

VIII - 75 - 24. Letter from Lt. Col. E. F. Carlson, 1st Marine Raider
Regiment, c/o Fleet Post Office, San Francisco, dated
March 26, 1943 - no envelope.

1st Marine Raider Regiment,
C/o Fleet Post Office,
San Francisco, California,
26 March 1943.

Dear Agnes:

Yours of March 8th came through in unusually rapid time. Thanks, old dear, for your words of encouragement. Your approbation is adequate compensation and gives me inspiration, for I know that you approve only that which is honest endeavor in the common interest.

Well, you know me well enough by now to know that I have been consistently dead serious since I first met you. If my memory serves me correctly you were a bit skeptical at that time. I'll admit I was a novice, but my instincts and my intentions and desires were sound. In was only in the approach that we differed, my approach being gauged to meet a very realistic situation in terms which would be persuasive rather than startling. I hold no particular brief for my approach; each of us humans must use his own particular talent in his own particular way. And by so doing he appeals to a particular audience which could probably be reached in no other way. One quality all must have in common: intellectual honesty and the moral courage to back it. I am continually in hot water, even in the midst of a peculiarly vicious war, because I am excruciatingly frank and honest in my criticism and actions. The only reason I hold my job in the service is because Destiny has graced me with the ability to accomplish results in military affairs. And yet, so bitter is the opposition to my methods that I am constantly being sabotaged. but - I firmly believe that right must win in the long run, and I shall continue to plug along with this knowledge, and with the knowledge that the people I respect believe in the methods as well as in the end sought, to sustain me.

~~I had a letter from Mrs. Anopf about a possible book. I am tied up with Dodd, Mead, having given them an option on my next two books at the time of the contract for Twin Stars. They have been very decent, and there is no just cause to change publishers, as much as I would like to work with Mrs. Anopf. I know from your experience that the firm must be a good one.~~

~~Nothing very new with me, except that I have been boosted up to No. 2 in the regiment. In a way it means separation from my gang, but the field of endeavor is broadened. While the move is logical from the military standpoint, it removes me from command temporarily at least, which must give some people a feeling of relief.~~

~~passed. And honorably. Yes, I know what you are thinking.~~

Most of the time I am eaten with a feeling of frustration. But I presume the feeling would be more intense if I were not actively engaged in the war. As in the days before war came I could see the pattern it would take with uncanny clarity, so now I can see how it should be fought. And yet, I am as impotent now as I was in the pre-war period. There are two factors which modern military leaders do not seem to understand, or prefer to ignore. One, comfort and personal convenience are not consonant with the conduct of military-naval operations against an alert and tenacious enemy; two, men are inspired to fight with all that is in them only by leadership based on merit, a profound knowledge of the reasons why they fight, and the conviction that the things for which they fight are worth fighting for. We will win because of our economic strength, but the sacrifice in men and treasure will be out of proportion to our effort and far beyond what it would be if we as a nation had learned that there is no smooth road to freedom. Failure to recognize these facts on the part of men who otherwise give evidence of possessing ability and intelligence is beyond my comprehension. It distresses me beyond words to express. And this is not criticism of the men themselves, but of the system which produced them.

~~Well, it does no good to rail. It's simply a safety valve.~~

~~Give my love to J. E. and all my old friends whom you may see. What of Freda? Is she back on the beam again? Tell her that I am sorry I was so short with her after my return from that last trip to China, but I was shocked at what seemed to me to be intellectual dishonesty on her part. I felt she was compromising, though I realize that it was probably concern for her child that prompted her to do so. If my judgement was wrong, I am deeply sorry. In any event I still respect her for what she accomplished in the past, and I have a deep affection for her because of her sensibilities.~~

My love to you, Agnes. And success to your new book.

*Better had the facts been
my return. The report
that I am returning soon
is, unfortunately, greatly
exaggerated - I doubt if I
would be allowed to return - E*

VIII - 75 - 25. Letter from Lt. Col. E. F. Carlson, U.S. Naval Hospital,
San Diego, California, dated May 26, 1943 - no envelope.

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