



Merry Christmas

WITH THE A.A.F. IN AFRICA

WITH THE LOYAL JAPANESE
 AT MINIDOKA--you
 I feel as if there wasn't
 much to do now that all the
 books are classified, including
 more than a thousand brand
 new ones. I've been having
 classes in library instruction
 for my regular assistants,
 plus thirteen high school girls
 and have been giving library
 talks in the thirty-three high
 school core classes, but that's
 all business-as-usual stuff.
 Our circulation statistics
 totalled 14,753 last month,
 tho' the project population
 is just 8,100 now as many are
 still out on seasonal leaves.
 I'm mighty proud of that, and
 the new Japanese-Americans
 coming here from Tule and other
 projects have laudatory things
 to say about our libraries.
 It's fun to work when the results
 are so showy, and more than
 that, I feel my work is important,
 that I'm building toward
 a very near tomorrow.

Sept. 18. ...had a film on geopolitics as applied by
 the Germans. Essentially accurate, but a little propa-
 gandized. I enjoy a film like that better than most
 movie fare. They're producing some good documentary
 films now...
 Sept. 19. And wonder of wonders! The camera came today.
 I've got it all loaded. What do you want? Scenic effects?
 Too bad I haven't a tatoo on my chest...
 Sept. 20...went down to the African curio market and
 picked up some trinkets to use for Xmas gifts. You'll
 notice I found some bobby pins, too--all colors.
 Sept. 22. The Tarzan opus must be in full swing by this
 time, but I decided to skip it. Africa a la Hollywood
 back lots would probably be too alluring for me...
 Sept. 23. I found fairly recent copies of Time and
 Newsweek last night. Kelland's plan for a postwar policy
 is a lot more practical than Wallace's broad dreams of
 brotherhood. We won't have Utopia for some centuries yet,
 and maybe not at all. But the sweetness and light boys
 will figure that it isn't economy to keep an adequate army,
 so we'll do it all over sooner or later... If my scrawl
 seems even worse than usual, it's because I'm trying to
 write on my knees, and I'm no good at it. One of the
 horrors of war as far as you're concerned is my handwriting.
 He can't read it either...
 Sept. 24. I have ringworm on top my feet now, too, but I'm
 hoping it and it's stopped spreading. Seems all sorts of
 skin eruptions are common here. We'd probably be better off
 if we went barefoot...
 Sept. 26...had to go down to the beach to get something to
 eat at noon, and it was quite a mess. They had invited
 some local chief, and he was there in all his glory with
 all his tribe and we were outnumbered six to one. He wore
 his purple robes and a leopard skin cap, and sat in splendor
 under a huge umbrella. The symbol of leadership here is
 a chair. They don't impeach a chief here; they destool them.
 Sept. 30. The latest issue of the journal came today. It's
 below standard, isn't it? Show signs of having been too
 long in Africa. But whenever I feel like that, I try to
 remember that nobody is shooting at me... Took a local
 hop today to check on some instruments. It was raining and
 rough as the devil, so we had to go up to 13,000 to find
 smooth air for our work. It was about 0 centigrade up
 there and me in my shirt sleeves...
 Oct. 1. Since it was a perfect day for flying today, I
 stayed on the ground...
 Oct. 2. Everyone is getting mouth harps and ocarinas around
 here now. I'm planning to get a trombone in self defense.

