

Sunday 10th

Dear Hil

As I was about to leave to mail the
card we were assembled. I

was sent on a detail on a

truck. It is cold as hell, so I started to sit down. I braced myself with my right hand, and in so doing ran a nail in between two knuckles. I was surprised that it really didn't hurt. I pulled it out, about an inch of it, and believe it or not, it was so cold that I didn't even bleed. They sent me from the detail to the infirmary, where they swabbed it with iodine and I returned. I'm where my detail was, and they have left, so I am here waiting for them. A very nice guy here allowed me to write, lending me paper and this machine. I still can't get over the fact that with an inch of nail in me I haven't bled, and there is no real pain, just a little itch. Yesterday they gave us vaccinations and inoculations, small-pox or diphtheria, typhoid and ant-tetanus (the "hook", in Army parlance). I'm tickled to death they gave us the "hook" yesterday, because that means there is no chance of a lockjaw infection from the nail. I'm learning lots of unusual things and skills, like eating grapefruit with a knife. There is only one spoon available, a large dessert spoon, and it is practically useless. I ate cereal for breakfast with a fork. Dinner today was our first meal. We had a poor roast beef, potatoes, bread, applebutter, salad (good), a big hunk of coffee cake, some grapes, and coffee with salt-peter. Yesterday we had a miserable baloney sandwich for lunch and when we finally were sent to supper they had closed the mess hall. We got there about 7, tired and cold. Someone roused a chef, who gave us a little more baloney and some potatoes at 8:30. I had no overcoat, and was so cold I thought I'd come down with at least a bad cold, but I'm fine today, having had a good night's sleep. The worst thing I've discovered, not counting my usual difficulties, of which I've said and will say nothing, is getting all sweated up, as I did yesterday getting my clothing, or as I am doing now, sweat almost dripping off my forehead, and then going out into the cold, where the moisture gets cold as hell and chills you terribly. I have never been as grateful for itchy woolen under-

wear. I have learned how to make a bed, Army style, and although it is a bother, I admit it's a good way. It took us almost an hour last night, and about half that time this morning, but I am certain that there will never been any trouble with loose sheets or covers coming up on a cold night. I have also learnee how to throw a cigarette away leaving practically no trace (we spent some time picking up stubs, mtach sticks and odds and ends of other refus this morning. You tear the paper off the cigarette, scatter the tobacco and roll the paper into as small a ball as possible and then throw it away. At the moment my great concern is tr, trying to locate a nickel so, if I get time, I can all you. I'll have to reverse the call, because I'll have no change. If I dont get time, I'll do so as soon as I can. My understanding, based upnn what the veterans- those who have been here for a week or so- say, is that most of us will be sent to a camp in a few days, maybe even tomorrow. I hope it is, because there are many inconveniences. The first time I sat down, except to eat or on the toilet, was thms morning, when I sat on the floor and wrtoe the card to you. That, for me, is a great inconvenience. We have no ash trays, and must throw butts in a can - one to a floor in the barracks. No s,oking in bed, lights out at ten, no going to the toilet between 10 and 11 am, not having things we need and having too many things we dont need are the great problems. Lugging my bagk with all the unnecessary wlothing, x the clothes I was weaking, and all the stuff they issued us- up to four and five of a kind, hurt and tired me last night, but I grit my teeth and trudged on. We had gone about 100 or 150 yards when an unfortunate accident gave me a break. A little Chinese fellow collapsed. Someone went after an ambulance and the rest of us stood there in the road and waited until they carted the poor fellow off. We haven't heard what happened to him, but even though it was very cold just standng there, it gave us, paricularly me, a rest that was more than welcome. By the time we got back from the belated "supper" and stood around in the open trying to locate our duffle, I was ~~xxxx~~ chattering. Some guys were so cold and pooped they ~~xxxxndzx~~ turned in without even getting their stuff. I had a little trouble falling asleep, partly because I was draining and wanted to, because I had had a bad headache and we cant spit in barracks, and partly because I was thinking of you. As I said in the card, had I been able to I would have written you a long letter, because there wqs much I wanted to say to you.

