

17 November 1945

Dear Ones,

Neither Hughes (going home with 62 points) nor Sprague (New Zealand Bound) got off today. It is now 3:30 and all the lads have tramped over to the theatre for orientation. This morning we heard a flash that the points had been reduced to 55 for the men and that officers had dropped only to 73, but that new length of service provisions were going into affect to clean out all the pre-Pearl Harbor soldiers - but we have heard no more mention of it and I will save my reaction to it until it is confirmed. I almost blew my top when I first got wind of the report. Some more mail came in - all clippings except for a letter from USAFI; they told me that I could get that Psych course all at once and sent me the papers and information. I filled them out and sent them together with a money order for \$13.50 to Wisconsin. I imagine it will be about a month before the course itself arrives. It is now something to look forward to. Last night I felt the urge to write so I dropped Carl Wiggin a line some time after I sealed up my letter to you. I asked him his attitude toward the Truman proposals about military training. And this noontime I wrote a letter to Uncle Lou and another to Selma. So I am pretty well up to date. The Colonel went down to Noumea for a Court Martial. So things may be quiet for a while. The movie tonight is Uncle Harry and that should be all right - George Saunders can usually be counted upon for a good performance. My work is fairly up to date and tomorrow should be restful.

It is now 9 PM and the picture was wonderful - until they had to stick a Hollywood, artificial ending on it. If you see it, just pretend that it ends as Geraldine Fitzgerald walks down the hall - that is where it should have ended. She is a superb actress, I would like to see her in something other than the role of a Witch, however. Saunders lived up to expectations too. Now to go through some of your accumulated letters - November 3 through 7th, I think they cover. I am glad that my mail is coming through well; some of the fellows have heard from their correspondents that mail going stateside has been irregular too. You have answered a lot of my questions - I had often wondered about Ted Perry. Let me know, of course, if you ever do get up to date on Louis D B Gilbert. I am glad that we have the release-leave-release- reserve question cleared up. I just heard that the news of the point reductions is practically official - as I understand it all four year men and four year-three month officers are to be released; that is fine, all pre-December 7 men should be out. As for the provision for the three time fathers, that is OK since most of them are out on points already anyway. BUT - the point reductions bother me; why don't they scrap the system officially as they have actually. Jerry Caples has enough time but only 68 points - so he gets out as pre-PH but not on points. And what kind of a reduction is a 2 point reduction?? My godfrey -- these are just my first reactions and there may be fuller information which has not reached me. The officer situation is more confused than before to my mind and it looks as though a certain group is getting the screws put to it - the overseas officers, with anywhere from eighteen to thirty months overseas and no glimmer of hope as to getting out. The enlisted men are complaining that the reduction was 5 instead of the expected 10 points and they are justified at that, too. But I am more concerned by the helter-skelter method, the lack of system, the compromises, the unfairness, the inequality of the way the Army is handling this thing than by the question of the specific reductions - needless to say, my own picture is about as black as the queen of spades. It looks as though March of 1947 would be overly optimistic. Do not misunderstand me - the Army is not at fault in the immediate question; whether the Army is at fault because of lack of popularity and the resultant lack of volunteers and confidence in its promises is not the question. The Army has a job to be done - it cannot do it without men; I have rehashed these things over and over again - the burden is on Congress. I am seriously considering writing a letter to Bob Hale.... but enough of this, needless to say, chins are hanging low around here once more.

The complications arising out of the handling of the Children to Palestine contribution problem seem to have run true to form. I think that your attitude is right Mother, and apparently Annabel knows what the situation is, even if Mrs. Caplan's enthusiasm carries her too far. The community can take only the attitude that the Federation is the Agency which must handle this project; these special efforts if they are to be effective and healthy cannot be directed at Jewish contributors. I am glad that you told Fournier about St Cyr - he will be on his way next week; he has some 68 points. Did Charlie Patch

ever contact you? So far, I guess Joe Marotta is the only one who stuck to his word about contacted people back home when he returned.

The clipping about HB's activity looked good - more tangible evidence of your leadership and ability, Boots. It is a good thing that Mrs Craig puts more care in her column than she did in her letter to you, Mother; it was a little disjointed, to say the least. If I ever have the opportunity to accept her invitation I certainly will. As yet no XMAS mail has come through - I'll let you know when it does. I have no needs - except for the socks I bought I don't want to restock with underwear until I get home. I haven't worn an undershirt for months and I have two shelves of them in my hot-locker; and there are no jockey-type shorts available here - I have plenty anyway. The confusion over the resignation of Campbell which turned out to be Gimble sounds amusing now - I imagine at the time it was confusing and not amusin' as little Abner would say. Thanks for the summary of my bond situation. Which reminds me - you have never given me a definite answer on what my income tax status is or what I have to do to register as a voter. I can get no information here on either subject, how about checking up for me, huh? I am willing to pay a moderate retaining fee!!

Godd for Dave Sacknoff - he can have all his majorities and lt-colonelcies - oh, just get me home into tweeds!! I guess it is a good deal for him since he can see nothing to be gained in going out into the cold cruel civilian world. I haven't given any orientations lectures and I think it is too late to start now, although Jerry would be glad to have me take over one of these Saturday afternoons. I'll be looking for the inside story on Uncle Heine's new venture. Has he moved from Lynbrook - what gives? I hope you have included me in the birthday messages to the family whom you mentioned as celebrating their natal days this month. Your mentioning of Aunt Etta's talk with Uncle Lou, and the tie-in of Uncle Heine sounds like real family politics again - I'm all ears. I hope that Aunt Etta doesn't feel hurt on Sonia's account - interpret it as Ida's influence over hers. Ah, me .. I wonder. Thanks for all the details that you have, Mother - I am trying to keep the Kahns straight as well as all the high diplomacy of inspection trips disguised as buying trips for a coat for Ruthie. The detail of whipping out the picture of Uncle Lou sent me into hysterics and everyone in the office looked at me in amazement!! What technique - a little direct, but obviously effective. I am glad that at this point everyone is pleased.

I spent an hour or so trying to figure out the family of Aunt Sarah Thurman and finally gave it up - anyway, I checked and Jerome Kumin's ship hasn't been in for months - Aunt Anne did send me the name of his vessel. There is no doubt about it - I need a catalogue of the Thurman and Bernstein clans and in-laws if I am ever to keep them straight. When you get started telling a family story there seem to be a million and one sidetracks what with all the aunts uncles and assorted cousins; it is a good thing that divorces are not prevalent or the confusion would be unbearable. (I refer you to Frank Sullivan's hilarious parody of Cholly Knickerbocker which deals with the Vanderbilt family and pretends to try to straighten it up for the records - it is Subtreasury of American Humor, by EBWhite, which we ought to have if we don't have it already.)

OK for tonight - I will make tomorrow the occasion for a longer letter and try to get through some of the stacks of clippings.

All my love,

Regards to Doris

Summer