

Somewhere on the East coast
not New York City
Monday 20 Dec 43

Hello gang:

I'm sorry that I have not written you for quite some time, but I have been an extremely busy man, and the duties and responsibilities of a company commander have weighed heavily on my shoulders. I have now entered the realm of military censorship so my letters will probably be relatively uninteresting. I'm sorry, but being a military censor myself, I realize the importance of carefulness and am aware as I write that if I should forget for even a moment the censor will not.

Of course you all know that Ros and the children are home. I have been in almost constant contact with her, both by mail and by phone. In fact I talked to her and the kids to-day. They are fine and are enjoying their return to small town life with gusto. I should say that that statement refers to the kids. I'm afraid that Ros (and the kids on occasion) still miss the old man tremendously.

Gosh! It's been so long since I wrote you that I could write half a book on what has gone on, but I'm much too busy for that. In fact, I have just finished my daily letter to Ros, (never less than 3 typewritten pages) and finished my job of censoring for the day, so I decided to start a letter to you and see how far along I could get before I had to stop. The last time I wrote, we were still living together in Lakewood. We had some fine times there, going to New York on several occasions. I believe I told you about the first trip there, but the second trip which we made there was really much more interesting from the viewpoint of a lover of night life. We went to celebrate our wedding anniversary (13th to you who may not remember), and started off by going to the famous Billie Rose's Diamond Horseshoe. The place is in the basement of a hotel and does not begin to compare to Beverlee Hills in beauty. It is moderately ornate with fluted lamps along the wall and a small stage to one side on which the orchestra plays, and an additional smaller stage on which the players parade in the floor show. The latter simply was an ordinary vaudeville show - very ordinary. We saw no celebrities and were totally dissatisfied with the entire proceedings, so we decided to go to another place to see if we couldn't make up for the poor time up to then. We were with a couple, a captain DC and his wife, who were legitimate New Yorkers and they suggested that we go to a place in Greenwich Village called the Howdy Club. We needed no coaxing so off we headed to Washington Square (one block from where Mark Twain used to live) and entered a terribly crowded small place with a long hall, a room to one side used as a bar, a larger room at the end of the hall which served as the dining room. This max had a balcony upstairs which took care of the overflow. They had no actual stage here, but the acts were held in the middle of the dance floor. (Incidentally dance floors in all New York night clubs seem to be of secondary significance, being about the size of a nice Knas card). As we entered we noticed nothing unusual until the accompanying couple called our attention to the head waiter. He was a very handsome, clean shaven man with mannerisms slightly effeminate, but no worse than some of my closest acquaintances. However, as we stood there waiting to be seated upwalked a man with rouged face, mascaraed eyelashes, lipstick lips, and that horrible bluish stuff on his eyelids that sirens think is so attractive. To top it off he had confetti of a silvery color all thru his hair and sticking to his eyelashes. I thought, Mignard, where did THAT come from. There was no question in my mind then as to what the place was going to be like. We were seated at the table in the terribly crowded room which was darkened while someone banged away at one of those small pianos while a tenor sang in a trilling soft voice (that word is trilling and not thrilling, please). A most honey atmosphere until you began to adjust to the dark room and look about you. At the very next table was a lovely girl, small, dark, and handsome, with one of those low rich pleasant voices that are so attractive - something like Mrs. Lauer, Louise. However, her hair was cut like a long man's haircut and she was wearing men's clothes. I tried to listen in on her conversation but there was much too much noise in the place. All the waiters were fairly nice boys - some of them disgustingly effeminate, others apparently normal until you saw them subsequently in the floor show. Everybody would watch these creatures go by, nudging his neighbor to look at this one or that one. We were having the time of our lives, and feeling that we were really seeing the new York that everybody writes about. Then the floor show came on. Gosh was it filthy. Their songs were much rarer than I had ever heard anywhere before in any place, night club or burlesque show, altho I must admit that I wasn't much of a frequenter of the latter. They had one act there in which a most attractive, exotic girl, in G string and bra put on the first solo exhibit of coitus that I have ever seen. It was very realistic, despite the lack of a partner, starting slowly

note envelope for new address. -2-

with movements which require no explanation, increasing gradually in pitch until one wondered how long she could keep it up, until she reached the climax of the dance, at which time she turned her back to the audience and shivered from the tips of her overhead fingers to the tips of her toes. (This is a helluva thing for a man to write about who hasn't seen his wife for 20 days, and with her more than oops, slips, I almost gave away our approximate location. Do n't blush Ros.) That act, and one put on by the confetti covered being whom we met in the hall (a toe dancing act with facial expressions and gestures more feminine than a woman's) were the most outstanding insofar as they stick in my memory best. The remainder of the show as I mentioned was raw. It made me blush in many of its songs and wisecracks, and I'm no particular sissy.

