

146-92 Street  
Brooklyn, N.Y.  
October 15, 1944

Dear Frank,

So you're written at last! I ask myself what is the meaning of this sudden letter: has Shields contracted some illogic vainglory? Has Shields taken the glitter of Paris unto himself? Does he have a mind to torture me after he has neglected me? I think there was always an implicit rivalry between us, to see who would reach Paris first; this is your implicit victory - call. I could rejoice more with your good-fortune, of course, if you would have permitted me also to sympathize with your reverses.

So much for good-willed sarcasm. I have to stop now, be-

cause if I goaded your equanimity to a reply, you would be able to find sufficient neglect to top me with: I haven't time to see your parents; nor your brother when he was home; nor you, although your mother once suggested I might find you in, some Sunday morning. But we are children of whim and fancy, with closer eyesight for our offences than for a duty.

Someday I shall see Paris myself, through your eyes, if in other way. To behold the Palais Royal, the Tuileries etc. etc. is to stock your brain with a set of as delightful memories as you will ever have. Now, the enjoyment of loved ones is missing; but, in memory, the two will be interpenetrated, and be perfect.

Be careful you don't forget the Sorbonne, and Catholic University,

Les Invalides, La Sainte Chapelle,  
the Louvre, Fontainebleau, Bois de  
Boulogne, & opera. There is much  
to be found in the rustic environs  
of Paris, I'm sure, in old churches  
with Tompstones buried in the floor, and  
peasant houses with black cellars  
and immense beams of great anti-  
quity.

I'm pretty empty of news,  
but I shall tell you what I hear  
of the various acquaintances of F. S.  
Dembincki is still writing from  
the same place in the S. Pacific.  
Duffy is training in El Paso, Tex -  
as, having become a flight officer\*  
in Louisiana and come home for 2  
weeks. He is a mile from Mexico,  
and he expects to go across before the  
beginning of next year. He is still  
engaged, and, apparently, very in  
love.

Stouffer is on his overseas furlough.  
at Barclay, Texas, he came out 2nd.  
among ~~the~~ 80,000, and was recom-  
mended for O.C.S.; but being shipped  
to Virginia, he is at the bottom of  
this list. Now he is expecting to  
go overseas when this furlough is

\* navigator

done. He is very in love with Shirley.

Nick Lucile is in Nebraska, in the same outfit as Duff. He will go overseas when Duff goes.

Cassari's body was found 48 days after the same left.

Sentimental songs, "How dumbly I'll get on I - do!", "resemble for money while it can be got, talk of suffering, want of doing, - this is all we have here - this is all I hear, while soldiers come back in baskets. Show me a man can see humanity as it is, and not be disgusted, I'll show you a saint, or a fool.

(This is an interesting situation, Frank; I have just discovered your letter under a pile of papers, after being convinced for weeks that I had sent it off. Am I ashamed! I really did begin it Oct. 25. But it is now)

Oct. 31 -

I'm kind of sorry about  
my "Paris" paragraph now; because  
I've been to see Mrs. Dembinski,  
and all she's been able to tell me  
about you is, that the cross you're  
in, according to the 1-club girls,  
is "either very dangerous or very  
good." What this means is a se-  
cret concealed from my exit, perhaps  
from yours. I know Mrs. Dem-  
binski couldn't explain herself.  
However, it gives me room for  
fear. There have been too many  
shocks in this war. Even we at  
the center of the wheel find the  
strain telling. What it must be  
to some of you, to whom a thought  
of home is a riot in imaginary  
opulence, is a question I, like  
a sailor, sitting in the midst  
of it, cannot answer, and do not  
dare to discuss.

I happened to think of an  
old conversation we had. Remem-

but when you said that mountains  
shake, and I doubted it? I asked  
"What mountains?" you said Fuji-  
yama, and I sang out in triumph,  
"No wonder! that is a volcano!"  
Even then I was slow to give up an  
argument (I hope will repay you).  
That was in grammar school, perhaps  
1935. Remember when you had to  
go home, and come back by taxi on the  
intercourse day space at St. Michael's?  
That was almost 8 years ago. I  
guess we weren't speaking at St.  
Anselm's graduation - or even you sick?  
Remember what when Croy shot off  
his mouth about you in Letter Bounta's?  
There are just a few of the thoughts  
I had recently when considering you.  
They are kind of pleasant at a distance,  
though I guess neither of us would  
live them over, - proof enough of the  
wretchedness of human existence.

I am about to be appointed  
Vice-consul at some port away  
from these shores, & be appointed by  
the State Department; that is, I have

been interviewed (after a free  
discussion & Washington D.C.), in-  
vestigated, and approved in all  
respects, except for the joining of a  
physical exam., whose results I  
shall know presently. It is a  
fine job, I think, with a good  
salary, ample expenses, travel,  
apartment, an element of glamour,  
and an history of movement.  
Moreover, there is some chance,  
should I stay in it, for improve-  
ment. It is not a mere job, but,  
as Dr. Johnson would have said,  
"the potentiality of becoming rich,  
beyond the wildest dreams of ava-  
rice!" Think me luck; give me  
some prayers.

and you shall have my  
prayers, & as long as you  
have health & utter them and time  
to live.

Yours friend,  
John C.