

August 16, 1945

Dearest Hiro,

It has come at last—V-J Day, and peace all over the world again! Somehow it still doesn't seem possible, after so many years, so much suffering all over the world, to think that a difference of one second could change a world of madness into some semblance of sanity again, but it's come, and we are still dazed by it. All I could think of when the news came was of you, wondering where you were, and hoping that you felt the same thankfulness that was in my heart—and the deep longing to hold you again, and to have you close to me.

And now we are trying to count the days until you'll be coming home; for we all hope that this will bring you home sooner—Peter is talking already as if you should be coming through the front door any day—he talks about planning for around the island trips, going camping, visiting the outside islands, etc—

To show you what a hectic week this has been, I'll go back to where I last left off when I wrote you on Sunday the 12th. If you recall, it was on Sunday about 4:03 p.m. that the erroneous announcement that Japan had surrendered went over the radio. I think I told you how the ships in Pearl Harbor all blew their horns, and the service men around us all nearly went wild. Still it raised all our hopes that something was cooking and there was great excitement everywhere.

On Monday I went to the office; had lunch at the Brookland Hotel (where Kazuko used to stay) with Sam, as he had arranged for me to meet Marthai Fujioaka of Hilo, who was leaving for the mainland to attend the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music. Her sister, Elizabeth, who is a student at the U here was also present, and Kenji and his friend named Oda, from Hilo too. She is Mr. Fujioaka's daughter, the dentist in Hilo. I gave her Alice, Hank and Fuzzie's addresses, so she could look them up. Then I went shopping in town, and bought a few things to send home with Kenji, and aloha gifts for the Takaysu girls and Sumiko Arakawa. Incidentally they all left today for the mainland. I received a baby announcement from Lois Shattuck Parsons in Md, they had another boy, it makes their third one. She asked about you.

That evening about 8:27, we were listening to the radio, when suddenly they announced the flash that Japan had accepted the Potsdam surrender terms, and that the Emperor's message would follow. I wish you could have been here to see the celebration that immediately took place; the soldiers around here nearly went wild with joy; the ships in Pearl Harbor all put on their lights, sirens blew, church bells rang, the ships had fireworks made from Very pistols, and it was the most beautiful sight you ever saw. Such a contrast to that awful Dec. 7th day we saw in 1941. The Iguchi girls came down with some of the soldiers near their place, and wanted to take me for a ride to see the fireworks, but I stayed home. Obachan had mixed feelings as you can imagine all the old folks did; she actually had tears in her eyes, for after all, it was her native country, and the uncertainty of her relatives all has been very taxing to her too. It has been a strange chain of circumstances, this war with Japan; here we are Americans, and yet our parents are Japanese, and for them the defeat was very real, and they all feel it deeply personally. I never realized it till now, for each one feels the same way—they don't say much, but you can see it in their eyes and feel it in their hearts. I hope that never in our lifetime again, we have to go through such a hell—where parents and children must be divided in their loyalties. Then about 9:30 Mae and Noboru and the children came; they had driven up near Waimano Home to watch the fireworks—remember how we all fled up there on that terrible day in 1941? After they left, I stayed up till 1:30 a.m. listening to the radio, waiting for that news of the Emperor's message, which didn't come through that night at all. Yet, it was fun listening to the whole world celebrate, they broadcasted the rejoicing in Times Square, in Chicago, L.A. ~~Guam~~—Guam, Okinawa, Manila, etc.

I don't think I got much sleep that night from the excitement. Poor Jane was flabbergasted at all the fireworks, searchlights, etc, and was scared to death. Peter was enjoying like he never did before—you know like Fourth of July or something. It was cute the way he expressed himself—the first thing he said was, "Now, mama, we can have metal and rubber toys again." That is a child for you—and I'm glad it was just like that and not what the children of Europe that to go through or the children of Japan or the Philippines—