HAPPY
XMAS



- Oct. 3. Somebody will get elected something someday by saying, "Your son will never fight in foreign solar systems." We'll mistrust Saturn's motives, and form a lease bond with Jupiter, and move out planetoid by planetoid. I could go on a la Ray Cummings, but skip it. As the kids say, there's nothing new in all those new inventions to get excited about--they've been in the comic books for years...
- Oct. 5. I wonder how many times I've reported that the rainy season had ended, only to deny it in the next letter? The heck with it. Let it end when it gets good and ready... We'll be awaiting the results of the World's Series for the next few days now. I think they have made plans to get them for us as quickly as possible. If we had a radio good enough, we could get it direct by short wave. BBC is our mainstay here for war news, but we aren't concerned with cricket matches.
- Oct. 6. We had a show last night, a regular Hollywood production, and a piece of film for threading purposes was labeled "This film is restricted"--always a part of G.I. training films. Today we learned that all the films were jettisoned over a jungle when a plane developed engine trouble and had to lighten the load. A native found the boxes, took them to civilization; the film was patched up and put into service. Next time you see Priscilla Lane, mention it to her... (I told Jim I was going to see Mr. Linville, the project lawyer, about a cheap divorce, if he didn't let up on those awful puns he pulls. Reply was:) And it's no use seeing Mr. Linville, either. You can't divorce me without my consent, and I won't consent, so there and nuts to you, madame. You're stuck for the duration, at least, and by that time you'll be used to me. Anyway, my only brother is already married and you'd have to break in a new mother-in-law....
- Oct. 7. Speaking of babies and such, that's marvelous news about Erma. I can sigh with relief now that everything is going so well. I've been mentally pacing the floor, as it were... The show last night was very, very good. The female master of ceremonies was seven feet tall, six inches wide, and all joints. She did imitations of ZAZU Pitts, Catman Miranda and Charlotte Greenwood and I howled myself silly. There was a ventriloquist the dummy gave out with a parody on Strawberry Blonde--something about "Casey would shag with his red-headed hag". There was a girl who sang, a man who played the squeeze box--but good--and the sex appeal gal (a low whistle, please) I think it was Eve--not that she looked old but her costume was scanty, the skirt cut low, I mean low --but I digress (Ed. note. Keep off digress.)...
- Oct. 10. Freddie March and company blew in again this afternoon... It's so seldom I hear music over here. The odd ways of a short wave radio baffle me, and I think I usually emerge with the Turkish weather report... So help me, we've got the game from Cuba in Spanish? If only you were here to tell me what it all means. That would put your love to the acid test, translating a ball game for me. (It wouldn't. But it would put my Spanish to an acid test, all right.) Never mind. We have it in English now. The first inning is just over with no score on either side. You needn't expect any sense to the rest of this letter... (There wasn't)
- Oct. 11. From all appearances, the series is almost over, and you can soon expect me to be back to normal again. Don't have a sigh of relief comparable to what you actually feel, or you'll stir up another dust storm around there...
- Oct. 12. Wish I could celebrate Columbus day by discovering America all over again. More rumors today. If I went every place I've heard we were going, I'd make the Wandering Jew look like a piker. You heard of the boy who never went any farther than down to the barn to gather the eggs, didn't you?
- Oct. 13. Today makes 18 months in the Army... The very first day or so, when you've been sworn in but haven't yet got your uniform, you live in abject fear that you'll break some minor rule and incur the full wrath of the war department. Your dreams consist of yourself appearing before a court martial on which sit in judgment all the four star generals from Washington on complete with horns, foghorn voices, and private firing squads. You fight to be in the middle of every formation, fearing that you'll be too conspicuous in the front rank and be suspected of unpatriotic banings and incipient mutiny if you're last. Then you get your uniform and your first pass! Napoleon himself was never chestier than a new dogface on his first pass.

Your shoulders are back so far you're in danger of falling on your fanny, and your chin is out in what you hope will pass for a stern, determined expression which you hope will assure all and sundry civilians that the defense of the country is in capable hands. Actually, they think you have a fishbone caught in your throat if they notice you at all, which they don't. The fact that there are six hundred other fresh soldiers in each block accounts for that. You'd like to yell "Hi ya, Buddy" at each one, but you don't. You're afraid they'll think you're a rookie. So you give them the dead pan, hoping they won't notice the wrinkles where your uniform has been folded. But all good things must come to an end. Your pass is good till midnight, so you catch the nine o'clock bus back. It's all of three miles to camp, and you're afraid of being late.

And the first time you're summoned to the orderly room! Now, there's a sensation! You're sure the C.O. is going to boil you in oil, though you don't know why. You make your will, write your farewell letters, divide your personal belongings among your kiam friends in the outfit, and go to get your medicine hoping you'll be a brave soldier and say "to hell with the handkerchief" when you face the firing squad. But it turns out you don't see the C.O. Instead, you see a buck private who tells you your records are indistinct, and was that a size 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ or 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ cap you were issued. You don't know but you run all the way back to the barracks to find out... Had a letter from the folks today. The blue dress is not to be. It's a black one instead. It will go well with those kias black unmentionables, no doubt... (Jim's folks sent me a dress that fit for my birthday) Oct. 14. We don't get atabrine anymore. As I understand it, when one's system is full of atabrine, a smear will show negative under the microscope when malaria is actually present.

Oct. 15. The baboon is still a four star attraction in camp, with everybody standing around to watch. If you toss a rock at him, he'll throw it back and with good aim, too.

