

May 21, 1946.

Dear Mr. Merrill:

They've gone and done it. Yes sir, I'm a civilian but it isn't what I'd been dreaming about in the two years overseas. But it's grand to be back and get into something besides those b. l. boots and o. d.'s.

Boy, I thought the Procurement Department and its' heads forgot me after I got in. I remember sending a couple post cards and a turtle during train. I should have written, I know, but the training was pretty rough and conditions weren't too pleasant. Then I hit the grind up at M & S. If you had trouble reading those chicken tracks, then you know the difficulty I had reading pages and pages of that besides translating it. Things broke pretty fast and furious after that. I was in Brisbane, Australia for seven months with G-2, GHQ, Allied Translators and Interpreters Section. When I received Mr. Mann's letter there, you could have knocked me

over with a feather. I couldn't figure it out when he didn't answer. Guess both of you were pretty busy. I got a confession to make - remember those jokes that used to come out in a paper by that Cal. friend of yours? Well, I was expecting some from you but perhaps he quit printing them.

Didn't stick around in Australia too long. Just long enough to want to get out but still make a few nice friends. Those Aussie gals are really okay Mr. Merrill. Stayed in Hollandia, New Guinea for about a half year. Glad I didn't get stuck there like some fellows did - hot, damp, and nothing but jungle. Altho a few fellows came down with yellow jaundice and malaria, most of us came thru okay. The malaria control units did a decent good job. They really had the mosquitoes down around camp areas.

Got into Manila next, just after the Germans surrendered. The Nips were still around Manila then but were steadily being driven back. It must

have been a beautiful city before the war. I certainly would have liked to have seen it. The architecture on some of <sup>the</sup> remains of buildings was beautiful and very modernistic. Our outfit was stationed at the Philippine New Truck in the southern suburbs of the town.

The center of the town was a shambles and the Filipinos living there were in shacks reminiscent of the Hoover era. Altho the suburbs weren't touched, the conditions, living & mean, weren't too good. No sewage system and shortage of water. Just rained by hundreds of army vehicles permeated everything and talk about the best - it was worse than New Guinea.

It was in July that we figured something to beek soon. All the translators and interpreters in the whole Pacific area and CBI were placed under our outfit's command and most everyone was being reassigned to new outfits. We were all ready to make their invasion of Japan. Knowing it was going to be rougher than anything yet, made us all jittery. Then Japan surrendered. The G. I.'s went wild in Manila. I guess we must have celebrated for a week as the conflicting stories came through.

Quite a bunch of our fellows were on hand when the surrender terms were discussed with high Japanese officials. A good friend of mine was also the personal interpreter of Yamashita at his surrender. I think the surrender caused more headaches in administrative and tactical plans than anything else. Everything had to be changed, and all outfits were loaded with supplies they wouldn't need. Then too, since the invasion was figured for November, plans had to be hurriedly changed for August and September occupation.

I left Maima, the middle of September with one other interpreter with USASCOM-C, Base Section 2, B-2. Our plan was to land with the 81st Div at Aomori on the northern tip of Honshu, but when we got there Aomori had been so demolished by our B-29's that it couldn't hold all the troops. We laid at anchor in Aomori Bay for 3 days while the brigades talked things over. Finally, an advance party of 7 colonels and us two misai took a PC craft over to Hokkaido. Our destination was Otsu on the NW coast of Hokkaido but we had to go there by rail so we landed at Hakodate. The officer in charge was shitting in his pants all the way to Otsu but

we didn't run into trouble. We chartered a car and the Nips were bending over backward to oblige. As we passed each station, all the attendants would stand at attention as our car passed by. At Otsu, my work was mainly getting the place set up for the main body - expected in about 10 days. Since we were the only interpreters there and also the only enlisted men, we had to work like beavers - shoving the Nips out of the buildings we needed, getting transportation for the officers, getting the mayor and the Chief of Police in line, confiscating weapons and ammunition, and weeding out suspicious public officials. It was hard work but a lot of fun and very interesting.

