

Chapter Twenty-Three

Philippines: March-April, 1939

March, 1939

Herb had been taking on extra duty assignments, both paid and volunteer, over the past several weeks. Louise had asked him in one of her letters if maybe he wasn't taking on too much. Although he is happy to be busy, because it makes time go faster, he realizes that it leaves him little time to write to her.

He writes about the Asiatic Fleet's basketball tournament. He believes that his team can win all their games and the tournament championship. Then he admits "I'll be glad when its over. Between the games and practice and writing them up;¹ it takes me away from you a little too much sweets. And this new job of mine requires a little spare time too" (March 2). Then he tries to reassure Louise that he will continue to write regularly.

I like to write too much to ever eliminate it from my daily schedule. I think I'd go crazy if I wasn't able to write to you often. Its just like getting to talk to you. Lots of times during the day I'd like to pick up a pen and talk to you but it isn't always possible. And I think it would do me good too; I get so angry at times, with things around me; it would settle me down if I could drop you a line at such times. (March 2)

Then he ponders over his career options.

Yes, I even find myself wondering at times, whether or not I would like to do twenty years in the Navy. You meet up with some awfully irritating people at times. Sometimes they are officers too. Many a man has put a lot of time in the Navy and then some day told an officer what he thought of him, in an angry moment. The result of that would be drastic.

Oh, I think I have enough self-control, not to have to worry about that. But then a person has so much more personal independence on the outside, compared with a military outfit; sometimes I wonder. (March 2)

The next evening Herb is writing while "listening to some old dreamy music."

I can't think of anything except that I love you very much Mary Lou. After all, though; that is all that matters. Right now, I wish I could be in your arms resting peacefully, away from anything irritating or annoying. And just close my eyes and forget about the rest of the world. I need you so much angel; so, so much at times. ... I sure do love you honey

¹ One of the jobs Herb volunteered for was writing news summaries about the ship's basketball team, for the Navy's local newsletter, called the *Iswas*.

*dear. That's all I can think of all day long half of the time; how much you mean to me.
(March 3)*

Sunday morning Herb again writes about the basketball tournament. They lost a tough game on Saturday, explaining that poor coaching was mainly responsible for their defeat. "And a defeat tomorrow means finis to our championship aspirations" (March 5).

A couple of days later, Herb has to explain how their basketball team lost the championship playoff game. They came in second in their league, and he got a "runner up" medal. He tells Louise "It was lots of fun, this basketball season" (March 7).

Herb is elated at what arrived on the President Cleveland for him. "It's just got me so up in the air; I don't know whether I'm coming or going" (March 7). His March 8th birthday was remembered.

Your card was sweet darling and the verse on it so well chosen. And your candy – delicious. Thanks so much for it Mary Lou. ... And three letters from you!

Then cards from Bernard, Pearl and Flamore; and your mother and Fred; and they were all wonderfully thoughtful to remember me. (March 7)

Then Herb begins answering her letters, postmarked Jan 31, Feb 3, and Feb 7. "I'm glad that time is going so fast for you too sweets. Same with me – I can't keep track of the time from Monday to Saturday" (March 7).

Herb continues answering her letters, and at one point, marvels at their relationship.

Do you ever stop to realize what an exceptional romance ours is. Why maybe one couple in a million could do what we are doing. It really should be written up some day. Let's us write a book about it all when we are enjoying the happy ending. (March 9)

The next time Herb has plenty of time to write a nice long letter is on Saturday afternoon. He begins by explaining, now that basketball season is over, he will have more time to devote to writing letters to her. He also plans to discontinue his extra jobs.

Just between my job here in the office; and studying; but most of all, writing to you, I have more than enough to keep my day busy. That's why I'm tossing those other jobs of mine to the wind. I'll bet you have noticed how they kept me from writing as often as I used to. But starting next week it will be different. (March 11).

He continues to waver over what to do with his Navy career. He finds it helpful to get his thoughts out by writing to Louise.

Lots of fellows stay in the Navy a long time because they are afraid of the outside or afraid of a little hard work. Honey, I'll go out of the Navy so darn fast, it wont even be funny; if I can only get a line on some decent job or possibly stand a chance of getting some sort of civil service job. (Yep; I'm changing my mind again lately!) But this Navy work is a thankless job.

