

April 25th

Dear Ones,

This is the kind of letter which I hate to write - since I subject you to my own moods of depression, but I have to talk to somebody and this is the only means I have, I guess I am just too sensitive - when things go wrong, I just cannot shrug my shoulders and forget about it. The fact that I am not in work that is basically interesting to me (and God only knows if there is anything in the Army that is - that is one rub: there is no alternative endeavor to which I can look with any assurance of being able to find a job which will hold my interest and which will get my full effort and concentration) --that fact does not mean that I am not conscientious, and when things are fouled up, when I find myself in a middle with no door out, I can't let myself escape by just forgetting about it or saying the hell with it. And that is so even though they may just be so many little things, details which when analysed and considered don't amount to a row of pins. This depression, this allowing things to get me down is the result of a combination of almost innumerable factors. First of all is the inescapable fact that despite correspondence and reading and cards and Spanish, I do not have a balanced program: that is just me, my makeup, the way I work - I miss the close friendships which I was able to develop in school, I miss the common bounds of social existence which mean so much - home, companions with similar standards and outlooks and sympathies, it is almost impossible to describe that lack fully - - and it is my fault that when things are not going right, I reveal this fundamental failure to adjust myself. To be honest with you, I don't want to change to make that adjustment, I would much rather make my fitting into the Army a completely superficial and surface process, even though it does mean these down spells at times. It is only fair to say that this command is perhaps not a fair criterion of what my adjustment possibilities are - there must be places where the exuberance of youth, the willingness to be different, the readiness to use a little imagination and initiative are not frowned upon, but are encouraged. It is, of course, difficult for me to write the specific cases of what I mean - certainly it all ties in with the current situation of Ordnance on this island and with my relationship with Major Thorpe and the others of the command. I know that Thorpe may be a back-slapping, good guy and all that, but if the chips were down on any matter I could not count on him to back me up - even though he tends to leave me holding the sack with the nature of the job he has channeled me into. ... Oh, hell, enough of this - if the sun were out I would probably feel much better - but writing these things out does help me to define what is wrong; if I could only develop a little indifference! The point is that I know that responsibility is something I can thrive on - my specific gripe right now is that I am getting the responsibility but I do not have the necessary authority to go with it - I find myself in the middle and somewhat pushed around and I just am not an escapist to the extent of getting out of that. At any rate, things will be cleared up in a little while, they always are, and the routine will return to a happier channel. These spells do serve to remind me that the Army is strictly not for me - I'm a born civilian. And in the long run the experience will probably stand me in good stead - I will not always find myself in a pleasant or desirable working or living condition and the ability to keep on an even keel will be critical. Just writing to you this way and getting it off my chest as I would in conversation is all I need to break the tension and begin to snap out of it - so actually my correspondence can give me that balance I seek. Up to a point I guess this self-psychanalysis is good - I might even write a novel; it not hard to see how a person can become psychoneurotic in the Army! the case of Joe Thompson would certainly fit into the picture here. Joe wasn't even adjusted to the minimum state which I am.

OK for now - I'll try to be more cheerful in my next note; the book of "Sad Sack" cartoon came today - I feel a sort of kinship for the Sack -

All my love,

Regards to Doris

Jimmy