



Feb. 28, 1943

JEFFERSON BARRACKS
MISSOURI

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Headquarters 31st T.S.S.

Dear Nannie -

With all your glands and membranes and every-thing, I could excuse you, as hard as it might be, for me, if you should fail once to write me punctually, especially since I let you down so continuously. I suspect that a lot of your troubles are from too much activity so why not try taking it easy even when you feel O.K.?

The very idea of your giving a supper party is preposterous. Japs from the East say such events never occur any more, and my friend the horticulturalist from Stanford, who was discharged yesterday from the army, is warned by his grand dowagers of the San Francisco peninsula that they can no longer have friends in to meals. The freezing apparatus sounds like lots of fun but ^{can} you ~~have~~ buy enough to fill it up and feed yourself at the same time? To tell the truth your party menu doesn't impress me much. Listen to this - for chow today we had rich chicken noodle soup - creamed chicken, asparagus, Lyonnaise potatoes, solid head lettuce orange jello, ice cream, cookies coffee. Yesterday we had delicious fillet of sole with tartar sauce. Only my gripe is that there is not enough time to eat. We now all sit down together at each table, and rise from each table together. No one wants to be last so they gulp their food faster than ever. I am always last.

and never finish. When the glances of my table mates become too threatening I jam my jaws and voluminous pockets with such remnants of food as are feasible and rise stumblingly after my scornful companions. Usually there is a slight stomach ache from swallowing the morning's icy milk in one breath. But my friends can swallow a platter of food in one breath and think nothing of it.

I received the cutest Valentine - only one - and have been trying to think ever since where it could have come from. Also on the evening of the 20th I spent the longest time on the phone in conversation with Western Union trying to invent a birthday greetings that didn't sound like a birthday greetings but every effort was censured. I suppose that supper bridge was by way of celebrating a birthday.

As for me, Military Intelligence no longer holds first place in desire for urgency of action, but a presentable request for discharge!! This will undoubtedly shock and disappoint you - but it does not mean that you will immediately have one less soldier boy to write to. Nevertheless the necessity for my taking quick action is urgent. The army at the moment is not at all picayunish about post-discharge employment. They are anxious to be rid of the older men - at least here - where the thousands of youngsters pouring in make everything too crowded. However according to the latest order, all requests must be in before May 10th. After that the Army will arrange with the U.S. Employment Agencies to see that all older men do get jobs such as coal mining or road building etc. I've been scurrying around



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and have already returned my questionnaire from Lockheed Vega in Burbank Cal where I have been recommended. Also thru a friend in U.S. Coastal and Geodetic Survey in Washington I have offered my services there, and I am waiting for suggestions from other friends both in Washington and California. But it has to be more than suggestions - there must be a notorized letter of offer of employment in some essential industry before one may apply for discharge. Essential industry fortunately, has at present a very broad definition - and furthermore, it does not mean that one must remain in or even accept the position offered which is presented with application for discharge. In the case of my Stanford friend, he is not going back to any specified employment. He has been recommended as a lecturer on agriculture, and will be self employed in ~~instructing~~ promoting victory gardens. I, for instance, might ask Doubleday Doran for a contract to do a good neighbor book in Central America, but I've not decided yet that I would want such a contract. tho I may ask for it, as I am anxious to have some letter of almost any sort of acceptable employment in my hands as soon as possible. I did have a presentiment that this situation was approaching and ^{hence} that there

was more than one reason for getting to Washington; since, with all the contacts that I might have there it might be possible to get into some work that would mean something to me. Now even a job in Wilmington would bring me nearer to such contacts and I've been thinking that with all your brilliant ideas and efficiency you might for instance be able to recommend me as janitor for the Red Cross, or doorman for Hotel Dupont or as a designer for Dupont chemical containers, or as a decorator for the U.S.O. or what ever you have that seems necessary for the moment.

Thanks for your offer to send on the Chinese checkers. But they probably have more time at an Air Base than at J.B. for such games, as I have never seen anyone - except officers - indulging here.

It may be that I shall be moved tomorrow to Headquarters + Headquarters Squadron as there are great reshufflings going on here. The change will be an improvement in many ways: comfortable barracks near my work instead of a flimsy hut with night-noisy inmates, almost a mile from the Art Section - a chance of getting a rating. (here there is absolutely none) and association with a higher average of inmates. There is a violent discussion on at the next bunk now between a Mormon fundamentalist and an Eastside Jew which is somewhat distracting to letter writing so this must close

Your Tom

P.S. Jim making a bundle of letters + pamphlets which have been over stuffing my locker, and which you will please return among my things. Tom pressing!