

Chapter Eleven

The Southern Cruise¹: May, 1938

The USS Canopus had been at sea for two days before Herb wrote his next letter. They were headed for Makassar, on the island of Celebes.²

Hello darling! It's high time I dropped you a letter again even though we are out in the middle of nowhere; and it will be a few days before we reach our first port of call.

I didn't get transferred to the storekeeper division yet but this morning I saw the supply officer, and perhaps I can get in there soon. ... I've a new job in the first division. I'm now a dashing messenger and it isn't a half bad job, considering that I'm in the deck force. There are two of us. One stands from noon to supper and on the following day from breakfast to noon. Then the other one takes the watch for a day. ... At sea, when we are on watch, we stand on the bridge, and run errands for the officer of the deck to the captain, exec. Squad commander, or other officers. ...

There really isn't much to it. I just stand up there in a clean suit of whites and neckerchief, look wise, and watch the water go by. And while I'm watching the water turn all sorts of shades of blue, and porpoises and flying fish playing about the bow; then it is that I always think of you.

I let my mind wander into a heaven where I find that I am once again with you, and we are planning and happily looking forward to everything that we are about to do. Once again, I'm kissing you, and you are in my arms, and heart, and soul; and about that time the quartermaster rudely jolts me out of my paradise by saying "messenger, go below on the foc'sle and stand by to strike seven bells." I skip down the ladder to the foc'sle by the bell, and at the wave of his arm from the bridge I bang out the time. (April 28)

Herb elaborates on his attempts to get into the storekeeper division.

I was feeling very discouraged about not getting the transfer I've been looking forward to. I stood up on the bridge hating the Navy, the Canopus, and everything about them. However, last evening a storekeeper told me to put in another request chit, and I did; and this morning I saw the supply officer who is in charge of the storekeeper division; and the result is that I feel optimistic tonight. (April 28)

¹ A map of Indonesia, including the South China Sea and the Philippine Islands, is on the next page.

² The modern name is Sulawesi, and it is one of the larger islands which now belong to the Republic of Indonesia.



Herb describes the Canopus and the group of ships making the voyage.

The Pigeon is right behind us, and five subs are broadside to us, strung out in a column. One sub needed repair and couldn't make the trip. ... It's just like dragging a couple of kid brothers to a party with you, when you want to go alone. ... You see, it means that in every port, we must tie the subs up alongside, fuel them, and then untie them when we get underway for the next port.

It isn't much fun for those sub sailors on this cruise either. They don't have movies every night like we do. And if it gets the least bit rough the subs rock and roll crazily, and if all hands have to stay below decks it gets awful hot for them. There are about 40 men on a sub. (April 28)

Herb continues his description of the cruise.

We aren't so very far from land at any time on this cruise. We can usually see islands in the far distance, and birds are always swooping about the sea. And when a squall or wind comes up its nice to smell the earthy tropical fragrance that comes with it. The winds swoop down over tropical islands covered with lush jungle vegetation, and bear its scent out to sea. (April 28)

Crossing the Equator

The USS Canopus crossed the equator at noon on April 30. At the end of the day, Herb writes at length, in full detail, about the contests and the hijinks between the veterans (shellbacks) and the uninitiated (polliwogs).

Well, the big day has finally come and gone, and what a riot the last 48 hours has been. We sure had a tough time with the mutinous polliwogs too. Last evening, they locked a couple of us up for a short time; and last night after movies they crept up on us while we slept, grabbed us out of our bunks, and threw about 20 of us down in a dark and stuffy hold. We "shellbacks" hollered and banged away for about two hours before they finally got tired of keeping us imprisoned and they let us go. We were all set to get even with them last night but the Chief master-at-arms told us to turn in and take it easy. For our day was about to dawn.

This morning we were supposed to have an inspection but it was called off because of rain; and so with nothing else to do, the two factions girded for war. (The pollywogs outnumbered us 300 to 100 too.) The pollywogs proceeded to gather and hold a meeting in the lower mess hall while we shellbacks got together on the movie platform, which is three decks above the mess hall. ... They wanted to fight their way up to the movie platform, wreck some of our equipment, and hoist their flag aloft. (April 30)

Herb describes the "battle" that took place, which was waged primarily with high pressure hoses. He then writes

We were holding out fine and we kept them from hoisting their flag. About that time ... our fun was ended when the bugler blew "All divisions to quarters." Well, it was almost dinnertime by then anyhow. (April 30)

Herb continues with his description of the more ritualistic, less rowdy, activities.

