



ALBERT PETER DEWEY

1935

Peter Dewey spent much of his childhood abroad, and he spoke French perfectly when he entered St. Paul's a very small Second Former in 1930. He played football with determination, reaching the second Delphian team in his Sixth Form year and at Long Pond he rowed Bow on the fourth Shattuck crew. He wrote much, and well, in both English and French, for the *Horae* and for Le Cercle Français: he became Associate Head Editor of the one and Secretary of the other. He greatly enjoyed his years at the School, for he had many interests, a warm heart and a keen sense of humor.

At Yale, Dewey was an editor of the *Daily News*. He graduated in 1939 and went to Paris as reporter for the *Chicago Daily Tribune*. When war broke out, he joined the Polish Military Ambulance Corps and was attached as ambulance driver to the Black Tank Brigade, which was annihilated at Sezanne. He served through the Battle of France, including the retreat from Nancy to Bordeaux, narrowly escaped the Gestapo at the Spanish border, and got back to the United States after being interned for a while in Portugal. During the next year he wrote two books, *Cima Reversa*, a novel, and *War Trivia*, a first-hand account of the events of 1939-40 in France; he also studied law for a brief time at the University of Virginia. He joined the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs in 1941 and was sent to England to report on the European governments-in-exile and on the influence of France in South America.

In 1942 he was commissioned Second Lieutenant in the Air Transport Command and served eight months as Intelligence Officer

in North Africa and in Arabia. Returning to the United States the following year, he joined the Office of Strategic Services, was promoted Captain and assigned to a paratroop unit. In August, 1944, he commanded a special mission which parachuted into Southern France before the American invasion and operated with a French Forces of the Interior patrol. After that, he was requisitioned by the State Department to attend the San Francisco Conference.

In July, 1945, at the age of twenty-eight, Dewey was promoted Lieutenant Colonel and appointed Senior American Authority attached to the Allied Mission in Southern Indo-China. During the summer the war ended he was in Kerachi, and Calcutta, and Kandy in Ceylon, in Rangoon and in Bangkok. From Saigon he wrote in mid-September, "These last two weeks have been incredibly exhausting." His task was mainly to develop intelligence in Southern Indo-China for O.S.S. and for the State Department. A highly complex and disordered political situation had succeeded the collapse of Japanese power. In Saigon, revolutionists, fighting for independence, declared "Death to all White People." Dewey, who had gone there to evacuate American prisoners of war, also saved the lives of many French citizens by taking over as American property the hotel in which they had taken refuge.

On September 26, 1945, the day he was to have flown to Bangkok to set up a new mission headquarters, his jeep was held up by a road block 100 yards from his headquarters in Saigon. He got out, presumably to identify himself as an American officer, and was instantly killed by Annamese machine-gun fire at point-blank range.

Dewey received decorations from Poland, Yugoslavia and France. By his own country he was awarded the Legion of Merit and, posthumously, the Silver Star for his mission to Southern France; and a second Legion of Merit, posthumously, for his work in Indo-China. There are two plaques in his memory: one is at the School; the other, despite the fact that he was known to be a Protestant, was placed in the Chapel of Jeanne d'Arc in the old Cathedral of Bayeux. Bayeux is near Dewey's family's place, the Abbaye de Sainte Marie, where he spent much of his boyhood and of which he told a legend in one of his *Horae* articles. Every year, on the 26th of September, a mass is said for Dewey in the Chapel of Jeanne d'Arc and many of the school children of Bayeux attend. On the monument of the little town of Longues-sur-Mer, Calvados, his name has been included among those of its citizens "Morts pour la Patrie."

Peter Dewey was married in August, 1942, to Nancy Weller. Their daughter, Nancy Pritchard Dewey, was a year and a half old when he was killed.