

# Chapter Thirty

## Tsingtao: July-August, 1939

July in Tsingtao so far has been mostly uneventful for Herb. He hasn't been ashore much. His frustration with the Navy and his planning for the future with Louise has dominated his correspondence with her.

It is early in the afternoon of Tuesday, July 25 and Herb has just read the two letters he received from Louise today, the first one written June 22. He begins answering them, and his dislike for the Navy comes up again.

*You say darling, we won't be able to save any money when we are married? Well, that's another reason why I should get out of the Navy and get a decent job on the outside. More and more these days I've been feeling an increasing determination to go out of the Navy when my time is up. The way they do things here, their system, some of the people, and their attitudes, its enough to drive a fellow crazy. Yes, Louise, in a year and ten months I hope to be a civilian again. (July 25)*

Then he detects in her letter a great deal of angst over what happened with her old high school boyfriend Leonard. He responds lovingly.

*Louise darling, I know you love me and that you'll always love me just as I'll always love you. That is why you shouldn't keep things on your mind like you did about whatever it was about Leonard that was worrying you.*

He writes a long explanation why kissing someone should be considered only natural, and not a sign of their love for each other wavering.

*When I happened to kiss a girl, when you happened to kiss a fellow; it wasn't they who we were really kissing. It was you and I kissing each other; it was our flesh and blood crying out for some sort of satisfaction that was real. (July 25)*

He wants her to feel good about their love for each other. "It is our hearts which still tell us the true status of our love" (July 25).

Later in the evening Herb continues writing. He is eager to tell her all about his busy weekend ashore, beginning with the lovely beaches and fun cabarets on Saturday.

*The weather was wonderful Saturday so Smitty and I caught the first boat ashore, picked up our bathing suits, got some money exchanged at the club, and then headed for the beach.*

*Well, the beach which is about a mile's ride from town, and it's a pretty ride along the seashore, turned out to appear very inviting. We donned our suits and went in for a dip. The water was swell and the sandy beach perfect. Then bordering the beach are some*

*pavilions where you can sit in the shade, or the sun, and drink, or eat, or dance right in your bathing suits. They just keep stacking the bills on the table and then when you get dressed, you pay them before you leave.*

*So we went in for an occasional dip, or took a sun bath in the sand now and then; or sat around a table drinking. ... Now and then we'd see a lot of the fellows from the ship, or some of the cabaret girls Smitty knows. The beach is full of them on a weekend since they all go there every afternoon. We took some pictures too while we were there.*

*Around six o'clock we had had enough of the beach, anyhow Smitty was starting to feel high, so after a final swim to sober him up, we went down town to eat supper. After we ate, we took a long walk downtown, doing some window shopping; and then as evening was drawing on Smitty decided to go cabareting, so I thought I'd go with him.*

*The swimming, and the afternoon at the beach made me feel like a million dollars and I felt like getting in some dancing practice. Which I sure did! I must have danced around 30 dances Saturday night. And I drank coca cola. I got a kick out of Smitty, with his various loves; trying to get a date with one for Sunday at the beach. I had a good time dancing, trying to learn some faster steps, but I'll be darned if I could. Finally, we caught the last boat back to the ship, tired; but enthusiastic about the thought of catching the 9 A.M. boat back over Sunday morning. (July 25)*

Herb tells Louise what he knows about the cabaret girls.

*Most of the girls live in rooms right over the cabarets. It is like a dormitory and no men are allowed in them. The girls come from Shanghai mostly; and they have to sign a contract to act as dance hostesses, wherever they may work, from about 6 P.M. to midnight.*

*Now if you like a girl and want to keep her out after 6 P.M. if you are at the beach; or if you want to take her to a show, or to other cabarets, you can buy her out for the evening from the manager. Of course, that is just a release from her contract. They are still free to act as they please once you get them out. But some of the fellows, like Smitty, have picked up steady girlfriends over there and when they want to go around with them in the evening, they buy them out.*

*They are beyond a doubt the biggest and best bunch of gold diggers you will find anywhere. It is about all they can do. Even at the beach they still return to their old cabaret habits. (July 25)*

On Sunday morning Herb is up early, as they had planned to go to the beach again. Smitty would pick up his "date" for the beach and Herb would meet him there.

