

July 10th 1945

Dear Ones,

All is well, I guess. Last night we had an uproarious volleyball game; I played poker for a while but my luck was running very poorly so after \$5 I quit and went back to reading Keys to the Kingdom; I like Cronin's stuff. I am in the midst of a mild reading jag again.

This morning on the way out to the depot, we started talking about conscription and Thorpe started screeching that it would mean fascism in 20 years and that line. I will admit that most of the fellows here hate the Army so that they are against conscription on the basis of their personal dislike alone. I started to explain my point of view and it dawned on me that my thinking and my arguments are on an entirely different level from theirs. My arguments just don't strike home ground with them at all - and when I try to answer their arguments by putting them in what to my mind is the proper frame they will not grant the validity of my reasoning. You can't discuss military training and its affect on our set-up in a vacuum; comparison to Germany is completely invalid in terms of American tradition and the way American conscription will work. Try as I do I can't get across the idea of the relationship of the problem to our commitments for the enforcement of peace and our readiness for a new emergency; I can't convince them that the new Army need not be a breeding place for tyrannical sergeants and Gestapo minded West Pointers; I can't explain the factor that the Army experience could play in breaking down social and provincial barriers. I am at one disadvantage - we are not sitting down and talking these things over calmly - our discussion comes in fits and starts and with no orderliness. I am impressed by the fact that I miss the Herb Schreiber Joe Thompson group and the type of contacts and friendships which they afforded me, and by the fact that important as it is to have those contacts you cannot become an intellectual snob and you must be ready to explain and justify your thinking at any level of argument and discussion; the fact that you can convince a Harvard professor does not mean that the crowd on the Boston Common will follow you. One thing I am hoping for in the future phases of my Army career is to get back into the swing of real orientation work - that is my best testing and proving ground. In specific argument, all of these men feel that action should wait until the boys get home since they feel that the soldiers will be strong against it - yet there is no answer to the fact that the Legion and the VFW are behind conscription all the way. It seems to me that in Congress the soldier is as much represented now as when he was a civilian and I see no reason to feel that on the whole the current soldier will be more vociferous or self expressive as a civilian than he is now. (I'll continue after lunch - I'm off for the hospital and chow.)

The plan for the MJC Camp sounds wonderful - I see that the old name problem is going to creep in; it was the same thing at the Center. I still think that non-committal community names should be used; the precedent being created by honoring donors is bad and invariably leads to conflict and rivalry that in the long run means ill will. True the personal element in giving is important - but proper community spirit and backing is a more important and firmer foundation for any project. It is an evaluation which the community itself must make. As for the MJC, I think the Camp projection is a neat idea. I take it that the Lown contribution made possible the securing of the site. Beth Osgood writes a very fine letter; she certainly is community minded although my impression is that the nature ~~and~~ seriousness of community effort in Youngstown is not in the same class as that in Portland. As I said yesterday, her views on Zionism should be carefully considered because they are fairly typical of the way the average American of Jewish faith feels on the question - she is on firm middle ground. HB's letter from New York certainly was happy. What struck me was the sharp resemblance of her handwriting when she writes hurriedly to the way mine used to look a few years back. In fact at first I thought that you were sending me one of my old letters from some reason or other. Kohanski seems to have a good background - but I almost flutzed when I saw the heading as "Biological Sketch!!!" on the Lown description of his record.

OK for today

Zoe Summer