All during the time I was there, all of us were treated very good. The people were resigned to the fact that they had lost and when they found out how sincere the Americans were, they cooperated to the utmost. Since before the war had always been looked down on and with suspicion. All the while I was there I was treated very good. Being able to converse and understand was very much of an advantage and I was being invited out so much I really got tired of it. I found

out they were pretty sorry for the Japanese in America as they had heard we were all thrown into concentration camps. Naturally, they were at first surprised to know my ancestry and wanted to know immediately whether the Japanese had been persecuted during the war. Since they had heard quite a bit of the racial superior attitude of the Americans and that is why they expected to be kicked all over the place when the Americans landed. They were surprised at the democratic relationships between officers and E.M. In the Japanese army, a lower ranking man bows to all above him and an E.M. doesn't even talk to an officer.

More than anything, I felt sorry for the common people I came in contact with. They had no voice in determining the policy of the gov't. Right or wrong they had to agree or else! They were living hand to mouth with a mere pittance for wages so that they could work a lifetime without getting out of debt. Industrial and agricultural methods, as well as home life was all very crude.

By December we had gotten things in Otae running smoothly as the Base broke up. The P-2 captain got transferred to Sapporo, the prefectural capital of Hokkaido.

Since he liked my work so much he fixed it so that I got to go with him. Otaru is a town of approximately 160,000. Sapporo is inland with about 210,000. The American influence is very noticeable there. Structures, modern office buildings, and wide paved streets. Incidentally, none of these towns were bombed. In fact only a couple on the whole island were ever touched. Our strategic bombing of Admiral, the ferry connection with this northernmost island, had cut its effective use to the main island.

I was with IX Corps Headquarters, G-2 there and being right where the general was, I didn't have as much freedom as in Otaru. In the latter town most of my work was interpreting and I was always out on my own. In Sapporo it was straight translating and a desk job. Your letter arrived just when I went on temporary duty to southern Japan and therefore I didn't have time to answer. When I came back to Sapporo I shipped right off for home so that is why I'm answering now.

I was more than surprised to receive your letter and very glad that you remembered me. The card that I sent you incidentally is nothing to be suspicious about.

I sent it from Otum and all it has on there is a Christmas  
and New Years greeting. I sent Mr. Mann one too but  
it came back to me about a couple months after I got back.  
If you ever get in touch with him will you mention that?  
I hope he didn't feel too bad about my not giving him one.

I got discharged on February 21 but I guess the  
wound fest was still in my blood. After getting out  
from Camp Grant, I went to Chicago where my mother, +  
Minnie and her husband are living. They are all doing  
fine. Incidentally, Minnie has a baby boy of 20 months  
and he really is cute. Her husband used to work for  
Mr. Essene and is a pre-med major but during the  
war, since weren't allowed in med schools so he had  
taken a defense job. I don't think he plans to go to  
school now with a family to support. So he's in the  
body and fender line and is doing okay. Like I said, I  
got restless so I went back to Seattle for a vacation  
and to see how things are on the coast. It hasn't changed  
much from pre-war days. Still is hard for a nigger to  
break into anything good along a white collar line, unless  
he has connections. I came back about three weeks ago



but I have been so busy trying to lead something along bookkeeping, accounting, a government line that I haven't time to write anyone. Incidentally, I have close to 70 letters to answer and I haven't even started the pile yet.

All the letters were received before I shipped back or were waiting for me when I got back. Housing is terrific here. I'm staying with Marion until I land something. I don't like Chicago because of the weather and its hugeness but there seem to be more opportunities - but where?

I filled out a number of form 5's for government jobs and since I listed the Procurement Club job I had under you and Mr. Meen you may receive inquiries about me. I hope you don't mind that and I'd appreciate your answering any if you should receive them.

Do you think I was right in applying for a government position, and how are the opportunities there?

I imagine you had a pretty rough time closing up the camp. But, I suppose with the satisfaction of having done a job well. All of us certainly owe Mr. Meyer and each and every one of you a deep indebtedness for your persevering and indomitable attitude throughout that turbulent period. If you ever come in contact with Mr. Meen will you please extend my very best and if you have time to write I'd certainly appreciate hearing from you. Marion sends her regards. Sincerely, Herb

KARL NAKAMURA  
1375-E. 57TH ST.  
CHICAGO 37, ILL.

~~12/21/46~~



MR. KENNETH MERRILL  
WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY  
HUNT, IDAHO  
532 Capital Street  
Salinas, California