*I went to the beach early and started getting lots of sun, sand, and water right away. That was around 10 A.M. A lot of fellows I know kept drifting in from time to time and I saw a lot of the cabaret girls I had danced with the night before. But they forget very quickly, unless you are with them catering to their every wish, and far be it from me to do that.*

*Bye and bye I met Smitty and his girl Mary out there; and we went swimming and took some pictures. Then I layed around in the sand for quite a while, until finally around 3 P.M. I was starting to feel rather burned up so I decided to call it a day.*

*I went down town, ate supper, and caught the 6:30 boat back to the ship, weary, dusty, and hot. (July 25)*



**Above left: Strand Beach, 1939. Above right: Smitty and Herb.**



**Smitty and Friends at Strand beach**

Now Herb begins answering Louise's letter.

The subject of Bernard comes up again. Herb is quite bothered over what he believes to be serious shortcomings on his brother's part, and vents to Louise about it.

*So I did guess who it was that bothers you so much. And now the same person bothers me. I'm still burnt up from his letter. What a superior attitude was taken towards "kid brother." Oh well, I'm just sorry that Bernard is made up like he is; he'd have been a different person, perhaps, had he been brought up as I was. But I don't want to bother you with family troubles, nor do I want to create a bad appearance of Bernard to you. (July 25)*

Herb tries to bring closure to something that has repeatedly come up in their letters.

*So you seem to have a doubt in your mind as to whether or not I'll actually spank you some day. Hmm! Of course, not if Mary Lou is a good girl. But then it would be fun since you once practically challenged me by saying I probably couldn't do it. (July 25)*

He adds "Then you got my letter on how I 'slipped' in Shanghai. Ironic coincidence, isn't it?"

*So, look how innocent you are compared to me! Aw, its only natural for both of us hon; as I wrote this afternoon. Lord; we aren't two angels, or two perfect models of man and woman. We are human! And we are doing a superhuman task as it is; quite nobly if I may say so. ... It is funny; how it happened to both of us, and around the same time. <sup>1</sup> (July 25)*

A couple of days later Herb continues answering Louise's letters.

*I won't be able to write much over the weekends now when I can go swimming. It sure is swell to be able to have some recreation like that for a change. Gosh, a year and a half in Manila was just about enough to drive a guy crazy. (July 27)*

Herb recently received a letter from his step mother, and he hopes that someday soon they will be able to visit her in New York. He shares with Louise some of his thoughts about his step mother's situation.

*She still is quite weak, and has not been downstairs in over a year. The store below our house has been rented but what little that is goes straight to some banks to pay interest on mortgages. Sometimes I wonder if she will ever be able to salvage anything out of it all. The boys, Bob and Art are well and growing big. They are both, or will be next year, in their third year of high school. (July 27)*

He then continues their conversation about where they might live after they get married.

*I guess I don't blame you for not wanting to spend the rest of your life at Halcyon without at least getting out for a while. I used to feel the same about my old home town, Lake Huntington. So maybe if we go away from Halcyon a few years ... we won't mind settling down there later on. I know, things are different in a little town like that.*

*You know, it's nice to live and work in a town like San Luis or Santa Maria, I think. Boy I'd be happy to get any kind of job in a place like that that pays about \$20 or \$25 a week to start off with.*

He comes to the end of her letter, which he considers very sweet; so he closes his letter with:

*I'm so thankful you love me so much sweetheart. It gives me the most exultant feeling in the world. I hope I can always be sweet and dear to you Mary Lou; Lord knows I'll always try to be. (July 27)*

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<sup>1</sup> His reference is to incidents that occurred in late May.

The following Monday Herb begins writing another letter. He is eager to tell her all about his weekend ashore.

