.

The rainy season continues to plague us.. understand this keeps up until November, when it really rains around here. Last night it sounded as if the tent was being pushed into the ground. I am living in the communications office for the moment, and sorta camping out. At least we have electric lights here, and a radio. A station has opened on the island, "Radio Okinawa.. a stones throw from Tokyo". The commercials are lovely.. take your gal to the Hotel Okinawa, etc. -- or "buy a cellophane sun suit at Hong Lee Chongs.. your girl will look lovely.. surprise you and your friends.. etc. ad infinitum. The yankee sense of humor is marvelous. However, it turned off hot.. and high humidity.. the sun was blistering, so I washed my clothes in my helmet, two shirts, one pair pants, one underwear, and two sox, the underwear dirty enough to crawl away somewhere. Some of the boys took their clothes to a SeeBee outfit where they have a laundry, but they were left in the bags wet and all turned sour..

Yesterday was Memorial Day, and we handled the heaviest volume of communications to date.. some 120 messages, and that's something.. type three copies, check all file records, determine how to route them, and get them out of here. They are phoned to our ARC men over signal corps wires that are often out of commission because of rain. The phone switchboards have code names, and they are wonderful.. remind me to tell you about them some time .. also the screwy pass words we have at night. Red Cross decorated graves in one of three cemeteries, and the general made a speech with a Red Cross gal on either hand. Understand there were plenty news photographers present, so you will no doubt see the pictures

in the papers, or at the movies. Would have liked to be there, but was very busy every minute. Just night I was thinking about so many Memorial Days.. when I marched in parades as a school child, and as a boy scout. My first older pal was Mr. Van Lieu.. an old gentleman who was our hostler, and a grand old civil war veteran. With his limited income his pockets were always full of drug store peppermints for me and I have loved them ever since. And then the many times when you were away and I looked after the sprats.. taking them to the zoo, will never forget the time I bought them everything in the place and they cried all the way home because they wanted something else. Jerry McGrudy was with us.. I expect he will beat me home, if he has any luck.. then again he may show up out here. Another Memorial Day I spent hitch hiking from Oberlin to Ann Arbor.. or somewhere, but I remember I swore never to hitch hike on the holiday again; the burgers were out with their families going for short rides.. I had about 50 during the day.

One thing about this stinking weather is that the Japs stay home.. any bright moonlit night is the very devil. Tonight it is a bit overcast, but they will no doubt pay us a visit or two. We usually get plenty of warning, but it is not considered "good form" in these parts to take cover until the shooting starts. It takes flack at least a minute or two to come down after it first goes off.. so we have plenty of time. We have four tents in this cluster, and three of them have holes. So you can see it does pay to take cover. The guy who was running communications is still in the hospital.. suppose he will get the Purple Heart. Oh me.

Gibson is having his troubles. There has been a lot of illness. Many things show up in this climate, like asthma and sinus, etc. and the older guys get bad tickers, etc. Also there has been an epidemic of resignations, from guys that just can't take it and want to go home. Gibson is wild, of course, as it is a reflection on his operation of the outfit and area wants to know what the hell cooks, and I don't blame them. C'est la guerre.. many of us are sticking just because we know we are really helping the soldiers, and that is what we are here for.

Our man who was attached to military government on civilian relief has bailed out. It seems ARC national would not approve half of his program and the army would not approve the other half. Actually there is little needed in the way of relief, as they have never had much in the way of clothing, and live off the land. But when I suggested to him that the

operation might be a good subject for a doctors thesis in political science he laughed for the rest of the afternoon. You figure it out. From his observations there would be no place to begin or end. Had a letter from Mr. LaGorce yesterday, editor of Natl. Geographic.. says they could not use an article on Okinawa.. as there is plenty about it in all the papers and magazines now. So that is that.

So here we are, listening to Duffy's Tavern.. the records from the states are played on the local station, so we have the big league programs. But the "news" we get.. oh me.. what I would give to hear Lowell Thomas. Wish you could take time out to call Redeker and beg him to send me some tear sheets or clippings of my stories... he is usually in his office around 11 AM till 12.. Columbia 4242. Thinking it over I expect Jackson gave that item to the Free Press because they carried Ernie Pyle's column, and have given him a lot of play.. professional courtesy.. but I wonder what ever happened to the rest of the story.. it must be stuck, with the naviee.

Have not heard another word about Gibson's request to have me accredited.. but it's too soon to hope for that.

Our current "chow" at this headquarters is plenty lousy... gets so I don't want to go to meals, but we still have good breakfast and that helps. But it is a dismal place.. in a sea of mud, and you stand in line with mess kit... in the pouring rain, and wait your turn. Now and then I beat it back to tenth army to get a good meal and take a bath. Wish you could send me some wood "clacks" for bathing. I hate the damn things, but they are wonderful on a ship, where the floor is inclined to be dirty and full of fungus germs, and out here we have to walk back and forth in the wet dirt and ordinary slippers soak through in a minute. I meant to get some on Oahu, but never got around to it. Also want olives, anchovies, canned seafood, etc. We do manage to get fruit juice now and again. Radio.. Bob Burns program is playing Limehouse Blues. Must stop and listen.. what an arrangement... They tell us the habu do not appear until hot weather... it was stinking hot this afternoon and I saw a baby one in front of the tent.. wonder where the momma and papa are? We have scads of rats.. big and little. The other night one of the boys was sitting in his fox hole eating a chocolate bar and a rat climbed up in his lap and took it out of his hand.. and that's no fish story.. it's the truth.

Tomorrow my darling is the first of June.. and another month is gone.. guess I told you.. war is best defined as long

periods of boredom punctuated with occasional periods of intense fright.. that's about it.

Don't understand why you have never mailed me the pictures I requested.. some of the prints of the children and you from Possum Hollow...or can't you get someone to take a snap of all of you, and send it to me? Darling.. little things like that mean so very very much out here.. you can't possibly realize. Did I tell you my moustache is gone.. and my stomach also.. my middle is flat, like yours.

Wish you were here tonight.. although the weather's hot and sultry, and that's no time to commit... remember that one? I could, however, use a bit, believe me. Oh darling darling I miss you so much.. you could not believe it... hope there is a letter tomorrow.. I get blue without them.. I hope they are not where I think they are. Have bites all over my forehead and shoulders.. could it be fleas? Could be. By the way, a friend of mine got a quart of whiskey the other day in the mail.. it was shipped, believe it or not, in a loaf of bread. Can also be put in a tin container, (some brands have them already) filled with sealing wax. Give you an idea?

My "roomie" who is a poor devil with asthma waiting evacuation, is sound asleep. Have two others around in the same category.. am running a regular ARC rest camp in addition to my duties.. what would I give for some competent help.

Goodnight darling...Dombrowsky.. the asst dir I am now working with has two kids in high school, and "Butch" who is 2 years old. He says it's wonderful.. does that give you an idea? He said "I had a hell of a time talking her into it.. but now she thinks its grand." He is a retired army colonel.. West Pointer.. regular army, and has soldiered all over the world.. grand guy. Love you my darling.. write me long, long letters and tell me all that is in your heart.

Your own, Henry

Henry,