

5/28/43, 7:15 a.m.
Darling, As I write this I know nothing new. I got up with the rest of the men at 3:40 this morning. It was so cold I shivered in my long underwear, heavy clothing and field jacket, even after I got into the mess hall, which took some time because there were no KP and only 3 cooks to feed 225 men. It was quite an operation. As I write this the last truck has just pushed off with the baggage and I presume the men are now marching down to the station. The lieutenant has asked me to stay here until his return. So I suppose he'll be going down with them.
Last night I decided not to eat on the post. I wasn't hungry and thought it would be nice to take a vacation from mess-kit washing. I had intended to grab a few hamburgers at the USO and go to the Movies-The Moon Is Down. But the boys I walked in with decided to go to a restaurant, so I wound up not feeling much like the movies. I hung around with them a little while and decided to return at about 8:20. I went to the USO to go to the latrine and all of a sudden came arainstorm. So I stayed at the USO for a while listening to Mozart and wrote a few cards. Then to what would have been a not-too-late bed, but I couldn't sleep. I once again had (less right at this moment, but strong last night) that terrible feeling of futility and uselessness, and of emptiness. After I got in bed the boys started to wander in. It seems as though the upstairs boys yesterday morning raided the downstairs boys with pillows. So some the the downstairs boys imagined the heard the upstairs boys plotting another raid at about 1 o'clock, so they took all the lousy useless boxes that had been given to us as footlockers but which no one used and built barricades with them. It was a noisy and fruitless operation, succeeding only in barking the shins of a lot of the builders and their companions.
I came into the office early this morning. There was a boy from a bother company here. He and some of his buddies are to ship with our company. He told me that 6 of the men of that company are still on the range, will finish today, and will then go to the second battalion, from which, tomorrow or Monday, they will ship to either Trenton or the 66th. St. Armony in NYC. That made me feel wonderful and swell once again with hope. So I began to speculate. If I had a choice, which would I prefer (not that I'll have a choice. God but I'd be tickled to take either). The Tranton ~~company~~ battalion has companies hthroughout the State, and I might get shifted into one of those (I reasoned), hence I have built my

hopes, foolishly but pleasantly on 66th. St., which, I decided, while it would take $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours longer than Trenton by train, actually might make better time because of the excellent subways in NYC whereas I might be a few miles from the station in Trenton; because of the Congressional, which I might be able to make, and because it wouldn't be so bad on you if there were (as I presume with the best of possible arrangements there still would be) times when, during the period of treatment, I couldn't get off. You could make the trip to NYC for the right weekend without too much trouble. So I'm hoping and praying that I get shipped to 66th. St., will be overjoyed at being sent to Trenton, and, dazzled by the possibility of such good fortune, I recollect that there are even MPs stationed in Wilmington, from which Washington is but an hour and three-quarters by schedule. Meanwhile, I keep wanting to get shipped because thereafter either I'll continue training, going to things I haven't had before, or I'll get a job which, no matter how little I might like it, would still be an occupation. My understanding is that we are to have an additional 26 weeks of training after we leave here, in two 13-week hunks. We are to learn all the small weapons and things like that in this training. And, if I went to NYC I'd be patrolling the streets or guarding something that has to be guarded (I visualize no strikebreaking on such an assignment), and I could feel at least somewhat as I did at Dix, that I was doing something that someone had to do, and perhaps there was, someplace, a soldier released for being a warrior through my taking his job. Anyway, though it felt funny for all the men to go and leave me-- I'm the only man in the company now-- I feel pretty good this morning, bolstered by the hopes I have. On the envelope you might find my new address, though God knows how long it will be mine. There is, apparently, an excellent chance of early shipment in the second battalion. Lt. Eberhardt, our second second lt., told me this morning that two of the barracks have already shot the "C" course. And the fellow from I Company this morning told me what might be a latrine rumor about the NYC or Trenton shipment supposed to be tomorrow or Monday. I now hear the band, so I presume this time the men have been getting ready and they are now marching off. I know it is foolish to build hopes on such thin fabrics, but at the moment I fairly bursy with it. Just think." Through the decency and understanding of an officer who has nothing for or against me, but who is motivated by fine and decent impulses, I might be in a position to do the two things which, to me, are the closest personal

things to me: I might be able to have a healthier wife and a junior. And arling, I so wont both. I hope you understand I want them in the order above. I know it doesn't (thank God), but if I had a choice between you being rid of your troubles and pains for the rest of your life and junior, I'd forget about Him. It is fortunate that the two are parallel and there is no such choice necessary.

