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Monday
January 14th -

My Darling Wife —

There's a question that all of the 45-9 point men are asking - but nobody knows the answer: when do we leave Leyte? We know it will be somewhere between the 21st - next Monday, and February 7th. The consensus of opinion seems to indicate January 23rd or 4th - but the reason for that is that when the 50 point men were eligible last month on the 26th they moved out on the 29th - three days later - so most of us figure we will leave in about that same interval of time. The news we heard yesterday was repeated today and the only thing that has been added to it is an announcement posted on the bulletin board today. All it had to say was that the men with more than 45 points can pick up the clothing they need for shipment to the U.S. from the supply room either Thursday afternoon or Friday. That means the blouses, extra OD's - all our winter clothing has arrived, so probably next Saturday or Sunday I'll have my final house-cleaning.

Last evening I sealed your letter, and then sat here at the desk thinking where you would be and how you would feel when you read the news -. I hope so much that Uncle Sam sends that letter through to you with all possible haste - I want you to know the news just as soon as possible, and all of a sudden I had an idea - and the idea formulated a way for me to let you know there was good news coming just as soon as you saw the envelope - a little message down in the left hand corner would do it - so I obeyed that impulse. From now on, each evening you'll find a little "preview" down in the corner as to just how the news is going and what you'll find inside. Do you like the system - do you mind if I put that

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little advance notice there?

The work over at Signal Supply should be finished in a few days - but after what happened Saturday evening I was afraid the inventory would have to be started all over again. Before we had no guards around the warehouses - but on Saturday evening, the office and six of the warehouses were broken into, locks ripped open and goods strewn all over the place. Another inventory wasn't needed because a quick check disclosed all of the losses and after those items have been deducted the inventory will again be correct. Evidence showed the robbery to be the work of Indians - and the main items that were missing were flashlights, batteries, knives (machetes) - all things the Indian wants. Only small quantities were stolen - three knives, five flashlights - and those warehouses that were broken into which contained telescopes and surveyor's drawing tools didn't find a single item missing. There were a lot of fellows just waiting here - marking time - so now they have the job of guarding the warehouses from four in the evening till 8:30 in the morning.

Almost forgot - did I tell you? Major Burdeshaw said that a man declared essential to the outfit may be retained 90 days before he can go home so another man may be trained to replace him - but (and here's why the fellows like him) - he said that effective today, all men with 35 points or more would be declared surplus to the outfit - the outfit doesn't have the slightest need for any of them - so as soon as any man with more than 35 points becomes eligible to go home, when his turn comes - he goes! Since this Signal Supply work is quite important we were afraid we might be essential till it was finished - but he said his words were especially directed toward us and that he regrets - everybody with more than 35 is surplus!

Offin the distance I just heard a train whistle - and

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how good it feels to know that when we do go to Calcutta - we fly. Never again will I complain if I have to travel overnight in a day coach -; it's luxury compared to any Indian coach. Over here the gas buggys would be reserved for royalty! Because the gauge varies, you have to change three times - one train to another - and at each change you find a more dilapidated specimen of coach awaiting you. That trip, later on, from Seattle to Indiantown Gap - but third class Pullman or Troop Sleeper I won't mind as long as it makes good time - that will be the longest 3,000 miles of them all -! But over here - I'm so glad - January's going by so quickly - I've been almost two weeks in Ledo and it seems like two days. This job - having something to do, really makes the time pass quickly - and I hope it just keeps flying till I'm on my way!

I was thinking about Sidney today - and I wondered - did my letter reach him before he reached his staging area or was it too late and forwarded back to the States? Darling, don't forget - if any of your letters to me come back marked "Returning to the U.S." - save every one till I come home. I don't want to miss a single letter that you've written and when I come home we'll read them over together. Fellows who have gone to the staging area here have told us that once you reach there on your trip home, mail is no longer forwarded, but stamped and returned. Probably before we leave here they will ask us for a forwarding address - where we want our mail to be sent in the States - and I'm going to give your address. When mail does come marked like that, I will get no more mail - so as soon as that first one comes, none that you would write would reach me. Although your letters won't get through to me, mine will be delivered to you, so I'm going to keep writing till we get on the boat. On the boat I'll just keep a little diary - daily happenings and I'll mail it

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from Seattle! When you get that first letter marked, "Returning" - stop writing, but, Cotton, remember everything that happens, so when I come home you can tell me all about the days in between - and hearing it from your lips while you're close in my arms will be the grandest way to have my letters - I'll be having them just as I do in my dreams!

Ledo is getting ready to close. So far, the B.V., the Red Cross, the radio station, the library - they're all moved. There will be only a small installation remaining where the 20th General Hospital now stands - all the troops here in Ledo will be stationed there and they expect to remain till about the first of April. This ten months over here has passed a lot more quickly than I thought it would - and looking at Ledo as it was when I arrived and as it is now - golly, what a change! It's fast going back to the little Indian village that it was - one of the outposts of civilization (?) before the primitive jungles of Burma. And when I came over I never expected the conveniences that were found and could be had. Darling, I hope so much that when you're reading this letter I will be in Calcutta - either on or soon to be on a boat to the States. My prayer is that nothing arises which will change the order this time - and that everything will happen as now planned. So many things could happen; we won't become too optimistic for after the other disappointments we almost expect something which will make this but a pipe dream.

Ruth, I want so much to be with you - I miss you very, very much and I pray that Our Day will be here in just a little while - Goodnight, Darling - God Bless You - My Love - It's Yours - And I Am Yours -

Your Jerry (ox)