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AMERICAN EMBASSY
London, England
November 16, 1941

Dear Folks:

This is to supplement the cable which I sent you yesterday and to tell you as much as the censors will allow about my trip up here. Wednesday noon in Lisbon I received notice from the British Overseas Airways that I was to leave the following morning, and that I should be at the airport at six o'clock. I had to spend a lot of time arranging for the Legation to pay for the ticket, and then I went to the Consulate to take leave of the friends who had been so very kind to me all the time I was in Lisbon. That was really a sad moment, only slightly lightened by the thought that we would always see each other again as long as we remained in the Service. Then I went downtown to buy a dozen handkerchiefs to take care of the nasty cold which I had contracted. In fact, I had to whisper all my farewells, since the cold had settled in my throat and I couldn't say a single word out loud. The cold is much better now, and seems to be going "according to plan".

I spent my last evening in Lisbon with Phil Hubbard, who was with me in Milan and who was passing through Lisbon on his way to Zurich. I got to bed at midnight, but was immediately awakened by some other friends who came over to say good-bye. At one I asked them if they would mind if I got a little sleep, because I had to get up at four. Up at four I was, and shaved, bathed and dressed. It is about a three quarters of an hour's drive from Lisbon to the airport, and I got there right on the scratch - or at least only four minutes late. The formalities were very simple. They weighed the baggage, made the charges for excess, very kindly permitted me two kilos more than I was supposed to have, and the Portuguese customs glanced at the bags to see that there was no food in them, since the export of food is prohibited. At seven o'clock sharp, we loaded into the plane and took off. The plane was a small Douglas transport, built to carry 24 passengers. However, due to the distance to be covered ~~km~~ and to allow for more mail, half the seats were removed, and so there were only spaces for 12 people. Now I understand better why it is so hard to get on the plane from Lisbon to England.

The flight itself was quiet and uneventful. The weather was more or less clear, and the air was smooth. I wasn't troubled by air sickness, although it got a little unpleasant toward the end, when the plane got very hot and stuffy inside. We did not land at the usual landing field, but at another much farther from London, and we had to wait for three hours and a half for the officials from the other air field to come down by car. While waiting, we were served with tea, and all the officials were most polite, although we were not allowed to leave the waiting room and there was always a guard with us. The inspector, when he came, was very nice but very thorough. I was the second one examined, and it didn't take long. The customs had to go through by bags from top to bottom, but raised no objection to the cigarettes I had with me. Then they loaded us into a car and took us to the railroad station where we just made the train for London. We went first to Exeter, and ~~from~~ there we had a four hour wait. If we had been smart, we would have stayed there all night, but each one imagined that

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he had to get to London by the next morning, so we went on. I thought that I might have to leave right away, and, as a matter of fact, that was almost the case; now, however, they think it will be three or four days yet. Anyway, we took the train from Exeter at one AM and arrived in London at 5:30. I got some sleep on the train, but you know sleeping sitting up isn't very restful. We went out in the gloomy station, which, to my surprise, wasn't much darker than the station at Milan always was, and we tried to find a taxi. There weren't any. We waited for half an hour, and finally got one who agreed to take us in two groups to hotels. I went with two other Americans to the Hotel Cumberland, where they told us that they had no rooms at all. I wasn't much surprised, but the fellows with me were, because they thought they would have reservations. I know the Foreign Service too well by this time to expect anything like that. However, by that time it was about 6:30, so there wasn't much point in going to bed anyway, and they kindly allowed us the use the men's room to wash and shave in. After that there was nothing to do except to wait until time for the Embassy to open.

Arrived there, I was warmly greeted by Mr. Abbey, whom I had known in Washington and who is now in charge of the consular section of the Embassy. It seemed that no definite information was yet available about my time of sailing, but it was expected momentarily. While waiting, Abbey let me go to his apartment, which is nearby, and take a bath. They were still up in the air when I got back, and Abbey took me to lunch. The food was adequate and very well prepared, but the prices were terrific. In general, that is what I have found here: sufficient food, but high prices. The staff of the Embassy is well supplied from the States, and so they have nothing to worry about. From the point of view of expense, it is too bad that it is customary to invite people out to eat rather than to one's home. Personally, I should prefer to eat home anytime. Last evening, after the first half of this letter was written, I went home with Dick Johnson, one of the Vice Consuls here whom I knew in Italy, and we had a splendid meal which he prepared himself, consisting on bouillon, canned baked beans, brown bread which was really delicious, peas, and canned American peaches. They were about the first canned peaches I had had since I left home, and they certainly tasted good. They have peaches in Italy, but they don't know how to handle them. They invariably reach the table either hard and green or rotten.

According to the last information received, I will stay here for a few days yet, and from my long experience with the difficulties of travel, I know well that this may prolong itself for some time. I am staying at the Hotel Cumberland, a fine, modern hotel as we are used to at home. I have a room with bath for 13/6, or about \$2.70, including breakfast. The room is not large, but quite large enough for one person. There is a built in closet, something which I had almost forgotten existed, and all the usual American hotel furniture. The bed is so comfortable compared to what I have had in Portugal and the sheets and pillow cases so smooth that I have a terrible time getting up in the morning. To appreciate good quality, one has to experience bad quality; I must say that I get a thrill every time I step into my beautifully tiled, modernly equipped, private bathroom. Tomorrow I am going out with Johnson to see the town. Love to all,