

Toward Freedom

A RECENT V-Mail letter from "Somewhere in New Guinea" jolted my conscience quite a bit. Perhaps you need to know about it too.

Bill Taylor, former chairman of the Communist Party of Baltimore, writes, in part:

"A friend sends me your column. . . . I was wondering if sometime you couldn't write one on the need for letters to the soldiers overseas. I say this because I have noticed that everyone in my Company has been writing to everyone he knows. Hundreds of letters go out, but only a few come in.

"Letters are important for us as they (1) keep us in touch with the 'States,' and (2) give us something to read. You see, we don't have much reading matter here. Books are rare, and the only big thing we have are movies.

"Speaking of movies, imagine sitting at an outdoor theatre. It starts to rain like hell, but only a few leave. The bulk of the men and officers just sit there and get soaked, because movies are some diversion to us.

"Letters mean the same thing to the men here. Those folks back home who say they don't have time to write should remember



by Doxie Wilkerson

this: We too don't have eight-hour days. We work day and night sometime, but we find time to write letters."

THIS is my second letter from Bill since his outfit left camp to be shipped. The first remains unanswered.

Which reminds me of another unanswered letter about "Toward Freedom" from London. Its author is probably in France now. Then, too, there is that long unanswered letter from a former student who was in North Africa when he wrote. By now he may be marching somewhere north of Rome.

There are others. I am ashamed to admit it, and do so because I suspect that my negligence is by no means unique.

We win-the-war actives on the civilian front get so darned busy with the urgent tasks of today—and tonight!—that some of us just "can't find time" to write letters—unless they're to GOP presidential aspirant, Governor Thomas E. Dewey, urging him to free Morris Schappes.

We say that we are doing "everything in our power to back-up the boys overseas." We buy war bonds, donate blood, fight discrimination, spur war production, solicit funds for the Daily Worker and The Worker, ring door-bells for the election of FDR and

My Letter from GI Bill— THEY Find Time To Write

a win-the-war congress, and so on with the never-ending series of immediate tasks.

MEANWHILE, the concrete personalities of GI Joe and Bill and Jim, with whom we once worked and played and fought, tend to recede into the background of our consciousness. They get metamorphosed into a sort of collective "boys overseas" whom we must do everything to "back-up." We lose contact with them as persons.

It is easy to forget that the resolute morale of our fighting men is one of the most imperative requirements of victory, and that nothing contributes more to build and sustain such morale than frequent and newsy letters to the fighting men we know.

Perhaps (and I hope) YOU do not need this little sermon. Anyway, it was good for me to write. I have just gone through my file of "Correspondence—pending," and pulled out all the GI letters it contained. Every one of them will be answered before you read this week's column. Moreover, I have already begun to inquire about the overseas addresses of fellows who have not written to me, but to whom I surely should write.

It may not be a bad idea for you to do a little checking-up too. Just remember Bill Taylor's closing words to me: "We work day and night sometime, but we find time to write letters."