

August 24th

Dear Ones,

MacArthur must be using all the available planes & there is still no mail; and the result is that I have nothing to write about. Last night we worked right on through so I did not get the opportunity to drop you a line then; it looks as though we will be at it for another all night stretch unless things pick up a little. While waiting for the trucks to show up, I did manage to read Conrad's Victory and to start Wickford Point. The former is a superb book and I can see why the Pole's prose style has attracted such widespread attention; his narrative and description are crystal clear. The Marquand book starts off like all the others - the touch of gently satiric treatment of New England, Harvard, and Boston is there. Like the works of Cronin, the work of Marquand impress me as all being in the same pattern - later books never renew the freshness of the first effort.

Things are as blank here as they have been in a long time - there are odds and ends to be cleaned up, but they don't even hold the interest-factor of being bothersome and/or especially essential. Life in the area is slow - the last glimmer seemed to fade when even the New Zealanders couldn't get up a team for last night's scheduled game. We play ping-pong and poker and trapse off to occasional movies, but for the most part we just seem to be killing time. My reading is helping me to fill the gap, fortunately - of course, the lack of mail is just about the straw that threatens to break our backs. It is not that most of us are looking for anything special or that we have anything special to write in reply; it is just that mail is the closest and most real escape route to home. I would welcome a change of assignment if only so that I could go through the experience of meeting new people, of getting settled, of learning a new routine, factors that would make the time pass more quickly if nothing else. For invariably when one has nothing else on his mind, the passing of time becomes the primary consideration. Mind you, I am not blue or depressed right now - my emotions are sort of rolling along in neutral; that seems to be the only and the ideal state of mind to be in. Of course I know that one of these days things will go kablooey again - and it is not a big shift to slip into a down spell.

When my reveries are exhausted I begin to think of what I really look for in my later life, what my values and standards will be and I find it hard to orient myself. First of all the idea of earning a living seems completely foreign to me now - I can only regard my earning power as nil. Secondly, although I am pretty well set on the idea of giving law school a crack, I am not at all sure into what channels or directions I will want to turn whatever talents I have or may develop. I dislike this being up in the air but there is nothing I can do about it and I certainly don't want to commit myself irrevocable to any course which I have not tested and found right; I can only wait until I return to college and to the opportunities of reevaluation that it will offer. To be frank with you, economic security does not especially concern me - I guess the reason is that underneath I am sure that if I find the field for which I am suited I will be reasonably enough successful so that I won't have to be disturbed by lack of basic needs. In thinking it over, I guess it is just as well that I do have a variety of ideas as to what I would like to be and do, it at least keeps my thinking from getting into the rut that having made my decision would have created.

I can't help but feel that my present state of mind will continue not only while I am in the Army, but until I actually get into the swing of civilian life again and can start concentrating on my solution and my choice. The first step of actually getting back to the states and then back into tweeds and white shirts will be cheering and stimulating but it will not answer any of the questions, and that, I feel, will temper my exuberance and my enthusiasm during the interim period. I don't crave excitement or activity for itself alone - I am going to be starting fresh and clean and I will start to achieve satisfaction only when I feel myself in the midst of the process of my mature formation.

Well, enough of these reflections for today; I will try to make up for the two days I have skipped in writing this week with a couple of long week-end letters if the mail comes in.

All my love,

Regards to Doris.