*Did I say I got sunburned last weekend? Gosh that was nothing; you should see my shoulders right now. Boy they were just a bunch of blisters this morning and it served me right after riding around on a bicycle for two hours, in a blazing sun yesterday.*

*But I'll start from the beginning and give you every single step I made from Friday to Sunday night.*

*When Smitty went ashore Friday night he said he was going to get a date with his girl to go swimming Saturday afternoon. So, I told him to see the girl that I usually dance with in the place where his girls works, and ask her if she wouldn't go swimming with me Saturday, the four of us together. ... He came back early Friday night and said everything was all set.*

*(July 31)*

Saturday morning Herb and Smitty got the first boat ashore, and met the girls at their residence, above one of the cabarets. Then they headed for the beach.

*Oh yes, Smitty's girl's name is Mary; the one with me was Tamaro. Both are good dancers, pleasant, and speak fair English.*

*It was about 2 P.M. by the time we got to the beach and we went in swimming right away. ... The water sure was swell. We sat on the sand a while, talking; and learning each other's history. I told her about the sweet girl in the states to whom I was engaged.*

*(July 31)*

Herb explains to Louise why he is interested in Tamaro.

*She has a sister in San Francisco. ... She says she is certain that she will get to the states in a few months, where she will stay for good. ... She has only been cabareting a few months and doesn't like it; and it isn't the right sort of life for a nice girl; and I assure you honey; she is a nice girl.*

*I'll admit I went out of my way to get acquainted with Tamaro; what I mean is, ordinarily I wouldn't have thought of getting a date with one of these girls; but I knew she would be pleasant to talk to and pal around with, after all these months of isolation from contact with decent girls.*

*(July 31)*

Then the four of them went for a bike ride and took some pictures. It wasn't long before the girls had to be back at the cabaret, so after dropping them off, Herb and Smitty had dinner at their favorite restaurant.



**Mary and Smitty**



**Tamaro and Herb**

Then they went to a birthday party, hosted by a first-class ship's cook who is Italian, and whom they call "Muzz."

*When we arrived at our host's, things were already well underway. Muzz and wife welcomed us, and Red and his wife who live in the same building were there, besides a bunch of other ship's cooks and storekeepers from the Canopus.*

*He had piled high on a long table the largest assortment of drinks and cold chow I ever saw in my life. We were shoved into some chairs and poured a big glass of whiskey soda without any delay. Right then and there I decided that self-restraint was going to be necessary lest I become highly inebriated. (Later on I was to be glad of it!) Some of the fellows were already feeling good, singing and what not.*

*Smitty was drinking to beat the band and I began to feel dubious as to what would follow. ... Finally, around nine o'clock Smitty lunged to the floor and passed blissfully into dreamland. We dragged him into a corner to let him sleep it off.*

*So the party continued, people wandering in and out, some falling by the wayside. Glasses and bottles were broken now and then and some people almost started fighting because they brought up some of their ship side grievances. (Later on, I found out the next day that somebody pushed someone through a window and that there were a couple of fights.)*

*Around 9:30 Smitty looked like a pretty sick lad, and showed no signs of reviving so we decided I'd better take him back to the ship. So it was a good thing I had only a few drinks and had stayed sober. (July 31)*

The next morning, Smitty and Herb were both up early and caught the first boat ashore. First they went to the beach.

*It sure was a scorcher of a day, too. We went in swimming, laid on the sand a while; then we ran into three more buddies of ours and we decided to hire some bicycles and go on out to some other beach, a long ride. And like a darn fool, I didn't even bring a towel along to throw over my shoulders when we started out.*

*We took a long ride along a coast road, out to another beach, past some old German forts; down dirt roads and all through the countryside. We stopped now and then to get out of the blazing sun and rest in the shade. And in one place, some cool coca cola sure hit the spot.*

*It must have been a two-hour jaunt, and we were in the sun practically all of the time. I felt sort of burnt up when we finally got back to Strand Beach. That was around 2 o'clock and we stayed pretty much in the shade after that. (July 31)*



**Herb (on the left) and Buddies Taking a Break During Long Bike Ride**

After Herb and Smitty enjoyed a leisurely supper at the Navy Club, they returned to the "Midnight Café" to dance a bit with the girls who were their dates on Saturday.

