



## AMERICAN RED CROSS

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Okinawa.  
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My darling:

Tonight I'm so tired I'm almost cross eyed, but have not written you for several days, and want to bring you up to date.

Saturday night went to my first "party" on Okinawa and what a shindig. One of the Doctors with the 382nd Station Hospital invited me over.. I expected it was to be an outdoor affair in their area, but it turned out to be a regular dance held in the mess hall, which had a concrete floor. I was not the only one present in combat boots, but I was the only one in Navy greens. The outfit just came from the States and most of the men were wearing pressed CKCs, all very neat, and many of the nurses wore tropical worsted uniforms which looked very neat indeed. Anyway, the Colonel welcomed us (me and Zook) and herded us into the punch line. The beverage known as GI is made of grapefruit juice, pineapple juice and grain alcohol. Anyway we watched the fun and danced with several of the nurses and one Red Cross gal. On the way home had a flat tire on Kadena strip, which is about two miles from here. With no jack and no spare drove the damn thing in flat. Anyway, the crowd got "going" during the evening, the GIs serving, and those in the orchestra got very drunk. Everyone seemed to be having a grand time. And to us, who have been here so long, it was something, really something. I met a lot of people and can't remember their names. It was that kind of a party. Refreshments were steak sandwiches and ice cream. What a treat.

Sunday morning I got the damn tire fixed (finally) and then picked up Doctor Baslitt and his gal friend and her ARC gal friend and the four of us drove up the island to Ginusa to see the natives. The ARC gal named Berg, sort of on the old

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maid old bag side and chattered all the time, but pleasant enough. We found the ARC man, Weiss, who is attached to military government, and he took us through an orphanage. I have read about starvation and malnutrition, etc. but have never seen anything like those children. One of them, a little boy, looked about 7 months old.. sitting up on his mat, and the guide said, "Ask him how old he is." I said, in my best Japanese "tedesco?" The little boy's eyes opened wider and he started half a smile, raised up his little fist and opened 5 fingers. Before I thought I said, "Him, 5 months?" The doctor said, "hell no, five years." Honest to God.

After that we went to a native celebration in the village of Fukuyama. There were, when we arrived, about 5,000 seated in an outdoor bowl, in front of a small stage. I determined that it would be no good from the back row, so I asked an interpreter for the Mayor. He said the Mayor was down in front with his honored guests. I requested to be presented to his honor, so the guide took us down to the front row. Here was the Mayor and several ranking dignitaries, sitting on straw mats before a long low bench that served as a table, facing the stage. We told the Mayor we had come to honor him and his people with our presence, etc. and he bid us be seated.. In an instant, we were given saki in little dishes, and little plates piled with food. The plate contained octopus, sliced with the exterior dyed a brilliant red, smoked sardines that were delicious, little round fried cakes that tasted, something like our donuts, and then a pudding made of fermented soy bean flour that tasted simply dreadful. The saki is a flat tasting beverage, and the rest of the plate, except the smoked fish was also pretty flat.. but we ate it to be polite. Before us the "show" continued, complete with oriental stringed orchestra and chanters behind a thin curtain.

The feature attraction was a Geisha dancer.. lovely girl in a lovely full kimona doing a very stylized dance. Oriental dances are a long way from our strip shows, as they even wear stockings with a mitten fitting the big toe, as they dance. Then came a little girl dancer who did an interpretive dance that was right out of this world. Something about "boy meets girl" and what happened the first night, the second, the third,

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etc. The child was graceful, and charming, and the motions of her hands were perfect. The Okinawans went wild about her and we did too, although we could not understand the story. Then came an old man demonstrating the ancient native weapon, the Bolo.. which is weights on the end of a rope swung very skillfully, to entangle the enemy. Also, it is made with weights on both ends and thrown in such a way that it wraps itself around the victim's neck and chokes him. Then came the "comedian" with painted moustache, etc., who danced and sang and then started to tell stories. At the end of each story the Okinawans would hold their stomachs and howl. I kept asking our little neisi interpreter what it was all about. Finally the point of one story was something about a child wetting the bed and he burst out, to the two gals with us, "He peed on the mat." Then he looked sort of funny and said, "podon me leddes, I meant urinate". We tried to keep a straight face, but about that time we were having trouble keeping from laughing.. at him... not the story. At length we left.

The show ended, and we went to chow at a Navy hospital, where we had an excellent meal: hamburgers, sweet potatoes, and green beans, apple pie with ice cream. Did not tell you, as I don't want you to think we squawk and bitch all the time, but we have been on half rations for the past week, and C rations at that, so the Sunday night meal was good. It was about a two hour ride back to the area, down the Pacific side of the island. There are forty one PB2YRs<sup>1</sup> washed up on the beach at one spot. They were rescue planes (dumbos) washed up by the recent typhoon. Talk about a waste in war.. you should see them, stripped of motors and controls, their great hulks lying worthless in the sand. Some of the roads along the shore are incredibly bad, and jeep riding is anything but pleasure; it simply takes your teeth out. We took the gals back to the compound, then I went to the Doctors dispensary on Kadena strip and we heated up some soup.. and so home to bed, very tired, but it was really a good day.

