

22 November 1945

Dear Ones,

I am down here in the AG building where all our offices are now; the teletype machine is quiet and the radio is on and for an office it is a fairly pleasant atmosphere. With Hughes and Sprague gone yesterday and Loken's leaving today, Bob Rauth and I are the whole Ordnance-CWS section until Sprague gets back. A word about Loken for the record - I can't recall how much I have told you of him before. He is a blond chap, with an excellent physique, and a pleasant face. He went to the University of Wisconsin where he majored in Drama and journalism; his background is Norwegian and I assume that his parents are fairly well to do. His interests and tastes, which he obviously was allowed to indulge to the full are artistic and aesthetic; he admires Frank Lloyd Wright, he designs floor plans and homes on his own; he is constantly in the midst of some project of design or writing. He took notes on all his reading, quoting notable sections in full; for a long time he kept a minute daily journal of all the events on this island and his reactions to them. His main recreation on the island was to take extended trips when he could into the jungles and to neighboring islands; he took many photographs and made an amateur study of the island; his plans now that he is on his way out of the Army call for an extended world tour of tramping through the corners of the globe; his eventual aim is for a part in the life of the theatre either as an actor or as a technician - perhaps both. Perhaps he fits the modern terms of Bohemianism, I don't know since I am not quite sure of the definition of the word. The key to Loken's life on this island was his complete indifference to the society here, his refusal to admit that he paid one iota of attention to what others thought or said about him. He took none of the social criteria of others for his own standards. This took the form of his friendliness and open association with Negro personnel, the form of his night long sessions talking about art and what have you, the form of his open indifference to the unconcealed reactions of the rest of headquarters company. In effect the more prosaic members of headquarters looked upon the group of which Loken was a member much as the inhabitants of a small New England town would view the sudden moving of NY's Greenwich Village into their midst. As I understand it, Loken's group is accused of overfamiliarity among its members, effeminacy, and eventually of perversion. Whether these conclusions are justified or not, I do not know - I do know that the result was one of greater indifference on the part of the esthetes and in turn more serious accusations and whisperings on the part of the accusers. So in a way, Loken is comparable in his relationship with his society to Oscar Wilde. I like Ralph for his intelligence and his sensiveness, though I often found myself objecting to the enthusiasms which he had; I had never had the opportunity to get to know a person of his temperament until he came into the office. I can now see that there were fellows at college who lived under the same banners, but at that time I was unaware of them or of the nature of their lives. And I plan to keep in touch with Loken, simply out of interest and curiosity to see what he does make of his life; I feel that he has the abilities and the qualities to hit a peak or two.

The radio just played Artie Shaw's "Frenesi" - how well I remember that! When I was a Freshman I used to sing and hum that song so much that Mike and Dan Fenn threatened to drown me one night when I was giving forth in the shower. I still like ~~its~~ its catchy tune.

I still find myself tending to be "too friendly" with the enlisted men - I can understand why the officers of the Ordnance in the 30th Division weren't too keen about me if I so obviously preferred the company and the conversation of the men. After a session or two in the club, it seems to me that the officers have exhausted themselves and conversation becomes no more than a rehash; it is uninteresting to me and I have little respect for or interest in the majority of the officers - and I feel little like getting to know them better at the cost of having to sit through their endless nonsense in the club. I would rather go over to the motor pool or come down to the office and get to know the men - there are more of them, they are more interesting, and I find that I have a greater range of selection as to intelligence. I think that I carry my rank (!) easily, for the men certainly talk easily with me; I do not drink with them despite their offers, not because it is against regulations but because their supply of drinks is so limited. Of course this is all cast