



## AMERICAN RED CROSS

11 Oct 1945 Okinawa  
(what's left of it)

My darling:

This is another day, and the sun is shining, and ITS OVER. Just to give you an idea of what happened I am enclosing a letter that I started writing you day before yesterday on the 9th ..everything I own, or ever hope to own is soaking wet, or was soaking wet, and much of it full of mud. Even my beautiful piano accordion, my pride and joy, is a thing of the past. The "teeth" or I should say keys, being made of wood and glue, all disintegrated and fell apart. Such a mess.

It struck about dusk night before last. I had gone to bed early, thinking that would be the best tning to do, and had gone to sleep when it struck. The boys took off like scared rabbits, but feeling that one place was as good as another I stayed in my cot, until sometime in the night the roof blew off, and I crawled in with some officers down the lines. They still had a roof on, but the inside of their place was soaked. Many of the men went to the mess-hall, way up on the hill, but I was convinced that it would blow off into the ocean, but fortunately it stayed put.

Generally speaking, we are right back where we started at the end of the invasion. Our "women's compound" for Red Cross girls was completely destroyed; our big warehouse at Naha is gone, with all our supplies... my Communications Center is flat, and general Stillwell now has ARC girls and nurses in his guest cabins. (Quite a sight to see brassieres and panties hanging on the line in front of the General's headquarters). The only casualties in our area were five Jap POWs who ducked under a quonset hut to get out of the storm, just as it left the foundation and crushed them flat.

Approximately 50% of the American construction on the island was completely destroyed and the rest of it partially damaged in one way or another. I'll bet the Okinawans are laughing, as none of their sturdy little tile roofed or thatched roofed buildings were hurt. Some 150 million dollars worth of shipping is beached on one side of the island. There is not a



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telephone operating anywhere, and there are endless miles of broken and tangled wires. The place is an unholy mess, if you ever saw one.

This afternoon I went up to Yontan to try to get a plane to Tokio only to find out that the Tokio airfields are closed, and may be until they repair the damage. I understand that it is equally hard to get Stateside by air, so will set about trying to find a way back by ship.

Today the natives are saying that "wait until we get a big one", but we know that at our weather station the wind was clocked at 103 miles an hour just before the building disintegrated and fell apart. Latest news just came in.. 650 dead, god knows how many injured... Navy now saying they're going to give this place back to the Indians.. about the time they were trying to get survivors off ships they got word that a tidal wave was coming in.. guess it was some mess.

Today we are all thanking God that this did not happen during the height of the campaign. If it had the Japs would have been able to push us back into the ocean. Our food is getting desperately short.. they have not been able to unload ships for many days, and it is hard to tell when they will start.

Over at tenth Army the two office tents stood, but all the living quarters were blown to pieces. Gibson was in the women's john seconds before it was carried away. He ran for the entrance of a nearby tomb, slipped and knocked himself out on the cement.

A typhoon has a roar to it that is like the voice of God itself.. it is deep and heavy.. and it never seems to stop. I have never heard a sound like it and don't care to hear it again.

A hangar under construction at Kadena Field is just a mass of twisted metal. At Eighth Air Force Hdq. the Quonset which was ready for 8 ARC gals was turned over on its back and smashed to bits. The gals were due to move in the day before. At Yontan most of the planes on the field did pretty well, only a few had their wings torn off. The big hangar at Yonta had the



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canvas ends ripped out and half the metal covering is torn away. The nurses' transient area (600 women) is about 50% destroyed, I have not yet been able to get any trace of the three girls who work for me, and one of them was sick. The hospitals, for the most part were flattened.

As a matter of fact, darling, I could go on like that for the next hour, and not give you the slightest idea of what a horrible mess we have here, and I am certainly glad you are not in it. I have even lost all desire to go to Japan at this point.. just leave me out of this, as the boys say.

I am broken hearted over the accordian.. but have learned to accept the fortunes of war with considerable aplomb ... we are all alive, and that is what matters..

We have had no mail for about one week, and no hope of getting any in this mess. And I realize that you too will be sweating it out about next week, as no mail will be leaving the island for some time. By the way, did you ever get the message I sent you on Aug 26 via the ARC Chapter in Royal Oak?

Last night we all slept in wet blankets... there was no way to get things dry. Today the sun has been shining, and have been collecting the remains of my possessions. My electric razor is rusted so I doubt if it will ever run again, at least not without a complete overhaul.

This letter may not leave the island for a week, but I will mail it anyways. My notebook got soaked, but the little card you gave me is still intact, and I am still following that star. Katherine, I love you more than you will ever know.

Oct 12 - 1945

Henry  
Henry

Word from Manila this AM. says "Kawato  
proceed to San Francisco - not Tokio -" - O.K. with  
me but Gibson now says "end of month" - so  
am sweating it out - trying to find transportation  
home - but everything is really fucked up here.

Latest rumor says 120 ships + many  
thousands of men lost at sea - Hope it's  
not true - 17 years ago tonight - Oh my darling  
I love you - Katherine, my own. Your H.