I probably wont have time now to even begin, because the detail should be back soon to pick me up. Suffice it to say I missed you very much. Had you even a feeling of my thoughts the question that disturbed you Christmas Eve would forever leave you...I'll keep writing until they come back, and I'll write more later, if I get a chance, or will mail it unfinished, also if and when I can. Everything at home went well and was pleasant. I got here to find there had been a death in the family. An aged great-uncle. Mom was at the funeral. I promptly took a nap, because I had a bad headache. I awakened when Sammy's (my brother-in law's) father came in. Shortly thereafter Mom came in, with Sam and Joe's parents. We soon ate, a good meal, then many of Mom's friends and my uncle Nat and Aunt Gilbert came. I got three cartons of cigarettes, a money belt (a real necessity in the Army), many G.I. sox, a rare insignia we have to get and which is practically unavailable, a toilet kit, which Mom is going to trade in for me, some gloves (wrong size), and a few other things. Also \$20 cash(so please put the \$35 into a bond for me. Then we played poker, which netted me exactly \$10.00. Not a bad night's pay. In the morning Sammy drove Mom and me to the biggest hotel in town, where we gathered for the sole purpose of hearing the illiterate mayor make a speech, the best thing about which was that it was only about 5 minutes long. From there we went to the train. I am thankful that there were few tears (and I'm proud of you for not crying at the station, honey) in my family. My grandmother had tears streaming down her face when she kissed me goodbye, but she was very good. Mom was dry-eyed until we said goodbye. Uncle Nat and Aunt Leah, who had gone to the hotel, were likewise very good. Neither cried while with me, but as soon as they got away I saw them both red-eyed. This may not strike you as being the sort of thing one appreciates on leaving for the Army, but believe me it is. Some of the other boys had a bad time of it. They broke down and bawled with their relatives. My next-door neighbor, although he got over it soon enough, was badly shaken up by his ~~father~~ father and wife, both of whom cried fearfully, then followed him to the bus and began all over again. At the station some kids from a public school, constituting a band of sorts, came there and played for us until our special train, which had already picked up several hundred boys and men from down state

pulled in....We got here without event. They lined us up for "chow", already described, then started us through the mill, already described enogh. Which brings we up to this minute.... Everybody has been pretty good in conduct and attitude, and I think they probably have the best perspective and outlook or any inductees ever in our history. Which, I think, bodes well for our fair land. ...I think if you write me as on the card and this letter, I may get the letter here. They will forward everything to wherever we go. Here is so, so you wont have to look it up: Pvt. Harold Weisberg, Company A, 1229 R.C., Camp Dix, N.J. ... I bumped into a fellow just returned from overseas duty in the can this morning. I asked him if he thought it meant anything that Belle hadn't heard from Collie. He said he didn't think it meant anything, that there were many things that could have kept him from writing, from his letter from arriving on time, or from ever arriving. Evidently there are some sinkings among mail boats. Let me know when she hears from him. Also let me here what you hear from Eddie. Please tell Bob and Sid and others that I haven't time or necessities for writing, that I'll write them from camp whenever I get there. Give my regards to everyone and take care of yourself. After 14 days it is possible to get 36 hours off, and me for that. You cant tell in advance when it'll be, so what I'll do if and when I get it is to call you. Either you can come up to N.Y. or I'll come down there. I hope they stop feeding us salt-peter by that time! I am told that after six weeks in camp it is possible to get 7 days off. Me for that, too. Also, before I forget: Dont buy anything for me unless I ask you to, honey. There are some things I should be able to get here that I will need too soon for you to get them, and I may have them only to have you get them for me, too. I know you will be wanting to buy me presents and things like that, and this knowledge is as pleasing to me as the presents, which might be wasteful or excess baggage. And the latter is a plague in the Army! You just take care of yourself, get plent of rest, eat well, and tell me if there is any news of what we dont want. Incidentally, please put those group health papers through if you haven't already. If, after enough time, you have no news, please consult either them or Dodek. An examination might disclose that there is something wrong. If they tell you there is nothing wrong with you in this connection, which I hope they will, ~~not~~ then I'll have some one competent take a look at me. I'll say goodbye for now, honey, because I see the bottom of the paper. I'll be in touch with you as soon as I can. Love, Harold