Oh – some days I look at it the other way around; but I know when I will make up my mind. That will be in the spring of 1941 just before June 10 when my enlistment will be up. Undoubtedly you will help me decide one way or the other. (March 11)

Reading her pleas for pictures of him, Herb feels he needs to explain.

I know it's not nice of me not to have sent you pictures after all the times you asked me for some. ... I really didn't mean not to send you any; it was just a combination of many circumstances and my camera also crossed me up a lot. (March 11)

Then he comes to a passage in one of her letters, where she insists that he might come home sooner than expected. He responds.

My dear girl, I mean sweetheart; why don't you tell me some of these reasons why you think I'll be home sooner than I think I will be. What are the "lots of reasons" you were telling me about? What is just one of them? Oh, honey; sure I want to come home sooner; I'd give anything to – but – there are such things as certainties, you realize that? And a certainty it is that I won't be back there this year. Well, almost a certainty. Of course, anything is possible. (March 11)

On Saturday the Canopus basketball team won the very last game of their season, even though it didn't count. Herb took pleasure in them beating the same team that had beat them in the championship game. He was up late that night after the game, writing up an account of the game for the *Iswas*. He tells Louise

I laughed when I read it myself the next morning; I sure was enthusiastic about it all, after the game. But the fellows who played so hard in that game rate a word or two where the rest of the crew can see it. It's darn little support we got from most of the fellows on here. (March 13)

Herb feels very happy about things as he is writing his next letter. "Boy it's swell to think that probably in less than a year now I'll be on my way home! Home to you darling!" (March 13).

But he is concerned about what Japan is doing now in China, and tells Louise.

Japan is sure having a great time up in China regulating currency to suit herself, stopping foreign trade; but the marines won't let them mess around in the International Settlement the way they would like to. I've got my fingers crossed; hoping that no trouble will start to ruin our scheduled summer cruise². That would be drastic! (March 13)

A couple of days later, in the early evening before movies, Herb continues with this letter.

These two months before the scheduled start of our cruise is turning out to be a sort of lull before the storm period. I mean, things on board, and around here are very monotonous; and the only thing that does hold interest to anyone is our cruise coming up. Yep; it will be a gala day next month, on April 24 when we leave this bloomin' hole for many months. (March 15)

On Friday Herb did a lot of hard, physical work; at the end of the day as he is writing, he feels good, and he tells Louise what kept him so busy that day.

² The USS Canopus was scheduled to go to Saigon, Hong Kong and then to Tsingtao, China for a few months.

Thought I was going to have a bad day the way it started out. The stores lighter came alongside early this morning and the Chief Pay Clerk was all a twitter giving directions as to where each of us storekeepers worked. I stopped him as he was telling me, to ask him if he didn't want us to work where I usually did; and he blew up and told me not to argue with him. My, my, he almost had a fit; and was I worried (I could hardly keep from laughing in his face!) So, I had a pretty busy morning hauling stuff around and getting fellows to do one thing or another.

This afternoon I cleaned up the athletic gear locker and before inspection the Athletic Officer came down and said the place looked swell. ... Anyhow, when the inspecting party did come around this afternoon, the captain walked into my place ... and said "Fine." So that makes up for the bawling out I got from the Pay Clerk, who is just a small spud next to the skipper.

So it was a busy day, and after a bath I feel pretty well refreshed now and much like writing to my sweetheart. Later on tonight I'll go see the picture playing on board. (March 17)

It's a lazy, peaceful Saturday afternoon for Herb as he finishes writing.

Right now, everyone is making plans for the cruise and our summer stay up north in Tsingtao. The married men will all send their wives up there via commercial ship and then take temporary homes up there. (March 18)

Late Monday night the latest batch of mail from the states was put out. Herb could hardly contain himself because he got five letters from Louise (postmarked February 10, 12, 13, 17 and 21). Finally, the next day after work, he finds time to begin answering them.

I should skip the next subject of yours and not even mention it but I brought it up. ... I wonder whatever made me offer to send you that picture Andy and I had taken with those Filipino girls? And now I must. Gosh it's awful, I mean the girls; and of course, darling you realize that I put my arm partly around her only for the sake of the picture. Promise you won't show it to anyone else and I'll send it. Promise? O.K. I'll send it. Really, I'd be very embarrassed if you didn't keep that promise. You should tear the picture up after you see it³. (March 21)

I'm glad you had such a nice time darling with Anita at Oceano and the El Mar. Why its only fair that you enjoy yourself that way once in a while. I see you have Ivan disciplined so that he will behave now. (March 21)

Friday evening after work Herb pours his feelings about work into the opening of his letter.