When we have won this war and, I hope, the peace, and once again folks can settle down to their personal lives, in freedom, I visualize a very happy one for us, dear.

You will feel better, and as a consequence we will get along better. I dont mean that we haven't. I imagine our batting average is better than most. But have you ever noticed that the little and unimportant spats we did have were usually at the times our respective ailments tormented us? I know that I was short-tempered when my head was aching, my back or legs bothering me.

In this pleasant picture I conjure up this morning, there is one thing that has changed a little bit. I dont think I will ever be able to be a real farmer. Unless we "strike it rich", which I dont visualize, I dont see how we can decently retire to a country life. I have conscientiously taken lots of exercises, walked considerable, and spent all the day doing something. I have walked at night when I have felt I hadn't done enough during the day. That is what the doctor prescribed. That is what I did. And I have reduced my eating a lot. But I haven't lost an appreciable amount of weight that I can see. While my back is improved (now I have practically no trouble with it except under strains, and this morning I picked up my heavy barrack bags, both of them, and put them on my shoulder, without a pain), it still hurts when I do any amount of work. And I limp almost all the time. My left knee still doesn't want to take any weight. And both knees hurt this morning when I had to walk up a second flight of steps. So lets not indulge in any hopes of my being a full-time farmer unless it is as a landlord and the possibility of that is very remote, I'm afraid. But we can and I do hope for a nice small place not too far from the city on which we can grow what we'll want to eat, with perhaps a cow and a couple of hogs, some chickens and some fruit trees. That work I should be able to do while writing, if I can do as well at that as I did with Click. If I can do that well, you wont work except at being a wife.

So, dear, in a world torn to hell by all the forces of evil with the forces of good still terribly far from final victory, so far, I think, that it cannot yet be seen, I

allow myself the luxury of hoping, speculating and building

ing. Thought I know tomorrow it may be bad that I did, to day it is a joy to me. I believe this is the first time I have allowed myself this unsafe pleasure, but gee its good.

This morning, when you again bo through the unpleasantnes of the needles and other stuff the doctors give you, I am at peace and full of hope. Its such a wonderful contrast with the anniversary of my becoming a soldier, the day, two days ago, when all the breaks went against me.

I suppose you wont get this until Monday. Well, I hope yo you got to go to the country and that your folks are all in good shape. You haven't for some time reported Dolly's condition. How is his rheumatiz? How are Will Lloyd'd boys? Are they still where they were? Has Ma Lloyd gone yet? Do they know where he is, what he is doing? Had Belle yet heard where Colie is or what he was doing? I hope so. If you know any of these answers please pass 'em along. I haven't written Dolly, Buck or Will Lloyd for some time. Unless I am lucky enough to push off tomorrow I think I'll go into the USO on Sunday and write them while listening to the good music I presume will be listened to there.

But whether or not I do or get a chance to, please tell them all I miss them, that I was asking for them, and that I wish them the best.

Before I finish this so pleasant hour and su wonderful luxury of a typewriter, let me perhaps amuse you. I haven not yet worn my medal. I have it in my blouse pocket. Last night the boys were kidding me about not wearing it. They mostly had theirs on--all I was with did. But the damned things are, next to soldiers, the most common thin thing on the psst. About 90% of the men who were hear have them, and about 90% of them didn't earn them. I think I would feel self-conscious, though I know I earned it and think I could do it again, in the company of such phonies. I was pleased to find a number of the men feeling that way.

Well, dear, I am beginning to come back to realities through the numbness of my sitter. If you remember, the last really real long letter I wrote you was on the train as I was leaving this place ahead of original schedule. Today the situation is reversed. I am here after the scheduled time. At that time I believe I felt pretty hopeless and probably my letter disquieted you. Today that, too, is reversed. Let us hope this is an augur of the good things to come.

With an abundance of love and longing,
Harold