

Monday, 13 May 1946
D Day minus 51

Dear Ones,

I'll start where I left off - I hope Ruthie mailed you the letter I wrote on Sunday morning. After I called Mickey around noon, she called back with the news that her sister and brother in law were going to Coney Island; would we like to go along? - since I had made my usual plans (none at all) that sounded fine, so off we went around 2 PM to NYC's Old Orchard. The day was overcast and threatening, so the crowd was not heavy. There were two other couples along, Al and Jerry Meyers and Kurt and Renee Leeman. Al is a Cornell '43 boy, out of the Army six months and married to Mickey's sister for just better than one month; Kurt is a German refugee, also just out of the service and his wife is French. It was a lot of fun - we walked along the boardwalk, we patronized the penny arcade heavily, we ate a lot of stuff that couldn't have been any good for us, and we studiously avoided all the "breathtaking" rides - Mickey was raring to try the various whips and coasters, but she was outvoted by five terra firmities. It was the first time I had been to Coney island when it was open. We then went back to Al's home - he comes from one of the outer reaches of Brooklyn which is near Coney Island - the visit started out as a quest for coffee: it ended in our eating the Meyers out of house and home and spending the better part of the rest of the evening there. I got to Penn Station in plenty of time to catch the 1130 (10:30 Standard) train back to camp for five hours sleep. All in all it was a good weekend, certainly my entertainment was varied. Ruthie did not go with us - she hit a stubborn streak - just between us, it is probably just as well. For all her sophistication, she is far from any apparently workable adjustment to the world going on around her.

My current plans are indefinite - Abe Benioff has asked me to Allentown for next weekend, but I'll be honest with you: it is a six hour ride by train at best - 12 hours spent in travel makes me wonder. And Allentown, Pa., is not New York - not to mention the fact that Abe is some 20 years older than I... the other angle is that I have not met his niece to whom I have been writing occasionally. So, I don't know - you know me: I hate to experiment when there is a major inconvenience involved. And I'll admit that I would like to cultivate New York a little bit while it is still only some 3 hours away and I can get furlough rates. While on this topic... I asked Ruth if she knew this gal Erma Fuchs in DC whom Judy asked me to look up - far be it from me to set up Ruth as the perfect judge - but she was far from enthusiastic about her: I'm just reporting that for what it is worth.... Jerry Rosenbloom asked me to fix him up in NY some weekend - our plan was to double date; but between his exams and my duties I think I'll just send him Ruthie's address and the necessary encouragement and let him take over at will. Making my own weekends pan out is problem enough for me..

Today has been one of Aberdeen's little gems. Colonel Mather finally showed up - he is an inspector from Washington who used to command this Regiment, and he has the little boys around here scared blue, pink, and six shades of green. He showed up in the battalion when Sweeney was at a class and Raaka and I, having just checked a class, were enjoying a visit at the PX. I ambled out and reported - everybody was standing at attention and pushing me around to make sure that I was in the proper position while I reported for the Battalion. By some freak, I had on my fingertips the answers to all of his questions - I could sense how nervous the Regimental CO and his exec were for fear I would say the wrong thing - but if I say so myself I was completely at ease and the epitome of diplomacy. We got around to discussing physical conditioning, and while the others stood around, the Colonel and I discussed the problem in a basic training center for fully 15 minutes; Sweeney has showed up by then, but for a while I was still doing the talking. Finally, the Colonel who commands the ASFTC - he used to be a BG and hence is referred to as General Lawes - came over and the Colonel, who had heard my name only when I had reported to him, surprised me by referring to me by name

and commenting favorably on our conversation and my suggestions. When at last the party took off, I felt almost exhilarated! Sweeney went so far as to congratulate me in a round about way for my poise and ease in handling the interview. Mather seems to have everyone around here petrified and I think I know why - he used to be the bursar of the University of Chicago, I think - he has a quick mind and a quicker tongue, he can be sarcastic, and he not only knows what he is talking about but he is intelligent and responsive in handling material and personnel - which fact cannot be said for ninety five percent of the Army brass. At one point, I suggested that to make the Army physical conditioning program work, the high ranking policy making officers ought to attend the school at Lee, not the junior officer - he agreed with me, with a chuckle. Now, I am Battalion Duty Officer tonight and of course I have received 68 phone calls alerting me for 98 different inspections - Mather would have to be quintuplets to be every place where he is "liable" to be tonight.

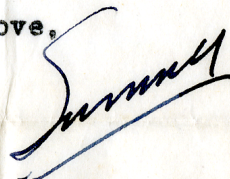
I picked up some summer pants today and Raaka loaned me a cap, so I can at least get by when we change uniforms on Wednesday. The idea has occurred to me that although we must wear woollens on the post there is no reason why I can't wear my wools for dress affairs when I get to New York, for whatever place I visit... but send my summer blouse anyway.

The Alumni Bulletin came today - I see that Hank Banks made the grade with a note on his graduation, marriage, and commission. I was sorry to read your note, Mother, about Hank's change of orders - apparently it upset the plans to travel by car, too... this is the Army, Mr B.

That about does it for now - I'll write letters for a while and then I hope to catch up on my sleep! I have to sleep down here, which is not good.

All my love,

Regards to Doris.



PS. It is now 7 in the morning - despite all the warnings it was a quiet night, although the Colonel did show up for breakfast.