

15 October 1945

Dear Ones,

Again no mail - and nothing to write. We played bridge last night and we will probably be at it again tonight after the movie which is "Thrill of a Romance" which can't be bad. Tomorrow morning we start loading out. Incidentally, Sprague's promotion came through so he is a sergeant at long last. We put Rauth's in today but his is under a shadow. He has just been court-martialed for speeding; he was fined \$10. but so far the verdict has not been acted upon by the reviewing authority (the CO.) In all probability it will be approved. It is a very raw deal - here is the story and the circumstances: Bob was nabbed going some 35 miles an hour - the limit here is 25. Before Colonel Howie left he published an order which directed that all enlisted personnel caught speeding would be court-martialed; it was part of a slow driving campaign. Colonel Pownall has not revoked it and the resultant situation is grossly unfair. When Rauth was booked by the MP's it was his first offense, but that did not alter the rule. The worst aspect, however, is the striking contrast with the punishment meted out to officers - Don Harms was caught going 44 mph and was restricted his last two nights on the island; most officers get away with a reprimand. Two officers of whom I know have cracked up vehicles as a result of driving while intoxicated, but no action commensurate with the seriousness of the offense was taken. Another angle is that a court martial is recorded on a man's discharge certificate. So all in all Bob has a good complaint - there are several ways he can register the complaint and if he plays his cards correctly he ought to be able to have the matter dropped.

It is now the 16th - it has been a busy morning moving vehicles and supplies to the dock; we have a regular navy detail and they are eager beavers - they love to drive and we are getting the stuff down to the piers in jig time. The movie last night was pure relaxation and 75% Lauritz Melchior; I enjoyed myself completely - Esther Williams knows how to wear a bathing suit. After seeing Van Johnson as a lieutenant in "A Guy named Joe" then a Captain in "Weekend at the Waldorf" and now as a Major, I am sure that if the war had lasted he would have been an Lieutenant Colonel in the next MGM extravaganza!! The bridge game was a little slow - we were all pretty tired. Today the Ordnance Officer of SoPac came in for a visit; I guess he had nothing better to do so he decided to take a trip - we could have used a couple of trained Ordnance non-coms to far greater advantage, I feel sure. And still no mail.....

It is hard to find something to write about - in listening to the football games this weekend I heard it mentioned that Harvard was playing Rochester but I have no idea who won; I hope that the next batch of mail will bring me up to date on such critical peacetime problems. I wonder if I will retain my knack of running up to the HAA office at noon on Saturday and pleading successfully that my father just came in and I need one more seat on the 50 yard line. I fear that these days are gone forever and that when I return I will find the class of '44 allotted seats someplace behind the goalposts. Of course that would be one advantage to returning to college for one more undergraduate term - I would get another crack at the better seats!

The Argentine situation seems rather confused from what I can gather from the newscasts. The encouraging sign is that Peron is nominally out of the picture; the rub is that the military is still the key to the situation. Between the Navy, the rival Army factions, and the Supreme court, the general picture is not very clear. A non-military stepgap to fill in between now and the coming election date would be the best answer. I guess I'll have to wait for the Times and Cortesi's articles. I imagine that the course of events in the Argentine will serve to remind Vargas in Brazil that it is a good idea for him to stick to his promise of free elections for that nation. And more and more the danger of revolt seems to hanging over Franco - his chances for a graceful exit are just about nil right now, unless he sacrifices his entire Falangist organization for his own neck. Even then it is doubtful whether the Spanish Republicans would be any more generous in that regard than were the French toward Laval.

OK for this noontime - not much to write about -

All my love, *Sumner*