Last night I was just going to bed when someone called from Yontan and said 5 ARC gals had just arrived. We went after them in a heavy truck, loaded their baggage, and brought them down here to my office, where I have one of the few ladies latrines

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<sup>1</sup> (written on side of letter) PB2YRs are two-engine seaplanes, "Dumbo" Rescue Planes.

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on the island. They were very tired and beat up after 9 hours flight from Guman, but by the time we got them reloaded, down to their area and got back here it was half past two. Our day starts at seven, regardless.

Tomorrow we are moving into our new CP. It's swell.. well located on very high ground and quite complete. We will be three men in a floored, framed tent.. very good and have running water (imagine), to wash, but still no flush toilets. One of the Coca Cola men here, setting up a factory, says he is importing a toilet from Honolulu and is going to charge a dollar to flush it.. or two flushes for \$1.50. The offices in the new area are Quonsets, very clean and well ventilated, so they are almost civilized. Somebody fouled up again, so ARC has no office Quonset assigned. Now we have to wait, to move our office, until one is built in the area near our Women's Compound. The nurses' transient center, built to hold 180, now has 600 inhabitants. We want to get our gals out but the few women POWs left in the ARC camp have all come down with the measles, and can't be moved. Oh me.

The women prisoners are living in the ARC gals compound.. to make it clear. Until we get them out our ARC gals must remain in the nurses area.

This morning I called Gibson and requested orders cut for Tokio. He said O.K. Am only planning to stay a day or two, but would like to have a look at the place now that I have come this far. There is little chance of getting stuck there, as there are lots of planes coming back almost empty, now that the POWs are out. Want to have orders so I can fly ATC (Air Transport Command) which has much better safety record than straight military flying.

Among the personnel I got for communications are two little girls.. each weighs about 110, and very, very pretty. What's more they are pleasant, and excellent workers. My GIs think they are wonderful, and it makes for a pleasant atmosphere all around. One of them has an excellent wit, and keeps everybody amused endlessly. Yesterday got Dodie Hamblin<sup>2</sup> our photorapher

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<sup>2</sup> <http://collguides.lib.uiowa.edu/?IWA0087> ,  
[http://www.public.coe.edu/historyweb/alumni\\_hamblin\\_jane.htm](http://www.public.coe.edu/historyweb/alumni_hamblin_jane.htm)

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to take a picture of the gang, loaded in a jeep with me pulling with a rope and Dombrowsky pushing.. hope it turns out well.

Have shipped you two boxes, one containing the Okinawan idol, and the other full of old clothes. I may not need them, but I hate to throw them away. Includes one Pair of beat up combat boots which still has a lot of wear in them.. also the liner to my helmet, which I would like to have, even if I can't get the metal part home. Will send the Pottery shortly, soon as I can find a cover for the box. You don't just "pick up" things like that here as every piece and scrap of wood and every nail is precious.

Here it is, October. Imagine it.. October,, and I will soon be on my way back. Many of our men are having a hell of a time trying to get out, but just hope I stay way up on the list. No letter from Sylvester yet, but doubt if it will make any difference. Jean Ludins is now sweating out his second month of waiting for action, and not getting any. Gibson knows damn well I want to get started the 15th and this morning he said, "well, you will be here until the 31st anyway, and perhaps longer." So don't get your ears up and I'll make it by Thanksgiving or anyway Christmas. But I hope much sooner. Please, please let me know about the Texas deal.. we could visit Dr. Clark in New Orleans and • that would be grand, even if you did not get as far as San Antonio.

We have a guest here tonight.. stopover for a few hours.. going to Tokio with Eighth Army ARC.. and I must run along and take him up to Yontan, and then BED. Tomorrow night, thank heaven, we will be off the ground and I will be living on a floor.. imagine. Speaking of that, yesterday I started trying to find the bad smell in my tent and finally opened up the back (long side) of my flight bag only to find that I had closed it on a large rat.. many days ago, and when he could not get out he just died in there. God what a mess.. one wool shirt about ruined where he had chewed it up and the whole thing full of dessicated rat and attendant maggots etc. Have never seen such a mess. I cleaned it all out and AIRED it all out, and sprinkled plenty DDT powder inside, but I still feel a bit squeamish about it.. and hesitate to put anything in it. but its the only bag I have. Everything happens on Okinawa. beautiful Okinawa.

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Goodnight darling.. can't let myself think about having you in my arms, now that it's all so close, or I would start hitching a ride home tomorrow. May have to come by ship yet, but that won't matter, so long as the ship is traveling EAST. I've had about enough of this "live alone and like it" business for right now anyway. Out here they call it "hunger for women" and its a very very real thing.. and right now I could just eat you up, with no salt or pepper.

Goodnight darling. Stay close to me tonight, and every night. forever.

Your very own,  
Henry

*Henry*  
Henry.

(handwritten) Your letter Sept 24 in tonite - 8 days! - No picture. Doolittle went home and that's where I'm going - Soon.

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