

1-17-15
On Route



FORT ONTARIO
OSWEGO, NEW YORK

Honey - Although but a few miles from camp I thought I'd write you. I may not be able to get a pass this weekend, and I certainly won't be able to write tonight or tomorrow morning - and there is no outgoing Dig mail after noon. An M.P. on the train who is going to me of the Cardinas has promised to mail this in Wash. ... you can't probably tell that the train has started to move by my writing, but I'll try to be legible.

My feelings on this abrupt change - I won't call it unexpected - are not like those of the many others in the same situation. They are all broken up about it. Or not. First, I never really expected to get the assignment, or award, I thought, if I did get it, that it would likely be unpleasant. I believe I told you that before. Well, at the moment I don't know that I'm not getting it, but from the wording of the order & the fact that it came but 2 weeks before I would have completed my tour

morning, whether or not there is a new assignment
meant awaiting me at Dix I do not know
& am not guessing or hoping about it. There
at least, there will be no disappointment.

Should any kind of an intelligent
placement officer examine my records,
which I have with me but cannot read,
I'm certain it would up in some
kind of a clerk job in Washington.

But after I mention a boy in the Army
& have no doubt that my papers
will never reach such hands. My most
acute disappointment in the Army
is the terrible loss, the suffering, the
wasteful situation. I have never had a
chance to talk to an officer about
what might be offered a qualified
to do in the Army, and if there is
any machinery for getting to such an
officer, I have been unable to discover it.
You see, there is machinery & a
system for everything in the Army.

of you getting
the permission of
rank & going
knows formalities.



7 just getting
then in
through a ridiculous
For instance

when I wanted to get additional infor-
mation I went to the company today &
addressed the first Sgt as follows: "May
Ist Wieroboy have the first Sgt's per-
mission to speak to the Lt.?" "What
about?" he asked. "Supernatural or
filling out enrollment forms," I replied.

He gave me his assent. Then turned to
the Lt, who left while I was less than
5 ft. from me. I saluted & said, "Sir,
Pvt. W. has the 1st Sgt's permission to
speak to the Lt." etc. I felt terribly
small & childish going through
this nonsense, and very unsatisfactory.


That, however, is what you do if you
are to speak to an officer. Best first
if you must, if you have a problem or

1) an area, find out if
Officer who may be ~~prob~~ properly
addressed on the subject!

We are pushing into Syracuse,
where we stop for 5 or 10 minutes +
dipping out for a breath of fresh
air and a smoke.

The air + water here both clear + fresh.
Now I can say I have been in Syracuse.
I went down + stopped on the sidewalk.

Looking back on the past 6 weeks I'm
surprised that everything seems unreal,
fuzzy - shepherds. I know how a learned
nothing that will help me do any kind
of a job the Army might want me to do.
Could I write, speak or learn
nothing of the job I was, theoretically,
to be prepared for. I am in no way any
better fitted to make any contribution to
writing, and if I can't do that I'm
wasting my time, the time of ~~many~~ many
others.

2) and the top page saying I was in
The one thing that depresses
me. I am not a  bit broken off
for my service, & I can't say I have any
reason to expect any improvement. And
it does depress me. I have lived a very
uncomfortable, unhealthy life, and
because I ~~have~~ know & understand
why we are in this war and the
uncompromisable necessity of ~~the~~
winning it. I don't care of my
personal situation. I may have
told you, during all the time I was
here I made one trip to town, which
adjoins the Fort, to do some shopping.
I made but 2 trips to the PX, which
is on the Fort & about a 5 minute
walk from my barracks. I didn't
even get to go in my company's
"day room", a sort of common living
room 2 buildings away from my
barracks - less than 200 ft. & didn't

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1) go out as a man, and in the way;
as to the service idea, I used a lot
of my spare time to see as I
could better do what was expected
of me. I didn't mind; I don't now
mind a regret. But the complete
futility of my any "work" thus
far has heavily on me because I
want to make at least a meager
contribution to our cause. This depression
is increased by my conviction
that the chances of my ever doing it,
with our own set of odds, are very thin.

I have spoken of depression and
futility. I don't want you to get
the wrong impression. It hasn't
"gotten me down". The only
effect thus far has been to decrease
my ~~appetite~~ appetite, & that has not
hurt me a bit. I have put on quite
a bit of weight here, even if I haven't

1/ been able to eat more than 1200-1300

a day - and plentiful food



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including the at the two other

meals. I'm leaving the train a Syracuse

distressed my self in the rear of the back of the car. It looks good. As far as

thought, for the first time, that there was about me what might be called a "giddy training." No, my

depression is not a physical one,

nor am I mentally depressed. I'm

infecting God spirit, and have been

all day. I'm just "professionally" unhappy, and I'm in a way because

I can see no way to change

this situation. But you may not

assume that I'm trying to dig

down it all, there are lots of things

I can do that could help, and at the


risk of doing the wrong thing (in

the any terms, that is) I'm trying

21. to try and find a way of getting to do one or the other.