*I decided it was a good night to get in some more dancing practice. I danced with Tamaro most of the time. ... We also talked a lot more during the course of the evening.*

*I told her that I just wanted to be friends with her; that most of my money was being devoted to sacred causes; and that she shouldn't waste any time on me when she could make some money elsewhere. But with that clear understanding between us we get along swell and I think I am getting some badly needed dancing practice.*

*My shoulders were burning like a furnace but I didn't think anything of it at the time. I must have danced around thirty dances and I was really tired when 11:30 rolled around. That's when our liberty is up.*

Herb feels the need to explain to Louise more about his relationship with Tamaro. He continues writing.

*Of course Louise you realize that taking a girl out in the afternoon to a beach in a place like this is nothing at all. I mean it isn't as if I were taking a girl out in the states. Our relations you might say are merely "cordial." I wouldn't think of making a pass at her, or flirting with her, or kissing her.*

*As I told you, Tamaro is a very nice girl, and I've told her all about "us" and she understands what I mean. ... I've raved about you [to her] so much. (July 31)*

It's Thursday evening, and Herb begins another letter to Louise. He just received three letters from Louise, dated July 2, July 10, and July 11. "I'm impatient as the dickens to start answering them, it's so much more like talking to you than when I'm just telling you things" (August 3).

His brother is again the subject of their correspondence.

*Regardless of his Temple work and how good it may be, he is still acting the same about work as he did when he got out of high school many years ago. He used to get lots of help from Dad when the family had some money and he had some chances at swell jobs but he tossed them up in the air because he didn't like the environment, or they didn't suit his temperament. ... Bernard is taking a course that is very easy on him, regardless of how much he may have to do. I can't imagine a man not wanting to be more independent than he is. ... So what can we do? Just tolerate him, I guess. ... I know I'll have to be careful when I talk to him in the future. Because if I ever got started, gosh what I wouldn't tell him. (August 3)*

He continues reading and responding to what she wrote.

*Darling when you are kept so busy that you don't have time to write so often that is good in a way, in that it means you are kept so busy that time will naturally go much faster for you.*

*Nope, we haven't had that exam yet dear. As a matter of fact, we take it tomorrow morning. It was put off a month longer than when it is usually held, and funny thing; I*

*couldn't force myself to study once in the last month; I was so fed up with studying for the date when the exam should have been held; I went stale after it, like an athlete who overtrains. I have a fair knowledge of what I should know; and at that there isn't much chance of my making it this time as I told you before.*

*(August 4)*

He finishes answering her letters, and then he tells her what he plans to do this coming weekend.

*Guess I'll go out to the beach Saturday or Sunday afternoon even though my one shoulder is kind of raw.... I love the sun and the water, and no matter what shape I'm in its hard for me to keep from taking sun baths, or going swimming.*

*Guess Tamaro will be out on the beach too, if I don't pick her up on my way out. And maybe I'll get in some more dance practice Saturday or Sunday night. You can depend on me darling to act the part of a gentleman who is a fiancée at all times when I am with one of these Russian girls who might be a friend of both of us some day. She is an interesting person in a way.*

*(August 4)*

On Monday evening Herb begins a long letter; he is eager to tell her about his weekend, but first venting about an unfortunate occurrence.

*I sure was furious by the time I got ashore Saturday morning. I told you that I was scheduled to take an exam Saturday morning. Well, Saturday morning I went in to the mess hall where they were to take the exam and sat down, pencil and paper in hand, prepared to do or die. When they started giving out the papers, they didn't have any for me; and I didn't know what was wrong at first.*

*So I dashed up to the Exec's office, and they couldn't give me any dope; so I went down and got the Supply Officer who reluctantly went slowly about inquiring into the matter. What happened was; some stupid yeoman left my name off the list; (mine and a lot of others); that went in to the flagship about a month ago. For I was both eligible and recommended. Well, the yeoman is on his way to the states by now.*

*The Supply Officer didn't do any more about it so I thought there was nothing I could do about it. And I spent the rest of the morning raving and ranting about what I thought of the Navy, supply officers, and yeomen in general. (Of course, where no one concerned, could hear me!) But I did see red; and you can't blame me; for missing out on an exam because of someone's stupidity.*

