

August 7th 1945

Dear Ones,

Last night we played bridge for four hours and I lost \$5¢ - my poker cards seems to follow me! There were a lot of misfit hands with high honor counts. I read until 1 o'clock - "OHB" is a fascinating book. The theatre where Valley of Decision was to have played last night has been closed; I will catch it sooner or later - tonight we have Colonel Blimp. For some reason, perhaps the recognition of morale conditions, we have started to get better pictures. Today is one of those days when I wonder why in the world I am in the Ordnance Department - but there is no point in going through that routine again.

I mentioned that I had heard from Jay Kay - he got a good deal in going to Colombo, Ceylon with an AACCS (Army Airways Communication Service) Station. He is near the Equator but apparently not too uncomfortable; He complains that because of all the British Service Women around he finds it tough to get a bridge game going!! It is his guess that he will move up into China after he gets broken into his work. Paul Bauer wrote a short note from Manila; he mentioned that the destruction up there is hard to imagine. All the rest of the mail was from home.

There was a great deal of merit in the Lerner series on Japan. It is important that we recognize that we are fighting a society as well as an Army and Navy, and that that society is a vicious combination of feudalism, monopoly capitalism, and religious chauvinism. It is a complex but integrated structure. There is also probably justification for his argument that the Japanese mind has never had the opportunity to escape its shackles - it is undeveloped and in fact untested, unlike the German mentality which apparently is perverted according to our western standards of freedom. Where I begin to differ with Lerner is in his emphasis on victory for us, defeat for the Japs, and reconstruction for the Japs. He would give the impression that unless we do a complete and thorough job we will accomplish nothing positive. What he is doing is opening the way for criticism of our treatment of the defeated Nips by people who do not wish to see the Japanese economy and society overturned - Lerner will oppose half measures as not going far enough, the others will oppose half measures for going too far and accomplishing nothing. (It is not an unusual critical situation.) What I am trying to get at is this: our first job is the defeat of Japan and this has several obvious corollaries - the reduction of Japanese power to the home islands, the formation of an occupation government, the outlawing and destruction of the entire religious-national system based on the emperor and emperor-worship. But there is not any real point in not supporting these moves unless some democratic plan for self-redemption is offered to the Japanese; the process of reconstruction and the creation of a substitute for the current structure is a matter of time. There will be a long occupation, there will be enforced peace, there will be a lot of chaos and doubt in Japan; the offer of democracy and self-rule will always be open - before we start planting seeds we have to plow and plow again and see what the potential of the land is. Lerner's arguments are sound - we have a constructive as well as a destructive responsibility to fulfill if we are to accomplish our war aims - his slant is just a little too "perfectionist" for me.

The storm started by Wheeler in the Senate should make clear to the country that the battle of internationalism is far from won. You will note that one of his basic themes was that we have given Russia a free hand in Europe, in a Europe "rampant with totalitarian tyranny." The Reston article in the TIMES was an effective summary of the issues involved; it seems to me just as clear as the nose on my face that Wheeler and his supporters want to take all the teeth out of the enforcement clauses of the Charter. He would in fact deny the commitment made in Article 43 and would hamstring the use of US forces in emergency. I think that the specific question of the 2/3 Senate vote or joint Congressional majority is not a critical one although some definition should be made now and clearly defined so that the snarl will not arise during the discussion of some actual military agreement. It is more important that we understand clearly now that there can be no limitations on where our troops may be used and that it is the executive prerogative to send troops where they are needed to meet our commitments. Here then we have the first signs of life of the opposition to the ramifications

Did Donald Herman marry a Louisville girl? He certainly has no kick coming - what with all his service in the States and a comfortable spot at that. Some Englishmen came into the depot; we are selling to the local Europeans the vehicles which are non-standard for Army use and which are to be disposed of. It has thrown us right into the middle of the governmental mess which is this condominium set-up of the New Hebrides; you see, we have to sell through the government auspices, not directly to the civilians here. The British and French have no confidence in each other, and the air is loaded with talk of trouble and bribes! It almost has Gilbert and Sullivan musical comedy possibilities. Joint colonial administrations just don't seem to work in the New Hebrides.

That sort of covers things for today -

All my love -

Summer

Regards to Doris.

(NO more eating lunch at the hospital - so back to the command everyday - it's going to upset my current letter writing program!!)

WB