

## WOMEN VETERANS HISTORICAL COLLECTION

### CORRESPONDENCE

COLLECTION: Jean Holdridge Reeves Papers

DATE: September 27,

At sea

Dearest Melissa and Kay

You know—the strangest thing- same view each day. The ocean is a beautiful dark blue topped by bits of white. Occasionally a little painter drops in extra green or in a more romantic mood purple.

Our Christmas decorations are simple, but quite original with miniatures figures. Vari-colored snow, trees with cards attached. We do have a real tree with lights, tinsel and bulbs about which we gather for evening sings. Singing has passed away many, many hours for all of us. Each day the jam sessions are crowded and boogie-woogie makes the feet move constantly although not high.

Ever since the ST. Louis interview ARC life has been painted with black but evidently there is a colored undercoating and we have scratched into that for all along the way life has been much better than anticipation. This is one time when the saying anticipation is greater than realization does not hold true.

There is no extra space in our cabin but facilities are adequate. I love the dry, wet wash shirts but they get so wrinkled and all that there is little difference. Salt water showers are rugged and no lather results but the distilled water is on long enough each day so that our skin is not wasting away at all. Already I can tell we'll be using lots and lots of powder and if I ever ask you for any you maybe should send it in a can because we've already had some sad cases of boxes being smashed and powder all over everything. If you still have my package please send it on to me when my APO comes.

Church services outside are most interesting and very different from the usual ones. They are pretty much true to the picture ideas however. We've been singing in the choir and have practices during the week. Don't sound too badly since we stick to the simple hymns and let the Messiah and Alleluia chorus take care of themselves. Christmas we wore our white blouses and made every one cheery with a white Christmas. Our group exchanged 10¢ presents and wrote silly verses to each other. They had fixed up one of the cabins like a living room with fire place individual red socks filled with candy, oranges, cigarettes, and a wee bit of fruit cake. Santa Claus even found us that evening via "flying fish", I guess. The next day the ARC distributed Christmas presents—the writing paper,

cards, pencil, washcloth variety Small groups of us got together and opened them with much ceremony.

We've met lots of nice people aboard—each day finding some one you hadn't noticed before. I have never sat so much in all my life but find little space for exercising. Several days one of the fellows and I have played with a medicine ball which must weigh at least 15 pounds. The listing of the ship tips you over too much to do very strenuous work.

I was never actually seasick and think there is very little danger anymore. The first breakfast was extremely rugged. Will be writing more as the days roll on. You know I'm thinking about you all the time.

Lovingly  
Jean

Dear Mother

Just a note to tell you we are fine- Melissa left yesterday so we're terribly quiet. However I think I'll enjoy it and try to rest some.

This letter came from Jean yesterday so thought I'd copy and send it on to you. You probably have already heard from her. This machine doesn't work very good any more guess too many children have been playing with it.

We have terrible roads here, the drifts are as high as the car in some spots. This morning it is snowing again. We are almost out of coal and there doesn't seem to be much chance of getting more it will be a good excuse for the Forest to get out and clean the woods. There has been so much ice that truckers haven't been able to bring coal from the mines, so that the coal situation is serious through this part of Ohio.

Douglas is such a good baby that I hated to see Melissa go away and get him spoiled. Grandma Myers is so [unreadable] over Jimmie I hope she will leave the baby to Melissa. They spoiled Jimmie so that I don't think he'll ever learn to mind. Maybe I am wrong I hope so.

Forest got a new tractor the other day he is so pleased as one never knows how much the old ones will have to do yet. Calvin has to go for this examination Monday, and Kenneth's man has to go the next day—it keeps a person guessing what will happen next.

I have to run along and do some cleaning—everything is turned upside down.

Love

Catherine