

JUDMS5_BernsteinS_06101943tr

Transcribed by Kara Kralik 06/14/2020

[Letter is written on letterhead with a crest and the words:]

ORDNANCE SCHOOL
ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND
MARYLAND

Saturday,

Dear Ones

I have just written 4 letters on this new stationery which I finally got around to buying; Uncle Lou, The [Ahams], York St. and [Menickoe] are the fortunate recipients. So now I will scrawl this note to you. I hope you received the check which I mailed back the office, endorsed.

Do I face a busy week!! I am barracks leader - I assign all the details - make sure everyone keep [*sic*] his place clean and neat and does his job; I have to make bed check each night; and pick up the mail twice a day. To top it off I am also the platoon leader on Thursday. Of course, this will take care of all my spare time! this is the climax week of our first 8 weeks - so this week I really have to be on the ball. Incidentally, did I

[Page 2]

mention the fact that we have guard duty next weekend and the week after that - so that I won't see the light of day until after graduation. But it's all part of the day's [*illegible*]- it is really not too tough - everyone gets it sooner or later.

Speaking of graduation (always assume the big "IF" and save me the trouble of writing it every time - pessimism, as long as it is not depressing, is a necessary adjunct to the mental balance of a candidate, I still insist) the usual procedure is that the ceremony is over by 10:30 AM on Saturday (the 31st of July). Unless

radical procedure changes take place, I will then be given a ten day leave (please, Mother, "furlough" is for enlisted men; officers get "leave.") So you plan what you like on that basis. I have no specific desires and I don't have the time to plan on such a distant day anyway. At present, the 6 weeks before crossing that bridge seem like a long time.

[Page 3]

[Page is hand-numbered "2"]

Let me congratulate you, Helen Barby, on your graduation from [LP]HS and the fine record you left there - you certainly put me to shame. Now relax and really enjoy yourself this summer, Toots; we'll be seeing each other around August 1st, or July 31st I should say, - I hope.

I must repeat how much I enjoy your [newsy] letters - they are really something to look forward to. I am really up to date in family and community events.

That leaves our good old major topic of discussion for the end. I just want to say that I think your distinction between uncertainty and pessimism is a wise one. But you make an unreasonable request based on an untrue assumption. You think that because I write to you pessimistically that I am

[Page 4]

pessimistic - that is not true. Whenever I get down I just stop and think - I am so much better off than so many others that what the hell! But when I write to you I am painting a picture of what goes on here - and no one here can deny the atmosphere of apprehension which the individual must naturally reflect.

A second point is that, as I said, optimism is a bad opiate here - it is contrary to good

school policy. Uncertainty is what dominates us; it is not really optimism or pessimism, it is really degrees of uncertainty and certainty. I can honestly say it is the tension resulting from uncertainty that is the driving force of O.C.S. Don't get the idea I am pessimistic - you can't live under a pessimistic cloud. I am happy, I am enjoying a tough and a glorious experience. Pessimism is a surface manifestation only. I am sure you understand what I mean. That's about it for a while -
Love,
Sumner.

[Envelope:]

[Written on top left:]
OC ST Bernstein
Co B Cl. 52 Ord OCS
Bks #1 #1015 APG, Md.

[Written on top right:]
Free

[Written in center:]
The Bernsteins
184 Bolton St
Portland, Maine