

10 November

Dear Ones -

If I am a little weak in my typing you will understand the reason why - we are being given Monday off in honor of Armistice day (which falls on Sunday.) The shock has left me shaking - what has happened to the Army?? This is the first holiday we have had officially since I have been overseas - I'll bet it took a direct order from Washington to allow it, too! We have moved our office, for the last time I hope. We are in a big double quonset hut with the AG, QM, every section except the Engineers and the Post Office. I don't like it too well since the element of privacy and the ease that goes with it are gone; Trosper told me that if I liked I could move into his office where he, Major Moore, and Theo Mendell, the Transportation Officer, have desks - but I think I'll stay out here in the big hut for the present at least. The Picture, Rhapsody in Blue, lived up to my expectations as to the music but the corn in the story and the surprising amount of ham in the acting of Alda and Joan Leslie almost spoiled it. (My comments are beginning to sound like a menu..) I have just finished reading Robert Nathan's "Portrait of Jennie" - it was short and a touching fantasy of love. As for "Anything Can Happen" which I see is topping the best seller lists - I thought it rather mediocre in both content and style. I am planning to leave the tent I am in now and move in with Jerry Caples - he is a warrant officer with a bunch of odd jobs: he handles the PX and is an assistant in the AG section. He is a good boy and we decided to move into his tent (which is newer than mine) since it is obvious that one of these days all the officers without tentmates will be bld to double up so that tents can be ripped down. I would rather not get thrown in with some of the characters who are left here. I am counting on the two day holiday of Sunday and Monday to catch up on the batches of mail that came in yesterday.

Your long letter of Sunday October 28th deserves much more than a mere acknowledgment, HB. I had no idea how busy you are - especially on Tuesdays! Your school activities are certainly coming closer to a reasonable balance than mine ever did - and you can bet your bottom dollar that with the poise, the confidence, and manners which you develop at this stage of the game you will be able to make up whatever you think you are missing now later on and in good measure. It seems to me that the USS Portland must do nothing but visit our fair city - I can recall going aboard her years ago during the Navy Day celebrations of the 30's. You are one up on me, though, because I have never been inside a submarine - I didn't even see Destination Tokyo!!! I imagine that the crowds of sailors did seem to be pleasant changes from the more routine throngs of the Portland scene - I can see that the girls back home are going to have to become adjusted to men in civilian clothes again. The day will come when a college boy in a tweed suit will replace the GI in his issue zoot-suits as your ideal! Your mentioning Dr Fields reminds me that I had better have my teeth checked once again while the dentist is still here - as much as I dread those visits I know well that the more often I check the easier each visit is and the surer I feel the next time I go in. I am sorry that you are not finding Miss Williams a sympathetic teacher - you go right ahead and give you imagination and ideas full play on paper, whether she labels them "melodramatic" or not. I got a kick out of your technique of early class participation in French to avoid being trapped when Miss Briggs comes to the tougher material at the end of the lesson. I imagine you are finding that you can get away with anything in her classes - again I advise you to study hard and really develop you French foundation. I know how you feel about getting recognition and sharing leadership responsibilities at school and in the community, Toots; it is satisfying.

It is now Sunday evening - the 11th. I wrote a few letters this morning and this afternoon I fell asleep with Army ahead 28-0. I awoke at quarter to six! I am waiting to hear how Harvard did against the Merchant Marine. It is wonderful to think that tomorrow is a day off. It really was a job writing letters today - there seemed to be nothing to write about but the difficulty of writing letters. There is, as you well know, no news, and every time I sit down to write I start to analyze my adjustment to this place and I realize that my adjustment depends on not thinking about it! Oh, me .. well, I'm getting plenty of sleep but it is not really rest. My eyes are tired and if I read too much I am bothered by headaches which are accentuated by the heat. So goes life on Santo.

As I write this I am listening to Navy about to roll over Michigan - it is funny: we hear the games rebroadcast after we know the final scores! I did manage to sort out your clippings of the last batch and they give me something to write about. The first topic is the commentary on the Truman conscription-for-peacetime speech. PM thinks that Truman missed the boat - I think it is PM that missed the boat. Their angle is that Truman should stress the need for industrial-technical training and mobilization and preparedness; how they interpret the Truman proposals as denying their emphasis on the importance of an alert functioning and prosperous economy is beyond me. The fact remains that military alertness, the readiness to commit our armed might to preserve the peace, the recognition of our responsibilities as a world power separate from the primarily economic notion of world trade which need not be consistent with our world peace program (example: cartels) these intangibles can not be created out of a clear blue sky. Then David Lawrence comes up and his angle is that the draft is aimed at high school graduates rather than men of 23-25 who have completed their education; I still feel that this is a fallacious argument. The disruption to a man of 24 is much greater than that to a man of 19. The older man is liable to be married, have a family, or at least have started on a semi-permanent occupational activity. And when a man reaches 24, as the experience in the Army and the Marine Corps has shown, he has passed the peak of his learning years - remember that this is a training program. But I don't have to rehash all these arguments about maturity, education and the rest. All indications are that the Truman proposals will have one hell of a rough time in Congress - but one thing is a cinch; we must have some policy.

The Palestine picture seems to be growing clearer simply because of the wide publicity it is receiving and the interest which is being stirred over its issues. I see that the Aran publicists have convinced Senator Bailey of the rightness of their anti-Zionist arguments; what bothered me about the Bailey letter to Byrnes was not so much that it was anti-Zionist but that it echoed the general attitude that we have no business interfering in Palestine or any other country - that is the most dangerous notion in the world, the war we have just fought is proof of its error - look at Argentina, Spain, China, India, Indonesia, any trouble spot in the world and you will see that in each case the US has a definite stake not necessarily in one of the opponents of the other but in seeing that democratic justice is achieved. (More on this topic in later letters when the question of current Chinese unrest comes up in the clippings.) The word you sent about "I'm from Missouri" is more encouraging. On the question of political Zionism - I still feel that the issue is now beyond the point where immigration and the homeland can be separated as issues.

Well, that is about it for tonight - I'll try to write at some length tomorrow.

All my love,

Regards to Doris.

