Ike's Letters to a Friend, 1941 -1958
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Eisenhower and Swede continued to joke about encouraging a romance between their children, John Eisenhower and Mary Elizabeth Hazlett. Swede had earlier asked Eisenhower to remind his son that there was "a damned good-looking (and sensible) blonde out at Hood College at Frederick who would like to meet him."

25 January 1946

Dear Swede:

Thank you very much for the copy of the Chapel Hill Weekly. I enjoyed the editorial and the article as well as your note.

The article was particularly amusing so far as I was concerned because it proved that in spite of your laborious efforts to deny acquaintanceship with me someone finally caught up with you.

I probably wrote you in my most recent letter that I personally have nothing further to say on the subject of unification. So far as I am concerned the greatest factor in the problem right now is my conviction that Nimitz is a man of extraordinary qualifications, including ability and devotion to duty, and on top of these, is a friendly soul with whom it is a pleasure to work. He and I communicate constantly and no matter what the outcome should
be in Congress I have no doubt that he and I will succeed in instituting a lot of reforms that are badly needed.

My son is still in Germany. In fact, even if he should be ordered to some other duty as a matter of mere routine I would probably have to stop him because there would be an accusation of favoritism. Aside from the natural desire of Mamie and myself to see him, I am hopeful that he will get home and meet that daughter of yours before she goes and gets herself married. I chuckle to myself every time you and I exchange any ideas along this line because the spectacle of a couple of old-time Kansas farmer boys timidly sticking their noses into Cupid’s business is, after all, a bit on the ludicrous side.

Love to your family and warm regards to yourself,

As ever,

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Even before the war was over, prominent Americans were urging Eisenhower to run for the presidency; and although Eisenhower undoubtedly had at least considered the possibility, he continued to insist throughout his private correspondence, as he did in public, that he had absolutely no such ambition. In October 1945 Swede had written that “no matter what party you affiliated with, (and I have no idea if you’re D. or R.) you could carry the country without even taking to the road.” The following February, Swede returned to the subject, concluding, however, that “I have an idea that you have no real interest in public office.”

Swede, whose health continued to decline, had meanwhile been relieved of his command of the Naval ROTC at North Carolina. Although offered several posts at the university, he declined them, deciding instead to devote himself to retirement and to the occasional writing of juvenile fiction.
Dear Swede:

Thank you very much for your letter which was written while I was on my recent swing around the country. I stopped at Abilene and saw Charlie Harger, Sam Heller [president of the United Trust Company in Abilene] and Charlie Case. Others I didn’t get to see because I was too rushed.

I share your sympathy for Bradley. You can be certain that he took that job only because he was ordered to do so. He was under no illusions as to the shower of brickbats that was certain to come his way. However, in that respect his attitude was no different from mine with regard to this post I am occupying.

Your conclusions concerning my attitude toward politics are 100 per cent correct. When trying to express my sentiments myself I merely get so vehement that I grow speechless, if not hysterical. I cannot conceive of any set of circumstances that could ever drag out of me permission to consider me for any political post from Dog Catcher to “Grand High Supreme King of the Universe.” Moreover, I find myself in rather general agreement with your general observations concerning the receptive boys.

It was a blow to Beetle Smith when he was told that they wanted him to accept the Moscow job. He is a thorough-going soldier, extremely capable and occupies a place of high regard and esteem among those people in Europe with whom he worked. I know of no one better qualified for the job but of course his ambitions do not lie along diplomatic and political lines.

In the same position I am sure that I would feel the same as you do about taking a job in the University. I would far rather attempt to write. You have a distinct flair in that line and I don’t see why even “light fiction” should be beyond your reach. I am certain that there are a number of special writing fields in which

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1. Gen. Omar N. Bradley, who had commanded the American forces in the Normandy invasion, served as head of the Veteran’s Administration from 1945 to 1947. Swede had written that his heart went out to Bradley and “his enmeshment in [American] Legion politics.”

2. Gen. Walter Bedell Smith, who had served as Eisenhower’s chief of staff during World War II, had just been named ambassador to the Soviet Union, where he served for the next three years.
you could enter with real success. Anyway it is the type of effort that should be fun and even if the publishers won’t take your stuff, I’ll bet a nickel that Ibby would like it—possibly even your young blonde. Why don’t you start writing some Wild West stories; I guarantee I’ll read them. Moreover, I will write to the publishers and demand that I want to read “Wild Bill and the Long-horned Steer,” “Early Days in Abilene,” “The Smokey Hill”—all by E. E. Hazlett, Jr. Maybe we can work out a reciprocal agreement. You do the writing, I’ll do the reading and I’ll howl to every publisher for more and more of your stories.

My love to the family and warm regard to yourself,

As ever,

Eisenhower wrote this letter shortly after a joint task force under the command of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) had detonated the first of two atomic tests at Bikini atoll in the Pacific. The SHAEF (Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces) Reports that Eisenhower mentions included both his “Report on Operations in Northeast Europe” and a copy of the February 1944 directive to the supreme commander from the Combined Chiefs of Staff. Publication of the reports was designed, at least in part, to answer criticism of the conduct of the European campaigns.

1 July 1946

Dear Swede:

I am sorry that your trip had to be put off but please count on staying in our house whatever time you can spend in Washington when you come through this way. We have lots of room in the old house at Fort Myer and you can be as comfortable there as any
place else in the City. Certainly, it is about ten degrees cooler than in the center of town.

Right now my plans call for me being out of town between the 15th and 21st of July and between the 1st and 20th of August. Outside of these two periods I expect to be in Washington almost constantly. Between the 10th and 15th of September I will probably have some prominent guests from Britain staying in the house but otherwise the slate is rather clear. If your own plans would so develop that you simply had to go through here during a period when I am absent, then we will have to count on your stopping by on your way back home. Please do not feel anything but the greatest freedom and confidence in coming up to the house; Mamie and I are really looking forward to a visit with you and your family. As an added attraction, I might tell you there is even an elevator in the house so that if the doctors are always jumping you about climbing stairs you can thumb your nose at them.

This morning’s papers say that the first test shot at Bikini went off alright. While I am certain that we will learn much from the technical reports, my own idea is that if this hellish contrivance is really effective against ships, it will be from some type of under water use rather than from air bursts. However, we can wait and see.

Because you were interested enough to want to read one of the SHAEF Reports, it occurred to me that you might like to have one in your library. I will get hold of one at once and send it under separate cover. You understand, of course, that it was written a year ago and that I have never had time really to go over it and edit it as I should like. A few of the paragraphs or pages were written personally; the most of it was done by the Historical Section from the records they had in Europe and I got a chance merely to take out most of the vertical pronouns and to insert items that I thought of particular interest. All that was done before I came home last November and I have not since changed it in any way at all. Security staffs went over it—when the Combined Chiefs of Staff agreed to its publication—to make sure that nothing in it violated standing agreements concerning secret matter. No other changes were made.

With warmest regards to you and your family.

As ever,

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