Oct. 18. Gastronomically speaking, you're amazing. Peanuts and pickles and coke and icecream all in one breath, and you live to write about it. I believe you could eat army food. Have you ever tried powdered eggs. After all a hen goes through, it's a sin and a shame what happens to her day's work...

Oct. 19. Mary V. says she likes Texas. First non-Texan I ever heard say that, and I could hardly believe it... It seems the soldier had met a new girl. They got along nicely at first, finally had a row, and she threatened to see his C.O. if he didn't return her picture. He sent it to her along with a dozen others, and told her he'd forgotten which one was hers; she could pick it out and return the rest...

Oct. 21. I got those films mailed yesterday. The background of one shot is a big, weed-grown ant hill--an old one with no ants or I wouldn't have been so close to it. I hope you won't have any trouble identifying me in the others. I'm the big one in each case... (Yup. You guessed it--monkeys.)

Oct. 22. We had some new magazines arrive today. Life and Time and Newsweek and a couple of Collier's, one with an article by Quentin Reynolds. Funny what censorship does to a man's stuff. I used to think he was extra good, and now he seems to be writing around things...

Oct. 25. I hear there's a prison camp for captured soldiers here now, though I haven't seen it. I understand they have the freedom of the town during the day if they behave. There's no reason why they shouldn't, for there's no industry they could harm... Some of the boys are getting furloughs and planning to spend them on various cities around Africa. As for me, I've long been disillusioned about the darkest continent...

Oct. 27. I saw Rimkus, the mad Russian, a while ago, very swanky in shorts. I'd wear mine too, but we're supposed to wear long stockings with them, and can't wear them in formation, so it's hardly worth the bother. As far as I know, ours is the only army that doesn't have a tropic uniform...

Oct. 28. Some Wacs came through today, and you could hear the boys panting all over the... Oh yes! I almost forgot

Oct. 30. And Mom said Dad wrote her that he'd seen Penny, and induced her to call him Pop. She told him he looked like Floyd's older brother. How do you like that? And she has a husband of her own in the navy...

Oct. 31. Hot again today. I think that will be a permanent news item on my bulletin from now on...

Nov. 4. Don't see why I can't dream of you--like Bob Hope. He said he spent the day at the studio kissing Hedy Lamar then went home and dreamed about Indians...

Nov. 7. Today is another scorcher, and I don't mean maybe, wish I were working so I wouldn't sit around thinking how hot it is. Haven't a thermometer, and I'd be afraid to look at it if I did. But I have been busy--I'm past the 200 page mark on my electrical books and it took 36 pages of notes to get there, which isn't so bad, considering that I print all my notes so I'll be able to read them later on... War news is picking up in tempo every day. The all-over view of this war in retrospect will be tremendous and I shudder to think of the books that will be written about it. He, I'll stick to Grimm's Fairy Tales or read Superman...

Nov. 8. I had a letter from the folks and three from my wife with Mrs. Hutchenreuther's letter enclosed. I still haven't deciphered all of it, and may have to call in a translator. She does have a poorer hand than I do, at that, and I had always doubted if that could be possible. I found the part where some teacher said we were half wits or had wits, I couldn't tell which, so I don't know whether to send her a shilling or a time bomb... How come the saddle soap. Are you having any truck with ~~cowboys~~ them dude wranglers? You know the Shakespearian manner of comment on cowboys, don't you

"what manner of men are these

That wear their legs in parentheses?"

Nov. 11. I almost ran over Joel McGree a few minutes ago. Guess he just got here. He came down to get some duds from our supply room. He had on a pair of fatigue pants, a khaki shirt, mechanics cap and mosquito boots... And while you're running down my jokes, let me tell you that "long distance from California" gag was pulled on Socrates and he didn't even grin, claiming the Ptolemeys had a court jester beheaded for it...

Nov. 12. I howled over the letter from Edna's brother. Said he finally found an English girl to go with who didn't speak so much American slang he couldn't understand her... I hear a big bunch of boys are going back for cadet. Seems they just can't get enough pilots, navigators, bombardiers and such. The age limit has been raised to 32 now so if I only had eyes, I probably could make it too.

Nov. 13. That Japanese entertainment must have been something--a recitation in Greek with a Japanese accent would send me screaming into the night. How come you didn't stay for the sword swallowing? It should be instructive since you eat with your knife. Did you hear about the fire-eater who had gas on his stomach? He got a bang out of it..

