

Somewhere in New Guinea
24 April 1944

Dear Major,

Every night as I sit down to sup I think of you folks at home—think of the rationed foods and scarcity of good thick steaks so common in the old days. And I recall how difficult it was to get a good meal in a restaurant before I left the States several months ago.

Then we ordered our ~~filet mignon~~, thick and rare, only to be told most of the time that there was no steaks—"everything for the troops overseas." But occasionally we did find a juicy red hunk of beef—as you no doubt still do sometimes.

I said I think of those days every night as I sit down to sup at our splintery board table.

What makes me think of those days is the fact that it's a rare meal that we do not have some of those luscious steaks you are bearing up without on the home front.

But, the awful things that happen to those choice sirloins before we get them in our ample quota of "everything for the troops overseas."

Some call it corned willie, some call it bully beef. I call it utter monotonous. The shame of it all—such a ~~thing~~ fate shouldn't happen to any porterhouse.

When the bugler rolls us out of our bunks in the morning—he's about the last thing and surely the worst of the old army mechanism hasn't outmoded—we occasionally have a plate of Pearl River mud—I mean ~~poached eggs~~ starched powdered eggs. The boys call ~~it~~ 'em Argo for short. On rare occasions we have "flannel cakes" with hardly a weevil in 'em.

But, no matter what we have for breakfast ~~the~~ the meal always includes the same delicacy. Sometimes we facetiously call it fried chicken. Mostly it's Canadian bacon. On special occasions it's Virginia ham. But, take my word for it, it's still corned beef.

For lunch we have had turnip greens and collards out of a can. With ~~the~~ the greens we have more Argo—this time dehydrated spuds. The main dish is sometimes meat loaf with tomato sauce; or pot-pie in individual crusts, flaky and light. Often, again, it is fried chicken.

But, as I said before, it's still corned beef.

Most every night for supper ~~the~~ our 'entree is simply steak, either sirloin, or tenderloin, or hamburger, or porterhouse, or T-bone, or country-fied. Always steak.

And, that too, my friends, is corned beef again.

There's one dish even Army cooks cannot make out of bully beef—and that's fish for the traditional Friday dinner.

We have goldfish for that. Nice, mealy, smelly salmon.

Without which we'd probably have another rare broiled, juicy, deliciousness of bully beef.

Corned beef isn't rationed here—it's our only ration. We get plenty of it and I love it dearly. The only food I'd rather have is plenty of anything else.

Major, I hear Bette is getting married to one of the Flying Dutchmen. Rumors reach even here (started mostly by one Louie Jiggetts). Tell her I think that's a sure way to ruin ^{the} good newspaperman she is.

Best regards,