We had dinner in peace and then all hands prepared for the boarding of King Neptune and his Royal Court. The pollywogs fell in at quarters; and when we crossed the line, the royal party emerged from behind the screen on the foc'sle and made a grand parade to the movie platform where everything was to take place. Jolly Rogers (King Neptune's flag) was hoisted aloft, and the Commodore's flag was taken down. You see the ship was turned over to Davy Jones who the captain welcomed aboard. (Incidentally, the Commodore is the Commander of Subron Five, and the title Commodore is only honorary.) (April 30)

Herb explains that because the Captain and his executive officer were both pollywogs, they got initiated first. He describes this initiation in detail; something that each pollywog would also get.

The skipper got off easy but the exec. got the works. He first appeared before the Royal Judge. He pleaded guilty to the charges, and his counsel for defense crossed him up and said that he should be prosecuted to the fullest extent. So, he had to take a drink of some bitter stuff out of the Royal Baby's bottle; he got put on the operating table where he was shocked with some electric wires, stamped shellback, and the royal dentist put some

more medicine in his mouth. Then he was put in the barber's chair which hung above a tank of water, slapped with some grease, and dumped into the tank of water below where they dunked him and threw him down the chute to the end of it all where two more shellbacks were ready with some more graphite and grease. He was quite a sport and the fellows gave him quite an ovation. (April 30)

Herb continues with descriptions of additional forms of punishment meted out to the ringleaders of the pollywogs' mutiny.

They had to lay in coffins where they were pounded with canvas clubs and doused with buckets of water. And there was the dog house where one man could squeeze in, to get dunked with loads of water. There were stocks, irons, and handcuffs. There was a big bird cage that a man could fit in to be hoisted aloft about 20 ft. Since the pollywogs threw a lot of our canvass clubs overboard last night, we substituted some pieces of rubber hose for them. (April 30)

He then writes about his role, and how he made out.

I came through it okay except for a strained arm, a headache, and a bruised lip. That's "nuthin" compared to what some got. I didn't get to dunk anyone because I was on watch this afternoon, but I saw it all from the bridge deck, and anyhow I didn't have the ambition to feel like doing any dunking, and I wasn't a bit sorry that I had the watch. (April 30).

Makassar

The USS Canopus arrived at Makassar³ on the morning of May 2, and she tied up to a dock for their three-day visit. Herb writes "We were cordially received by the Dutch authorities here and given every available privilege" (May 3).

Herb rated liberty [privileges to go ashore] on their second day there, and he and a buddy went ashore. As soon as they were off the pier, they exchanged their U.S. currency for Dutch guilders, then rented a bicycle taxi for getting around, for 15 cents per hour. He describes the taxi: "There are two wheels in front, and one wheel behind. The driver sits behind the passengers and pedals. The passenger seats are comfortable too" (May 3). They told the driver to take them around town. Herb writes about their adventures that day.

I'd say that Makassar is by far the cleanest tropical city that I have ever seen. ... All the houses and streets are cleanly swept and neatly kept, and no visible vice exists at all. The natives are mostly Malaysians and Indians; and almost all are Mohammedans.

They wear funny looking black felt hats and nearly all have a brightly colored sash which they wear thrown over their shoulder, draped about their wastes; or as a shade over their heads. Their favorite colors seem to be vivid shades of red, scarlet, and green.

³ Makassar is located on the southern tip of Sulawesi.



Bicycle taxis in Makassar. Herb is in the center.

Our bicycle boy seemed tireless and pedaled us about for a couple of hours. The natives were very friendly and kept waving to us wherever we went. If we would stop to take a picture about 50 kids would come running up and start chattering away.

We were wheeling by a large imposing looking Chinese cemetery and we stopped to take some pictures of a beautiful looking temple a little way inside one gate. To our surprise an aged Chinaman appeared and unlocked the gates and told us to come on in and take a good look at it. We gladly did, and what a beautiful work of art those temples ere. They were evidently built over some graves or tombs of respected and wealthy deceased Chinese; and no labor or expense had been spared to create a collection of altars, statues, images, and writings about their temples. There were dragons, and ferocious looking idols sculpted painstakingly in marble and other rock, and vividly painted. We thanked him for showing us around and gave him a few coins for his trouble. We then went back downtown and looked around for souvenirs.

On Thursday the USS Canopus left Makassar for Bali.