*I really told some yeomen what I thought of them. (But do you know what one of them told me ashore, last night?) That if the supply officer had particularly been interested, he could have gone up to the exec's office and demanded that I be allowed to take the exam. That's what some other division officers did for their men who were left off the list. But no, you wouldn't catch that stupid, no good, supply officer of ours doing anything for a man. Boy how everyone in the division hates him. He's the most spiteful, useless, pig headed mistake for an officer. ... Thank the Lord he is leaving next month. It will be the*

*best thing that ever happened to the fourth division. Boy, some of the old-timers in the office are disgusted with him too.*

*I was bewildered, disappointed, and disgusted Saturday morning and I let everyone know it. Because I have to wait until January for the next exam; and if I'm on the Henderson by then I'll miss out on that one too. So, between him and a yeoman, it's liable to cost me a few months until I make second class.*

*(August 7)*

Then Herb writes about what he and Smitty did on Saturday.

*It was also raining Saturday morning when I went ashore, so it all fit in with my mood. Then Tamaro had a date with another fellow; it wasn't good swimming weather anyhow, so I was just as glad to go my own way, feeling as I did. I got in a rickshaw and headed for the Navy Club where I was to meet Smitty.*

*Smitty and I rode around and picked up some pictures, and then we went back to the Navy Club to eat supper. We hung around there until 6 p.m. and then decided to go cabareting. We went down to the Midnight Café and hung around there for an hour or two, then on to another cabaret, the "Moulin Rouge."*

*In there we met a cute little Chinese girl, Rosie. She speaks excellent English and was very pleasant, and it happened that it was her first night there. Smitty had her come over to our table and she proceeded to tell us about herself. ... Smitty and I asked her if she wouldn't come to the beach with us Sunday morning.*

*Then Smitty and I went back to the Midnight Café where his girl Mary works and we spent the rest of the evening there dancing, singing, and drinking Tom Collins and Whiskey Sodas. ... At least I didn't have to carry Smitty back this Saturday night.*

*(August 7)*

That night Smitty told Herb that he would have to meet up with Rosie by himself, as he had to meet someone else. As it turned out, another fellow from Herb's ship also had a date with Rosie. Herb writes about Sunday's activities.

*Anyhow the three of us went swimming and laid around in the sand for a while. And then we all decided to go sailing. We got some sandwiches, hired a sailboat, and tried to start out. It was quite calm, and we had to row quite a ways out. Then we drifted for an hour, go tired; and had to row all the way back. A fine sailing trip! When we got back to the beach; since this other fellow was making a play for Rosie, I let them shove off by themselves and I went over where Smitty and some of our other pals were.*

*That's the way these weekends go by. I just go ashore and drift in and out of whatever happens to be happening. The water sure was swell yesterday too. I did a lot of swimming; and between swimming, rowing, and dancing some more last night; I'm really tired out tonight. But I'd rather swim than anything else I do ashore.*

*(August 7)*

Early Monday morning Herb picked up the picture of Louise that rests on his desk. He reflects upon what she means to him. He gazes upon her “sweet smile; youthful allure.”

*I realized just how wonderful you really are Mary Lou. And why none of these girls on the beach could ever appeal to me. I can't describe it, some sort of a pang shot through me and I wanted you with me right then and there so much. ... Everything I do ashore is hollow, empty; no fun in it, and from now on ... I might just as well confine my liberties to swimming.*

*I don't even want to be with any of them doing anything, when it is you who I should be with. I pictured you in that sailboat, wondering how you'd like it; you on the beach, having lots of fun with me; it's you I want in my arms when I'm dancing, or walking through a park, along the seashore, or anywhere.*

*(August 7)*

Tuesday evening Herb finishes this letter, commenting about the recent exam.

