

NEI, 8 Dec 44

Dear Inez,

Received your letters of the 21st and 22nd and the ~~Mail~~ of 14th; also a letter from Gene of the 12th--and the package apparently mailed about October 1--containing toilet articles, stationery and a game board. Thanks a million for all of it. It comes in handy.

No, nothing has happened to Land that I know of, except he was promoted to PFC. I'll try to look up Mable's nephew. He's located only a couple of miles from me so I'll drop in and see if I can find him. There were a few furloughs given in the division and I suppose Dominic was one of the lucky ones. Only three officers got leaves and all leaves to Australia have been cancelled now, so I don't suppose I'll be getting down that way. I understand Dominic has been recommended for promotion, but I wouldn't say anything about it until, and if, it comes through.

Gene's letter was full of football, so I know he is wrapped up in it and I'm glad he has the interest to keep him occupied. Be sure he gets to go to the Toy Bowl if McComb plays in it.

By the time you receive this, it no doubt will be Christmas. I hope you all have a very nice holiday, and don't worry about me. Christmas here will be more like another Sunday, I expect, but with a good meal. Many Christmas packages are coming in for the boys and that makes them glad. We're planning to have a tree party--our tent and the ones on either side--with "improvised" and "simulated" presents. There will be special services in all the chapels, of course.

So Gene and Nancy aren't doing as well as they have done in school? Tell Nancy I know she is doing the best she can (when she isn't talking too much) but I wonder if Gene is letting the girls distract him? Perhaps both are too much like their father.

I'm not doing much now, being sort of out of a job. Have some feelers out but haven't heard from the ones I really want. One of the hospitals here offered me a place, but after looking the setup over I've decided not to apply for it. Living conditions would be better, no doubt, as I wouldn't have to be moving all the time, but I think I've gotten a little fed up with army medical officers, so I hesitate to go to a place where that would be all I'd see. And staying in one place probably would be very boring after four years as a tourist. I've written the GHQ ~~main~~ PRO regarding getting back in to public relations. If I could land that I'm sure I'd like it.

After stalling around for sometime, the rainy season apparently has set in here, making it much cooler. I spent sometime in my boma off last night so had a hard time waking up this morning. Johnson, who is known as "The Appetite" because of the way he likes to eat, slept through breakfast--but he didn't miss any treat. Dehydrated egg patties, hot cakes and overcooked salt bacon.

We have a sanitary detail composed of 20 natives, with one of our sergeants in charge. I am helping direct them, since the sgt doesn't understand Malay and I have been studying it some. A couple of the Malay boys (their names are hard to pronounce so we named them Barnum and Bailey) were riding with me and we passed the cemetery just as a funeral was being conducted. We stopped and waited. The boys looked solemnly at the ceremony and when we started to leave one of them said, "Serdado Amma-reekan mati. Tida bagoose. (American soldier is dead. That is bad.)" And he sounded very sad. Then he said, "Serdado Amma-reekan bagoose-bagoose---" and went on to tell how good-good the Americans were for shooting the Japs and giving the Malayos clothes and food. They are certainly a grateful people. I think they got along all right with the Japs to some extent, but they, Nuns ate up all the food in their gardens and they were nearly naked when we came in, so they think we're great guys.

Thanks again for the package. I am looking forward to receiving the others.

Loads of love,

*Merry Christmas! Ae*