As we softly slipped out of the little tropical harbor and rounded its tree and hut lined shores, it seemed like a very quaint little port. ... The whole sea around there seems crowded full of all sized fishing vessels and junks. Some are brightly colored and have pretty sails, and with the families aboard them arrayed in their vivid sashes; they present quite a colorful picture when you pass one close by. (May 5).

The next day, on the cruise to Bali, Herb had time to write a nice long letter. That evening he writes “You know, honey, whatever I do see or enjoy on a cruise like this, I also have a sort of incomplete satisfaction about it because I keep wishing that you were with me seeing everything that I see.” He then added “I’m missing you all the more these days because of our lack of stateside mail” (May 6).

He reminisces about their last night together, exactly eight months ago. “Oh, what a night ‘the night that love was born.’ Do you remember that song? It came out in 1932 or 33 I believe. The words are nice.” (May 6)

In the same letter Herb vented a bit about not yet getting the position he wanted, and he explains “However I am studying the storekeeper course and I hope that I will be allowed to take the quarterly exam in July, even though I am not in the Supply Department by then” (May 6).

Bali

The next day the USS Canopus anchored off shore. Herb writes about seeing Bali⁴ for the first time “a beautiful island with its wavy green rice fields fringed by groves of coconut trees and its tropical forests rising into the rugged hills of the interior” (May 7).



Above: Two of Herb’s buddies by a rice field

Herb rated liberty on the first day there, so he and about a hundred others went ashore. They reached the shore by 2 p.m., and broke into small groups. Herb was with two others, and because of heavy rain they arranged for a car and driver to show them around. Herb describes what they did and saw. [The following is from his letter of May 7.]

As is typical of a Dutch possession the roadsides were clean and neat and inside the town of Bulelang, off which we are anchored, all the huts, houses, and stores were painfully clean and well kept. However from the start it was evident that the Dutch hadn’t ruined Bali by commercialism as most countries do ruin beauty spots.

⁴ Bali is a small island immediately to the east of the island of Java, and now part of the Republic of Indonesia.



Darling, as far as the Balinese natives are concerned, they took our breath away. The whole world could learn a lesson from these clean living, innocent brown gods and goddesses. They walk erect with loads on their heads piled high and they have the most correct posture. ... And that adds grace and perfection to all the rest of their body which is plainly noticeable because hardly anyone wears clothing above their waist. However, Louise, there is nothing that seems indecent about that. ... They seem so clean and so alive and they walk proudly with their heads held high and they look at you when you look at them.

Their facial features are a work of art. They have smooth foreheads and finely and softly chiseled faces and their eyes have an eternal innocent and angelic look about them, round and appealing as they are.

Our drive took us to some large, ancient Balinese temples which were hundreds of years old. I can't begin to tell you how beautiful they were with their ferocious images and idols and sculpted out of sandstone and colored gold, blue, red and every other color. So many parts to one temple, too. Altars for all different gods.



And as we drove about the countryside we would see now and then, about 20 huts to a village surrounded by a stone wall; and each village has its own little temple in it where the natives still practice their ancient rituals.



Entrance to a villager's home

Always the rain too! We only could take a couple of pictures, in one of the temples. The natives would always look at us and smile as we went by, from the tiniest kid to old and wrinkled men and women.



Bearing gifts at an altar

These people also put out some wonderful wood carvings for which they are internationally famous. On our way back we stopped at a curio shop and I got exactly what I wanted. The head of a Balinese woman carved in what appears to be ebony wood. It's about seven inches high and three inches wide, and I like it because the features of it are smooth, and typical of a Balinese woman. It will look nice on our mantelpiece darling, and it will always remind me of all that I saw in Bali.

I never expect to see a more perfect and beautiful tropical island as long as I live. I hope I get to go ashore again there but I'm not sure that I will because only 100 men from the Canopus are allowed ashore a day. It's a rather small place for a lot of men to be ashore in.

As for my companions – well, they aren't fortunate in having the inspiration that I have. However, I exerted my influence over them and our trip remained strictly a sightseeing trip. It's funny that we still appreciated the sights even though we dashed into temples in the rain, with mud splattering our whites, and sopping our shoes. I took a flop once when we were downtown and took about a foot of skin off one leg – but it was funny the way I slipped on a dry spot and didn't even get dirty.

Oh yes to complete the day we had a bottle of Dutch beer and a liverwurst sandwich in a Dutch place down near the boat landing.

Three days later, on May 10, Herb gets an opportunity to write again, and writes about his second visit ashore.