My aim is to have no greeting
trials, not before they get a
chance to switch the dinner
off the train, as they did to us
in the way up. I'll try to get
a seat there. There has been
a lot for it. People up here ~~there~~
seem to have very healthy appetites.

It is now quite a bit later. We are in
the station at Birmingham. I got off to
see Mr. & stay bells & see how
the always good fight went today
& I decided it was too early, that
he might be on the floor & might
come to speak to me only to ^{miss} ~~leave~~
something & then be sorry. I
didn't tell him but walked
~~around~~ around talking to some
soldiers instead. In the dinner a

7 I had dressed + showing up
invited me to sit with him - he
was just finish  ing up He said
he wished he'd seen me earlier,
but he'd have been happy to have me
sit with him. We had some
pleasant small-talk then etc,
and as I was finishing a young
married woman sat down
and soon engaged me in conver-
sation. I had a very nice
meal, and a sweet hot soda,
which, tastes good after the
long time since my last drink,
and now its pushing 2 o'clock
& we are about ready to leave.

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now to pick up my account
of my feelings. I am surprised,
looking back on it, to find
that I didn't mind it at all,
because, in retrospect, it was
a pretty bleak existence.

1 up by 5:45 a.m. rush through
a busy, sleepy toilet, dash
out in the morning cold for a
short Revlon, then back to the
parade to make our beds in
order to get to breakfast (wait-
able beginning at 6:30. Beds had
to be made before you could
go to chow.) Back to the parade,
skidding dangerously on the
ice that completely covered
everything - I saw a piece
piece of wood & fragment
in the way this a.m., and
it was the first piece I
saw a good-sized piece of
either since getting here - so
"police" remarks. For me this
meant clear the debris, which

1) kept me pretty much 1.30.
Then our day usually began
celebration that took



no account of food tickets for
an hour or so then out to
again - either a previous
search in the largest possible
paths to a movie or a ~~lecture~~
~~lecture~~ lecture, both in
unventilated buildings where
the air was so bad after 15
minutes that it was almost
impossible to keep awake.
And as often as not the movie
or lecture was a duplication.
As a variation we had both
in the morning, or ~~both~~

I had one good dress. As per
we had just marching.
Then they gave us guns. At the
time we got guns we started
learning the various attitudes
in which they are carried,
and shifting them from one to
the other, all of which is called
the manual of arms. Toward the
~~end~~ end we spent the whole
morning combining left &
marching drill on terrain
where no man in his right
senses would walk. The
morning was supposed to end
for us at 11:30, where we had
mail call, & give us a few
minutes to relax, rest, and work

7/ Work up for
getting for ~~at~~ days we got
back very close to noon, when
I had us no time to get a cot off
before resting. After lunch we were
supposed to have water for drinks
for ourselves, but they soon
got to coming us anywhere from
11:30 ~~on~~ on. As you can see,
we not only had no chance
to rest, we didn't even have
time to take a cup. Most of the
time (I think we did so often
as not there was no paper). ~~For~~
Again ~~for~~ in the ~~rest~~
recent part we were in the
ditch field, with rifles, ~~and~~
the day ended. We were
supposed to be back in the barracks
for next call at 4:30, but we missed



1
In a period of 3 days our Sgt.
didn't even give us a rest. We
are "supposed" to get a 10 minute
"break" in which we're supposed to
+ fall every hour. He didn't
give them to us. I see an acting
Sgt. ~~who~~ who was directing us
gave us our "break" & the Sgt. came
in a minute later. He raised hell
& called us to attention. The act-
ing Sgt. explained, most of us
were I-B men, & which the Sgt.
with more authority than he realized,
said, "Hell, when I get pinched
with them they'll be I-C men!"

Well, you can imagine that
by the time we got to barracks in
the p.m. I was absolutely done in.

But when we got there we ran us
into our dress uniforms for
retreat, which ended at 5:30,


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When supper was served. Getting
changed meant taking off tunic &
Cartridge belt, necktie, field
jacket, shirt, gaiters, pants, &
putting on officer's pants, shirt,
tie, gaiters, jacket, necktie. Car-

tridge belt & necktie & hat! After
show your head & scrub your
mess but I got it really
clean, as everybody else did.

