

IN REPLY REFER TO

FILE NO. 21



AMERICAN CONSULAR SERVICE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

A.P.O. 606-A, Miami, Fla.
February 6, 1944

Dear Folks,

Your letters have been making so much better time than mine have that I have decided to switch to A.P.O. also. For instance, Daddy's letter of January 20th arrived here February 4th, whereas the last letter of mine that he had received up to that time ~~wasn't there~~ had taken over a month on the way. Please let me know how this comes through.

Philinda and I are delighted with the news that Janie's baby had arrived and that all was going well. I hope Norman was still in Seattle at the time, and that Janie will soon be able to go to San Francisco with him. I hope also that in the meantime you received my letter about buying a bond for the baby. It is a shame the letter was so long delayed; I certainly would have expected that it would have arrived by January 20th as it was written on December 28th. We are eagerly awaiting further details.

Things have not been too bright for us during the past five weeks. When I last wrote you, Philinda had come home from the hospital. However, her fever continued after the treatment finished, and, as she failed to improve, we were forced to take her back to the hospital again. She is still there, poor darling, on this, our first wedding anniversary. The doctor has promised to let her come home tomorrow, and we sincerely hope that there will be no further trouble. The doctor was unable to make any diagnosis, but two days ago the fever suddenly abated and she is feeling much better, except that she is very anxiously to get out of the hospital. She feels pretty weak and shaky, and will have to take it easy for some time. Eventually, I still hope to get a couple of days at the beach; I think it would be good for both of us.

I got so worried toward the end of January that I asked Mr. Lynch to wire the Department requesting home leave because of Philinda's illness. The Department has granted the necessary permission, which can be used at any time between now and the end of June. I haven't entirely made up my mind yet what to do; it will depend on how thoroughly she recovers. 30 days home leave seems so ridiculously short to do all the things we wanted to do at home, even apart from medical grounds, that the prospect does not look too attractive. Once I have had my 30 days, I will not be eligible for home leave again for another three years. Then, too, there is the question of her being able to accompany me to my next post. The Department's wire only said

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I should come to Washington for consultation during my leave, and that the question of my transfer would be discussed at that time. The time spent "consulting" will be deducted from the leave, and I hope that if Philinda is not yet entirely well, they will prolong the consultation for a few weeks. Or perhaps they will take her health into consideration in making the assignment. However, under war conditions, they will have to send me wherever they need me, regardless of personal considerations.

On the other hand, I would like to come home to see you all, after four years of absence. That seems like a long time to be away, especially for a home loving fellow like me. I would be sorry not to be able to see my old friends, though, and Janie's being so far away would make it impossible to see her, either. Naturally, the clothes that I took with me four years ago are now in pretty bad shape; somehow, I would have to get some more, and that isn't always easy to do in Africa these days (assuming my new post would be on this side.) The clothes that I bought in Portugal to wear here are now completely worn out, and the ones I made here a year ago are on their last legs. We also need lots of smaller items which we could probably still get at home.

Taking everything into consideration, I think the chances are we will come home. Although Philinda is much better, I am not sure that they have got to the root of the trouble, and a check over by real experts would be desirable even if she feels O.K. by the time we get home. Our good friend Dick Poland, Representative of the Civil Aviation Department of the ~~Ministry of Aviation~~ Air Ministry, was here Friday and I discussed the question with him. Although he no longer has complete control over priorities, he seemed to think that we would have no trouble getting over on B.O.A.C. He is planning to make the trip himself about March 10th, and the chances are that we will go with him then. I will wire you before we leave, although I do not suppose they would let me give you the details. We would arrive in Baltimore, and I will either wire or telephone you from ^{there} and let you know what we plan to do. Probably medical questions would come first; afterwards, we will come out to Ohio. If I stay in Washington a while, I hope you will be able to come there to prolong our visit, which is bound to be too short under the best of circumstances.

All in all, it's been a worrisome time for me. I have wanted to come home for some time, but not for these reasons. I know you will join me in praying that Philinda's health will return.

If you ever told me that Mary and Leonard had given us a bond, I am quite sure I never received the letter. I will try hard to write them real soon, although I spend so much time at the hospital now that I have very little left to write letters in.

I am sorry to hear that liquor supplies are so short now. We will have to celebrate my home coming with beer, I guess.

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You asked how we got our supplies so cheaply. I order them direct from the manufacturer or importer - actually, from the Schenley Corp. It is then shipped direct out of bond and pays no taxes. The taxes are the biggest part of the price, although of course we also avoid middlemen's profits. I believe I told you we had not been able to get any gin, and I understand that no more liquor at all is being sent abroad. The local supplies of gin were exhausted this month, the first time they have been unable to meet the ration. I do not think any further shipments are expected, but we have enough on hand for the rest of our stay here. I shall put a few bottles in our trunks when we come, and some whiskey too. The local supplies of the latter are still adequate. This is the result of the wisdom in having rationed liquor practically since the beginning of the war. We could buy four bottles a month, although of course we do not do so as we have our own supply. The cost is about \$3.80 a fifth.

I am glad to hear that the black suitcase arrived safely. I see I had been falsely accusing my friends of having forgotten to send it on. As regards the watch, please have the jewellers look at it and see if it can be repaired for a reasonable cost. The locals have probably ruined it, I fear. One man said to have been trained in Switzerland kept it for three months or more, and I had the threaten to call the police to make him give it back. He had been completely unable to fix it, and I wouldn't be surprised if he had pirated some of the parts. Philinda gave me a watch for my birthday which I am now using. Although fairly expensive, it is actually a rather cheap Swiss make, but so far it has been running well.

It is now time for me to rush off to the hospital to keep poor Philinda company during the short time that visitors are allowed. I will let you know of new developments as they come along.

With love to all of you,

Billie

Feb. 8 '44.

Philinda was released from the hospital yesterday and feels much better to be at home. It is now mainly a question of recuperation. I still am thinking about pulling out in the first half of March, however.