On Tuesday the 14th, I had a field day out here. About 11:30 while I was visiting a client in Aiea, I turned on my car radio and heard that the Emperor's answer had just reached Secretary of State Byrnes. At 1:30 our time after we had lunch, the surrender of Japan was confirmed, and then what a madhouse this island became. The whistles, sirens, bells, etc. all blew at once—I went to Waipahu to deliver some aloha gifts and found all the stores closing up (as had been requested previously as soon as the news came through). I visited the Arakawa cleaners and left Sumiko's gift, and then went to the Takayesu's and left theirs, as they were home. Marion (Buster's wife) gave me a Pyrex bowl set as orei for the gift we had given their baby, Catherine Anne. When I got to the circle by Waipahu-Pearl City intersection, I got caught in the traffic jam, and you never saw anything like it—they had M.P.'s, civilian police, and everyone trying to untangle it. Truckloads of GIs would go by, yelling, "California, here I come"—"I'm going home"—etc. One truck had toilet paper streamers all over it. People were picking up sailors and soldiers to give them a life—and it was wonderful. It took me about an hour to get home, through all of that traffic—I stopped at the post office and found the enclosed check, which is a rebate on our 1944 withholding tax, so will you please endorse it and send it back to me, so I can cash it.

At 5:30 our time, we heard faintly Emperor Hirohito's speech to his people—but we couldn't understand it, and NBC cut it off as it wasn't clear. The governor had earlier spoken and declared August 14 and 15th as Territorial holidays, and Pres. Truman stated that August 15 and 16 would be national holidays (however later it was changed to mean only Federal employees). All censorships of mail, telegrams, phone calls were lifted here that day too—so this will be my first letter to you uncensored. Later that day the radio announced the Japanese minister of War Amami committed suicide, and predicted a wave of others in the cabinet.

That night there were more searchlights in Pearl Harbor—but it was comparatively quiet around here. However in reading the papers, it tells how Honolulu celebrated, people had parades, they threw paper all over the streets, some even took the pulleys off the HRT busses, and in general everyone had a grand time. I think though that the entire celebration was under control, and people were not as crazy as in Frisco where they nearly tore the town apart. I'm sure it's because for the majority of GIs here, the war is still too real to them; this is a frontier town—and too near the real thing—so that even in rejoicing, there was some reserve. Naturally, everyone wondered what the reaction against the local Japanese population would be, but I haven't heard of one bad incident, and I think that everyone of all races felt akin in that they were thankful it was over—and no hard feelings should remain. That is how it should be, and I only hope that on the Pacific coast people had the same attitude of good will.

Yesterday, the 15, was our tenth anniversary—our third one apart from each other. We had a holiday—I was so tired from just the suspense of the past few days, and sleeplessness, I just took it easy and rested and listened to the radio and read magazines. The best news came about noon, when they announced that all gas rationing has been lifted—I visited Grace for a while after cleaning the house. Peter played with Pickie all day at his house. We heard the announcement that MacArthur had requested the Emperor to send a certain white plane to Ie Shima, etc—

Today is ht 16th; I worked in the morning, visited Aiea— saw Ferreira, and he asked about you, and Abe too. Still don't like that man, he is kind of a smoothie if you ask me, and I can see why Abe and he never got along.

Mrs. Sato gave us some fresh mullet thather husband had caught; the gang is now waiting for you to come home, as with gas rationing lifted they will be going fishing all the time again I'm sure. I mdae an applesauce cake to ay, and gave some to the Kito's too. The Tatekawa's son, John, who was drafted just last week, came to see me. Tongith after supper, who should come over but Tokuo Yoshida("ollar's brother) with ~~Paul~~ Paul Shimabukuro, he had just got in Tuesday, in time for vJ day. He had gained so much weight and matured, I didn't recognize him at first. It was so nice of him to visit me; he has been writing to me regularly all along; he said he is on a 30 day furlough, then will get his discharge here. He said that Jutei Kiyabu also returned with him. Also learned that "Haka" had passed through here recently enroute to the Philippines, but missed seeing him. He said th t many of the 100th boys are at Camp Beale, near Sacramento, awaiting passage home— and that they should all be coming back soon. I am wonderng about Pete, he waid that Pete and Takeo Ige were very good friends.

