

AIR MAIL

No. 19

September 14, 1943

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Dear Family,

Spent all day Saturday on my Spanish ship, but got out of it all a glass of delicious Spanish wine straight from Spain. Naturally, the best I've had in years, except for that Portuguese vinho verde that came down for us by plane. We were kept waiting from eight A.M. to eight P.M. No, I don't mean that. I mean we waited from eight till two, and worked from two till eight, and the last part was spent running around like so many decapitated chickens. Most interesting it was.

We went to the club at night, but didn't stay long because I was a dead duck. I had missed my curry lunch, which was of course nothing less than a stark tragedy, and I had to have it for supper. You can never eat so much of it at night, which was an additional pity.

Sunday up betimes at nine, and to the beach with General Bruce, his harried ADC, Mr. Lynch, and (later) John Houser the nice OEW man. We went in style, because the General ordered out the old Waaf lar for a special trip just to take us. It no longer takes ordinary civilian passengers, you know. Did we feel revenged on the whole military set-up! We went over to lighthouse beach for a fine romp in the surf, then back to curry lunch amid the sound of merriment and laughter. We settled the French situation this time, and had time left over to clarify the USSR. Back after a sound sleep.

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Tuesday, Sept. 14

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We went to see "Shadow of a Doubt" over at Apapa in the evening. The place was so crowded that John Houser had to lie on the ground on two pillows. He said it gives you quite an odd angle on things. Anyway, William and I held our little hot hands and shivered with fright in perfect unison. It was just as good as mother said, and just the sort of thing both William and I love. Fascinating but horrible.

Monday morning all sorts of things happened. We got a pouch in, bearing in its bowels an airgram saying that a new lady clerk is arriving some time in the future. Her name is Harriet Thurgood, a fact which set Bill Bruns on his ears because she was at his office in Panama. He says she's twenty nine or so, gay, efficient, intelligent, and a wee bit bossy. William and I are afraid that her coming, combined with the Department's unwillingness to assign Bill Bruns permanently to Accra, where they need him much more than here, heralds an approaching change of post for us. In any case, the change couldn't possibly take place until at least four months have passed. The girl has to get over here, and probably the War Department won't give her air priority, which means getting priority for sea transportation and arranging her departure. And now Bill Bruns is going up to Accra temporarily, which should mean six weeks or so, so that puts the dreaded hour of our departure off that much more.

It isn't that both of us wouldn't be delighted to go home, as I've probably said before. But other things enter into the picture. Were we to go home on leave (and William is certainly due for it) William might be transferred to some post relatively near the hot spots, in which case it would be either an uphill struggle or impossible for me to go along. A consumation devoutly to be avoided. On the other hand he might be transferred to South America, where I could go. But it's a dangerous chance to take. Now if we were transferred to South Africa, we might very well be permitted to forgo leave in the United States in order to go wherever we were sent directly. That would be easy. Perhaps anywhere in Africa, with the improbable exception of Algiers, would be easy. Of course the dream of William and my lives is to be sent to somewhere in Italy. Not ghastly likely, or even less than that that I could go along. William says he is going to put up a herculean struggle in case the Department wants to send him somewhere where I can't go, and I imagine he would. The very thought of such a thing chills my soul. Well, anyway, we don't have to worry about that just yet, thank goodness.

I had a ~~play~~ play rehearsal last night. My but it feels good to be traading the boards again! I do dearly love plays, especially if I'm in them. Tonight we are going over to the Rasmussons small small, and then to the Discussion Group, where Mr. Cook the Scottish trade unionist is to give a talk on Russia. Things ought to get pretty hot, because Mr. Cook is a great one for creating the spirit of argument. We are dated up every night this week. Tomorrow to Mike Reid, the Shell Oil man's for dinner- he's a temporary bachelor due to the fact that his wife got

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answered a hurry-up call for nurses in Kamo. The Rasmussons will be along too, so we will probably have a fairly merry evening. Thursday Lillemor and Nils are giving a party, and Friday we are going to the same mess (British) where they held the magnificent outside dance a week or so ago- I described it to you in detail.

Ham Hamilton, the General's ADC, brought around six lovely bottles of chutney the other day. That should save our lives temporarily, but we demolish half a bottle between the two of us every Saturday, and the same on Sunday. The chutney situation is getting almost as desperate as the rubber situation.

Saturday we are to go ~~back~~ to the Hotel Bristol for dinner, with John Houser, who has just gone for bush small small.

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But, on receipt of Poppa's missive which I can't remember the date of, I only scream in a soft, tentative way. I promise I won't scream any more, and anyway that time I screamed it was done gently as any suckling dove. Most of the time I am so frustrated and spluttery that I can't utter a word.

To-day ~~arrives~~ a sea mail pouch from the Dept. arrived, NOT bringing any of the packages mother has sent me. The situation is beginning to get me down. I wish you would write to the Det. and ask them why, if they aren't planning to send the packages, they haven't returned them. I wouldn't be quite so bitter if I didn't see so many packages for other people coming through. Homer Heller got a package in a month. You might tell them approximately on what day you sent them, or at least what month. I am going to write them a letter myself, too.

To dinner at the Rasmussons last night, and then the club. A very enjoyable party.

I think I'd better end this because we are ghastly busy.

Much love,