

A LETTER FROM: Lt. Horace R. Hansen 0-1325088
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c/o Postmaster, New York City, New York.

Germany
November 19, 1944

Dear Folks and Friends,

My new assignment has provided a range of activity beyond anything I had expected. Most of my time is spent in Courts Martial work which requires frequent roving of the front lines, the rest in such things as legal aid and, recently, soldier voting.

The army certainly deserves some credit for its nursemaid solicitude of G.I. voting rights. If any soldier on this side didn't vote it was only because he didn't want to or wasn't eligible. In early August he was provided with an application form for a state absentee ballot whether he wanted it or not. There were bulletins, posters and announcements in messlines giving him all the dope and if he wanted more the Soldier Voting officer in his company had manuals, ABC style, to give him the requirements of his state.

If he chose to use the service, he got personal attention from the officer in executing form, which then were taken by high priority air mail to the states. The ballot was brought to him and returned the same way. If the ballot was not received by October 1st, he could vote by a furnished Federal ballot if he was from one of the twenty authorizing states. Incidentally, those from the other twenty-eight states, including Minnesota, did some very dark brown griping. However, almost all state ballots were received and sent back by the end of September.

You will never appreciate what an active, if strange, interlude of battle this voting business was unless you understand what happens when Gen. Eisenhower orders something to be second in priority to the tactical situation. To give you some idea I closed my files yesterday and had 8 inches of paper just covering administration. And if Willie writes his Congressman, who feels investigative, we can show him Willie's signature of receipt in the Company Dugout.

I've ceased being curious about German civilians. At first I wondered about their attitude toward us and looked for signs of it, but that was like looking at the Mona Lisa -- I've never been able to make up my mind if she is smiling pleasantly or smirking insolently.

The civilians we see are the stubborn ones who refused the orders of both their own and our armies to move to the East. They are mostly farmers, coal miners and small factory workers. It is verboten for our troops to "fraternize" or talk with them, for security reasons, but I've talked with our Civil Affairs people and Medical Officers who have treated them, and they sum up their attitude like this. In this section of Germany, the people are deeply religious Catholics. They cooperated with the Nazis because they had to, but resented their religion-like dogma and hated them for their persecution of the priests who attempted to correct injustice and opposed their anti-social decrees. There is some corroboration of these statements in the fact that these people defied strong orders from both sides and a lot of shelling in staying put on their property. However, they calculated correctly that their own soldiers would not shoot them and that we would abide by the Rules of Land Warfare and not drive them out.

At any rate, they are here and very much in our hair. We know there are some among them who spot for their artillery, snipe at us and transmit information about us by concealed radios. It is impossible to watch all the activities of each of them, so the best we can do is to enforce strictly our rules for their conduct. Most important of these is that they must post a list on the door of each dwelling of

all occupants, with complete identification; must stay indoors from dusk to dawn and observe absolute blackout; and must also stay indoors during daylight, with the exceptions that they can work the land adjoining their homes and tend cattle, and that one person from each dwelling can obtain a pass for one hour a day to shop for food. Those who are outside are carefully watched by the newly-recruited Dutch Army, our M.P.'s our Intelligence Corps, Civil Affairs, and probably others. So we all shun and watch them, and are most suspicious of those who say they are glad to see us. We expect no indications of welcome, and get none. Our troops are thoroughly educated on the idea that we are here as "conquerors and not liberators", and that it is a serious Courts Martial offense to fraternize or plunder.

Our firmness with them is free of oppression and full of our typical fairness. They have even stated their surprise at the fact that we have not taken their homes, furnishings or cattle for our needs. They are not even forced to work for us, but may if they wish, for pay -- $1\frac{1}{2}$ marks per hour for common labor and more for skilled work. In fact, this treatment must even seem strange to them, knowing as they do that some of their possessions were taken from occupied countries and that there are millions of slave laborers working for Germany.

Those who work for us are mining coal, repairing power and communication lines, clearing debris in the towns or rebuilding roads. They are guarded but know they can quit at any time with impunity. I've watched them working. They are neither sullen nor cheerful, but they are industrious and stay on the job. Some of them are given our regular army rations, in addition to pay, when there is insufficient food at farms or shops.

Mines, factories and warehouses are guarded by our troops to prevent pillaging by German and Dutch civilians. Under Rules of Land Warfare, captured military stocks are ours, but civilian goods must be credited. One of our units, for example, can obtain coal stoves, coal, or beds for a hospital only by requisition. A record of the amount and value is kept for the final accounting.

Our troops often discuss among themselves this policy toward German civilians and property. First reactions often are that we are too soft, that the Russians would handle the thing on an eye for an eye etc. basis. However, on more reflection, they usually wind up with the realization that the purpose of this war is to wipe out oppression and that as the chief espousers of individual rights we must practice what we preach. I know that our troops are inwardly proud of our standards and the examples we are setting, and they are satisfied that our policy toward these civilians meets military necessities.