*You know what, they gave such stiff exams this time, hardly anyone on the ship passed them. And they didn't give the fellows a break at all when they marked the papers, especially in the 4<sup>th</sup> division. Mostly on account of our supply officer (the rat), and also because we have some new officers in the division who don't know the men yet, or much about how they do things on the ship. So, now I know I wouldn't have stood a chance because I would have had to get almost a perfect score to have been in the running.*  
*(August 8)*

Herb remained onboard the next weekend, and he spent much of his time sunning up on the ship's deck. But on Monday he went ashore to find Tamaro to arrange a date with her for Wednesday. He tries to explain to Louise why he sought her out.

*After thinking it over decided that I might just as well get fairly well acquainted with her since she is going to the states. And she is one of the few decent appearing and pleasant girls that I've seen here in Tsingtao. Anyhow I dropped around the cabaret where she works early in the evening and asked her if she wanted to go out with me Wednesday, swimming, and then go to the dance at the club afterwards. She knows all about you and she knew I'm not like some of these fellows who throw all their money away on cabaret girls. ... She said she wouldn't mind going out to the beach with me. Louise, you'd be surprised how enjoyable it can be, just talking to a nice girl for a change.*  
*(August 17)*

Herb wrote in detail about his day with Tamaro. After meeting her at the cabaret, where she lives, they went down to the beach.

*It wasn't such a nice day, sort of windy, and cloudy at times. ... Rough as it was, I persuaded her to go rowing with me and we had a heck of a time rowing through the breakers. ... In a few minutes she started to feel funny ... so we decided not to do any more rowing. I tried to back the boat into the beach and it hit bottom and stuck, just as a big breaker came along, and it filled the rowboat half full of water.*

*Then I went swimming a while but the sun wasn't out and it was a little chilly so we decided to take a walk. There was a park not far off and we spent a little while there feeding monkeys peanuts.*

*Then we rode down town in rickshaws and went to a theater where we saw "Man's Heritage." After the show we had supper, and then decided to go back out to the beach to the Sea Pavilion where they have dancing and floor shows in the evening. We stayed there a while, dancing a little and looking at the floor show.*

*It was getting late and we decided to take a little walk before I had to go back to the ship. We did a lot of talking; I told her some more about you. ... I was telling her all about the states and how much she'd probably like it when she gets there.*

Herb continues his letter, explaining to Louise what this relationship means to him.

*Honest honey, it was swell, just being able to talk English to a girl for a change. You can't imagine how starved a fellow gets for conversation with a girl when you haven't had a chance to talk to one for a year or so.*

*Now that I've told Tamaro about you, I can't believe that she would permit me to make a pass at her. Also, as far as that goes, I think she's a little more decent than most of these other girls here. She's sincere too, and I think we've become good friends, and I hope that you'll meet her some day so that you can verify my confidence in her sincerity.*

*The immediate reason for my wanting to know a girl here in a friendly way is that it makes time spent here more pleasant and it makes it go faster. In a way it's a selfish desire of mine at heart but as long as it is harmless, and stays harmless I know that you don't mind in the least.*

*(August 17)*



**Caption on back of photo: "Meet Tamaro, honey. She looks sad, unless she smiles; and she doesn't ever seem to smile much. She's a nice kid though."**

Next Monday Herb again writes about his weekend adventures.

*I went ashore early yesterday morning and went with [Chris] a good friend of mine, a third-class storekeeper also, who just got transferred from the Augusta to the Canopus. He has a home, with a Russian girl, and they have been living together ever since he's been out here ... almost two years.*

*I didn't have any place to go so we sat around drinking coffee up in their place and his girl Zonia made us some sandwiches. They have a Victrola and we spent the morning listening to records and shooting the breeze about our various travels.*

*She fixed us a pretty good dinner, and after that we went out to the ball grounds where the Augusta and Canopus were playing.*

*After the game we went down to the beach and I went in for a dip; and we sat around there a while until the evening. Then we went back down to their place and had some coffee and sandwiches. Late in the evening we all decided to go down to the cabarets. I stayed at the Midnight Café to get some more practice with my favorite partner, Tamaro.*

*(August 21)*

He writes about the presence of the Japanese.

*It seems as if there were a million Jap sailors and soldiers around town this weekend. They get in your way, just about run you down, stare and gape at you, and in general are a heck of a nuisance. Boy I'm getting so I hate the sight of the sloppy slant eyed boy scouts from Japan. They think they are pretty good; running all over defenseless China. Huh; if they ever get in a war with us we'd clean them up in nothing flat! (August 17)*

Next, he begins answering Louise's latest letter, dated July 20.