I need a little sympathy again; or at least I need to pour some of my woes into your ears. I've decided to try to get out of the office and back in the storeroom again. In the first place my eyes are bothering me too much on account of all the small writing I have to do. Also, the job has become very monotonous, after eight steady months of it and I'd welcome a change.

³ The blouse on the girl that Herb had his arm around fell open just as the picture was taken.

And lastly, I can't get along with a couple of the "old women" in here. There's one guy who I'd really like to take a poke at if he so much as gave me one reason to. And he knows it! But he and I aren't even on speaking terms. Which certainly does annoy me. He's a rat too; with his whispering campaigns. Boy I'd like to catch him saying something about me behind my back. I'd really knock him for a loop!

There's one week left in this quarter, maybe then I can get a swap with a man in the storeroom; providing of course that the Supply Officer approves of it. But that's enough about all my trials and tribulations. I'll answer your last letter tonight and wind this one up and then I can write you another one over the weekend. (March 24)

He closes his letter with an outpouring of emotion – a longing for her.

Gosh, I was just looking through your pictures (I do that a lot lately); and every time I get through looking at them sweets; honest; I just about get a lump in my throat. You're so sweet and innocent looking in all your pictures and it brings out every bit of my love for you.

It just makes me feel how much you mean to me. Oh darling, so help me but I love you like no man ever loved a woman before; with all my heart and soul; and I'd rather die than ever think of not loving you anymore. And here I worry about petty things in life and complain about this or that when I'm so lucky as to have a sweetheart like you. (March 24)

On Sunday morning Herb begins a new letter to Louise, first telling her about his workplace.

Yesterday morning I also asked the Supply Officer if I couldn't get back down in the storeroom and he said, "Oh maybe, in about a month." So it looks like the "old folks" in here will have to grin and bear me.

How grown men can act the way they do at times beats me. Oh I could go on for hours, sweets; but I won't. And it isn't just me who doesn't get along with them. For a while I was wondering if perhaps I wasn't to blame for it all; but no, they don't get along with hardly anyone else in the division either. I wish the Supply Officer would open his eyes. (March 26)

Herb's brother Bernard had sent him a copy of the latest Temple Artisan. He writes "After reading several of the articles ... it made me want to be generous with the people around me" (March 26), and he feels he must tell her about friendships he has developed.

I still have lots of real friends around the ship; fellows my own age, a bunch of us who came out here together and we get along swell; kidding each other about this or that, but no one gets sore about anything. Since we will all probably get back to the states together, this morning they were kidding me about coming to our wedding. They were arguing over who was going to be best man. Can you imagine? And they didn't even ask me! (March 26)

While reading her last letter, Herb again learns how desperate she is for some pictures of him. "As you unfortunately know by now there were no good pictures in that one roll of film I took that day. Cheer up darling; I'm sure that some pictures will be forthcoming from me during our cruise" (March 26).

On Tuesday evening, while they are showing movies on board, Herb has an opportunity to begin another letter. He opens by telling Louise he got a letter from Gabriel, telling Herb that they are leaving Manila on April 6th to return home. Herb writes "I'm glad they are. I know they will both be much happier in the states" (March 28). Herb wants to visit them this coming weekend, before they leave.

He writes again about work.

Well, the end of another quarter is almost here, so starting tomorrow; for the next two weeks; we will be as busy as the dickens in the office here. And if the "old folks" in here are hard to get along with now; I wonder what they will be like during the next week or so when we are all up to our ears in work and nerves begin to get a little frazzled. Probably will be a few fireworks. Ordinarily I'm a peacefully inclined person but I'll stand for nothing from some people I know. (March 28)

Two days later Herb writes about one of the guys who was not on "speaking terms" with him, and how the guy failed to file some papers so Herb could get paid for his overtime. This led to Herb confronting the guy; which led to a serious disciplinary warning.

