

Lisbon, Portugal
September 20, 1941

Dear Folks:

Daddy's letter of September 9th got here the fifteenth; if all the mail went as quickly as that, I guess we would have nothing to complain about. I am sorry that I haven't been able or gotten around to writing you a letter sooner, but it is harder here than it was in Milan for several reasons. In the first place, in Milan, I had my own desk and typewriter and paper, and I could type any time I felt like it, although of course I rarely had time to during office hours. Here, there isn't even a place for me to sit down, much less a desk, and the only way I can write a letter is to wait until the others go home or else come in on Saturday afternoon, like today. They are very short of equipment of all kinds here, since this office has grown during the last few years from a very small one into a rather large one. They even have trouble themselves in remembering the names of all the officers because they change so rapidly. They go home on leave and don't come back, and sometimes they aren't sure here whether or not the persons in question have received new assignments or not, and so it is quite a mess.

Another thing which has been complicating the situation is that I have been working during the day. One of the Department's telegrams stated that the officers here awaiting visas might be put to work if desired, and Hervé asked me if I would look into the visa file room and recommend ways and means of reorganizing it. As you know, they have had a tremendous amount of visa work here during the last year, and they have had no time to keep up with a lot of things which they should have. I went over the situation with the ladies who work there and drew up a series of changes which I recommended and had them approved by Hervé and the Vice Consul who is in charge of the visa section, and then I proceeded to go to work to put the changes into effect, since the regular staff did not have enough time to do that and keep up with their regular work at the same time. As a result, for the last two weeks I have been spending all my time moving cards from one box into another and filing away hundreds of cards in the new files. It is extremely boring and tedious work, and it is worse because the women take my presence there as an excuse for not making any decisions on their own initiative. I have had to point out a couple of times that I was not there to make decisions about routine matters, but of course I do not want to hurt their feelings, since everything depends on my having their cooperation. The cards will probably occupy me for two more days, as Hervé has delegated some one to help me, and then I will be able to pass on to other things. I do hope sincerely that things will work out better in the future, because if all my work doesn't lead to an increase in efficiency, it will have

have been for nothing. I have been glad to be working, however, because, as I said in my last letter, I had gotten a little tired of doing nothing.

In the meantime, I have moved out of the hotel where I had been staying, because it was too expensive, and my now at a smaller place where the bed is as hard as a rock. The mattress is made of straw, and the pillow apparently of cotton. The bed has the same kind of springs as some of the cots we used to have on the back porch or at the farm - a sort of a wire mesh which gives very little. The food isn't bad, however, and the main attraction is a couple from the Consulate who live there. They are the Joneses. Jimmy is about my age and his wife is a few years younger. They are most enjoyable people, and we go around together all the time. They have made my stay here very pleasant.

For all practical intents and purposes, my status here is unchanged since the last writing. Some weeks ago they received notice from the Department that they did not consider the refusal of my visa and those of the others as definitive, and that the Department was taking the matter up again with the Vichy authorities. After the usual two weeks had gone by, we heard from Vichy that they had conceded that we should have the right to send additional officers to France, but that they did not desire to have any more in the colonies. Further, they did not wish to have in France any officers who had been expelled from Italy, Germany or the occupied territories. This hit every one of the group, since we had all come from those places. However, the Department has tried to send ~~some~~ of the non-career men through as clerks, and we got word today that visas for two of them who were going to France proper had come through. About me there is nothing except that the Department inquired once about my status here. They were informed that I was still here awaiting instructions, and so far no answer has been received. I would not be surprised to get something in the next week, however.

Last Saturday afternoon I came over here to write a letter and found out that a telegram had just come in promoting me to unclassified (a) at \$3000 per year. This is an increase of \$250 over what I was getting before. Since several people came in, including Hervé, I was too occupied receiving congratulations to write the letter, and it wound up with me asking them all out for a drink. We had several, and then some stayed for dinner. After that, we went out to Hervé's and had some more drinks, and altogether it was a very pleasant celebration. Bill Cordell was also promoted (he is in my class), and he celebrated by getting a nasty boil in an embarrassing place which has kept him at home all this week. I assume that all the others of my group were also promoted, although the list has not yet been published. The Coast Guard Cutter Ingham sailed unexpectedly last Monday, and now we have no more radio bulletins, so it may be some time before I find out exactly who was promoted and so forth. We were all sorry to see the Ingham leave, as we had all enjoyed going out there occasionally. In the course of a few hours on Sunday she was painted battle gray instead of her usual gleaming white, and the whole business looked rather ominous. She should be in safe waters by this time, however; they thought she would make the return trip in about eight days.

I guess that is about all the news for the present. I got a letter from Janie dated in June; that is all. I will send her a copy of ~~it~~