*That's right, it won't be many months now before you'll be moving out of the guest house for good.*

*Gee honey, I hope that doesn't hurt you much or bother you too much when some of your bones go out of joints. Why your hips?*

*You're getting like me. I don't enjoy dancing so much any more either. The novelty of cabaret dancing has worn off. (August 17)*

Another week goes by before Herb writes again.

*Haven't seen much of my pal Tamaro at all lately; she seems to be pretty popular with a bunch of fellows. And I think it's going to her head.*

*The Japs here seem to be getting more insolent and overbearing every day. ... They have threatened to blockade the Whangpoo River at Shanghai and that would cause serious international tension. What with that, and the present situation in Poland the whole world seems as if it might blow up any day now. I almost would like to see a war with those crazy dictatorships wiped off the face of the earth.*

*Liberty up here has been so good I've been going ashore just about every chance I get. Because I know once we get back to Manila I'll hardly go ashore then. ... We stop at Shanghai for about five days I think, on the way down, providing the place isn't blockaded.*

*(August 24)*

Now Herb is answering Louise's letter of July 27.

*You ought to be sore; after playing a game of softball and climbing a mountain.*

*I'm glad Georgie is back home with you, and in good shape. He must be a swell little dog, you love him so much. (August 24)*

The next night he finishes his letter, writing about incidents involving the Japanese.

*Some interesting stories about the Japs and Chinese guerillas fighting near here drift in from time to time. And this is one tale the Japs wouldn't verify. Anyhow a few days ago the Japs shipped in a transport full of young, green soldiers from Japan and they were taken out to drill on the outskirts of Tsingtao. They didn't give them any bullets to take with them just for drilling; and the Chinese somehow found out about it and massacred the whole outfit of them. One of the fellows in the office here who is married and lives far out from town said he saw them bringing in the dead by the truck load. They put straw or gravel on top of the load to make it look like a load of junk.*

*And last week, through a careless accident one of our destroyers in here lost a torpedo over near the Jap air base. So the Pigeon anchored on the spot and they commenced diving for it. The Japs told them to move out; that they were in an unauthorized place; but our squadron commander told them to go ahead and keep diving until they heard otherwise from the C. in C. So, they kept diving! Even though the Japs own this place now we still aren't taking any of the bunk they put out.*