I dashed into the office this morning and told him that if he pulled a few more tricks like that he was going to get knocked on his, backside (only I didn't say that). He said who was gonna do it! And I said I was gonna do it! When he got up, I thought we were going to have it out right then and there but no, he just said "I'll fix you; I'll tell the man on you." He was too yellow to fight; I told him so, and that I expected such tactics from him.

Sure enough, sometime this morning he must have told the Supply Officer all about it. When the Supply Officer came in this afternoon, he called us all over to his desk and held "kangaroo court." He asked the one guy to repeat what I said to him in the morning. Which he did. And I said "Yes sir! That's right!" And I went on, to try to explain what I had done.

But you see, darling; no matter how right I might have been in principle I used the wrong tactics. The Supply Officer made it clear to me that threatening a superior petty officer was a court-martial offense and he said if I ever did it again, he'd take me up to the Captain. So, I got off with a fifteen-minute lecture and even though I had some of the answers; there is just no winning when it comes to the military. (March 30)

Then he explains everything to Louise, revealing more of his feelings, trying to understand himself better, in the process.

Don't worry darling, I won't lose my temper again and get in any trouble. Oh, but some things sure get under your skin at times.

This morning I was working and trying to keep from getting angry and shooting off my mouth at him; but the more I thought of it the angrier I got. I could hardly see straight.

So I finally jumped up and told him "that." It was foolish of me. He is first class; I'm third class. He has 14 years in the Navy; and I only have 4 in. All that makes him right and me wrong in the eyes of any officer; regardless of what the circumstances might have been.

If I had any common sense I would have thought first; and kept quiet. But no, sucker that I am, I have to blow up, and he with a couple of stooges around to confirm anything I might have denied. I'll sure be glad when I get out of this office (Rat Hole)!

Darn it, why must I be so foolish at times, darling; tell me? Is it the year and a half out here that is finally getting on my nerves? No; I don't think it is that. I think it's the monotony of my job in here that's got me down. That, and working with people, each of who has over ten years in the Navy. Honey; aren't I awful? Why don't I try to get along with people more than I do? (March 30)

April, 1939

It is the first Sunday in April, and Herb has plenty of time to write a nice long letter. He tells Louise about his visit on Saturday with Gabriel and Yoshiko.

I figured on having to go way out in the province to see them, but as I always do I first called at their uncle's address in Manila. And fortunately, they were there so I sure was saved a lot of traveling. They were glad to see me. Both looking good and gosh, the baby is big for his age, I think. He's going to be quite a husky boy.

Yoshiko is sure glad to be going back to the states and I guess she will be very happy to see you again. I guess Gabriel is glad to be going back too. ... He will also have many more business opportunities back in the states.

I couldn't stay with them long as they had so many things to do. They are scheduled to be very busy from now until they leave. So, I said good bye to Yoshiko and Gabriel and Martin and told them that I'd be sure to see them in eleven or twelve months. (April 2)

Writing about Yoshiko's and Gabriel's journey back to the states reminded Herb of how much time still remains until he gets to return as well. He writes to Louise, acknowledging the challenge.

Gee how I wish I could be catching the Coolidge with them. And seeing you darling, in less than a month. Oh well; it won't be long now honey, will it.

It wouldn't be so bad if we only knew for sure what transport I'd catch and when I'd get back. This way, even though its only from ten to fourteen months; it's so vague, isn't it. But you mustn't let it bother you dear. After all what will a couple of months be after over two years of waiting? Nothing at all darling! (April 2)

On Saturday after visiting Yoshiko and Gabriel, he went to the Y in town, met up with some buddies, had a few beers, then went to see a movie, and get a bite to eat "And spent the rest of the evening chasing around in taxis" (April 2). It was the latest he'd been ashore in the evening since they were in Hong Kong last fall.

But I'm not so tired this morning that I can't go over and play soft ball this afternoon. Anything to stay away from this office here and some of the old folks in it.

Haven't had any more trouble in the last couple of days and I hadn't better have any more trouble for a long while.

I know this though. If I ever happen to catch that fellow ashore when I'm ashore, I'm liable to take a poke at him. He's a – oh, its Sunday. I refuse to let myself get bothered by even thinking about him. (April 2)

In closing this letter, Herb summarizes his take on the world situation.

