

Chu Lai
August 4

Dear Family -

I've come to the conclusion that I have begun to merge with my typewriter. Whenever I think about writing a letter longhand, I have to admit that it's not quite as easy as it used to be. Handwriting has become something in the nature of a "field expedient," to be used when a typewriter isn't available. There is one advantage to the typewriter, though. It makes me look sufficiently busy to be left alone, at least temporarily - and that is quite a boon, lately. With the number of people we are losing lately, everyone is busy with his own job and puttering around with at least one other. When I first came here, we were cramped for room; now there are more desks than people. Plus guard duty, plus this, that, and the other. I am now jealous with my free time, and do my best to get down to the shore to do some swimming once a week or so, after I've cleared up most of my work for the day.

I got to see a genuine old-fashioned type movie the other night, i.e. one with an intelligible plot and total lack of "relevance," despite the fact that it was comparatively recent: "The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes." The only way it lived up to the title was a scene in which Great Russian Ballerina (an admirer of the story "Big Dog From Baskerville"), who has been turned down by Tolstoy, Nietzsche, and Tschaikowsky, demands that Holmes help her produce the perfect child so that she'll have something to do in her retirement. Holmes refuses as delicately (more or less) as possible. There is also an appearance by Victoria, whose reaction to a submarine is "Mr. Holmes! We are not amused; this is unsporting, un-English, and in very poor taste. Get rid of it." The flick tried to pay attention to detail and was definitely enjoying itself. The only glaring error was a too-thin Mycroft Holmes - but we'll let that go.

Various answers: To my Father, the camera came complete with the appropriate case and a carrying strap attached to the body of the camera itself, so I don't have to worry about that. To Lois, I haven't had the time to write to Mrs. Anderson, and I rather doubt that I will for quite some time - that's why I included a section in one of the letters I wrote to you people some months ago, so that it could be shown to her. I already find it almost impossible to find the time to write to anyone as often as I should, and, except for my family, the most anyone gets from me is a note every 6 weeks or so, unfortunately. I just don't have time to write thank-you letters. However, you may pass on my thanks to her, if you will.

That's about all that I can think of at the moment. I so love you all, and miss you - but there's only about 150 days left, and that's not all that bad.

"Excelsior!" he said.

