

10 September 1945

Dear Ones,

There is only one word for it - "plucha" - it started to rain in earnest about noon and by one o'clock the water was cascading over the hill with the speed and strength of mountain streams. One especially strong stream rolls by the office and has carried many coconuts along on its crest only to lose them to the grass beneath our hut; at present we have collection of some 25 nuts and 2 beer cans at this depositing area. It was almost like the Milne story which has always appealed to me of watching two raindrops "race" down a window pane to see the coconuts come swirling and rolling down the hill. In the few seconds it took to walk from the tent to the office I got thoroughly soaked - which annoys all the more since I have absolutely nothing to do except write what I feel like and read James Thurber. I took off my shoes and I am sitting here in my stocking feet, cursing the water which instead of drying out of my pantlegs is seeping up them, way above my knees. I remember once that I caused a big stir at the New England Grain by taking off my shoes and stockings when I got wet one noontime and parading around in a pair of rubbers - I'll bet that Bud Cohen still remembers the day. Ask him the next time you see him. I don't imagine that the letter which I dashed off this noon will be very interesting; I just reviewed some of physical factors of the island so that the letter could serve as a reminder to me (if I ever felt that I needed one!!) I didn't include San Juan Hill which is our steepest incline and after I sketched the map outline I realized that I left out one important turn which throws everything else somewhat out of kilter.

My real memories of Santo will be of the personalities - the different experiences I have had in dealing with people, the friendships I have made. Despite all my griping and complaining I have no real complaint against even the most doddering of the command element - they have bothered me, they have annoyed me, they have earned neither my respect nor my affection, I have resented their authority and their attitudes - but they have not left any mark. The reason I imagine is that my basic attitude of disinterest is a barrier against them. Their importance comes in making up part of that creative background material in the patterns of my life and viewpoints. The trouble is that I feel now, what with the war over for one thing, that they and the Army life here no longer have even that element to add; the vacuum is becoming complete. My problem now is to avoid losing balance in this vacuum and indifference to the point where I do something that actually wrong and get into trouble.

I have guard again this Friday - it is coming around every three weeks now. Well, there is not much more to say now - I don't imagine that any mail will come in in view of the rain. We have Blood on the Sun tonight and I guess it is a pretty good show. I will probably be writing off and on about Santo during the dull periods for some time - I still have a lot of the personalities to rehash. It is now Tuesday morning - the picture was only fair; it is still raining. I am enclosing a paragraph from an island letter - it is self explanatory and this time my answer was "no." I saw absolutely no reason for sticking my neck out under the current conditions and with my current attitudes. The mail yesterday brought letters from Ruth, Lois, HB, and home (the Pearl Harbor Report.) Today the big news here is the question of handling the Japs - I'll bet that PM and even the TIMES are strong in their complaint against the current coddling of the Nipponese; the Australians certainly let the world know how they feel about MacArthur's and Hodge's decisions. We must face the fact that we are undertaking a huge administrative-military problem - I think that the trouble lies in MacArthur's semi-conciliatory tone and in Hodge's poor timing in explaining the use of the Jap administrators in Korea. We must be practical, we must use what means are at hand, but we must be hard and firm; there can be no hint of easiness, of relaxing, no wedge for the Japanese to drive home. In Germany, we used Nazis at first but there was never any break in Eisenhower's sternness or severity. We shall see what results in affirmation of policy the Australian and other protests have.

OK for now - things are quiet as you can imagine the rain is pretty well dampening the spirits of even the eagerest old beavers.

Love,
Sumner