

May 14, 1943

Dear Sumner:

Mother just read me your letter which I hasten to answer especially since I shall be in Boston tomorrow and unable to write you.

When you say that this is the last class of 13 weeks and that thereafter the classes will be for twice that length of time, I can readily understand the necessity for the change, in the light of what you have already described as the daily routine. To me that is just added proof that you must not permit yourself to reach the point where you will feel crushed, should you fail to graduate with your class. Frankly I would much prefer your having to stay longer and taking things in a more normal stride under the circumstances than to work at such a feverish and strained pitch as you are now laboring. It just does not mean that much to us and it should not to you to feel that your whole life will be a failure were you not to make the grade the first time. I felt exactly the same way when you were pointing towards O.C.S. You are not fighting against time and you have not the eyes of the country focused on you. I say these things honestly and calmly and fairly and not for the purpose of cushioning you against a future disappointment. Evidently the War Department also recognizes this fact, else it would not have changed its policy and increase the time from 13 to 26 weeks.

All things do not come easily in every walk of life. I have known brilliant minds in college who had great difficulty in wading through languages but absorbed with ease mathematics and history, while to others languages were pie and mathematics almost impossible to digest. It is going to take you much longer to become proficient in some things than in others. When you wrote that you will make mistakes but you will not make the same mistakes twice you hit the highest goal that man can strive for; if you went beyond that point you would be a superman. So again I beg of you to ease up and to relax, lest you grow stale. I am asking no more than what physical directors and athletic coaches do all the time with those under their charge. Go into Baltimore and take in the movies and a dance and go to the horse races. The expense I will cheerfully bear.

I laugh as I write these words of parental advice, for I see before me your sweet, lovable sister who is exactly like you. She had a cold, a slight one, on Tuesday, and Mother kept her home out of an excess of caution. You should have heard Helen complain and if you had paid the least bit of attention to what she said you would have had to come to the conclusion that this one day's absence from school would set her back a full year. The one thing that I remember distinctly was that she would not present her poster (mind you, I said poster) in time for credit. Of course to me this was just something about which to chuckle; but to her it was a very serious matter. She was tense and uncomfortable. She comes by her sensibilities rightly and perhaps both of you should blame the male side of your parenthood. Some day soon you, too, are going to chuckle at your fears which bring about these anxieties and tense moments. Just remember that I am as I was and as I ever will be
Affectionately,

E.