

The Philippines
28 April 45

My darling,

I didn't get to write you yesterday because I was on the go all day and until late at night. I looked like a sack of sand when I got in and finally took a bath. Everything is so dusty here. There was a well near our camp and I took the best bath I've had since leaving our nice showers down in NEI. Johnson and I dipped water up with a bucket on the end of a pole and sluiced it over each other until we actually felt clean again.

Last night we camped in the shadow of the ruins of an old stone fort. This fort, built many years ago by the Americans, was occupied by the Japs until our planes bombed them out. ~~Monday~~ Yesterday I rode through rolling hill country into a large, fertile valley, and on one detour far off the road I drove through a very nice little farm--large field of corn, large rice paddy, small cotton patch, small vegetable garden. Many Filipinos, mostly women and children, were along the road, giving and selling fruit to the soldiers and trying to swap chickens for clothing. We aren't allowed to give clothing away, for obvious reasons, so chicken trading didn't go so well. The Filipinos need clothing so badly that is the only thing they really want. However, I did buy two chickens for a peso apiece and we're planning on having a feast tonight. I ate bananas, avacados, tomatoes and a strange kind of fruit, whose name I don't know, for dinner and supper yesterday. We got our kitchen set up for lunch today and I got some solid food. This fruit I mentioned is shaped something like a pear, grows to the size of a cantaloupe, has a green tough outer rind and the inside is soft and spongy, with a taste something like very sweet quince.

Today I rode through a vast grassland plateau--the grass growing fifteen feet high alongside the ~~main~~ dusty road. Tonight we're camped in a grove of rubber trees--I'm sticking a bit of raw rubber in this letter. This bit of rubber had run out of a slash in the tree bark and ~~immediately~~ coagulated within a few minutes.

So, you can see, I'm really moving. How far or how fast we are moving, of course, is military information, but I think I can say that I'm far piece from that coconut grove I wrote you about a week ago. I'm seeing a lot of the country, and although this isn't exactly a cook's tour, it is very interesting.

Yesterday I had an experience which was exciting--and something I had little expected ever to have. Twelve soldiers and I ran a Jap down and captured him, without a shot being fired. Here's how it happened. My driver, Hunt, and I were riding down the road, through a grassy flat and we met a truck, with a squad of infantrymen on it, going the other way. (I may as well admit I was on my way back to a village where we had left some laundry to be washed and where I had been promised some chickens on my return). As we met the truck, a Filipino dashed out into the road and yelled, "come quick! two Japs at my house. They ask for food and I slip away from them." The infantrymen piled off and I went with them to the Filipino's house. We deployed to search the grounds, of course, and then the Filipino saw the Japs. "There they go!" he yelled, pointing toward some underbrush/~~and~~ which was shaking. "I see them throw down arms." I didn't see anything and I don't think any of the other soldiers did, either. So, we proceeded cautiously through the brush and waded across a shallow creek. Just as we came out on the other side, the Filipino cried, "there!" and pointed to a bamboo thicket. All guns were turned on the spot, and one Jap raised up, his arms held high over his head. We ordered him out and made him take off his uniform so we could search it, ~~nothing~~ He had two grenades in his pocket. Then, I saw his rifle lying on the ground. I picked it up and another soldier found a second rifle. We asked the Jap (by sign language) where the other Jap was and he pointed up the creek. About that time we heard a hard grenade explode where he was pointing. One of the infantry boys said, "well, he must have decided to die for the emperor." The infantrymen said they had to get to their GP, and so we decided to turn back and carry in our prisoner

and tell some guerillas at an outpost up the road to search for the second jap--or his body, if he actually did commit hari-kari. We marched our jap ahead of us back to the road and the infantrymen put him on their truck to carry him in to the cp. When the Infantryment said they were going to abandon the chase for the second jap, I also decided my business was pressing elsewhere. After all I was armed only with a pistol and I wasn't sure about that hari-kari stuff.

This morning I learned that our jap was really a Korean, and that the second one was killed yesterday afternoon by the guerillas.

Our captive was a big fellow (probably looked extra big to me anyway). He was in good physical condition and didn't even have any sores on his body. He had on a good khaki uniform, but no shoes, and the guns we found were American Enfields, Model 1917. Koreans are usually much larger than Japs from Japan proper, and certainly this one was bigger and healthier than any of the many I had previously seen in NEI and New Guinea.

So, fifteen minutes after getting out of my peep, I was again on the way to get my laundry and chickens. That's all there was to it--and tell I'll I'm sorry, but no publicity. I didn't know any of the infantry boys, but some were from Mississippi. I gave my captured rifle to my guerilla friend, 3rd Lt. Paquil, and he arranged for me to get an elaborately carved ebony handled Moro bolo knife, which I gave to Maj George Meaders (Vicksburg), who is going back to the States to attend the same school Andrew attended.

