

Monday, 29 December 1941

Dear Folks,

I'll keep on writing my letters in duplicate until I am able to hear how well they are coming through under the war conditions. It may be that I am just wasting money by putting air mail stamps on one copy, but for once in my life I can't find any use for that part of my pay that I am still receiving on the ship here, after I have paid my bills on the ship, and I certainly don't know of any better use to put it to than to get some word back to you of how I am getting along.

I trust that Frances forwarded my cable on to you. I am sorry that I was not able to send one to you also, but they are quite expensive from here, and I thought that your getting it second hand would only mean a short delay anyhow. I hope that your Christmas was a very happy one and that all of you were able to be together. On board the ship it was much like the other days now. We had a Church Service in the morning that I attended, and a good dinner that noon, but the rest of the time was spent in standing the usual watches that are going on now. I am sorry to have to tell you that your package didn't arrive. I imagine that it reached Manila shortly after we left and never got out of there in time. From all of the reports we have received I doubt if I will ever get it as things seem to be getting critical there now. I am especially sorry about that as from what you wrote I had guessed that it was a picture and I would have been so happy to have it. Well perhaps you will be able to start another one out here sometime soon. We haven't received any mail yet and nobody seems to know when we will. I suppose that sooner or later things will be worked out so that it will find us, but I don't suppose that we can expect to have as good service as we had in the past before the trouble started.

The Japs seem to be taking full advantage of their fast start and I am afraid that it will be some time before we can get this over with. We know very little that is not received in the press releases, and naturally there is someone listening for news over the radio almost all of the time. We never know where we are going or when, as almost everything that goes on is considered secret, and we have to be ready to do anything on no notice at all. Just in case my last letter should not reach you I think perhaps that I should mention to you again not to take all the reports which you hear at their face value, particularly the ones that the Japs originate. I have heard that the Japs broadcast a report that the Houston was sunk about the second day of the war, and I do know for a fact that others of their reports are just as untrue. They are liable to cause a great deal of unnecessary worry, so I wouldn't pay any attention to them unless they are confirmed by Washington. As far as we can tell our own reports have been accurate, and I hope that the Dutch are, as they have been getting a lot of results from all we hear.

I am feeling perfectly well, with the exception of a mild case of prickly heat. It seems to be bothering most of us, and I doubt if anything will do much good except a change of climate. It has been hotter lately than any weather I have experienced in a long time.

I hope that Mother has a very happy birthday, mine came on the first day of summer this year. I hope to be able to get something back there within the next month but of course don't know whether I will be able to or not, so I'll send my love and best wishes along now.

I hope that Sarah is getting along all right, and that Frances and Larry are going to be up to see you by the time that this reaches you.

Devotedly  
Robert

VIA CLIPPER AIRMAIL



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