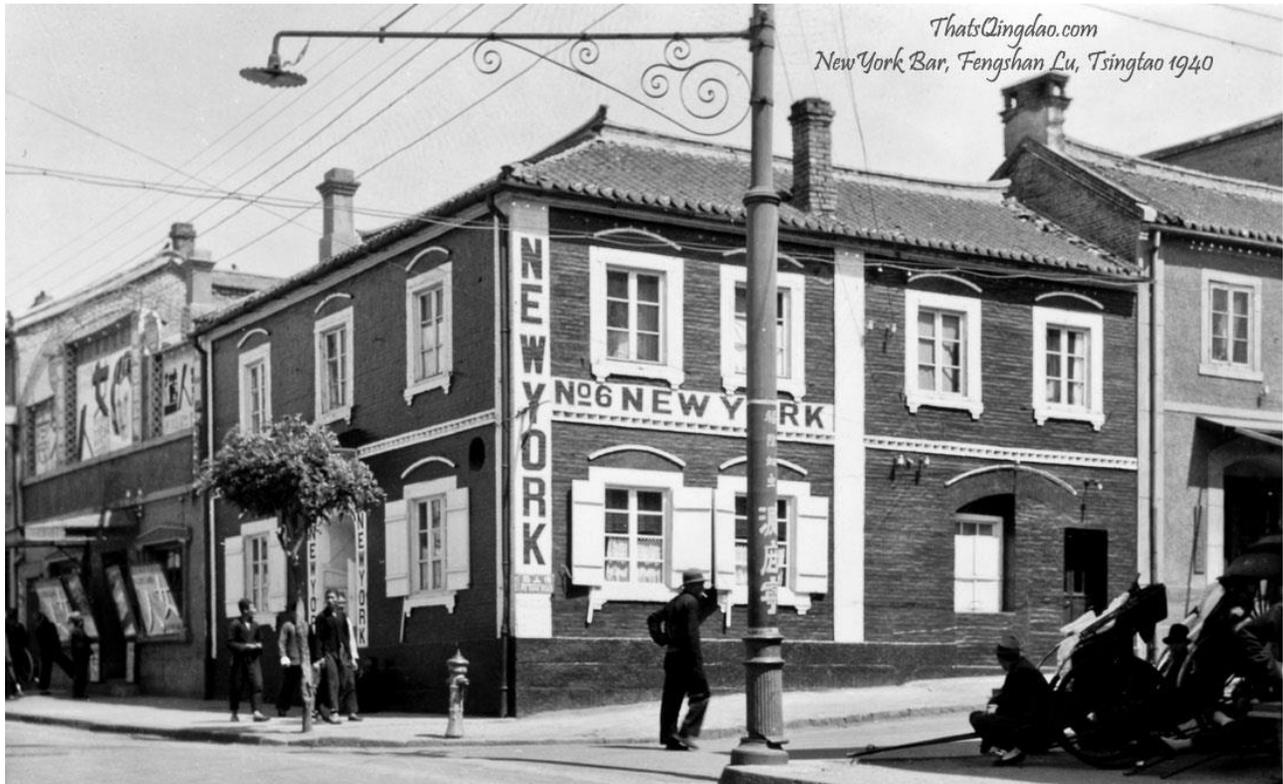
*Slowly but surely, I think that relations between the Japanese and Americans here in China are becoming strained. Who knows what a war in Europe would result in happening here. But I don't think the Japs would ever dare to tackle anyone but the almost defenseless Chinese.*

*(August 25)*

Three days later, on Monday evening, Herb begins a new letter to Louise. He is eager to tell her all about his weekend activities ashore.

*Spent most of my time swimming with the result that I've got a pretty good tan in spots and slight burns in other spots, particularly on my nose.*

*Yesterday I went to a ball game in the morning. ... Then I went swimming all afternoon. The water sure was swell. The tide was in and you don't have to walk a mile to get to deep water then. I had a swell supper in a new place. I found a German restaurant that has all the places beat I've eaten in so far. Then I caught the 6:30 boat back to the ship. (August 28)*



Above: Sample of street life in Tsingtao, China

Photo taken from the collection of ThatsQingdao.com

Herb writes about the world's current events.

*Every morning now when we read the press news, we expect to see that Europe is at war. Or will it be another "Munich peace" with England giving Hitler as much as he wants of Poland? But it looks as though Hitler will either back down; or there will be war. And they are all making preparations for it, recalling their merchant ships or ordering them to neutral ports.*

*Anyhow, long before you get this letter it will either be settled or they'll be in the midst of a gory war<sup>2</sup>. Because I think a huge war is inevitable, I wish that they'd just as soon start fighting now and get the whole thing over with. And now that Germany more or less has a pact with Russia that puts her on the sidelines; do you realize that it would probably take the U.S. to keep Italy and Germany from conquering England and France. But that will depend upon all you citizens there in the states.*

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<sup>2</sup> On September 1, 1939, Hitler invaded Poland from the west; two days later, France and Britain declared war on Germany, beginning World War II.

*If we could remain neutral and sell things to all countries it might do away with unemployment and hard times. ... Funny how most of us fellows would like to see them start fighting. But then, that's something that's supposed to be part of our makeup, I guess. But that isn't a very cheerful subject, is it Louise?*

*(August 28)*

In closing, Herb tries to reassure Louise of his faithfulness to her; he tries to be encouraging.

*All the pretty Russian cabaret girls in the world couldn't make me forget you for one instant. In fact, when I'm around them I think of you that much more. I keep wishing so much that you were with me instead of them.*

*I hope you are fine and having as much fun as I am lately and that time is going as fast for you as it is for me.*

*(August 28)*