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AMERICAN RED CROSS



PITTSBURGH CHAPTER

Say, this isn't Pittsburgh--the Pitt RC Chapter just sent us some paper--This is Somewhere in New Guinea, Thurs 30 March 44

Dearest Inez,

You can't imagine how lonesome I am tonight--no mail in several days and I wonder so much about you all--hoping you are all well. But, it's so good to know--even though the letters take awhile to reach us here. I know you've been writing, however, and I'll get my mail bye and bye.

I've been hard put to find time to write a long letter and I don't know yet whether I'll get to finish this one tonight. Morel has gone down to see some Aussie friends and Dexter is hobnobbing with the bigwigs and Chappie is keeping his library open for the boys--so I am all alone here in our "Jungle View Motel". In digging through my duffel today I found some things you may be interested in--I hope there's nothing in there the censor would object to. The kids will probably run you ragged with the booklet--I know how they do like games. We whiled away some of the time on the ship with these booklets--Gene will no doubt relish the card tricks.

Our shipboard paper was one of the most valuable assets we had on the voyage--the masthead carried the picture of a seahorse--until we sighted land and saw what our destination looked like. You can see how the scenery changed in a couple days time. No fooling, the beaches here are beautiful and surf bathing is allowed--although I haven't been able to go down there yet.

Cpl Cockcroft built us a nice table today so we don't have to hump over on our cots to write--so maybe I'll be able to write more. Trouble is, my back stays sore and stiff all the time from bouncing over back trails in a jeep. I'm getting really well fixed now--something is added every day in increase our comfort. That's all we're doing--housekeeping. We have overhead shelves around our tent to keep our clothes on--can't leave anything in barracks bags on account of the dampness--mildew, you know. The tent floor--only one like it is made of perforated metal--all the trash goes right through--and we have a wash bench out back. Cocky keeps us supplied

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with a canful of water. We have pegs beside our cots over which we turn our shoes at night--to keep our the "varmints."

The boys used our new shower bath today for the first time--we dug a well and have built the shower, with the help of our engineer friends. Behind each tent is an old oil drum cut down for a wash tub--Gacky did my laundry today, and I surely needed some clean clothes.

You should have seen Morel and me yesterday, cutting our way through the jungle with machete and carbine--but never anything to shoot at. The jungle was so quiet that it was most eerie. Occasionally a flock of crows would fly over and far off we'd hear some jungle bird scream--it seems the smaller the bird the louder its larynx. There were insects aplenty, however, and the heat was stifling. As the Aussies say, "I was near fagged" after an hour or so in the undergrowth. It's amazing how the brush can grow even in the heaviest woods--huge plants with fronds like banana plants, but few bearing bananas, bamboo and grass ten feet high and briars and brambles and old foxholes into which we'd stumble unless we were careful. I ran into one brier that was tough as barbed wire--it tore the leg off a brand new pair of pants for me.

Some Aussie boys who are leaving soon for a furlough back to "the mainland" came by today to thank me for some old crates I had given them for packing purposes. They are a very nice bunch of people--all tall and ~~mainly~~ straight--well built and good looking; and most friendly. When they left tonight they asked us to come down to their camp and they'd give us some fruit juice. Morel went down, but I stayed here to write to you---I've bounced about enough for one day, anyway.

I mentioned the Chaplain's library. We asked all the boys to turn in their books--I had about fifty myself--and with those the Chaplain brought with him he has about three hundred volumes on his shelves--all paper bound "pocket" size books of course, but some very good literature. I wrote you that I had read quite a bit on board ship, but I haven't had time to read since our arrival here. Last night I picked up where I had left off on "Life in a Putty Knife Factory"--stories about New York characters like those we saw down on Mott Street in the Bowery last Spring. It's a good book, but

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I didn't get through one paragraph last night before I dropped off to sleep. Oh, yes, I can read in bed, even--our gasoline lantern gives plenty of good white light. Soon we will have electric lights, I think; just waiting until we can get our own portable generator installed. Then, our next problem is finding some screen wire to keep out the bugs--that will be the ultimate in luxury. Of course, we know we won't be here for the duration, but we're trying to make ourselves as comfortable as possible--you should see us combing the salvage dumps for old water pumps and wire and tin and oil drums and the like. Just a bunch of scavengers.

Right now I'm in the road building business, raising a roadbed through the swamp to my Medical dump. My present road is so winding--avoiding bogs and trees--that I have to have 13 direction signs on about 1000 yards of trail from the "Main Road" to my place.

Incidentally, there's an altogether different attitude among Army Service Forces personnel here to that in the States--here they really try to supply us with everything we need. And they do manage to find for us many more things than I ever dreamed of. So, I reckon the bonds we're buying and the ships they're building back home are having their effect.

Darling, I know you aren't worrying too much--you know I'm taking care of myself and Smiling Jack is taking care of us too. You should see him--he's an altogether different Person now--he's that happy that we're here and all safe and well.

Oh, by the way, the Aussies gave me their addresses and invited us to visit them in Sydney sometimes. One boy said he lived "in a bit of an orchard--p'aches 'n' Happles." So, if Jack can arrange to send me on a "mission" down there I'll certainly take off. That's wishful thinking, of course, for there're many on this island who haven't left it in many months--since their arrival here with the task forces.

I'm glad you got to go to the Lions' party--have as much fun as you can manage, won't you? Tell all the fellows they don't know what they're missing, not being over here--or under here, rather--also they don't realize how fortunate

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they really are, being at home, even with the trials of rationing.

Morel found his sister's brother-in-law near here yesterday, and we ran into the brother of one of our dental officers also, a pharmacist in a nearby hospital. Proving, of course, that it's a small world, as the wornout saying goes.

Did I write you about our daily paper here--its a very newsy, 4-page tabloid, named "Guinea Gold"--for the white man's complexion after a few weeks down here. I have no idea where the paper is published but we get it the day it's dated. To show how well it covers the news, it carried an item recently about Billo being appointed mayor or something of Washington--the things they're doing back in the USA!

31 March 44

Didn't get a chance to finish last night after all--had to stop and read copy on our Bn newspaper--will enclose copy.

Write me all the news and tell me how and what you are all doing. I'm sure hungry for word from you,

Loads of love,

A handwritten signature, possibly 'CL'.