

Tuesday July 10, 1945

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14th AA Command

APO75, Frisco.

Bunny Sweetheart;

It is now my turn to say that I am sorry I did not write last night. I didn't because there was a lot of excitement here; the rest of the fellows just got here and all was turmoil. Kowalchuk made it OK and said that they had a damned nice trip up here. It seems like the devil having so many fellows here now. We had a small group before and it was quite nice. We had plenty of food to go around. Yesterday morning I had a half dozen fried eggs for breakfast and this morning I only got one. That's what I mean. The barracks are much more filled now, hardly a place for a claustrophobic. I did manage to get myself a nice big box so I won't have to live out of a barracks bag any longer. It does take up a lot of room but I think I'll put shelves in it and stand it on end. It will make a nice cabinet and I will have the top of it for pictures. Yours of course.

Two more letters came yesterday – from you that is – and I want to tell you that you rectified the error which I wrote you about in my last letter. I told you that you numbered me of your letter 80 and the next one 82. Well, you sent the next two letters and numbered them both 83. This sort of makes up for the other if you operate on the theory that two wrong make a right. No matter what the numbers may be, they are still the most welcome and nicest letter in the world.

I was on guard after all on Sunday night. I had the same old 10:00 PM till 2 AM shift. To make matters worse, I very foolishly went for a walk before I went on guard. Bob Neumann and I started off down a new road and got lost and had to wander around for a couple of hours before we got reoriented. I bought some bananas and we feasted. They are very small, very expensive, but very delicious. Then we met some fellows who told us of a dance at Welforeville, a

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government project in the nature of a small town for orphans and for other people who needed aid. The orchestra was made up of orphans and was supposed to be quite good. As I said, we started out for there but it started to rain so we about faced and thumbed a ride back to the camp because it was raining quite hard. I'm glad we did because the downpour lasted about three hours and I never would have gotten back in time for guard.

The guard was just as monotonous as ever except that there was one little incident which helped to relieve the monotony. The officer of the day came around at about midnight, I had been told to challenge anyone who came onto my post after 10:30 so quick like a flash, calling upon my previous experienced as gained from the Hollywood version of the way to walk a post, I shouted "Halt! Who's there?" you will notice that I did not use the hackneyed "Who goes there." The OD halted in his tracks and said, "It's the officer of the day", and, quick like, I quipped "Advance officer of the day." With these little formalities dispensed with, the OD asked me if I hadn't recognized him, I told him I had and was then asked why I had stopped him; I explained that I had been told to challenge everyone after 10:30. He just shook his head sadly and said "Isn't that silly?" I agreed with him quite heartily, he laughed, and we both went our ways. I was glad to find an officer who felt just as I do about the whole thing.

As I mentioned previously, Kowalchuk and the rest of the fellows came in yesterday. They had nice weather all the way up and got into Manila when the sun was shining. They got off their ship into a landing crafts to go ashore and on their way in were trapped in a thunderstorm and were soaked to the skin. They were really a sad looking lot when they got here. John and I went stepping last night too.

We decided to go out and have just a few drinks

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so we went to one of these clubs, the Club Esmeralda. It was rather a nice little place on the ground floor of a home. There was a small band in their [sic] and there was a seating capacity of about forty. We sat down and were presented with a menu on which there were quite a list of items but on which there were also quite a list of prices. We decided to just buy a few shots instead of investing in a bottle and we ordered up. The stuff came and was surprisingly good. Suddenly a girl appeared at the table and asked if she might sit down with us. By way of finding out what the story was, we told her she could, and she did. She was a little taller than most Filipinos and was quite slender. Her dress was a plain one of black velvet with a small white collar. She didn't look like a girl who made a practise [sic] of accosting strange and stray men but I decided that I might as well investigate so we struck up a conversation. She spoke English so I unfurled my best basic English and asked her just how she had fared during the Jap occupation. I was rewarded with an account given in such fluent English that I was set back on my ear. I had thought that I was speaking with a relatively uneducated person but I don't mind telling you that I was put to shame by her English. It turned out that she was a college student when the Japs invaded. She also taught some classes at the same time. During the Jap occupation she did some teaching and taught classes in Tagalog – the Philippine national language – and in dancing. She married a fellow she was going to college with, after the Japs invaded and he had been a LT. in the Filipino army, guerilla, and was missing in action. She presumed he was dead since no one has heard from him for four or five months, this was the reason for the black velvet dress. She had a baby eleven months old. The people who owned the club were her in laws and she and her sisters in law had been hired by the folks to be hostesses there and to sit and talk with the boys. She didn't drink or smoke.

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The piano player, her brother in law, was a professional musician and did some composing. The singer was his wife and had studied voice at one of the universities. Her two oldest brothers in law were lawyers and another who was not present was an artist. And I had thought of them as natives.

I hope that you don't mind my stepping out like this because there is nothing at all wrong with it I assure you. It was very interesting to talk to someone again, at least someone in civilian clothes. To give you an idea of how much smaller these people are than Caucasians, this girls hand was just about the size of the palm of my hand – and I wasn't holding hands with her either. I would like to see the baby she was talking about. She and John had quite a long chat on that score because John is a new father. At least he has not yet seen Junior. They were exchanging weights and measurements like veterans at the game of raising children. She said that her boy was large for a Filipino. She didn't tell me his weight so I don't know just how large a Filipino baby has to be before he is large but most of the ones I have seen have been plenty small. The standard garment for the toddlers around here seems to consist of a little shirt about as long as a hospital johnny. Boys and girls alike wear them. The things I have seen. Tch! Tch!

