

15 November

Dear Ones,

Well, so far things are quiet on guard - I hope the moon and the good weather hold up throughout the night. Today I spent running around like mad trying to please everyone with my report on the ammunition loss - it's a great life. Sprague is getting his New Zealand leave so at least one of the Ordnance personnel is happy; I guess that there must be definitely no ships coming in - otherwise Trosper never would have released him. I loaned him \$40 to help him have his spree. The movie tonight was not bad, the change was pleasant.

It seems as though every time I look around I am struck by the jam the Army has got itself into - the rub of course is that since I am stuck for a while I find myself pelted with the various odd details which result from the Army predicament. The first problem is that the Army doesn't have a friend in the world - even the strongest supporters of post-war service program predicate their support on overall Army reform; they are not supporting the present set-up. The result is a terrible dilemma - first Congress says "Get the Boys Home" then they add, as they squeak through in a 13-12 committee vote, that they are hesitant about offering a supply of new boys; at the same time the pressure continues to do the police and occupation job and to keep all the property, salvage everything. I am just a little joker on the piddling island of Santo - but I literally can't throw a used piece of Kleenex away without clearing it through a liquidation committee. We spend more time making out forms, waiting for answers, conducting auctions, making out new forms and reports than eventual sales are worth. Everyone overseas is a small scale Eisenhower - maybe the job is not occupation without troops, but it scales down to the same thing. The Army has failed in the most important thing - its strength lay in its military necessity; it did not build a democratic prestige for the day when it would need it. And I can feel sorry for Eisenhower, if he has the ETO equivalents of Trosper and Moore and Spalding and what have you to carry out his orders, there is little wonder that the occupation gets blighty fouled up....

I spent some two hours with Spalding today - touring around the dump: he is like a combination Army commander and childish grandfather. I hope that my original suspicion that he is basically harmless continues to be borne out. One thing the little trip around the dump did for me was remind me how little I know about ammunition - it is almost funny. I am stumped for something to say - no mail.

It is now early evening of the 16th; As you can see I never did add anything to the letter I started last night. Nothing happened on guard. I spent the whole morning in disagreement with Trosper and Moore - the arguments are over such petty things, but my patience and my temper really are under a severe pressure. Neither of those august gentlemen have the knack of leadership. Someone told me that there is a new name for the codition of this island and I think it is good - "Trosperity." This afternoon I got soaked to the skin counting the bombs we have left in our old dump; you should have seen Bob Rauth and me plowing over roads long gone, crashing through the heavy undergrowths, searching for the bomb areas with a rough map as a guide, stumbling around in the wet and steamy jungle, and counting the big thousand and five hundred pounders with our feet - that is, scrambling over them and counting as we touched them through the overgrown grass. Our Khakis and shoes were soaked - I guess I looked like a drowned rat, and the jeep picked up enough green stuff so that it looks camouflaged. At least it was a pleasant change from trying to reason with Trosper or talk with more. When I get away from this office and can look at things with a better perspective, I can laugh, but they really make it uncomfortable trying to work with them in here. I never thought I'd see the day when I would be mixed up with aircraft bombs - my casualness was best symbolized I guess when I drove into a group of thousand pounders and jounced around unconcernedly. Of course they are unfused and not dangerous - I trust. The movie tonight is just too much for me and so I am skipping it, and besides ...

Mail came in - 21 letters from home ( first week in November, except for three clipping envelopes from mid-October!!) a note from Aunt Anne and an Alumni Bulletin. When this mail came in I finally threw away all the old clippings which I had never commented on - they were



getting to be ancient history. Now, of course, I have an ample new batch to carry me through the week-end. Contrary to my custom of going through and answering letters as I come to them, I must say that I was thrilled with the late news of Uncle Lou's engagement. As you know by now, I ran right down and sent a second radiogram to him, congratulating him both for his engagement and his birthday - earlier in the day I had sent my birthday radio to Daddy. I think that Uncle Lou probably knows what he is doing and I am sure that he will be happy; the family approval is a happy sign - I take it that my good uncle got a lot of support! I will write to both him and Selma - you realize that now we will definitely have to by a car!!!! (Are we going to have this "Aunt" problem with Selma, Mother? Refer to the famous case of Bernstein vs. Bernstein, circa 1938, on the question of "Mel" or "Aunt Mel." .....)

I am not very peppy tonight - and this letter may not be too sharp. The guard routine does cut into the sleep. As I read over what I said about Uncle Lou it doesn't seem to say exactly what I mean - but you and he know what I mean anyway...let's see now. I got the Ramblings, Toots - and it really looks like a good job. - it hardly seems like 5½ years since I left the hallowed halls of Stevens Avenue. I must admit that the picture of Carl Wiggin and the news that Deering lost a couple of football games were the only familiar notes! Your editorial was good, HB - and your name looks good on the masthead. This is real proof of your activities and it must make you feel good. No doubt about it now, When I wander back to visit the old alma mammy I will be pointed out as HB's brother - they may add that I was lost in the South Pacific after the war had ended!

One of the October letters brought a summary of Cottage news - I was always surprised that Ralf Martin had undertaken any construction with the war still on (which reminds me: will you make out and send to me a list of people to whom you think I might send New Year notes of greeting - make it select and small since with no V-mail, I will have to use plenty of ingenuity to whip up anything of any length.) I really enjoyed your picture of the incident of the boating trip, Mother. I see that the pace and personalities of social life at the cottage have not changed - and neither has the seamanship!! (What ever happeded to the Pines twins?) I take it that Portland is gradually whipping into its old civilian model and form - should I say "whipping" or just "slouching?" I see on the back of one of the old clippings that double features still hold forth in Portland - I wonder if I will ever be able to sit through one again. It is funny how in less than a month the opinions expressed by columnists and commentators can be completely disproved - it's a reminder of how fast a day an age this world we live in is. A month ago the London failure was still news - now the Washington atomic proposals came up and as I expected offer to Russia a realistic two-phase basis on which the world order can be built. China and Java have exploded, Palestine still simmers close to the boiling point.

Well, I'm going up and get out my val-pak - Sprague wants to borrow that too! OK for now -

All my love

Regards to Doris

*Deemi  
oops  
Summer*