Hello honey; here goes a letter in pencil to you for a change. And here's the reason for it. Right now, I am on watch on the quarterdeck, and I won't get off until 10:30 p.m. so I borrowed a pad and pencil from the quartermaster and now I can proceed to kill two birds with one stone. I'll make that 2 ½ hours go fast and I'll be letting my sweetheart know that I'm still thinking of her all the time.

I was ashore again yesterday and although it showered once or twice the weather was nice compared with Saturday afternoon. So, I took two rolls of pictures which I hope turn out. A couple of us rode all around in a calesa, which is a cart pulled by a pony. Its also called a carrametta.

Oh yes, wait until you see the picture I took especially for you, to make you jealous. Me alongside a cute Balinese girl. (However, don't get too worried, she had all her clothes on!) Most of the fellows on the ship thought it was very funny to have their pictures taken with their arms around half naked girls, but as I don't ever want to get a rolling pin thrown at me, I didn't like the idea of that.



We visited some temples again and took pictures of them and rode around through rice fields and coconut groves. I saw a girl lift a five gallon can full of water, put it on her head, and walk off with it just as if it was nothing. I bought another Balinese head carving too, about a foot high.



Practically no one speaks English here and what a job it is to get the drivers to take you some place. It seems that no matter where a sailor is, when he jumps into a cab, or cart, the driver always heads for a certain type of place. If he speaks English you can stop him; if he doesn't, before you know it you are in a tough district where women are for sale, so to speak. And only then can a guy like me get angry and get it through the driver's head that I want no part of it. Then with a shrug of his shoulders and a non-comprehensible look; he'll cluck to his horse and start off in another direction.

Herb posing at a temple

And don't worry honeybunch, there isn't a sign of my will power losing your influence. A faithful and dutiful fiancée I will always be Louise. (May 10)

Surabaya

The USS Canopus entered Surabaya Harbor⁵ in the early morning hours of May 13. Herb writes about their entrance and the Dutch presence there.



There is always a lot of bother and fuss to coming into port, especially a naval base like this. We had to fire a 21-gun national salute to the Netherlands' Indies officials on our way in; and then after we tied up along a pier here, the U.S. Consul and several high Dutch naval officials paid the commodore and captain a call. And that meant a lot of bother, side-boys, standing at attention, saluting as they came up the gangway.

Surabaya seems to be quite a busy harbor and there are over a dozen merchantmen in here. It rained while we were coming in but despite the rain about a dozen Dutch naval planes flew around the ship giving us a sort of welcome. There are also quite a few Dutch warships here as this is the home base for their Dutch East Indies fleet. (May 13)

The next day 160 of them went on a sight-seeing trip, on four busses. Herb writes about the excursion.

First we rode all around Surabaya and we were all surprised to find that it is a remarkably clean and modern city with wide streets, large buildings, street cars, and efficient policemen. I guess quite a few thousand Dutch families live here and you ought to see the beautiful homes they all have.

From there we went to a zoo filled with all sorts of native animals. And what funny monkeys we saw. When they saw all the sailors around their cages, they started throwing nuts at us and they seemed to get quite a kick out of us by the way they showed off.

⁵ Surabaya is located at the eastern end of the island of Java, and now a part of the Republic of Indonesia.

After we left the zoo, we went downtown to the Dutch Naval Canteen which was our last stop. There we were treated to free beer. So, you see that was one Dutch treat that didn't cost anyone anything. ... After a couple of glasses of beer me and a buddy decided to take a walk around. We looked through several stores and walked up and down a few streets, and after noticing the hundreds of bikes whizzing by us every minute, we decided to go get us a couple of bikes. What a job that turned out to be. (May 14)



Above: Fishermen repairing nets

Herb writes about his bicycle adventure in downtown Surabaya.

We finally found an Indian who understood English and he was very polite to us. He ran a repair shop and didn't have bikes for hire but he insisted that we use two of his bikes he had there. He wouldn't take any deposit and wanted no money for their use. He just wanted us to bring them back which we promised to do.

We started off on a busy street and we found out right away what bike traffic was like. You have a hundred rules to live up to just as though you were driving a car. ... Between the bike I had and the traffic it's a wonder I didn't smash up. The pedals kept turning all the time and the brake was a sort of lever affair on the frame, and half of the time I had a dozen people laughing at me. Once a cop looked at me like he was going to give me a ticket or something, for turning around in the middle of the block. And you must put out your hand when you make a turn!

We rode around for a couple of hours and by a miracle of navigation we arrived back at the shop. By the we were hot and tired and we decided to take it easy.

