

August 6 1945

Dear Ones,

This has been quite a morning of discussion - somehow or other we got started on compulsory military training and went on from that to labor and Thorpe just ended up by touching on Jewish caninshness. In almost every discussion I was a minority of one as far as the argument went - my one supporter was not at all vocal. I must admit that for the first time in years I blew up and yelled at one point when Major Thorpe, Sgt Luta (a fellow of Polish extraction from Chicago,) and Cpl Sprague (a chap of 23 whose parents come from old Maine stock but who now lives in Washington State) agreed that we should have allied with Hitler to stop Russia. I am afraid that I visibly shook with rage and indignation - Herr Goebbels must have smiled happily in his unmarked grave to see the seeds he had sown bloom so brilliantly. Again and again I find myself unable to find their level of argument, and if I do find it my own arguments lose a great deal of their force because they are out of context. When I asked them point blank what communism is, they did not answer but neither did they think that that mattered in the discussion; when I tried to show that the role and position of the Junkers in Germany's society is in no way comparable to the relative position of the Regular Army in our American democracy, they would not discuss the matter at that level. I could only think of how right the Buck report was in stressing the need for "general education" at the high school level; I could only think of how important the neglected orientation program is; I could only think of the tremendous responsibility that rests on the shoulders of thinking people in our country if we are to avoid the backslipping into demagoguery and disorganization; I could only think of the importance of realizing these elements in our national state of mind and of working to put them on the proper track. One part of the answer is the indescribably low morale on Santo, the extreme dislike for anything to do with Army, and the failure of the orientation program here at this base; what is true here I hope is not true elsewhere. There was one funny spot (I can assure ^{you} I did not laugh) when Thorpe was describing the militaristic spirit and said that it would roll like a ball, "gathering momentum and moss." A morning like this has a number of affects on me; I tend to feel a little discouraged - for my whole faith and belief are based on the people, on their ability to arrive at the correct conclusions through thought and action; I do not like to return to my secondary and Platonian idea of the necessity of an elite group to show the people what is best for them and to effect it for them. That is why I seek evidence from elsewhere that conditions on Santo are not representative. What I really miss is a grasp of the total picture, a context for their arguments, and I like to think that the Army is at fault there; that is, at fault for failing to put proper emphasis on orientation and at fault simply for being the Army and taking people away from normal influences and conditions. The men here are not given the opportunity to put their minds to work unless they supply the stimulus themselves. The responsibility of a functioning democracy is that minds shall keep open and working, that we do not allow our thinking to become static or stereotyped, that we shall keep critical and constructive attitude and that we shall realize we are in the spiral of progress which never stops and requires that constant momentum to keep from reversing its direction. Yet there is another factor in this mornings discussion that encourages me; because their opinions are not wholly thought out, these minds are still in formative stages and given the proper conditions and the proper leadership they can be changed; the fact that the minds are not particularly at work does not mean that will not work.

I will have to go back to the area early today to pick up my laundry - I'll get some indelible ink too; my markings must wash out since I consistently do not get my stuff back. While I am back in the area I am thinking of going over to listen to one of Nate Wolfe's orientation sessions; I'll admit that I have a few definite ideas about them without ever having had the opportunity to attend. Tonight I will chase around to see "Valley of Decision" if I can find someone to go with; I am reading "Of Human Bondage" and that is hard to put down. I like Maughm.

LETTERS AND

Now to some ^{clippings}. I am glad that the Thurmans decided on a family visit - I know that it was an enjoyable stay I can remember my excitement when I would come home from school and see a Massachusetts car (not the Parker's) parked outside 184 - I knew that that meant visiting Thurmans! I did send the Abrams an anniversary note. Glad that Charlie Chason is OK and that his furlough is going off without family qualms. Thanks also for the G-2 on Duffy; car chasing seems to be our perpetual bane. From your description of his habits I take it that he is still an excellent house dog. The Navy League sounds like a fairly sound idea - somewhat different from the Legion, at any rate. Why they say that a Navy second to none is an "assurance of prosperity in peace" is a little bit beyond me however. I am not in favor of such chauvinistic groups rising to positions of too great importance. The story of Fitzgerald was good for a chuckle - it was a little more hearty because of your typing error Mother in leaving out the "up" of "pin-up"!! Glad that you got Coronet. Good for Louis Black in Hawaii - is he still a Chaplain's assistant or am I thinking of somebody else? I could send him bushels of gefilte fish left over from my Pesach packages! I remember Jeanette and Sidney Solomon vaguely from one of those family get-togethers. But Allie Thurman I know only by name.

I wonder if they will ever find proof of Hitler's death or escape - speculation like Pearson's guess of Patagonia will probably go on for years. As for Pearson's analysis of the resignation of Chennault, he probably came close to hitting home. There can be little doubt but that politics both in the Army and in China were involved. Best of all I liked his closing remark that the "old line clique in the Army always wins in the end." Even if Chennault did not agree with overall political and military command policy in the Far East, his record and his reputation demanded his retention as, say, the commander of the Tactical Air Forces in China during the coming critical six months. I do not feel that the French Courts will sentence Petain to death - he is still the hero of Verdun and the trials will serve to clear the pre-collapse picture. As for Laval, I will be very much surprised if his neck is not already halfway into the noose. I don't know why he returned to France from Spain - we did not get the full details; was there a deal involved at any point along the way?

That sort of covers things for this noontime. I understand that there is quite a bit of mail in -

All my love,

Regards to Doris.

Sumner

we did get mail - Jay Kay is at Colombo Ceylon
and Paul Bauer is at Manila.