Going thru our rear areas in Germany, the only civilians to be seen are farmers tending crops and cattle, work gangs along roads and people looking out from windows and doorways. The latter are the Mona Lisas I mentioned. There will be an elderly man leaning against a doorway, a woman resting on her elbows in an open window, or a girl carrying milk pails suspended from a neck yoke. Some will look toward you but often will avoid your eyes. Others will look at you with a sort of intent stare and a half smile, as if in an attempt to be somewhat pleasant.

Most of these people are women of assorted ages, with some elderly men and small children. The women are chiefly evident, if not from number, by their window sitting. In these towns, as all over Europe, sidewalks are flush with the house fronts and window sills are about waist high. The windows are hinged and open inward, so when you look in you feel like you are already halfway inside. Women will sit by the hour, either on the sill, or on a chair inside, with their arms on the sill, just looking.

On the street there will be a constant parade of vehicles and tanks and marching troops going to the front. Here and there on the sidewalk, our men will be laying or repairing communication wire, guarding equipment or merely waiting for something. The women (some are young and not bad looking) will watch them with apparent interest, but the men on the sidewalk, not a dozen feet away, carry on their work with pretended unconcern. They might look the women over with a practiced eye, but there will be no exchange of greetings, or even slight smiles. What they will be thinking and talking about, besides the obvious, are things like poisoned beer, stilettos in their backs and what rhymes with witches. Anywhere else west of the border these men would like to be on the other side of the window sills.

Going thru dozens of these towns many times for over a month now, I have yet to see a smiling German face, a greeting of any kind, or for that matter a look of hatred. Whatever their attitude toward us may be, it is well concealed, for it certainly cannot be indifference.

We do not expect greetings -- if we have been spoiled that way -- because we do not consider Germans to be liberated people. We know instead that we are in an outlaw country where something treacherous and violent can happen any minute. While Hitler can no longer force his will upon them, for which some may be grateful, they are not overlooking that our shells have caused plenty of death and damage, and that an unpleasant reckoning is soon at hand. We sense that obvious feeling. Besides that our men know their historical propensities, at least in the immediate past, and if that were not enough, they have seen towns shelled promiscuously every day where German artillerymen know these civilians are living and where there are no military targets.

So our attitude toward these people as a mass is one of disdain, but not exactly hatred. None of us could find it in himself to be vindictively mean to these ~~unpleasant~~ and inoffensive people as individuals. But as a mass, so far as we are concerned, they are all potentially treacherous and the anti-fraternizing order is hardly necessary.

The hamlets and towns around here range from a small cluster of buildings to good sized places. You hardly leave one place when you are in the next. The area once was fairly dense with workers at the coal mines, small factories and brick kilns. The country side is mostly flat and is efficiently cultivated. There is some rolling ground but no really high hills, few ravines or abrupt banks, and many patches of woods. Some of these woodlots are pine, thickly planted in check rows. There is a good network of roads, mostly of well-built macadam.

The destruction of towns is the worst I have seen since the area from the beach to St. Lo. With few exceptions, houses and buildings are made of brick or concrete blocks with tile roofs. A lot of places look like nothing more than trash dumps, but generally the bigger part of the structure will be standing, with all or part of the roof or a wall gone, or at least with holes punched into it or the windows blown out. All high structures, like church steeples and concrete water towers that were useable as observation posts by either side, are all lopped off or chewed up from direct cannon fire.

And the destruction is continuing. Every day, and mainly at night when we use fewer air patrols, the enemy shells these towns with heavy cannon, probably railway guns. They do it strictly from map data, with no observation, and without pattern. Artillery men call it "screwball tactics". The purpose is simply to harass, with the hope of catching us by surprise. It does us little, if any, harm, but is constant changing the appearance of these towns. Yesterday, for example, I noticed the absence of a corner drug store.

Here we are inside the Seigfried Line. Contrary to schematic drawings I have seen in newspapers and magazines, it is not a line at all. Only where the terrain is flat and offers no possibilities for traps or strong points do we find a "line" of dragons teeth and barbed wire. The main parts of the line make the best use of natural obstacles, strengthened by forts, to canalize and funnel our forces into defiladed or open ground where we will run into mine fields and fire from the flanks. They have organized the ground in this fashion for a depth of thirty miles in some places.

The structures most in evidence are the blockhouses, camouflaged to look like natural grassy mounds, haystacks or small low cottages. They are situated for mutual support so that an attack on one will be countered by flanking fire from others nearby. There had to be carefully planned simultaneous attacks on several at a time to knock them out. Our assault tactics were so successful that the Krauts soon regarded them as death traps and used hasty dugouts and foxholes instead. Some of these blockhouses were used only for rest shelters, drying rooms and storehouses.

To make sure none of these would be remanned, as they sometimes were at first, our engineers systematically blew them up. I looked over some of the bigger ones. They were twenty to thirty feet square with walls and cover about five feet thick. It must have required a lot of TNT as the huge chunks of concrete were thickly reinforced with basket-like series of heavy steel rods. Some of the covers were further reinforced with big "I" beams laid tight together. They were located in such innocent places as a farmyard, a tip of woods, a natural bank, a cultivated field, a cemetery or a park.