We went back to an India shop where we had seen some stuff we liked, and we proceeded to do some bartering with the merchant. I got something for "us" that I liked a lot at a fairly reasonable price. It's a woolen table cover about four feet square and hand painted, imported from Bombay, India. It has a very colorful design on it, and it has those fringes about two inches long on all the edges. (May 14)

Batavia

The USS Canopus arrived in Batavia⁶ early in the morning of Tuesday, May 17. Herb writes: "This is another busy little Dutch port and it is fairly crowded with merchantmen, mostly Dutch owned. They have a breakwater almost completely surrounding the harbor and we are moored inside it" (May 17).

He again writes to Louise about his attempts to advance his career in the Navy.

I got impatient over waiting so long to get transferred, so I went up to the exec's cabin and had a personal talk with him. I said "Commander Kinney, I like the Navy and I'd like to stay in it if I reach the goal I've set out for; but after three years of trying to get in a supply department I've ran into nothing but obstacles, and it's all quite discouraging. I'd appreciate it if you would do something about it."

Anyhow, I said something almost like that. Then he said "Well son, that's what I want to know. If you really are trying for something you are interested in, I'll do all I can to help you." So, he told me to put in another request chit to his office and he'd see what he could do about it. (May 17)

On Wednesday Herb went ashore to see the sights in Batavia. On Thursday, he writes:

It is also a large, modern city; there is also a crowded Chinatown through which I walked, and I bought a set of supposedly silver ice cream spoons.

In the evening I ran into three fellows from my division and we rode around after having a couple of bottles of beer. Some of the places we visited though, for the other fellows' convenience; although novel compared with such places in other countries, made me feel awful guilty darling. I suppose I should leave the gang when they visit such places but I'm always dragged along, even though I do nothing but wait for the fellows.

What was novel about the places was their cleanliness and homeliness. Cute little houses and bungalows in a nice part of the city. Young Chinese, Malayan, Balinese, and Japanese girls in low cut dresses, soft lights, scented boudoirs. Oh sweetheart, even the fact that I was near such a place bothers me. But darling you will never have to worry about me losing my will power and falling under their influence. (May 19)

In the same letter, Herb writes about receiving letters from Louise.

Well, I got back to the ship at midnight; clean and sober darling! I heard that we had got mail in the afternoon and boy I dashed up to the mailbox. Imagine how I felt when I found four of your sweet letters waiting for me. ... I read your four letters before I turned in. I hadn't heard from you for three weeks. Oh, your letters are part of my life, just as you are all my life Louise. (May 19)

Before he turned in for the night, he writes back to her, responding to what she had written. In one passage he addresses the subject of dancing.

⁶ Batavia was the capital of Dutch East Indies, and corresponds with what is now Jakarta, the capital of the Republic of Indonesia. It is located at the western end of the island of Java.

Sure, you can bet I'll learn to dance as much as you want me to when I get back there. I won't want to take you to a dance for other men's benefit. However, I won't be the kind of husband who will mind if you just dance with other men; just so you will always tell them you are married when it becomes necessary to. (May 19)

He returned to the ship early that afternoon so that he could continue answering her three letters. At one point he continues their "discussion" on one particular subject.

Oh, I'll bet you stopped calling me Herbie because you were afraid that I would spank you. I know you are probably strong; but all you could kick would be air while you were laying across my lap. You just watch and see some time, honeybunch! (Are you scared??) You see I distinguish a difference between hitting you and spanking you. (May 20)

On Friday at a store in Batavia Herb had three rolls of film developed, which included scenes from Bali, Makassar, and Surabaya. He writes about one of them.

Most of them came out fair; one too good Louise, that I had taken in Bali. Me with my arm around a Balinese girl and, er, her blouse fell open I guess when my buddy snapped the picture. Gosh I tore it and the negative up right away; and I'm terribly sorry that I even posed for such a picture darling.

Sweetheart I'm always trying to be faithful to you every minute of my life now and that is why it bothers me even when I do little things like taking my picture with a half-clothed woman or going near a place that I told you about yesterday. (May 20)

Two days later they left Batavia and headed north through the Java Sea, on their way to Sarawak, Borneo. Herb writes about the good news he had received.

