



UNITED STATES ARMY

Somewhere in New Guinea
Sunday, March 2, 1944

My dearest ones,

I'm thinking of you all very much today, missing you as I love you. It's a beautiful sunny day--I can just feel my bones drying out after days of dampness. We slept a little later this morning and had breakfast of hot french toast, "characterful" coffee and salt bacon; then Paul Hudson and Paul Morel and I went down to the creek for a swim and sunbath---how's that for a program; never anything like it in the States, so you can see we have some advantages here (although I think it a poor trade, nevertheless).

Chaplain Bussman conducted Palm Sunday services this morning; they were most impressive and held in our new chapel. Built of native timber and covered with canvas, the building is to be used for a reading and writing room during the week and as a chapel on Sundays. Later on we plan to build a palm-thatched chapel. For benches we used empty medical kit crates and the sand floor was covered with tarpaulins. There were about 65 men and officers present and they surely made the jungle ring with the hymns.

Next Friday evening at 6 o'clock the chaplain is going to conduct services commemorating the death of Jesus Christ, and Easter services will be conducted next Sunday. This afternoon the chaplain is going to conduct services for a nearby unit whose chaplain was called suddenly to the front last night.

This afternoon Hudson and Morel and I are going to take a trip up into the mountains on a sightseeing trip. So far the only part of New Guinea we've been in is the swampy jungles; so we are looking forward to this afternoon's excursion. Cuz Joe was invited by Smilin Jack to go for a cruise on the latter's private launch this afternoon---really like Sunday afternoon in Peacetime back home---except for the hard, hot work we're doing now and the worse conditions we know are coming sometime in the future. Morel and many of the boys yesterday afternoon went down to the "Picnic Races" not so far from here. They had some fairly good horses entered, he said, some being nags captured from the Japs. Paul won the only race he bet on---netting himself five pounds; he was quite elated.

You should see me now. I have a pair of handlebar mustachios---biggest in the army, I'm sure. Jack has been making some wisecracks about them; says he's going to use me as a spy, doubling for Hirschito. I'm almost nutbrown---partly from the sun and partly "Guinea Gold"---from taking atabrine, which we do regularly. We're having no ill effects from the atabrine whatever. The official newspaper here, by the way, is called "Guinea Gold". It's a daily tabloid, 4 pgs, and keeps us well up on the news. It has a distinctly Australian flavor as you'll see. Some of the stuff they print is wasted insofar as we "Yanks" are concerned---such as results of the Aussie cricket matches. That's so much Greek to us, of course.

Our initial issue of "Jungle Juice" our own weekly, went over big and many of the boys are sending them home---to help the "home folks morale."

Did I tell you about the cigaret case incident? Paul M and I were on a banana hunt and ran across a gang of natives gathering cocoanuts---we got the bananas, incidentally---and one of them spotted my plastic cigaret case. It's made of translucent amber and has a cover that snaps open when you press the side of the case. Every one of the "boys" had to hold it and they went into hysterics when I showed them how to open it. As the boy pressed the case and the lid snapped open, the boy would go goggled eyed and shriek with laughter. They were quite puzzled by the fact that they could see through the case and see the printing on the cigaret package. One said, "Give me" and I said "five pound" just

like they do when we ask/ them gather some coconuts or bananas. (we wind up by paying them a few pence). The native then just shook his head sadly. One thing about these boys, they understand the value of money and can count it even though they don't speak much English. Quite a few of the natives are mission-educated and can speak English well---and are they proud of it. One youngster was indignant when I started talking to him in pidgeon English. "I know bananas," he declared in a hurt voice. "We get em. Five pound."

Well, Paul and Paul are anxious to get started on our tour, so I'll close for now.

loads of love,

(Handwritten signature)

