

Jan. 31st. 1942.

Dear Friends:

Wouldn't you all love to know what has finally blasted me out of my lethargy and brought me to the typewriter in reply to all of your many lovely letters? To my eternal shame I find no less than 62 unanswered letters in my possession! A contemptuous record, and one which I deeply regret. This inner force which is driving me to write, is not inspired by the close shave we experienced on Dec. the 7th; nor is it because a hunch warns of even more precarious times ahead, therefore one should have one's papers (so to speak) in order; but, it is because WE have that certain feeling coming on that the Jewetts are about to MOVE their place of abode once more. (This makes the fourth time in 19 months!) The very idea of it plunges me into a fit of destruction and wastefulness. Fortunately it also has its constructive side, as witness this endeavour to wipe the correspondence slate clean.

How we hate to move! Never have we lived in such delightful surroundings. The house is new, spacious and beautifully furnished. The commanding view (which is a military secret) is superb! This rich man's Paradise has EVERYTHING; the sea at the edge of the property, a 500 ft. pier, a sailboat, two rowboats, good fishing, good swimming for those who can desist from playing footie with the crawling sea life at the ocean's bottom, bananas and papayas galore; a nice lily pond and garden, a pingpong table, an excellent grill on one of the porches, and a fireplace indoors. It is truly Hawaii at its VERY BEST. We fell heirs to this lovely spot only because the landlady liked the look of us, upon short acquaintance I assure you, and impetuously cut the rent in half to meet our price. Did you ever hear of such luck, in this country of rent-gaugers? What parties and fun we have had here! And informal grilled steak dinners! 'Cushioned' in such sumptuous luxury during the past year, you might well ask, what have I done with my time? Certainly not much. To pass the time I've dabbled in such non-essential hobbies as learning the art of Chinese cooking from Mrs. Richard Sia, a former Peking neighbour of mine no less, and now residing in Honolulu: have touched on the subject of Japanese flower arrangement and tried my hand in an elementary way at block printing; and also volunteered my services at the Red Cross. Climaxing all this has been the usual routine of the home, the husband's wants and health to protect, his friends to entertain and the meeting of many new people. Yes, it has been a GOOD year and a memorable one! One that we are not likely to experience again in many moon's to come.

But the Rinell side of the family has fared less happily. Deep sorrow entered our family circle with the passing of Dad on July the 3rd. He suffered desperately during his last six months from a lingering heart ailment, for his sake we were grateful when the end to his full and useful life came. Life must have been satisfying to him in many ways during his 47 years in China. He lived to see the natives turn from distrust and fear to complete understanding and co-operation in his many social reforms. Attesting to their devotion was the City's last gift in Dad's memory of a beautiful monument erected by the local citizenry. (and not by the members of his Church.) And so Mother is alone at 84. Of course we are completely without news from China and probably will be for the duration of the War. We can only hope the Japanese will extend to the family the consideration and courtesies due all neutral subjects. But since our American and British friends in the Orient our thoughts are full of fear and apprehension for their safety. How glad we are that so many heeded the Government's warning last summer and left for safer parts. For while, last year, the thrill of meeting the boys and visiting with friends which we haven't seen in years made us almost think we were back in China again. Honolulu is truly the "Crossroads of the Pacific."

Dear Ethel! Don't die of heart failure because you are hearing from me at last! I know I'm the world's worst correspondent but I mean well! We have suddenly decided to return to the States. Roy's contract is up & he does not wish to renew it. We have had a wonderful 2 years on the islands & deeply regret leaving. Our future plans are

Edith  
you can always reach us at  
get settled again  
in definite - until we  
most

Sister Edith is coming along first-rate. She has only part of a school semester left before she receives her degree. The last news from Edith indicated that she would accept a part time job while completing the units she lacks. Last spring while playing badminton, the poor dear fell and fractured her right wrist badly. For months this handicap worked a real hardship on her, not to mention the long and painful treatments she had to undergo. How I wish she could come over here for the Duration. That would tickle me to pieces! However, travel by sea is no joke these days; it takes real courage to expose oneself to such an experience.