& there was only one stationing
hut in which you could do
this, which meant a wait. You
had to shove, do what ever necessary
you had to do, like that. a
Keweenaw beer & exhausting - and

1/ another day.

But, after all the pain I
went through, I was glad to
be able to go to bed, which I
did in 2 stages. First I got half-
undressed & under one blanket,
& feeling a muddled-up guilt for
a head back rest, more or less,
with my head at the foot of the
bed, so I could have a little
light, this was anywhere from
7 p. m. on. From 7:30-8:30 I
went to bed for the night. As
you can see from this I had
practically nothing but my
day work, but unless I
could go away somehow it
was just as good. There was

"I must be overpowered progression
defeat in the place of when
I might talk! and there was



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so much noise & talk I couldn't
hear. I was pretty much

alone until this past Sunday,

when I was, as I had expected, on

N. P. I was determined to

do a good job and be pleasant

about that as I was whistling
much of the time. While I

was whistling "Mr. Possaron"

a Greek boy, ^{is} ~~to~~

his name - he is the first cook,

a Greek in charge of the


me if I knew what I was

whistling. I said I did, & I

knew what it meant. It

even surprised, while he was

of making us 11.1.11 a ...
Spain. The Spanish people, &
our terrible mistake in our
mistreatment of them in 1936-7
But he was a thoroughly progressive
guy. We talked quite a bit and
got to be pretty friendly.
Through the work was pain-
ful & did more than my
share & worked overtime, which
he noticed. He was a guy to whom
I would talk, but, believe it or
not, he did most of the talking.
But, obviously, I didn't see
much of him ... Well, for
no reason whatsoever, my
name was taken out of the list
and I put on the R.P. list for

18/ yesterday. All the other guys had
money beginning with L. The
1st Sgt of the  Company did
it, for no apparent reason, & I
couldn't find out why. As you
know, & as to ~~Quest~~, I wasn't
supposed to be on I.P. at all
because I had the filthy ~~business~~
detailed every morning instead.
But again I determined I was
going to do it well, & I did.
When Jimmy saw me again
so soon he was furious & was
going to go to the ~~officer~~ &
raise hell. I kept him from
doing this. Then I began my
work. Besides odds & ends of other

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17/ days I scrubbed - been with
prop. The very large size for in
which they keep the latens of
600 meals a day - This can
give you an idea of its vast-
ness. When I was finished
I told me it was cleaner &
more attractive than it had
ever been since it was
built here. I was very proud -
not because cleaning an area
of a few feet of which one would
be proud. But because no
one could point any finger
or make any ~~accusations~~ ^{accusations}.
I worked hard. I did good
could see than my share.
It was my aim & to it there
could be no rest.

copying your name - must be obvious
to you that the 1st is a copy set
best in form.



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I haven't the
slightest idea why, because we had
no dealing with each other, &
I haven't had more than 100 words
with him all ~~the~~ about duty.
So knew more Swisses yesterday.
It was the boy who came to
show the me I was going to
be shipped. at 3 p.m. you
me a little time off to file my
allotment papers, but before I
had a chance to file them I was
sent off to pick up & sign various
papers attendant to my shipping.
When I finally got back to
my allotment papers at 4:30 it
was too late, they are still unfiled.

"I did returned to the room, ^{and}
even having the 45 minute "break"
The N.P.s had between the end of
cleaning up after dinner & the
beginning of ~~prep~~ preparations
for supper. I ate a light meal
and went with Johnny to
clean up the storeroom. When
we finished he told me I was
finished (5:40), that in all
his experience at the Fort there
was never a time when a man
on N.P. was being shipped that
he wasn't released from N.P. by
2 or 3 o'clock - that on the day
before a man who wasn't shipping
until the following day was
released from N.P. at 2 p.m.

doing a job in me but he
was going to let them get away
with it completely. I'd be not
been so decent. I'd not
have been able to reach you by
phone & I'd not have been able to
begin packing before 8 p.m.



His full name, I believe, is
John Navaho. He's from Kearney
and/or Jersey City, N.J. &
knows Man from the Bayou
fight. He used to have a restaurant.

Well, honey, we are
pulling into Swanton, Minn
getting tired, & this is already
a days work for you, decipher-
ing this. So this had best
be the last page. ... Jim proud

it, even though it hurt, and
there can be no criticism of
the way I took it. I have been
talking the stuff they give
1-A's, & that hurt. I took it
all! That's why I'm proud-

and I did all I did well.
Only don't feel anyone I said I
was proud) well, boy, I hope
I can meet it tomorrow. P/O
don't remember me to your ma
& granddad - and I'll be there
as soon as I can - wherever I
can. I love missed you
very much, dear.
I am
Harold.