Flash! Extra! Guess what? Tomorrow's dope sheet came out a few minutes ago and it said something that I'd been looking for, for six months now! Yep, I'm in the 4th Division and out of the 1st Division at last. Unshackled from the bonds of slavery that held me to the deck force. Boy, do I feel happy! Now my work means something to me. It changes my whole outlook on the Navy, too! Now I've got my hand on the ladder to success and I know I can climb it. I knew the Exec would do something after my pleas to him! Yes, tomorrow I'm a storekeeper stocker; and I'll leave no stone unturned to learn everything I can as quickly as I can to get rated as soon as I can! (May 22)

Two days later as the ship was still at sea, Herb writes about his new work environment.

Darling I sure have it swell now. Right now, I'm writing on a desk for a change, with an electric fan in my face; instead of in a stuffy corner on deck. I've lots of locker space down here and I can even sleep later in the morning if I want to. And the work isn't hard, but it is interesting and clean, just as I figured it would be.

I work in the main storeroom on ship. Whenever someone wants something (anything from soup to nuts), they make out a chit and leave it down here and we give them the stuff. We keep the chits on file, and subtract material from our stock cards, and send the chits up to the supply office. We keep the stock arranged down here and keep the place clean and that's all there is to it.

I work with a swell bunch of fellows compared with the average fellows in the deck force. They all try to help you out; don't rush you; and give you every break possible. Now I'll be able to write often, and at my leisure instead of being rushed all the time. These storekeepers aren't like bosun mates.

We always have a place to play cards, or write, or sit around and talk, or do whatever we want to. Why we can even have access to the ice box should we get hungry between meals. Right now, I can't write very sensibly. Some of the fellows are skylarking and joking amongst themselves and I'm laughing with them; so perhaps I'd better close this now. (May 24)

Sarawak, Borneo⁷

Herb writes about his first encounter with this tropical island.

Here it is darling, the first of the many typewritten letters⁸ you are going to get from now on. (After all I need the practice.)

We arrived in Sarawak this morning and it sure is a wild jungle looking place with swamps and marshes extending to the waters edge. There is nothing in sight except a few frail looking huts and no one has an idea where the city actually is. Anyhow there can't be any city here because they are allowing only about 50 men to go ashore this afternoon. A few fellows are going hunting and they ought to be able to find plenty to hunt because you know Borneo is a tropical jungle in most parts.

In fact, it was this island that Frank Buck visited on one of his expeditions, after which he wrote the book "Bring Them Back Alive" which was followed by the picture. (May 25)

Four days later, on a Sunday evening, Herb writes about his recent excursion on the island. He had just returned from a trip to Brunei, "a little jungle town in North Borneo." He and several others on liberty were in an open motor launch in "a broiling sun" for over three hours attempting to reach their destination on the island.

We had to go all the way across a long harbor and then up a river about twenty miles. ... There was little scenery on the way in and less when we arrived, at Brunei. The population of that place is supposed to be about ten thousand but from the looks of things along the waterfront it seems that most of those ten thousand people live in a bunch of huts on stilts in the shallow water of the river. (May 29)

⁷ Sarawak, a state within Malaysia, encompasses the northwestern portion of the island of Borneo, which is divided between Malaysia to the north, and Indonesia to the south. Borneo is one of the largest islands of the Greater Sunda Islands, which comprise most of modern-day Indonesia.

⁸ A page from this letter is at the end of this chapter.



Brunei itself had one main street with a few stores on it. They didn't even have any souvenirs for sale worth looking at and they were selling warm cans of beer and then they would charge you about ten cents in their money for an ice cube with which to cool off the beer.

Half-starved and aghast at the long trip facing us, we embarked in the motor launch, our spirits slightly bolstered by beer. Half way back to the ship to make the day complete it started to rain cats and dogs and we got properly soaked before we finally arrived back to the dear old Canopus.

Anyhow I can truthfully say now that I have been ashore in the wilds of Borneo and although it might mean something to someone, it doesn't mean a thing to me. Just like most of the other places I've visited, this place discourages a person's flair for travel or adventure. (May 29)

In the same letter Herb again writes about his new work environment, and the playful teasing that occurs.

Since there aren't many fellows in this division, we all know each other quite well and get along fine. However, like my other buddies on deck they kid me about some of my plans. "So I'm going to get married while I'm still in the Navy" they say. Can't be done, foolish idea, and all that sort of tripe they argue.

Just in the course of one week, honey, they have all learned (all the fellows I work with in this storeroom) that there is a certain little sweet girl in the States that means an awful lot to me and that I am not to be told anything that contradicts my plans regarding that same sweet person, lest they be most vehemently bawled out in no uncertain terms. (May 29)