

August 10th 1945

Dear Ones,

After I finished my "letter in red" I came back to the tent and went to bed - I did the crossword puzzle and fell asleep by 10. I was deeply asleep when I became conscious of a lot of noise and shouting. Don Harms, John DeMarines, Chet Kiel came streaming into the tent and Paul Sheneman was right behind them. "The war is over!" "Yeah, get up, it's all over!!" I sat up in a hurry; Chet had been writing a letter and had had his radio to the San Francisco short wave station - at about 10 minutes before 11 he heard the Domei report and the word spread like wild fire. I got out of bed and sat around in the nude for awhile as they explained the conditions that had been attached; between our sleepiness, our happiness, and our excitement, we must have acted as though we were a little drunk. By that time - about 11 - there was nobody left to wake up; most of the lights in the area came on and the enlisted men's area was bedlam. However as you might expect most of the people at this command just heard the news and there was little or no response; the club was not opened, and by 11:30 I can safely say that all the lights with few exceptions were out and only here and there were there groups like ours. (The pay-off came this morning when one of the old men who set the pace here complained to one of our group - Don Harms was telling me this at breakfast - that we had kept him awake.) By midnight here, the Radio station had come on and we began to here direct rebroadcasts of the Domei statement and the Potsdam ultimatum. In fact it was 1300 Greenwich Meridian time that I first heard the confirmed offer and the condition that "the emperor retain his prerogative." I was as excited and happy as the rest but I was also the first kill-joy when I said that I was not at all sure that those terms would be accepted; at first there were some doubts as to whether the whole thing might not be a terrific fake, but the 'Frisco reports tended to disprove those fears. Nobody was talking very logically, there was no discussion - we were still flushed by the first reports. The fellows wandered on to Nate Wolfe's tent and I slipped into my fatigues and sneakers. Nate had a bottle and some of the fellows took a shot or two as we listened to the repetition of the newscast. Again the question of acceptance was raised but our mood was obvious when Hank Martin said he was ready to accept even if the terms called for the Jap Army's occupying Washington, D.C. At one point DeMarines said it was too bad the war couldn't have lasted another month since three years ago he had made a prediction of September, 1945. Boy, did we jump down his throat. I went back to sleep around 1 - something bit me on the lip and I guess I went to sleep worrying more as to whether I would have a swollen lip in the morning than about the war! That is what happened, that is how we received the first news; this morning we are back in our old routines, awaiting word from Washington, London, and Berlin. On the surface nothing has happened or changed.

In this morning's discussions a great many of us expressed doubts as to whether the terms would be accepted; the Potsdam ultimatum conspicuously did not mention the Emperor. It is conceivable that we could carry out our defeat of Japan and not kill the emperor; however "the retention of prerogatives and sovereignty" are another question altogether. (To be completely frank with you, I would have no qualms at all about accepting the Japanese offer and then ignoring the conditions which they have proposed.) The decision before Truman and Attlee and Stalin and their advisors is not a simple one - and either way it will be understandable and justifiable. In the past few days I have written about what our peace with Japan must be - my ideas have not changed; if the Big Three and China can work out a way to keep the emperor and not contradict the provisions of the ultimatum, all well and good. In the case that the offer is accepted, there is no reason to regard the terms as binding if they contradict the ultimatum which is the basis of the solution during the years to come when the ramifications become clear as we occupy and control Japan. (We have just heard the Washington release that it will be a matter of days before our decision is reached and a final declaration made.) We are the victors and we can define "retention of prerogatives" as we will; but if it becomes clear that we are being offered a compromise peace, there must be no question of our refusing it.

I don't have to tell you that the idea of the war's being over is overwhelming and thrilling. And it dominates our minds right now, of course. The Army statements about

no end of the draft or of redeployment or of a new discharge system have cause some concern. Needless to say I am ~~xxx~~ in favor of continuing the draft and of deploying troops out here for occupation and enforcement needs (assuming that the war ends.) Of course if the offer is rejected, the situation stays the same. It seems to me that the Army should set a new discharge standard and I would outline it this way: three years in the service, and a year and a half overseas - that would be 54 points. The other point evaluations would apply except that there would be a minimum requirement of two years in the service and of at least one tour of overseas service. In other words: a man who had spent all his service stateside should not get out until he has served overseas. Similarly a man with three children and one year overseas (60 points) could not get out until he put in a second year in the service. Of course the point of it all is that unless there is military conscription after the war, ~~we~~ poor bastards are going to be stuck for years to come - and I mean me. It is only fair that people who came into the army and who came overseas ahead of me should get out ahead of me, it is only fair that people with children and with combat credit should get higher priority than we service commandos who have no families. But in March of 1946 I will have three years of active service and twenty two months overseas - and if the war is over, ~~and~~ has been over for some time, I will begin to think that the time has come for some good break to happen to me. At the present time, I think that when the war ends, plans should be made on the basis of everyone who has not been to the states within the previous 18 months being returned home for duty stateside or for furlough or for discharge. And in connection with what I wrote recently about civilian and younger men in the direction of War Department policy, I think it is important that civilian pressure be centralized in this vein, once military necessity of the battlefield ceases to be the predominant consideration and the war is over. Occupation and conscription are civilian-political matters of policy. How do Bob Hale and Brewster, White, Fellows, and Mrs Smith, feel on these matters? Have you had the opportunity to talk to Hale at all recently?

Now to your letters: thanks for the story on Uncle Heine - I am glad that he is doing well now. I think that Elliott's leaving the service is the easiest way out; we will probably never hear the end of it. I wonder how many points he has?!! The report of Sulzberger of Europe's coal and mining problems reflects the many areas into which American production could channel its products; the opportunity is there for proper economic policy to lead to American prosperity and European rehabilitation. Churchill's refusal of the order of the garter may reveal his determination to remain an active ~~thorn~~ in Labor's side as the opposition leader. As the results of the British elections come in, it is interesting to note how many leading personalities are defeated - this would add to the conclusion that the British vote on the issues and not on the labels. I hope that the anti-Zionist league is whistling in the dark in its bravado that the White paper and its allied policy will not be scrapped. The more I read and the more I think of it, the surer I become that we must reject the Japanese offer; we cannot solve that problem that I posed earlier, I do not believe, as much as I would like to have the war brought to an end. The emperor must go and the Japs wont give in on that --

OK for now -

All my love

