

15 December 1945

Dear Ones -

The court martial took up a couple of hours this afternoon. We were severely handicapped by the absence of both Judge Stout and old man Moore - so we had no lawyer to decide the questions that arose. The conduct of the trial was pretty rough, the first blow came when I learned that I could not have even an unofficial recorder and so I am going to have to write up the report of trial pretty much from memory - fine thing, huh? I put four witnesses on the stand to prove that the accused was asleep and the defense didn't even cross examine - Al Horvath's only angle was to have Dr Gray testify concerning the man's medical condition. Anyway when I asked my second witness the routine question of whether or not he knew the accused - he answered "no" and I almost fell out of my shoes: he was terribly nervous and it took me about a minute to bring him around to the realization that all I was asking was his identification of the accused as the guard about whom he made a sworn statement. There was nothing to my evidence, it was cut and dried, although the President of the Court, a pompous old bastard named Lewis who is simply ignorant, cut me short when I tried to forestall the defense's mediaal argument by introducing proof that the accused had never been on special or light duty on Doctor's orders - why I don't know, but you can't argue with the old fool. Finally I rested and the defense called Doc Gray - we admitted him as an expert witness but we immediately hit a snag when he tried to introduce an unauthenticated hospital record as part of his testimony. We thrashed that and numerous other questions out for some time and by threatening (more or less) to insist on the appointment of a medical board of inquiry Horvath managed to get the Court to agree to listen to the whole story. The man has VD and has a hospital record - his profile (physical) shows that his malingering tendencies have resulted in a case of neurasthenia and that he is not fully capable of all types of duty. We argued back and forth for almost an hour - it was a travesty on good court procedure - and eventually I had my opportunity to cross examine. I simply asked Gray whether it was his expert opinion that this man was incapable of staying awake for a four hour guard stretch during the daytime after eight hours of rest. His answer was yes and that ended Horvath's desperation attempts. The court only gave the accused three months hard labor and a thirty dollar fine instead of a maximum six months and some \$100 - few courts ever give the maximum. Now the problem remains for me to prepare a report of trial.. if I only had the enthusiasm for it that I do for writing about it that I do when I write to you ..

Officially tomorrow is not a working day and so I ~~plano~~ catch up on some mail - in the morning anyway. Now to get to some of your letters: (it is now Sunday, the 16th.) I now know that all my cables and letters were received - so that answers my question on that score. All in all I would say that your visit to NY worked out perfectly, Mother and Daddy, and I am glad that you had such a complete and satisfying vacation. And HB's welcome home to you was certainly a wonderful crowning touch - that's my sister! I guess I told you that we have a target date of January 15th for this base - my guess is that February 1st would be a safer bet and by then we will all be done ^{WV} at Noumea. The rub is that there is little, in fact no chance of my being declared surplus. Beaudry as much as told me that - I ~~xxxxxx~~ am going down there and will be pulled into headquarters to help do the same job that we faced on Santo. I like the idea of leaving Santo and I guess that Noumea is not too bad a place, but I dread another Ordnance situation like this one. I am at the point now where I do not give much of a damn and I am going to have to figure out some way of getting out of an assignment with Beaudry's office if there is anything better in the offing. I have a hunch that SoPac isn't declaring anybody surplus just on general principles and that I might end up in a QM depot or something like that if I goof off in Ordnance - so I will have to see what the lay of the land is down there. The old restlessness and emptiness of this existence out here is beginning to get me again.... I am not in the mood for making any more major adjustments to the Army!

I am glad that you were so pleased with Shirley - Lou's happiness is wonderful and I'll bet that it makes Aunt Ida and Uncle Harris feel on top of the world. It was good to note that Lou is giving serious thought to his law and his plans for the future. I agree with you in your analysis of his new stability and responsibility; in a way, I have always defended Lou because I thought that the predominant family attitude was one of misunderstanding - there is still no doubt in my mind, that given the proper response and understanding, Lou's

intelligence and sensitiveness would become constructive elements rather than elements of revolt. And I do enjoy your complete reports, Mother - I really feel up to date, almost as though I had been to all the family gatherings and met all the people whom I do not know yet. I especially enjoyed your comment about Ruth's adolescence - all I can say, (after all I haven't seen the girl for how many years now??) is that from her letters she seems to be quite the young sophisticate - -

That was a good picture of Bill and Mrs. Parker - I hope that I am in Portland for next Thanksgiving: or is that too pessimistic for you?? I read the letter you sent which was signed "Rose" over hurriedly while walking down to the office and it was only about two hours later that it dawned upon me that it was Rose Marble. She seems to miss Portland but apparently she has got to the point where she can relax and enjoy to the full the blessings of her children and their children - I certainly hope that the difficult days are over for her now: she deserves every good fortune. Give her my best when you write, of course. Daddy, I must say that your comment about HB was wrong in only one point - you don't have to write a poem - your pride in your daughter and the way you expressed it was as lyrical as anything could be. And I should add that it is a good thing that it is too late in the game for us to be spoiled(?) or such praise would undoubtedly leave Helen Babsy and me with incurable egos. I am glad that you are thinking of Smith, Mother - and certainly the Dunn contact would be a valuable one (and as I mentioned to HB, I am sure that Miss Pease might be helpful if HB did decide upon Smith.) Speaking of Esther Dunn, it is a funny thing how certain incidents remain in your mind from childhood for apparently no good reason. Right now I can remember clearly that one day when I must have been very young you went down to Congress Street to vote and then stopped by to visit the Dunns - for some reason I was left in the car and I can remember sitting there and waiting for you to come out.

Maybe I had better stay in the Army until you use up all the stationary with the incorrect heading, Mother! or do you use it with the Thurman communiques too?? Thanks for Louis Black's address - the chances of my getting to Oahu are pretty slim; it would certainly be a good break because that is civilization, more stateside than overseas, and I would have the opportunity of calling you by phone - but it all depends on the situation at Noumea when I get there. I got the clipping on Wiggin's attitude toward compulsory training - but I will not answer it until I hear from him. I can feel for Stanley Blumenthal - a lot of us are in a similar boat. And it is tougher on him, I imagine, since the attitude in the Marines is pretty rough and tumble when the rookie gets in with the regulars. Daddy, you seem to be becoming quite an expert on Veteran's affairs. From the reports we get, the VA is still in bad shape - that is one place where poor organization will be dynamite just as sure as hell. Let me ask you something - you have been sending most of the clippings about Uncle Don without comment: from everything I hear, real estate is booming everywhere in the states, and it is a lot easier to be on the selling than the buying end. Does that mean that Uncle Don has hit a good thing - in the right spot at the right time? it would appear that way to me. I think that Aunt Pearl's excuse for excluding cousins was pretty weak... economy has seldom been the rule for wedding parties, especially at the cost of family feelings.

That about does it for this morning. I have a million and one clippings up in the tent - I have sorted out the Terry's and the bridge columns and the sport pages and book reviews and during the day I will try to read through the remainder of Pearsons and stuff. Glad to learn that the USA will be the site of the UNO - if only for the reason that we need every possible reminder of our new international position: this symbolizes it.

All my love,

Regards to Doris

Summer