He told me how he saw you frequently, as he was with Hdqtrs— and how he used to go to your services, and of the good work you're doing. I'm always so glad to hear about you from the boys, and they are so good to come and see me when they return. I know that is due to what you've done for them over there.

Paul doesn't know what he'll do after his discharge, he wants to go back to the mainland. That seems to be the usual wish of these tys, this place becomes too small for them, and too confining in many ways. I can see how they feel about it.

I saw Yoshie Higuchi today; they never hear from "Lefty", I imagine there has never been much between him and the family anyways. She told me that Ed Kushi's brother was back, and he had been with you too.

We were expecting Kenji out here yesterday, but I think Sam took him around the island, since gas rationing was lifted. Then tonight Kenji calls me to tell me he has a "date" so would I mind if he didn't come out? I can't imagine him grown up like that, but he is a nice kid. He is going back to Hilo tomorrow on the 5:30 plane. I think he's had the experience of his lifetime here seeing vJ day come in.

I guess I shouldn't call it vJ day, as that won't really be until Japan has signed the surrender terms, then we will probaby get another holiday or tow. They are planning a huge parade in town, with floats, etc.

You should see the cars lined up at all the gas stations saying "fill er up". It is a sight— and everyone is so happy about it. Many cars which have been jacked up are somehow making a comeback— and people are joy- riding again—

Of course with all this comes the sombre news that unemployment is expected fro several mil ions within a year— today the papers said 250 employees of the censorship office here had already been let out— an s so on it will go. There is one thing, you G I will ge t first priority on jobs, so you needn't worry— but many a famkly will probably be back on relief befroe long. Already many defense workers are leaving the Territory— it is just as well with wome of them, as they are certainly a crummy lot— just a bunch of alocoholics, and who should know better thm our dept. as we've had to ship many of them home:

You see the catch is that while they were here and working, they had to pay the 72 welfare tax, so they feel entitled to it, and we find it is cheaper to pay the 75 passage and get them out, rather than keep them here on our relief rolls! Mrs. Ottman anticipates a big load of such types soon, so we'll probably be quite busy.

We are expecting word from Babe and George very soon about their baby which is expected around Aug. 24th. At least Mrs. Abe got there to join them, so mama is relieved now, as she was worrying about Babe— you know mama, how she worries about all kinds of things, and now again this week her hand is beginning to ache, like that neuritis she had after the blitz.

Tomorrow I go to the office in town; then will drop in at Sam's to leave the gifts for Kamejiu (socks) Obachan (socks) Florence (a cooking book). Saturday I will go shopping in Waipahu, then in the afternoon, I will have my car serviced. Sunday Dunny is coming out to speak to our church, it will be a thanksgiving service.

Jane is begging to try to talk now— and can say one syllable words— she is such a darling— and I keep hoping that you'll be home soon, so you won't have to miss seeing her grow up. Every morning, Peter crawls into bed with Jane and me, and we have such fun together, bouncing her on our knees, and playing with her.

Poor Peter has had to shift his life considerably since she's learned to climb and get around the house. He has to hide everything now, and all day long, it's "Jane don't do this, or that"— poor thing hasn't a moment of peace with her around, and poor Jane is getting bawled out all day long!

We keep hoping that this end of the war will mean your group can come home quicker. I heard that Chicken Yamada was in NYC— is that true? If so, will you be coming soon? I keep hoping, at least by Xmas anyways— we are planning that way, anyways.

Isn't it wonderful that the world is at peace again. If we can learn now by this bitter lesson how futile, and horrible wars are— and never again have one— but maybe that is wishful thinking—

Our postwar treatment of all kinds of peoples will be tested from now on— that will determine just how purposeful or useless all this has been— and I hope that it won't result in another mess again. At least not in Peter's generation— for it's been hard enough for him, and all other children in this war, without having to actually bear arms again.

Good night, dearest, I'm so happy tonight, in the thought, that you are now safe, and need never have to fear again— you are very close to me tonight, for I know you feel the same way— We will pray for that day when you'll be home with us— for keeps.

Love,

Ariake