Just look at this crazy world we are living in. Hitler keeps going on; Mussolini is threatening France; and England today pledged herself to defend Poland. Seems like they once said something like that before. Out here there is liable to be some fur flying pretty soon when the Jap fishing fleets go north to Russian waters even though Russia did not give them permission to do so this year.

Yeah, it sure is a great old world. Oh well; we don't care so much what happens, do we darling; just so we will always have each other. (April 2)

A whole week passes by before Herb gets a chance to write again. Now it is Friday evening, and he gets started on what will be a long letter. "We have been kept pretty busy in the office here putting out the quarterly returns" (April 7). He tells Louise what it was like being in Olongapo this past week.

Because of the intense heat up there they had the following daily routine. Reveille was at five A.M. And breakfast at five thirty. Then turn to at six o'clock. At one o'clock there was no further work for the day. There was liberty and recreation during the afternoon.

What a swim we had yesterday. Just when everyone was starting to have a good time, someone was bitten by a snake and they called us out of the water. There were too many jellyfish in it anyhow to make swimming a pleasure. (April 7)

Herb is eager to tell Louise how things in his office got resolved.

You know I can't keep a grudge against a person. Especially when I am partly wrong. I found out that the Supply Officer hadn't lowered my quarterly marks after I was firmly convinced that he would. ... Well that made me pretty happy and I forgot about any ill will that I might have been harboring. I went up to him [the man he threatened] and told him I was wrong, so we shook hands and agreed to forget the whole matter. Funny – but I just can't stand being on the outs with people, especially when I have to work with them. Now there is so much more harmony in the office here, it really is a relief. (April 7)

Herb was quite pleased that he received four letters from Louise the night before.

Thanks so much for the pictures. You're an angel to keep sending so many when I send you so few. ... [Referring to the dress he sent to her] That does look pretty nice. I did better than I expected I would in picking one out. ... I'll even admit that the hat looks cute. ... Now I'll answer each picture that you wrote on.

Herb begins answering her letters. The subject of where they might want to live comes up again. He tries to describe the constraints they will experience as they decide where they will live once he has returned to California, but still as an enlisted man in the U.S. Navy.

Things will be too indefinite as to where I will be stationed at the time when we get married. You see, I'll probably get leave as soon as I hit the receiving ship in Frisco. Since I can't be sure of where I will be stationed it is liable to cause a temporary difficulty. We can't very well move some place when we don't know where it is going to be. ...

When my leave is up, I'll have to leave you in Halcyon while I report back in to Frisco to get stationed somewhere. ... Then after our honeymoon we could pick out a place in which to live and get properly organized. It just goes to show you what an indefinite state the Navy puts you in, most of the time while you are under its controlling influence. (April 7)

He responds with concern and perhaps with just a bit of jealousy to her stories of her busy social life and late nights.

My gosh! Up until 4 A.M. Why darling, what in the world do you think you are, a night owl? See: I'm trying to discipline you. But really darling; if it isn't good for you, you won't stay up too late at night, will you? When you do stay up late, I assume that you feel that you can do so without endangering your health. Because you have got a lot of common sense and I'm sure that you wouldn't do anything that was foolish, ever, honey.

Hm, fine thing! I send you a dress which you go to a dance in and it captivates the eyes of all present. All of which does me no good; ironic, isn't it? But I was only kidding darling. Anything that makes you happy makes me happy. And I know it makes you happy when you go dancing or roller skating and it makes me that much happier to know that you aren't unhappy or in idle misery. (April 7)

Herb continues writing on Saturday afternoon.

Today and tomorrow I can write away to my hearts delight; answering your letters. I'd better write often during the next two weeks anyhow because during the early part of our cruise you won't be able to hear from me very often. Just think honey two weeks from today and we leave Manila, not to return until next October. Oh Boy! Is that thought swell! (April 8)

Herb recalls that long ago, in one of Louise's early letters, she asked him not to put her on a pedestal. Now, reading about how highly she regards him, he feels uncomfortable; he wants her to see him more realistically, too.

Darling, I can't imagine what makes you think that there is much to me; especially after I told you that I was to some extent shallow. ... I haven't always been such a fine person. ... It is needless for me to say how much you have changed me. You make everything different. To deserve you there is no limit to what I wouldn't do so you will never have to worry about me possibly reverting back to any former faults of mine. ... I'm just trying to prove to you what I tell you about myself. How I'm not half what you think I am. ... Really, you mustn't make me any better than I really am. (April 8)

He reads again how she wished that he would be more optimistic; and like her, believe that it might be possible for him to come home sooner than expected.

