

First Benediction
Sunday Night for...

University of Notre Dame
Religious Bulletin
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...men who made the
First Mission - 7:00 p.m.

A Father Writes To His Son.
(Cleveland Plain Dealer)

Dear Son:

As your father recalls it, after no-matter-how-many years, the opening of school in the fall was not quite so grim as the cartoonists usually picture it.

There was an excitement about it, at seeing old and new faces, and even a surge of good resolution to pay less attention to fun and daydreaming, and more to books. The resolution usually didn't last over-long. The novelty wore off, and the shackles didn't. The white margins of the textbooks were a temptation for imitation comic-strip art, and much more inviting than the dull print. The classes got monotonous, the teachers lost their novelty, and that feeling of what good-will-this-ever-do-me-anyway began to set in.

That's the way it used to be, at least. But at the risk of being too stuffy a parent, here is something to think about --

There is a war on. It is a smart man's war. It is not going to be won with plain muscle. Brains are going to win this war. This war is going to last a long time. You are very likely going to be a direct part of it.

Keep yourself in physical trim. Toughen yourself, physically. But you'll be smart not to count on your muscles alone carrying the load for you.

There's arithmetic, for instance. Maybe it's dull. But bear in mind that the navigator of an airplane, or warship, or the man in charge of a gun crew afloat or ashore, is as good as a goner without a mastery of mathematics.

Take English. If you want to become an officer, eventually, bear in mind that an officer's job is not just leading his men in action -- where the niceties of diction may be of small moment -- but may involve also a great deal of necessary correspondence and other paper work. You won't want your superior officers to mark you down as a deze-and-doze guy.

Or your foreign-language course. When your father studied French and Spanish and German it really didn't seem very important. And he forgot most of what he had learned before he got to the places where people talked those tongues. But you -- you're likely to reach such places in a few years, and what you're learning now -- if you learn it -- will be of real military importance.

In other word, if you were to ask our advice (which you haven't), it's this:

Get after those books with the same spirit as if you were learning the instrument of a Flying Fortress, or how to assemble a machine gun in pitch darkness.

This time your schoolbooks are your first step in preparing to fight for your country.

Affectionately,

Dad.