INDIA

7 June, 1943

AMERICAN RED CROSS

823rd Engineer Battalion
A.P.O. No. 689
C/o Postmaster
New York, N.Y.

Dear Al,

I received the two V. Mail letters at mail call less than an hour ago and I am answering them immediately so I can catch you again while you are in a writing mood. You answered in what was almost record time for you and I am in the hope that you will not lose the inclination to answer a letter within three months of its arrival by the time that this reaches you. Seriously, mail is our most looked for joy over here and mail from those who are close and dear to us always gives us the lift we need to carry on over here in this almost interest-bare jungle where we now find ourselves. Just in case you are in doubt as to whether you come under the "close and dear" classification

outlined above, I'll let you know that you meet the qualifications, just barely but nonetheless you meet them. Now, don't spoil it all and qualify for the "Apart and hated" badge by keeping me waiting too long for your next.

There are no great changes to report as to our present situation. Life still goes on, if somewhat boringly. We are beginning to long so desperately for home and our loved ones that some of the hopes we have held in that direction are taking on the aspect of convictions. The power of suggestion and all that you know.

We've put in a hard year overseas, as far as work is concerned, and even though we were doing no work it would still be hard. Marking time with no one around to help you "mark" it is not the easiest task. Soon, within the very near future to be sure, we are to be given a change.

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for rest and recreation. They are going to send us to a big city so that we can learn to be people again. It'll be strange to walk on a paved street, and open a door, and (if you will pardon me) sit on a toilet, and do some of the other simple things which form the line of demarcation between the urban civilization we have come to know and the jungle existence that army life has imposed upon us. It's all in it, though, and we'll just have to make the best of whatever comes until such time as this nightmare shall spend itself. And a box of candy or a bunch of flowers shall again be thought of as some of man's most effective and most important "weapons".

Though this experience has been one that I would not choose voluntarily to undergo, for the sake

of experience, it has had some enriching facets and I am not unaware of them. They shall be of value to me, I have no doubt. Should I be fortunate enough to answer "Here" at roll call on that glorious armistice day that is to come.

I am looking forward with eagerness to the receipt of a picture of Nelson. I insist that you read this part of the letter to Berta, so that she can cooperate with me by worrying you until the picture is actually posted. Give them both my love and greet Mike + Maria and Julia and all the bunch for me. Do you ever see Yvonne?

Nelson

"Ola Berta, mi amor! Cuando vas a escribirme una noticia? Mandame el retrato de Nelson o me pleo para siempre.