Again, last night, I had a very interesting experience--but of an entirely different kind, thank goodness. I was entertained by the Rev. and Mrs. Alfonso Quinones and their family and neighbors at the Quinones home. Now that sounds pretty pretentious, but let me tell you about it. The Quinones family, like all the Filipinos in this section, for the past three years have been living in the mountains, existing mainly on such little rice that they could surreptitiously plant. Three days ago, following liberation of this area by the Americans, the Quinones, with others, came back to their home. All their remaining possessions they carried in a sled drawn by a carabao. They found their home, a wooden, two-story house near the highway, still standing, but bare of all furnishings, of course. But, they were glad to be back home. That was evident. Their clothes consisted of what they wore: Mr. Q, a ragged shirt and slacks, Mrs. Q, a tattered mother Hubbard, daughters Deborah (17) and Dina Luz (15) wore worn gingham dresses, and four little boys, Peter, Liberty, Esau and Ming (pronounced Ming) wore next to nothing and it in rags. Living with them were Rev. Q's cousin and her three children, one a girl, Beatrice, 12, and two little boys. Their clothing was indescribably ragged and tattered.

The minister was pastor of the United Church of the Philippines, the only protestant church in the islands. The United Church, he said, was formed from a consolidation of the Presbyterian, Congregational and United Brethren churches. Most Filipino Christians are Catholics, of course, but this community was protestant.

Two neighbors came in for a visit, one Professor Ricardo del Mar, an accomplished musician, and the other (whose name I failed to get). del Mar had a guitar and his friend a violin. The minister had a mandolin he had made from a coconut shell, and we had music. The three men played their instruments and the three girls sang. Deborah had a very fine voice and her native songs were particularly good. The native music has a lilt very similar to the Hungarian music, and Deborah sang an aria from an opera in the Viscayan language written by Prof del Mar. She also sang songs in Tagalog, the proposed national language of the ~~united~~ Philippines.

"Would you like to hear some American songs," she asked. We did. "I will sing a song, I don't know the name, but we call it the 'Submarine Song' because ~~with~~ Mr. del Mar learned it from the American submarine sailors at Lebat before the war." The song turned out to be "I'll Never Love Again." We then learned that del Mar carried his music, including all the popular American songs, with him when the people fled to the mountains. And for the past three years he has been

teaching the children music and singing in their mountain hideout. Deborah, sometimes with the help of the other two girls, mostly solo, then sang all the popular songs of 1938-1941 ~~from~~ and older songs: "Dolores", "Looky, Looky, Here Comes Cooky", "Making Eyes at Me", "Mexicali Rosen", "Isle of Caprice", "Red Sails in the Sunset" and lots more I cannot remember. One of the boys asked if she knew "When the Moon Comes Over the Mountain," and Deborah quickly said, "Yess, Sar--that iss Kate ~~Smith's~~ ^{Smith's} smeeeth's song." And she sang it for us. Johnson said, of course you know the hymns, how about "In the Garden". The three girls then sang that, and before we knew it, we were all singing hymns, Americans and Filipinos.

I think this was the most enjoyable time I've had overseas, for this family was so typically American, despite their light brown skins and slight accent. They are Americans, and visiting there with this family--one of the little boys was on my lap most of the time chewing gum and/ swallowing it as fast as I would give it to him--sort of carried me back home. So much so that I forgot the bare room, the sputtering coconut oil lamp, the blinding smoke of the anti-mosquito smudge fire on the kitchen's dirt floor next to the living room, and even the ragged clothing of my hosts.

The music teacher's clothing was the most ragged I've ever seen—the nearest thing like it I've seen was the peasants' clothes in the movie, "The Good Earth." His shirt and shorts looked as if they were made of ruffles they were so patched and frayed—patches patched many times and those patches patched again. He was a bit self-conscious about his condition and apologized for the appearance of his clothes. "That's what comes from living three years in the mountains with no supplies," he explained.

I had a long chat with these men regarding current events and found they were very well posted. They explained that every week they went to the guerilla headquarters and listened to the radio---just once a week to conserve power in their batteries. They were curious to know what kind of man President Truman was and about the fourth term fight in the states. They discussed philimine political problems, the question of whether the P.I. should be given independence now, etc.---and they showed themselves well versed in world affairs.

It's 4:30 p.m. and hot as hot, so I think I'll see if I can get early chow and go look for a bath. There's a river nearby and I think I can use it. Don't worry about me. I'm fine--feel much better than at ~~mosquito~~ in the NEI. I think activity was what I needed to get me out of the dums. The mosquitos here are terrific--big as piper cubs, some say, but I have a good net, so I sleep very well--with the blanket tucked in. But mighty lonesome.

All my love,



Philippine
Rubbies

Right off the tree