

IN REPLY REFER TO
FILE No. 8

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AMERICAN CONSULAR SERVICE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Lagos, Nigeria; June 25, 1943

Dear Folks:

Your good letters came yesterday (the ones mailed May 19th). Philinda has already had letters from her folks by Army Post Office, and they have made much better time than this. I hope you will be able to use this service in the future.

I was delighted to hear about John and Eva Montgomery's having a baby. Right now I feel sure I am going to write them a congratulatory letter, but in the cold light of experience I know I won't, so will you please call Mrs. Montgomery Sr. and ask her to convey my very warmest regards to the recent parents? It seems ages since I have seen John, and both of us have been married since and moved to different parts of the world. Nevertheless, I feel sure that when we do meet again, we will be as warm friends as ever, because our friendship was a lot stronger than just a common locality. I do hope that there is no chance of John's being sent abroad. I gather that he is instructing now, and at his age and married status, I shouldn't imagine it likely. However, one of the lads who was recently stationed here had a wife and four children; you can never tell about the Army.

I am glad to say that Philinda has been quite well since I last wrote. Last night we went to a dance at the Army mess and she danced all evening. She was so popular that most of the time the boys would only get a few steps in before some one else cut in. She is an excellent dancer, and I wish I had spent a little more time on it when I was youthful (!); I certainly have little interest in it now, and I am very rusty and out of practice. The boys had done a fine job of decorating the mess hall with paper flags and palm fronds. Some one inspected the flags at the last moment and removed the Japanese, German and Italian flags, which were included. The flags had been bought in town and had been imported at the time of the Coronation, presumably from Japan. They had a free bar and served a grand supper about 10:30. We had lots of delicacies I haven't seen in years, such as cheese on rye sandwiches, ham sandwiches, etc. After some initial bungling with the invitations, the whole thing was run very well and the boys behaved very well throughout. We were all very proud of them.

We have been celebrating Philinda's return to health by going out a great deal. We haven't been home a single night so far this week, and we are having some people in tomorrow. I think we had better slow down a bit. However, we don't stay out very late at these affairs and almost always get to bed by midnight, except

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on Saturday nights, when we make up for it by sleeping longer on Sunday.

One of our most enjoyable and healthful forms of recreation is menaced, however. I refer to our trips over to Tarquah Bay on Sundays. An order from the sub-area commander of the British Army appeared in the press stating that the launch on which we have been travelling to the Bay will no longer be available for civilian use, or, if so, under such limited conditions that it would be useless in practice. Since the Bay is completely cut off from Lagos by road, the only other way of getting there is to hire a native canoe and entrust your life to the frail craft and the vicious currents and tides of the Lagos harbor. It is a very grim prospect, and everything possible is being done to persuade the officer to change his mind. I hope I will be able to report that some arrangement has been made in my next letter. We all feel that these trips to the beach are necessary to maintain our health, since the cooped-up feeling from remaining in Lagos and never getting into the sun are very bad for one's nerves. I really think I wouldn't care to stay here any more if it proves to be impossible to get to the Bay.

My work has picked up considerably in interest recently. The arrival of our new Vice Consul, Bill Brunis, has made it possible to do more interesting work instead of being confined all the time to pure routine. At the same time, a representative of the Board of Economic Warfare came to town and gave us some fine information about the type of material they need in Washington for his organization and started up a number of things which I have been carrying on with since he left for Accra. I have been having a great time running around town, seeing different people and trying to act as if I know something about business. When dealing with Africans, it isn't hard, because, as a matter of fact, I do know more about it than most of them do. Further, I have the pleasure of feeling that I am doing something directly connected with the war effort.

Transportation in this part of the world is getting very difficult indeed. It is almost impossible for any civilians except the highest officials to get air passage to the States. If Philinda and I were transferred and ordered to proceed to Washington, I do not think we could get transportation at this time. I hope, though, that the situation will enable us to travel next Spring.

I really can't think of anything to say. I'll have to get Philinda to make a copy of some of her letters to send you. She seems to be able to go on and on about things I never think to mention. One thing I can't avoid saying: this typewriter is abominable.

With love to all,

William
P.S. I am sending a copy to Aunt Vice & Minnie. Please pass this on to Janie.