

May 8th 1945

Dear Ones,

It started last night and this morning's news at 7 and 8 had everybody buzzing. All the details filtered in - the official British release that Tuesday May 8 would be celebrated as VE day, the US policy of extending passes in Europe and at home. Then came the word that Churchill and the King would speak, that Truman had promised that the definite announcement of unconditional surrender will be coordinated among the big Three. At the same time we heard that the AP had broken the news without authorization and had been refused the privilege of posting any more dispatches from ETO. The fellows whose radios can pick up New Zealand and the Fijis have reported that preparations for the observance of VE day are underway. We look for tomorrow morning's newscasts (that would be evening of the 8th in Europe) to bring us the word of final surrender - I hope that the Norwegian question is cleared up: it seems unlikely that negotiations have not included Norway since there have been no bombings of that country. I guess that the job of cleaning up the remnants will go on for some time. The general result is a tenseness and excitement - the fellows with long periods of service are thinking in terms of discharges and releases or at least of return to Stateside duty.

It's funny - we have looked forward to VE day for so long that now that it has come, like everything else in the Army, it is anti-climax. I wonder if the defeat of Japan and eventual discharge will be the same in creating our reaction? Well, any way, the quicker the forces get concentrated out here, the better - this may prove to be a significant day for me on which to be starting my second year overseas.

The letters which I received from home today deal with the "false" armistice reports of a couple of weekends ago. They certainly got you hopping about on paper, Daddy. I also received a couple of copies of the "Harvard Service News" and when I get to some remarks of theirs later in this letter, I hope I remember to enclose a couple of clippings on the subject of ~~Hayek~~ Hayek and his controversial volume.

Last night at supper Don Harms was talking to Herb Schreiber about the fact that he was reading a book called "Brainstorm" which apparently is a fictional treatment of the problems of abnormal psychology and that he could spot in himself a number of tendencies which afflicted the subject of the book. Herb explained that it is the old story of "medical student's diseases" and the fact that abnormal psychology is no more than the study of disproportionate demonstrations of entirely normal psychological factors. What it specifically called to my mind was the fact that I often find myself doing things which I find offensive in others; I think I have written to you before that I sometimes find myself imitating habits of speech especially of the people with whom I am closely associated, and naturally distasteful manifestations are more apparent. I don't know exactly what my point in writing along in this vein is - probably nothing more than that I am still very interested in the human animal and the way he works, especially me. I like to think that my introspection is healthy - I hope so. In some ways I am independent and self-sufficient - but in a great many others I am far from it. But enough of that (it is almost closing time and I will head up the hill to change for volleyball. I will probably return to this after supper - the movie looks pretty poor this evening.)

Volleyball was OK - we are planning to stay up to hear Truman at midnight tonight. Now to your mail. Columns like Brown's on the possibility of Japan's defeat this year are encouraging and I hope they are well founded. I can't help but feel that the Japanese army will have to be beaten on the Asiatic landmass as the German Army was in Europe before the end is definitely in sight. The encouraging question mark is still Russia, of course. On the question of European reconstruction, I was very interested in



the Lippman treatment of the very realistic Russian policy toward Poland, a reconstructed Germany, and the virulent if subtle anti-Soviet forces still powerful in the Western World. ( If you read "Valley of Decision" the last part of the book gives a treatment in novel form on this subject.) There remain in the United States interests which would rather see Germany rebuilt and militarily strong than see Russian predominance unchecked in eastern Europe - just as they did from 1933 on. This danger is out of the stage where it is treated only by the so-called muckrakers and nickel columnists. Its manifestations in any of its many forms should be a three alarm warning to every thoughtful American to think twice - now it finds strength by clinging to those who sincerely are concerned with the fate of Poland for the Poles; next it may show up in the questions of rebuilding Germany, what type of industries should be developed, what degree of transportation facilities should be allowed, how her national and international financial structure should be erected; it may creep in with those good souls who forget the war in 1946 and come to the conclusion that the Germans are cured and they no longer deserve to be treated as the vanquished; it may pop up in all sorts of movements for German culture, travel tours, and the like. And of course it will always be at the fore when any dispute arises with Russia or when communism is concerned. The free peoples of America and Britain and the rest of the world must not play into their hands.

For America I would very much like to see the return of Welles to the State Department; I would like to see more of an emphasis on younger men of MacLeish's class than of Clayton's and Dunn's. John Winant in a position of leadership and responsibility would be a capable support for the State Department. I want to see Morgenthau remain in the Treasury - he has always been the most important "strong peace" man in Washington. And needless to add, it might not be too bad if the State Department were dotted with a few more men whose records were not spotted by episodes of salving Franco or trading with Nazi Germany. As for England, I think that the signs are that the Conservative Party will not be strong enough to swing any Baldwinesque or Chamberlain-type policies through the gauntlet of public opinion. It is not incorrect to see in the results of the by-elections this rising alertness in the British populace. Once again it all boils down to the degree of interest manifested by the people.

A brief word on the Hayek clippings - I think that he feels that the Readers' Digest did him an injustice; if you recall in my commentary I wrote that the condensation might not be a fair test. You will also note that he does not reject planning as he is being interpreted to have said - to my mind, the Crimson's quotations of the man are as vague as the Readers' Digest - I do not know the distinction between "centralized" and "decentralized" planning; it strikes me that Hayek is actually coming to no definitive conclusion at all. I think Leontief's point is well taken - the impression of Hayek's book is that progress has ceased; it has not.

I am glad that the plans for Judy's wedding are going along smoothly. And that the cottages are so far not proving to be too much of a headache. I am glad that we do have a few friends like the Conley boys. The news is that despite the impending developments in Europe the San Francisco commissions will carry on - that is as it should be; there are months of spade work to be done which can be accomplished without tying up the leaders of the nations involved.

I'll save your two letters for tomorrow's note, Daddy - I am inclined to doubt that we will have mail for the next few days.

All my love,

Regards to Doris