

Letter #32 'Somewhere in England'

Wednesday - 8, November '44

Dear Alice, Mother, and Everyone else,

I haven't written a letter to the 'gang', for quite some time now, so, with a lot of good intentions, and not much to write about, I'll see what I can do.

My customary opening, since I have been overseas, is a 'bitch' about the mail situation generally, and mine in particular, so I'll get that off my chest first. Since the 18th of October, I have received mail only two days only; on the 30th I received one V-mail letter, and on the 31st: four V-mail and three regular mail. I have received no mail, as yet, that was addressed to my last address (APO-129), and now that I am at a different location, I look for one to two weeks more without mail. Maybe I will be pleasantly surprised, before then,

I hope. I've often suspected that there exists, somewhere, some sort of a committee, whose sole purpose is to think up new way's to aggravate G. I.'s; at present, they are working on my mail. Seriously, though, I have a tough time, what with censoring and all, trying to write, without the leads or openings that letters offer. To the best of my knowledge, I have stayed within the limits, and not disclosed anything that might be construed as military information, or in any other way, violated security regulations.

Now comes the weather. As usual, it is thoroughly wet, only today we had a new variation; it snowed. Large, damp flakes, that melted the instant they hit the ground, and made this gummy English mud, more so. That was the first snow I have seen, since

that Saturday night I spent at Fort Sheridan, a veteran of two days. That was just a little more than seven months ago, but it seems like that many years.

I wrote a v-mail letter to Fred Rastetter yesterday. According to my calculations, he should be home, on his ten day delay enroute, in the early part of December. I wonder where he will wind up. I am also wondering as to the whereabouts of both John Lehde and George Dubowski. I haven't heard from John since I was in Arkansas, but that is to be expected, especially if he is at sea. As for George, from his last letter, which I received about a month ago, he was expecting to go to the South Pacific, if he has gone there, it will be a long time between letters. But, you can never tell how things

are going to turn out, I may get to drink beer in Berlin with one of them yet, who knows?

I just mailed a copy of a London paper home. I find some of the English viewpoints quite interesting. I haven't read this particular paper, but I imagine with the election news, they may express a few opinions on our politics. Generally, when reading the war news, in an English paper, you would never know that we were at war. The front pages carry headlines that the R.A.F. does this; The Canadian Armies do that, and the English Armies do something else, and, on the back page, in small print, the U.S. rates a couple of paragraphs. I suppose that is only natural, but it seems funny. Not many of the papers have comics, and those that they do have

are very English, and about as flat as the beer here. There are some pretty fair magazines, which I shall mail home when I manage to get them.

The shows here are something like the real old ones used to be at home.

They run a series of slides and advertisements, for about ten minutes, between pictures, just like you'd expect to see in the backwoods of Minnesota. The admission prices determine what part of the theater you sit in. The farther toward the front you sit the less it costs. You may smoke in the show, and the backs of the seats in front of you are equipped with ash-trays, for convenience. The prices of the shows I went to were 1', 1¹/₆, & 2' (20, 30, & 40 cents), and they are usually quite crowded. They show double features here, too,

either two American pictures, or one of each.

I was on a pass last Saturday night and spent the night at an American Red Cross Service Club, where, for the first time since I was home, I slept between sheets, and it was quite a novelty. I slept like the proverbial log, and had a good breakfast, in the morning. The Red Cross sure has some wonderful set-ups, for the soldier, in this country. There is a real nice Service Club near camp here which I have not as yet become familiar with. I did go there for a few minutes last night, and had a snack on my way to a pub.

Three and a half hours have elapsed since I started this letter, what with the noise of a poker, and

a blackjack game in progress, and all the other interruptions that keep distracting me. I see by the number at the top of this page, that though I didn't have much to say, I've taken plenty of space to say it, and the time to close, has come.

Trusting that this finds you all in good health, and so forth, and hoping to ~~re~~ receive your letters, which I know are enroute, I remain,

Missing you all,
Johnny