Paul Katona wrote me a letter which I received yesterday. He does not yet know that I am here in Manila. I have been trying to get hold of him all day long but have had no luck. I have still had no luck in contacting Mac. If I can get a day or even an afternoon off I am going to have a try at getting over to where Mac is located but I have had no luck even in finding out where the place is that he is at. The telephone system here is the most complicated thing I have yet run across in the army. There are so damned many exchanges that a person has to get through to get to any place that it isn't funny.

I am glad that you and the rest of the family enjoyed the [sic] course on rotation. I will have to practise [sic] up on the manners as explained in there so that when I get home I will commit no faux pas. It seemed to have resulted in a stream of stories from the girls though didn't it? The ones you sent me were good, I had heard one or two of them before [sic] but most of them were new. I can just see myself on our vacation getting up to pull down the shade and then being invited back into the bed. It would be wonderful. Of course it would take a lot of that stuff before I debilitated to the stage where the shade would be able to pull me up but it would be fun to try. According to what I read though, you will have no fears on that score as far as you are concerned because if the experts are right you will thrive on the same sort of thing on which I am supposedly to wane. Don't fret for me yet though Honey because I'll make liars of them too, just wait and see. To save my energy I shall not even try to pull the shades in the morning but will leave them just the way they are. I am surprised at the girls though, such stories to be telling you.

The question of the picture of the soldier on the railing of the ship arises once more. Even though it may look like me Honey I am quite sure that it is not [sic] me. I never was a party in any action such as the one portrayed in the picture. I went aboard ship in the dark of the night and was hustled right down to the hold before I could see anything or change my mind about whether or not I wanted to go on a trip. We made one stop at Hollandia to take on some fellows who were going back to the States but they had no port such as the one pictured in the picture where there were regular sheds and all the other accoutrements; besides, we did not dock there but had our cargo taken off by LCVPs. The fellows going back were brought out in one of the same and, since the sea was too rough for the small boat to tie to ours, the fellows were lifted from their boat to our ship by the use of one of the hoists and a cargo net. The net was let down into the small boat and was loaded with the baggage for a certain number of men, then as the net was lifted, the men would grab onto the net and would be swung aloft with the [sic] bags. It was quite a unique way of doing it.

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If you want to though Darling you may think that that is me in the picture. I won't mind. Then too there is another thing about the fellow in the picture. I think that if you look closely you will notice something that looks like brass on his hat. That is something with which I am unencumbered.

I haven't been able to find the calendar for a Negro church which I told you I would send you. I have looked all over but I think that someone got hold of it and appropriated it for his own use. I will try to get another copy of it though and will send it to you as soon as I can get it.

How are [sic] you coming along in your efforts at finding a new job?? Has the employment service given you any encouragement at all. I hope that you are able to get something [sic] and that it will be work that you will like. I am sure that the only job for which you are [crossed out 'able'] absolutely suited and which you would really care for as a career is the job of being my wife. Have you

any references for the job? If you have send them along and I will file you application with all the others. I will let you know just whether I decide that you will do or not. ----- I have decided. You are the only one with all the necessary requisites for the job, and there are a few things about you which are above and beyond what I ever expected to find in any of the girls I would ever meet.

It is still terribly hot here and our not having had rain for a couple of days now is not helping matter out at all. I will be glad when all the stuff gets here from that ship because I want to get my other shoes to wear when it is muddy. These that I have on are full of holes and leak like sieves. The other are much more seaworthy. I also have a lot of things that I need there. The sketches of the teapot and the furniture that I liked are in that stuff so I won't be able to send them to you until that comes. I have no board to work on here so I can't get any of my work done. The desk I had was taken away from me and a small one substituted in its place. There isn't room enough to work on it so I will just have to wait for the rest of our stuff.

By now you will know what it was that I was working on and didn't tell you about. I hope that you liked it Darling. It could have been netter but the paper was quite damp and would not take the ink very well. I am going to have to figure out a way to dry the paper so that in the future I can work on it without any trouble. By the way, I wish that you could see the speed with which I am now typing this letter. It amazes me, really. I am improving steadily. Of course it will be a long time before I am even a fairly good typist but I am improving as I said before. The big trouble I have is the fact that I can't type as fast as I think. A speedy thinker don't you know? I am catching up slowly though.

These GIs here persist in calling these carabao around here caribou. I have tried telling them that caribou are denizens of the northern wastes but it just doesn't click. These fellows just don't think there is any difference. The [crossed out caribou], there I go I am doing it myself, carabao are a large animal and are used here in the same way that cows are in the States except that they are also used to plow fields. They are quite mild and roam around everywhere, we had a herd of them out here this evening. They have a very funny cry though and do not low like a cow does. Their cry sounded almost human to me. It seems funny to see these kids riding them. Some of the kids even go to sleep on their backs and let them wander around, they never fall off.

Well Darling, I am going to have to leave you now but I'll be thinking of you all the time just as I always do. I love you Darling, and I always shall. Don't ever forget that, even for a minute because I do love you so much that I want you to have some idea of just how I feel and I can't tell you adequately just how it is. I will have to be back with you once more before you can see just what I mean. Now will say goodnight and send you

All my love and kisses

Freddie