Nov. 14. I found out the full name of our houseboy today. It's James Egoikumo. Kick it around with a little Latin and phonetics and it could be the title of a popular song... I like Colbert. She wears bangs. Which reminds me. I gotta get a hair cut Night away. I thought I'd lost an ear, but it turned out it was just hidden in my hair.

Nov. 15. Joe E. Brown popped in during the afternoon fresh from the states...

Nov. 17. In the Oct. 26th copy of Life in the "pictures from readers" section, you'll see a dragon fly with a necklace of instrument jewels which will give you an idea of the their size... What are you writing to my folks? Mom says you're an angel. I'll have to show her those bumps on your head that tipped me off to the truth about you. What would I do with an angel? I would not! St. Peter wouldn't allow it...

Nov. 19. I have lots of fun keeping your friends in a unit. I sent Fran Ed's address, keep Ed in news about what Ada is doing, and keep 'em all informed about you. Ain't I a handy little gadget, though?

Nov. 20. Now there's a guy with a trumpet just two huts away. He can't play it, but oh how he tries. Somebody will have to throw him a fish...

Nov. 21. I'm in my shorts, and since it's getting late, I'll have to change to mosquito costume. It's worked pretty well for me. I've had no malaria so I'll keep up with all standard precautions...

Nov. 22. I went to the main PX in search of trinkets for you and I had pretty good luck. First there'll be a little box about three inches square, containing that snake skin cigaret case. I would strongly advise that you melt some wax, perfume it, then wax the case. It smells a bit. And I thought you'd like a companion piece to it so I got a small cigaret lighter of aluminum. It was made by an Italian prisoner of war. They'll be quite common. I've seen hundreds of them. Next, there's a tiny ivory rabbit, African made, crude but cute. But wait--that isn't all. In an envelope you'll get two items, one of them consists of a pair of delicately carved pendants of ivory on small silver chains. As for the other item, it was hand made in Palestine, and that's all I'm going to tell you about it... (The ivory pendants and the mother-of-pearl pendant on a silver chain have already come--in fact, they beat his letter here or I would have tried to wait until our anniversary to open them.)

Nov. 23. I rather like being a clearing house in Africa for news items from Idaho to Ohio...

Nov. 25. If you'd care to know how much I ate, I'll just say that if my head faced the other way, I'd be hump-backed enough to be a camel...

Nov. 27. Trips to the north on furlough are out for a while now because of transportation difficulties, so it looks like the Nile will have to get along without me for a spell. But what the heck? To anyone who grew up fishing on the Mississippi, the Nile is no bargain at any time. And I hear the flies there are terrible. That's one strange thing here--we have very few flies, even around the garbage cans outside the mess hall, and we had them in plenty at my last post too...

Nov. 28. One thing about this climate. You wouldn't need your fur coat. You could get along very well with a sarong by day and a mosquito net by night...

Nov. 30. Who's this guy Einstein anyway? Didn't he say in the fourth dimension, it's possible to get somewhere and come back fast enough to see yourself starting out? And to turn a tennis ball wrong side out without breaking the cover? I've been meaning to tell you--did you know 3-dimensional chess has been invented? When the other gets too easy kick that around for a while. You use twelve boards, one above the other, and change boards at will. I don't think I'd like it, and furthermore, I think I should have kept out of the sun today, don't you?

Dec. 4. Surely I remember Tommy. What ever happened to him? Did he become a war orphan or is he making the nights interesting for the lady cats in Florida now? Wish you'd known that big Maltese I used to have when I was a youngster. He finally weighed sixteen pounds, and he used to run the pooches bowlegged. He had a very nasty habit of feinting with his left and when he ducked it, he smacked 'em with his right paw. Some of them even crossed the street to keep away from our yard...

Dec. 5. Just now I'm wondering just what's going on at the meeting in Persia. It seems now that revenge is uppermost in everyone's mind, and if it is, we can get ready for another war just as soon as this one ends and the struggle of the haves and the have nots will go on. It will always go on, as long as there are haves and have nots, and unless peace terms are finally made with that in mind, we may as well be prepared for it, and if that's the way it is, I think I'll become a technocrat. Maybe that won't work but nothing else has worked either, and that's one of the few things that hasn't been tried. We're moving in that direction as it is. Economic dictatorship and political freedom won't ever be found together. One thing, though, whatever comes, no one can say our world has been dull...