

Good afternoon, darling:

21 November 1944 1200 Tuesday

This is a quiet day, more like a Sunday than Sunday, itself, was. Probably the reason it gives me such an impression is that one of my mechanics fixed the clock at the church across the way and it now rings every fifteen minutes. Surprisingly, it keeps perfect time checking right along with radio time. There is no question but that the people of this community have profited by our stay around here. They have been receiving excellent medical care, all the food that they can eat, and have not been molested by the troops, even though the troops may have had to live in the bigger part of their homes. Speaking of molesting, we have been having a funny incident occurring in the company. Patterson, a young soldier in the company whom I have made permanent KP because he gets so frightened ~~by~~ when things get a bit hot that he disturbs all of the other soldiers in the front lines, has gradually accumulated a number of natives to do his KP for him, for which they receive the uneaten food. One of his native workmen is a handsome youth under 20 who dresses very well and is very friendly. This youth has taken a fancy to P atterson and promised him that he would "fix him up" with one of the girls hereabouts. The idea appealed to Patterson when it was first told to him, but when the girl came by one day, and the Italian called her over to meet Patterson, he dove into the kitchen and we uldn't come out for love or money. It took no time for the story to get around the company and P at took such a ribbing that he decided to have another try at it; so last night he, accompanied by Macri (a second girl had been added to the "available" list walked up the hill to the girls' house. However, the girls were busy ironing clothes for an officer who needed them for the morning, so the visit did not p an out. This time, P at, in order to create a better impression on the boys thru Macri, tried to hang around, knowing that nothing would come of it, but Macri brought him ba back. To-day the girl passed by (I saw her for the first time and learned that she is pregnant, the father being a German soldier) and the Italian boy stopped her and called P at out to go up to her house with her, but the idea of coitus in broad daylight did not appeal to P at's aesthetic sense, so it looks like the affair is off. The boys have been kidding P at no end, and have told the Italian that P at is a virgin which both amazed and amused him no end. It seems that I am the only one in the company who is in favor of Pat keeping his virginity. I'm afraid that if the boys keep kidding him about it both P at and I will be on the losing end.

Sunday I met a Capt. May, a doctor from Marion Ill., a small town close to Sal's town of Ziegler, Ill. He knows Sal but did not know that we were located as close to him as we are. He is the CO of a collecting company of another division and dropped in to see us when he drove by our place. We compared notes and find that for the most part we run our companies very similarly. However, he has more difficulty with his combat team than I do with ours. It seems that it is a policy in his division for the collecting company litter bearers to work forward of the aid station. When he put up a howl about this, the battalion surgeon outsmarted him by putting the MAC officer in charge of half a battalion aid station practically up with the front line troops and since he has to bring the patients back from the forward aid station, they had him hooked. So far our aid stations never move in front of the battalion CP and we laid down the law right at the beginning of combat that our men were to be used only in evacuating patients from the aid station to the rear, except in emergency ~~cases~~ situations. I'm sure that it is this fact which accounts for the low rate of wounded and killed that we have had in our company. ~~The~~ Capt. May's company has lost 6 times as many men killed as my company has. In the course of our discussion I learned that Runde's company is faced with the same situation, his litter bearers working forward of the aid station and the aid station litter bearers working to the rear. It is probably for that reason that he has lost more men than I have. There is no question that the element of luck still rides with my company and I hope and pray that it continues.

Capt. May has a Capt. Kessler from Price Hill in Cincy as one of his medics. I can't pla him, altho I faintly remember a Kessler, a thin nice-looking fellow in a class or two after mine at UC. It looks like I won't get the chance to meet him, altho I do feel that it would be interesting. I am wondering if he might not have been in Ben's class.

Capt. Garwacki, the battalion surgeon in our combat team who lives in Chicago and who came into the army at Camp Grant the same time I did and went to Shelby at the same time, also (he is the fellow who rode with Adio Friedman and I from Grant to Chicago the day I took the plane to Cincy to surprise you) stopped in to see me yesterday. He looks like hell and I asked him what was wrong with him. He really had a woeful tale to tell. It seems that for some time he has been having anginoid pain with occasional attacks of paroxysmal tachycardia



one of which lasted for three hours. His anginoid attacks are somewhat typical and yet he doesn't feel that it is the real angina and won't show anything on EKG or if he goes into the hospital for a check up. He feels that others will think that he is goldbricking if he goes into the hospital and has therefore been sticking it out. He told me that for 10 days he was so sick that he had trouble getting out of bed, because of precordial discomfort. One day when he was moving up toward the very front lines along with his battalion a seizure of this type hit him and he had to fall out while his medics went on up ahead. Just then an artillery barrage came into his immediate vicinity and he was too tired to even look for cover under this added stimulation, and just lay where he was hoping that none of the fragments would strike him. Major Thompson happened to drop in later in the day and I asked him whether he knew about Garwacki's ailment. He said he did, but seemed to feel that Garwacki was really faking, for he feels that no doctor with symptoms of angina would continue doing strenuous work of the type Garwacki must do, eg. climbing up mountains. He feels that Garwacki is too sure that the hospital will find nothing wrong with him and therefore doesn't want to go in. He also said that Garwacki wrote in for a transfer to another unit in the division (clearing station) where he can do some definitive treatment, giving his qualifications for being able to do surgery. Actually there is no definitive treatment done on wounded ~~at~~ within our division, the first unit doing this type of work being the field hospital for seriously wounded and the evacuation hospital for less seriously wounded. Thompson thinks that Garwacki is just tired of his job and wants to get an easier one, particularly since knowing that Kirby who was formerly a battalion surgeon and who is now with the clearing station has such an easy time of it. At any rate, I had already told Garwacki to come in and see me at the station if and when we ever get to a rest area and I would send him into the hospital for EKG and work up. If he doesn't do that when the time comes I will feel that he is probably faking.

