

July 21st 1945

Dear Ones,

I am going to quit - the boys are really taking me to the cleaners this month; I certainly must be lucky in love! Last month I paid for my watch, this month I am almost to the point where I have to pawn it! Hal came over for supper last night and then we went to see "The Sky's the Limit" which I had seen before but which I still enjoyed. Today is one of those half-rain half-sun days that is quite uncomfortable. The mail yesterday brought me letters from home and from Dan Fenn and Renie Larner, who has been Mrs Myron Earl Freedman for one day now as I write this. Dan commented on the Guardian - his feeling is that there is a place for the magazine but that it is of little use to try to do any real spadework until those of us who are ready to work the magazine into shape get back. He had a good point in that the magazine must put stress on student contributions instead of the grist-mill articles which faculty members seem to be able to turn out at the drop of a hat. Renie wrote in the same vein in which Mike had written - she was all excited about the wedding, of course. They have an apartment and she is working and apparently they will be able to make both ends meet on her pay and Mike's pay and allotment. She too told me that at first Mike was determined to have no best man since I couldn't be there but that they finally agreed to have her brother Ed do the honors - he is an Ordnance Lieutenant too. (Either they are wonderfully tactful or else Mike doesn't have a friend in the world!!! If the fact that he wrote only twice or three times in two years is any indication, I think it is probably true that his self isolation let to his losing touch with even his oldest buddies from Great Neck - but such loyalty to me doesn't quite have an authentic ring!)

I didn't bring any of your letters down with me so I will wait and finish this one up in the office. Since I am on guard I should have ample letter writing time over the weekend - I just hope that I have a quiet tour of duty. I don't know if I have ever told you about the population of this island. There are the French and British and they fall into the two categories of officials and plantation owners; as I understand it Lever Brothers is the controlling interest out here and finances the copra production for their oils and soap bases. There are a few British store owners - the island has a Burns-Phillips store; B-P is the A&P of the South and Southwest Pacific. Most of the British and French have brought their families out here, but there are some cases of intermarriage with Polynesian natives. The second group is the native population - they are Melanesian and very unattractive; they keep to the back woods and we do not see them to any great extent. The third group, and apparently the largest, is the Tonkinese labor group; the French and British plantation owners imported from Tonkin, China, and from Indo-China these orientals to work the plantations. They are extremely small, their skin coloring is brown-yellow, their teeth are black from chewing betel-nut, and their conversation is carried on in a high pitched jabber; they are not attractive, but they seem to be a pretty tough bunch for their physical puniness. I am told however that before the coming of the Army and malaria control experts, Santo was a malarial danger spot of the worst order and that the Tonks were specially ravaged by the disease. The Tonks are here under some sort of labor contract which apparently is just one level above the exploitation of direct slavery; my impression is that the Tonkinese civilization of Indo-China must have been a fairly highly developed one because these Tonks are pretty clever and natively intelligent. As I say, they run the plantations, and now they have laundries and restaurants and the like - in all cases, French families are the owners. And in any case, they know the value of property and money. What I was getting at and what started me off on this description is that now that a lot of the troops have left the Army faces quite a pilferage problem with the natives, and I hope that none of them decide to explore the warehouse areas while I am on guard!

I am now back in the office and it is still noon hour. I think I'll use the other machine. Let's see what odds and ends there are --

The Army has put out a little booklet on State department documents ranging from the Charter signed by Roosevelt and Churchill through the Mexico City Pact; that plus the text of San Francisco is very good background material. I hope that you do decide to take your vacations to the Camps and to Provincetown; if you do go to the Cape, be sure and give my best to Uncle Sam and Aunt Hattie - you know. I have written them short notes every now and then but I never have received any ^{RESPONSE} from them as far as I can recall. As for your happiness that I am getting good food, I had better warn you that I am making the most of it and I fear that it is tending to make the most of me! It has come to the stage where hunger is about the only desire around here that can be satisfied to any degree; the volleyball game has stopped for lack of players, and dealing cards is hardly suitable exercise. I am trying to be more thoughtful of my posture.

I was sorry to read about Sam Novick. The makeup of the Jewish community at home will probably be noticeably different to me from my recollections and impressions of the days before I came into the Army. I still do not know the issues involved in the New York newspaper strike; apparently it is an independent union of delivery workers that is involved and the charge is that the employers are violating the agreement of the closed shop and not dealing with the employees through the union. The radio the other day said that the non-fraternization policy had been abandoned and apparently that was a wise decision.

OK for this noon time -

All my love,

Samuel

Regards to Doris