Hmm! Now we are back to this subject again. Who's cheerful about the year I have left to do out here? Not me! I am definitely not happy about the prospects of remaining away from you for some ten, eleven or twelve months.

Gosh darling you know I want to be with you as much as you want to be with me but when something is inevitable there is nothing that you can do about it.

But I do see your psychology dear. You hope I will get home sooner and then when that time comes around and I am not on my way by then it will be so soon you wont mind.

That is all very well for you to think dear. But you see; I am in a position to know beyond the shadow of a doubt when I am due to get back there and I would find it very hard to fool myself in that case regardless of the psychological effect of it. (April 8)

It's Sunday morning, and Herb continues answering her letters.

Happy Easter sweets! I feel more like writing than typing this morning. I just got up; too late for breakfast; so I'm having a cup of coffee for breakfast. Honey I'm very happy this morning for some reason or other and I'm so alert to the fact that I'm very much in love with you.

Last evening around ten o'clock the Coolidge steamed out. Sigh! How I wish again it was me on it sailing back to paradise, where a heavenly angel awaits me. ... Three weeks to the states! And then they'll see you. Gabriel and Yoshiko I mean! ... By the time you get this letter you will have seen them all too! (April 9)

He responds again to her feelings about time.

Honey, I know so well what you mean about Christmas and when I get back there. Sure, I do mind too. You aren't the only one hon. Please dear; don't let it seem too much for you. Now, with this short time left (only nine or ten months by the time you are reading this); you mustn't let it get you! We must be braver now in these remaining months than we were before. Seriously, I know they will seem longer; but we must be carefree about them hon. What's a year, for all the happiness that is to be ours. (April 9)

He continues "Another letter finished! Now for your fourth one, postmarked March 8, my birthday. How very thoughtful of you" (April 9). He enjoys reading about Louise's roller-skating adventures. "I'm glad you like skating too sweets. Anything that affords you pleasure and helps pass the time away for you is O.K. with me!" (April 9) He shares with her his critical assessment of her skating partner.

But this makes me laugh! The idea of a former National Guardsman not liking the idea of you being engaged to a sailor. Huh! Why the National Guard is just one notch higher than the boy scouts. Just a bunch of high school kids who they let play with guns.

But I don't mind if you skate with him darling, just don't let him say anything about the Navy.... And honey, you will be careful and not hurt yourself, wont you! (April 9)

After work Tuesday Herb begins a new letter to Louise. "There's a lot of hustle and bustle around the ship now with all kinds of stores and provisions coming aboard every day. Everyone will sure be glad when we say adieu to Manila" (April 11).

He now begins responding to her last letter, postmarked March 12. He reads about Ivan starting a fight.

I don't blame you for not liking such an incident. Every pretty girl like you has to be on guard all the time to avoid being responsible for things like that. Oh, I don't mean it was your fault in any way Mary Lou, because it wasn't.

You know I've never begun to dictate to you Louise but don't you think that when the fact that you're engaged fails to properly impress certain people like Ivan, it would be a fair idea to have little to do with them.

But then; its all up to you since I never worry about such things, nor would I ever be jealous of any of your friends. My faith in you, and your love, and my love for you makes anything else impossible. It just is taken for granted by me that at all times you know what you are doing. (April 11)

At the close of his letter, Herb shares his thoughts about the situation in Europe.

What do you think of Mussolini's invasion of Albania? And they just let Hitler and him keep going. Sorry to say, there has to be a war in Europe and the sooner it starts the better chance England and France will have of winning it by themselves. But wily England would like to inveigle us into it too, to serve her interests. (April 11)

Next Sunday morning Herb begins a new letter. "Well honey, we got mail last night and I received a long letter from you" (April 16). He was really happy about their cruise coming up in just another week.

