

IN REPLY REFER TO

FILE NO.

4-30 p1



## AMERICAN CONSULAR SERVICE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL  
Lisbon, Portugal  
November 11, 1941

Dear Folks:

How time drags on! I certainly thought I would be out of Lisbon long before this, but here I am, still sitting around and waiting. Things have been happening, though, and I really do expect to be on my way long before this reaches you. It started last Saturday, when London wired to the Legation here saying that it was impossible to arrange air passage from here to Lagos for me and suggesting that I proceed immediately to London by air and go from England to Lagos by sea. This proposal was made contingent upon the Department's approval, and so we waited until Sunday morning, when a wire came in from the Department saying that I should proceed immediately to London in accordance with the Embassy's suggestion. The Embassy said that they had arranged "highest priority" on the plane from here to England, so I thought I would be leaving at once. However, the list for today's plane has just come out and I am not on it, and the question arises whether I would get to England in time now to catch the ship they intended me to go on.

In the meantime, it has come out that the Pan American Airways runs an occasional plane from Bolama, Portuguese Guinea, to Lagos via Monrovia, and there are ships about once a month from Lisbon to Bolama. The next one leaves here about the 18th. It seems to me that this route would be preferable, as it probably would not take any longer and would certainly be much safer. I have asked the Legation to investigate this question, as well as to pin the British Air Attache down who arranges the priorities on the plane for London. If he can't give me a place right away, there isn't any use bothering about it, and we can submit the other plan to the Department. Personally, what I think we should have done at the beginning was for me to have come to the States, either by ship or Clipper, and go from there, either on a ship or on one of the bombers which are rumored to stop at Lagos en route to Egypt. It is easy to see that now that we have tried the other ways, but when the assignment was first made, it looked as if that would both take longer and cost more. I can only say that I am sure that if I had started out that way at the beginning, I would be much closer to Lagos than I am now.

So everything remains in a state of confusion. I have packed all the essentials into one suitcase plus the little kit bag, and have another suitcase in reserve in case they will carry that as excess baggage. Incidentally, the charge for excess is equivalent to 72¢ a kilo, but the government will pay. I would probably not have more than ten or fifteen kilos of excess. The other suitcase and my hat box I would ask Herve to bring home when he comes in a month or so, and the trunk and box of books are to be shipped to Lagos via New York. In the suitcase I am sending home there would be some old clothes which I don't need and some miscellaneous articles I picked up in Italy for presents. My radio has finally been cleared through the customs, and I am selling it to Parry, one of the Vice Consuls here. I expect to order a new one from the U.S. - possibly a better one. However, my main ambition right now is to get settled somewhere.

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I am sick to death of living in a hotel, and now that I have all my things packed up, my only desire is to get away. \*\*\*\*\*

The asterisks indicate time out for a telephone conversation. Once again I have talked to the Legation. The British have promised to get me off Thursday morning to London, and from there I can take a boat which will require about 28 days to reach Lagos. It all sounds like a very stupid way of doing things, but there is nothing that can be done about that, so I guess I will get to visit England at least once during this war. It should be an interesting experience, and I am looking forward to it with a good deal of interest. If nothing goes wrong, I ought to be well on the way before you receive this, and of course I will wire you as soon as I get to Lagos. I hope that the whole thing is settled now and that I will actually get started.

This morning I was surprised to receive a phone call from Phil Hubbard, my old friend and colleague from Milan. He arrived in town last night on one of the Export Line ships en route to Zurich, and he will probably be here a couple of days while they are arranging his transportation from Madrid to Barcelona. I had lunch with him this afternoon and another Foreign Service Officer, Paul Reveley, who is stationed in London and is on his way back there from home leave. All report conditions in Washington very bad, and I guess it is just as well that I am not there since I would certainly get stuck right smack in the visa division. Nevertheless, I can't help feeling a little homesick for my "favorite city". This evening I will go to dinner with them and then we will probably go to the movies. It will be my last chance, probably, to see any moderately recent films. Phil had to leave his wife and kids in the States, and they are living in New York where the girls are in school. It is hard for Phil to be without the children, but I think he is much happier without his wife. It will be fine for the children to be in school in America. In the past they have gone to school very irregularly, and then mostly in England. Both of them have a very strong British accent which they should endeavor to get rid of. It has been a real pleasure to see Phil; he saw quite a few of our old Milan friends in the States. Speaking of old friends, did you see in TIME that Bob Pallucca had changed his name to "Parke"? He always said he would change his name if he went home to the States; the competition with Joe Palooka was too much for him. He selected the name "Parke" because it was one of his wife's family names, and, since it began with "P", they would have to change all their linen and other things with initials on it. When last heard from, Bob had a good chance of getting a job with the Treasury Department, in the recently created division of foreign monetary control, to handle questions arising out of the blocking of accounts, etc.

The good weather which we enjoyed for so many months has finally broken and the rainy season has set in. It has been raining steadily now since Friday, and I understand that once it commences, it will continue at least until January. It is not quite as chilly as it was when it was clear, however. The gloom and the damp encourage my disposition to get away and follow the sun to the South. The anomaly is that I have to go North first. If I have any time in England, I will write you from there, but do not expect anything, as I may have to rush right down to board the boat. Due possibly to the change of weather, I have picked up a nasty cold (all my colds are nasty), and I have not been feeling especially lively during the last couple of days. This hasn't helped much in packing and making the decision about what to take and what to put in the trunk. You have no idea how sick I am of the uncertainty. All my love to all our friends and relatives, and may God bless you all.

As ever,