Garwacki was also greatly perturbed about one incident and very enthusiastic about another that had recently occurred. He was enthusiastic about the fact that in the static situation under which we are now living he had been able to set up a small hospital of his own, keeping non-battle-casualties as patients and treating them right there. He found out that he could save considerable time by doing his own treating, since it takes quite a long time to get men back from the hospital, and since there is a premium on men at present, he felt his work was especially well appreciated by the battalion commander. He mentioned a case of trench foot ~~of~~ which he treated and had back to duty in 12 days, whereas similar cases of the same intensity sent farther back take much longer than that to return. The incident which perturbed him was the case of a battle casualty who lost his leg at the knee due to a shell fragment. Garwacki is a catholic and he claims that in such cases the catholic religion states that the leg should be buried just as if it were a body. He tried to give the leg to the graves registration officer but they refused to take it and sent it back to him. He was all upset by this. I know that the idea of burying a leg in a cemetery would never have come into my mind and I suggested that he bury it in his back yard. I understand this is what he finally did. He did not follow my suggestion of talking with the priest to see if he couldn't set a policy for future handling of cases of this type. Talking to Tag and another catholic officer both of them said that they had never heard any catholic policy laid down to the effect that limbs should receive burial equivalent to that of a body. Mind you, the soldier that lost the leg is a protestant and is still alive and in good shape. It was interesting to notice how perturbed Garwacki seemed to be over this situation, which to me presented no problem at all. Maybe I'm cold-hearted.

The other morning we received a rush call to send some ambulances out to an area which had been shelled in order to pick up some casualties. The unit was not one of our units but we never ask questions in these cases and always send the ambulances if we have them. In this case we had only one ambulance available and since it sounded like we would need more than this I told the ambulance sergeant to send out the one ambulance which was to stop at Renzi's company and pick up ~~two~~ more ambulances on its way up to pick up these casualties. I gave him very specific instructions as to just what to do, and gave the matter no more thought. A few minutes after the ambulance had set out we received another call to send an ambulance to one of our own units to pick up some casualties. The areas were very close together, but still we knew that once that the ambulances had picked up the casualties they had gone after, they would not bother to check with any of the aid stations other than those involved and that the casualties at our aid station would not be taken care of, so I sent Macri up in a jeep to make sure that our aid station was also taken care of. As a precaution I suggested that he stop in Renzi's company and see if we had gotten the two ambulances. It turned out that the ambulances had been refused them at Renzi's because the man who went in to ask for it didn't realize that



the ambulances were needed for an emergency and thought that they were only going to make sick call. Menzi immediately gave the ambulances to Macri who continued on up to the area where the casualties were, only to find out that the original casualties had already been taken care of by a collecting station of the other division. Since our ambulance did not know about the casualties at our own aid station Macri took one of the B company ambulances and picked up the casualties there and sent them right back to the clearing station. It's a good thing that I happened to send Macri out afterward or there really would have been a mess. As it was all casualties were taken care of in excellent time so we had nothing to worry about. It just gives you an idea how easily well thought out plans may go awry in this man's army. The actual difficulty arose when the ~~10th~~ ambulance sgt. gave instructions to the ambulance driver who told the ambulance assistant nothing except that he was to go into Renzi's station and ask for two ambulances for us. It proves that if you want to be sure that things go properly every man involved in a situation must be told what the situation is.

Yesterday I started February Hill, by Victoria Lincoln. I imagine that you have read some reviews on it. I think that it caused a furor when it first came out. Once I got interested in it I read until midnite to finish it. Actually it is not an exceptionally good book, but it is interesting. I believe you may remember that it is the story about a lovable harlot, the mother of four children, wife of a Harvard educated drunk, and the daughter of a tough old harlot, likewise loveable. I believe the reviews discussed its similarity to tobacco road with a northern setting. The boys in the company have been asking for the book "With the green cover because they heard that it had a lot of sex in it and plenty of dirty words. Does that give you an insight in the type of reading that the average man in the army is looking for? Actually I believe that they are disappointed in it because the sex scenes probably don't go into sufficient detail for them. I ~~10th~~ know that I have read many books which were much filthier. However, the fact that they are merely reading a book is worthwhile, since most of the men in the company say that they can't keep their attention hinged to one thing long enough to read a book. Of course, they can play cards all day long, but that doesn't count.

Well, sweets, that's about all for now. I probably won't have the opportunity of writing anything in the AM as I expect to be busy, but I'll catch up again sooner or later.

All my love, dear,

Walt.

Chip ✓

Leo ✓

Louise ✓

Edie

Erw

Gunny

Soph