Our itinerary has been changed to include another port. It's north of Saigon and we visit it after Saigon. It is Haiphong and the reason for our stop there is to unload a truck. The truck with its crew of Navy men is going to make an exciting and dangerous trip across southern China to the present capitol, Chunking. I'll enclose a copy of the official letter dealing with the truck. I sure wish that I could make a trip like that. I'll bet the Japs would like to get ahold of that truck too, but there isn't much danger of that since the route the truck will take is through territory as yet untouched by the Japs. (April 16)

Again, Herb encourages her to try to be positive about how much time is left.

Now darling, you admit the days go by fast; don't you. You really don't have to think that the time to come yet, is so long; do you? It really isn't long! What is ten months or so? A very short time! Don't keep telling yourself that it's a long time when it isn't. For the days and weeks will continue to roll by as fast as they have been going; and the first thing you know, the ten months will be over. Just think; by the time you get this letter, in May some time; why it will almost be half of 1939 gone! (April 16)

He writes about a *physical exam* that is required – and realizes that maybe Louise has a point, with regard to one of their ongoing debates.

If I didn't pass it I couldn't ship over. I'd have to go out of the Navy. Which might be a very good thing for me should it ever happen. But there's no chance of my not passing it this June. They wouldn't want me not to pass it out here; else they'd have to send me back; and they wouldn't want to do that.

Ha, that's funny. You know, come to think of it; that is the only way that I could get to go back this year dear; by not passing that exam. And I can; so – no dear, I won't come home in 1939. (April 16)

He tells Louise again how he is looking forward to their upcoming cruise. “And I promise to try to send you a card from every port we hit. Yep, I'll finally get to see enough of China to make my tour of duty out here seem worthwhile” (April 16).

He also recognizes that their cruise will have an impact on their letters.

I don't think we get any more mail prior to our departure from Manila. Probably not before we get to Hong Kong almost a month from now; sigh! You see dear, this cruise is going to be hard on me too as far as mail is concerned. (April 17)

He got another letter from her this morning, postmarked March 22. In it she says Ray (aka Tom) sent her an airmail letter, telling her his ship would return to the west coast in May. Herb responds.

Well I certainly can't blame Ray for wishing you didn't have a boyfriend. I know how I'd feel were I in his shoes. However, he should realize that there isn't anything he can do about things as they are now. And even if he came to see you it couldn't do anything but put you ill at ease, could it? At least it wouldn't look good. ... So did you tell him that you'd like to see him, only it wouldn't be best if he did. ... But let's forget about him for now. I'm more interested in you. (April 17)

Herb responds to what Louise had written about Bernard. “He has a struggle with himself overcoming things that he knows are in his nature. He's as complicated to me as he is to you too” (April 17).

Herb explains more about their financial situation once they are married.

About my mother; you see dear, if everything works out as I think it will, it won't be so acutely necessary for me to keep helping her after we get married, because the boys will just about be out of high school then. Old enough to look after her themselves.

Honey, don't you realize that on \$60 a month we'll be lucky if someone doesn't have to help us; let alone help someone else. Oh, it's a complicated situation about which nothing can be done. Let's not think about it now darling anyhow. (April 17)

With his next letter, Herb encloses a money order “which brings our bank account up to the half way mark” (April 18).

He continues to respond to Louise's concerns about when he will return.

Some of our anxiety will be relieved in about three or four months when we find out just how the transports probably will run around the end of the year and the first of next year. The Henderson in July is the latest one scheduled. There possibly won't be another until Dec. or January and I'll get the one after that which should only be a month or two after it. It should be the Henderson. (April 18)

He closes with "Well the old Canopus is just about loaded down with stores and provisions now and we are all set to shove off" (April 18).

The next evening, he writes about preparations for their cruise.

There sure is an awful lot of hustle and bustle in the office these days with people ordering last minute stores and making various arrangements for the cruise. What a relief it will be to get out of here.

Part of the stores today included the truck we have to take up to Haiphong. It has an American flag painted on it which when the bandits see might deter them from attacking it. (April 19).

Finally, Herb again tries to encourage Louise to be positive about the time remaining.

Ah, just, let's say ten more months now. How short a time sweetheart for all the happiness that will be ours next spring. Shucks, we can do that little time standing on our heads; can't we darling! Sure, we can. I know my time will go fast on account of the cruise and all.

Let's see, how can we make your time go fast? Well, soon your swimming weather will be there; then Convention, then the fall, then Christmas before you know it and then just a wee bit more. Huh; nothing to it at all!

(April 19)

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