Our parting was unfortunate in that it occurred about 10 days before being absolutely necessary. However, in a way it was better that way because of the arrangements which we made with ever-generous Irv to drive the family back. Those were certainly hectic days, what with long distance calls trying to arrange for the trip back home, packing in order to make things easier for both Ros and Irv in their trip home, and all the time with the heart breaking thought of being separated after all these years. We told the kids nothing definite, merely throwing hints; but Judy needed no hints, she realized what was happening, and she would cry her heart out everytime I left the house without her. The night before they left for home Irv drove them out to the camp and I got to say a final goodbye. It was quite difficult, but these goodbyes do have to end somewhere so that I finally packed them off even tho I yearned to keep them there just a little longer.

After Ros trip home our restriction was lifted, and so I decided to go into New York again for some relaxation. I needed it, I'm afraid, because I was a pretty home-sick hombre. I really got to see some of the famous spots in New York - A Rockefeller tour, a show at Radio City Music Hall, at the Roxy and at the Paramount, ~~Gone with the Wind~~ For whom the Bell Tolls, which none of you must miss, and finally The Ice Follies of 1944 at Madison Square Garden. I had always thought that the movies with ice shows in them were terribly elaborate, but this ice show had them beat all hollow. It was really gorgeous both in costumes and scenery and the acts themselves were unbeatable. However, despite all this visiting around New York (I was there for 36 hours at one stretch at one time) I developed an acute attack of homesickness. I have always realized that one could be lonesome in a crowd but this was the first time that I ever experienced it to such a degree. For 36 hours I was in that town of 7-8-9-10 million people and not a single, solitary soul to talk to. I had arranged to meet some of the fellows there, but they stood me up. When I finally arrived at camp I immediately called up Ros and of course felt much better thereafter.

As far as my present circumstances are concerned, there is nothing to tell. I have been extremely busy with the usual duties of a company commander. The job of censoring letters I had delegated to one of my officers, but somehow or other the boys in the company were not kept busy enough and seemed to find plenty of time to write letters, so that the censor was sitting up until 1:30 and 2:00 O'clock to keep the daily mail moving (The mail must go out or is it the show must go on). I therefore decided to give him a hand so that now between the two of us it only takes two hours to get it out. However, this is two hours that might have been spent doing something else, but one must keep up the morale of his company. The job itself was extremely interesting for the first few letters, and it still has not lost its novelty, but it is much more hard work than fun. The private lives of some of the men in my company are amazingly complex, and you can't tell by looking at the man just which one is going to have a complicated life. The letters of most of them are very much alike, and disgustingly poorly written and without any imagination whatsoever. Some of them write four or five almost identical mushy love letters to different girls professing their unfailing devotion and hoping the girl will be true to them so that they can be married ~~when~~ he gets home. Several of them have mistresses, the prize one of whom is one with his wife and his mistress living together while he is away. The saddest case is a youngster who is in love with a girl who had a boy friend before he met her, and who refuses to let him consider her as his girl. He doesn't blame her because he knew the situation all the time he was courting her, but nevertheless his heart is breaking. (I'm not committing a breach of censorship etiquette in revealing the above, because I mention no names with the information which I am divulging to you.)

I'm getting near the end of the page and it's close to midnite and I'll be damned if I'll start another page, so since I want you to get a letter soon I'm going to mail this in the A.M. For goodness sake, write, write, write, all of you. At least one letter a week. I'll try to do the same. I want to thank Soph for the cooperation on the watch and Irv for his extreme helpfulness at a time when we really needed it. Goodbye, all. Lots of luck. Walt.