And now to the War and the reactions here. I'll take it for granted that you have read Secretary Knox' comments and also seen the report of the Robert's Commission on the Pearl Harbour attack. And Life Magazine's pictures. It was pretty terrible all right and carried out with deadly accuracy! Our personal reaction that morning was the same as experienced by thousands of others. From our grandstand seats, the planes seen cavorting through the skies seemed to us to be in the throes of a magnificent 'mock' battle, and when smoke welled up from certain localities darkening the skies, we brightly tossed that off by remarking "What an effective smoke screen, eh what?" Then gradually the horrible truth began to dawn on us that the vibration of exploding bombs which rattled the windows of our house and the rat-tat-tat of machine guns was REAL. WAR? IMPOSSIBLE! Slowly I began to feel that nervous sinking sensation settling in the pit of my stomach. In the thick of all this, a young bride of 20, and my nearest neighbour (whose sailor-husband had just answered the emergency call to duty) came to our home. She was obviously disturbed and on the verge of tears. That sorta brought me to for a moment as I put forth my most-composed-front to pooh-pooh the dangers involved; why the Japs didn't have a ghost of a chance; wasn't this the Gibraltar-of-the-Pacific etc. etc. said I loudly and boastfully! Then something stopped me DEAD and deflated me like a blowout in a tire RAT - TAT-TAT distinctly on OUR ROOF over the bedrooms - and YE GODS Roy upstairs on the open porch taking in the aerial show! Somehow or other I steered my shaking knees up the stairs - and guess what? There he stood - unharmed - still gaping through his binoculars at the enemy's planes! My relief immediately turned to anger as I rather incoherently shouted to him to stop being smart acting as a target for the enemy. All this didn't make sense to him at all as the motors of the planes overhead had completely drowned out the noise of the machine gun firing. But when he viewed the evidence of the shingles he was pretty happy that their aim fell wide of its mark. And don't think I wasn't! (At one time the Jewetts were up for a transfer to a project located on the Island of Guam, but construction was being wilfully retarded by wordy-words emanating from our Congressmen in Washington. Blessed Words! Then again, the Jewetts toyed with the idea of employment on the Burma Road for the Chinese Government! Are we lucky? Or.....Pinch me!)

Upon collecting ourselves after the first scare, we immediately donned our clothes and reported to the nearest base. I was assigned to the main dressing room. It was pretty awful! During the next three days and nights we remained at the post sleeping at one of the officer's homes and filling our days with much work. The blacked-out nights were squeamish beyond description; if someone saw a star shining unusually bright it was suggested what it might be a flare; if a sentry outside your window discharged his gun in a state of nerves, you would imagine he was blasting a landing party of Japs into eternity; or if you happened to be tuned into the police calls or a Mainland radio station, you were convinced that by morning the Japanese parachutists and troops would have complete control of the Island! Were we jittery!

By now though, you would find that the daily pattern of the average person here under Martial Law is very different to 2 months ago. We close our lights from 6 PM to 6 AM or else.....No one is permitted on the street at night except the defense worker enroute to work or home. No street lights. If you give a dinner party you must also be prepared to put your guests up for the night. Consequently practically no entertaining. Picture houses open at 10 AM and close at 5 PM. No dancing at hotels or night clubs. Not an ounce of liquor on sale anywhere, not even a glass of beer. And for a very good reason; our mixed races; of a total population on Oahu of 423,000 some 158,000 are Japanese, and 37,000 of those are aliens! A nice little army in itself! Gasoline is rationed although there is no shortage. Our cars remain in the garage as we bus or walk it now. Food is plentiful and not rationed; profiteering has been curbed by the pegging of some food prices - a break for the housewife - in places they were asking 25¢ for 2 lbs. of Irish potatoes! Gas masks have been distributed to all; they are horrible things, I do hope we won't ever have to use them. Shortly the government will be presenting us with our Masher bonnets - tin hats for every head! Japanese radio programs at last off the air in Honolulu. Public schools opening again after a seven week's vacation. The Army and Navy very much on the alert - much to write about, but hasn't. Federal projects running 7 days a week. Roy is overwhelmed with work, supervising no less than three jobs. A terrific order and strain. Almost everyone from Grandpa Joe to Aunt Maria is working on a defense job. Indignant support has struck an all time low. I shall remain on the Reserve List for the present, but expect to be in pitching again if an emergency arises. All sensible people (we're not) have built their air raid shelters already. Many of our friends have returned to the Mainland, and many more are planning to do so. Life has become very simple and unpretentious for us all. The change is definitely GOOD for us.

Don't waste time worrying about us, please. Roy, no doubt, would rather be in Alaska than here, but he has no further choice in the matter now, as his employment and income is more or less 'frozen' by military order. As for me, I am perfectly happy here, come what may. Japanese operations in this area in recent weeks have been limited to submarine activities entirely, so says Admiral Nimitz. Both the east and west coasts of the Mainland have had their share of the same, so we haven't a thing to brag about.

One thing more before I sign off. If you have any relatives or friends bound in 'parts unknown' be sure to tuck the name of 'L. Roy Jewett, Honolulu' into his pocket. Even when we move, we can always be reached by phone upon persistent inquiry of the Information Bureau of the Hawaii Telephone Co., we will be happy to do anything within our power to show the boys a good time. This horrible war is not of our making entirely, but we are in it up to our necks now, so the sooner we get it over with and correct all past errors by helping to write a New Peace ~~THE BROTHER!~~

LOVE TO ALL.

From

Roy, Capt. J. and the Cat.

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