The break into the Seigfried Line was followed by a long holding period during which, as you now know, everything was waiting for Antwerp to be cleared and preparation for the attack which has now been started. This waiting was hard. Every other day there would be a new rumor that we would push off the next morning. The weather was continually rotten and it looked like no air support when we did start. Wallowing around in cold mud and getting rain and even snow in your mess kit didn't help either.

One battalion commander told me it was about like his experiences in the last war, with a few refinements. There was constant exchange of shelling, sniping, patrols and raids. Neither side moved for more ground, but the idea was to keep the enemy rocked back on his heels to dispel any notions of attack.

There were some hot sectors up on this line where it was flirting with death to ever be above ground in an upright position. In one spot the Krauts were looking down our throats from the top of a high water tower, ruggedly constructed of thick concrete. Anything that moved in our area caught fire, and quickly. Our armor piercing shells, artillery and even dive bombing failed to knock it down. Finally this battalion commander I mentioned organized a raiding party armed with 135 pounds of TNT that infiltrated thru the enemy lines at night and finished it off. One of the party later told me that it took four hours of quiet crawling to get up there. The guards were quickly choked and stabbed. The charge was set with a three minute fuze, the party kept low getting away to a safe distance, then bolted back in the confusion of the biggest explosion around there before or since. Some prisoners taken later said there were an officer and two men on top when it happened.

The only approach to one sector was up a trail where a stretch about 50 yards long was under enemy observation. They took a crack at every vehicle going thru there with anti-tank guns. To make it worse this stretch was slightly upgrade and muddy. The reconnaissance car I use has a high silhouette, so every time I went up there I left it behind and borrowed a Jeep. The idea was to get a good running start, keep low and bat it hard thru the open spot. I don't think I ever cursed the mud so much as when it made the wheels spin at that place. The men on the other side of the gap had a habit of congratulating everyone who got across. Finally one night they sandbagged the gap high enough to conceal a Jeep and the game was over.

The worst stretch of this sort was the approach to a flank position. Here the ground was absolutely flat and open, with no concealment of any kind. Two companies were out there, one dug in around a hamlet of about twenty buildings, the other in a patch of woods adjoining. The Krauts were in a long finger of woods running as close as 100 yards in front of this hamlet where I had to see some officers. They had observation over the entire no-man's-land between the lines. This was covered with our mines except for the narrow dirt road which was about a half mile long in the open and the only way into the hamlet.

The Jeep driver pushed the speed to the limit permitted by the many dishlike holes from mortar shells and I watched that ominous finger of woods and tried to keep contact with my seat. I noticed two bursts in the woods on our side and one near the hamlet next to our road. My impulse was strong to turn around and get out of there until it was more quiet, but turning around without running off into the mine fields would be a slow process and make us a good target. So we had to keep going.

We made the hamlet safely and lost no time getting into a basement. As we expected, a few mortar shells came in promptly and I could feel the lack of welcome for having brought in a target. Tho nothing was said it was easy to see that these troops were fed up with sitting there and taking it for so long.

The way men feel in a prolonged static defense can be summed up in a few words. The constant shelling wears their nerves down, makes them jumpy. When a man gets ^{to} that way he can normally relieve it by relaxing or moving, but here he can do neither. He must sit there in his foxhole and watch for enemy movement all day and take turns at a listening post at night. He thinks endlessly about enemy raids or attacks, where the next shell might land, and getting dry and warm sometime.

The hamlet was badly hacked up and most of the men were in foxholes and dugouts surrounding it. A few ~~were~~ were in basements. In one, an artillery liaison party of five men had a fire and were frying some shell-killed cow and potatoes from the garden. They were speculating on how it would taste after weeks of "C" rations. Several other men were taking advantage of the warmth by attempting to get some much needed sleep. It would be only a rest at best because a heavy mortar section was firing from just behind the building and enemy shells were coming in every once in a while.

I went to a sniper's position on the second floor of one building where there was good observation on the enemy position in the woods. I looked thru his binoculars for some time before I was able to pick up a Kraut walking along, swinging his mess-kit, in a spot where the trees were thin. He told me that he switched off with his buddy every hour and that between them they rarely saw more than a dozen a day, altho there were several hundred there. Both had special rifles with telescopic sights which were carefully zeroed in for range on their assigned sector. Sometimes one would fire while the other checked results with the binoculars.

In the rear area next to the front lines there was little activity except sporadic artillery. No one minds howitzer shelling too much because it has a distinctive first whizzing, then whining sound as it comes in and there is always time to hit the ground and duck the flying fragments. It's the 88 mm shells that are bad. All you hear is a "fft-bang", happening as quickly as it would take you to say it. These shells travel faster than a rifle bullet. I was as close to these as I ever want to be when once I was standing at the edge of a firebreak in a pine forest and two of them came thru there skimming the ground and exploded at a little crossroads about 150 yards away.

One of the peculiar sights you see are shell-shocked rabbits. The farmers apparently raised a lot of them around here and every once in a while you will see one with its ears bent and drooping. When it is quiet they will cower down in a corner somewhere. When there is any kind of a loud bang they will run incoherently in all directions. Either way their ears hang straight down.

The cows seem absolutely imperturbable. They might raise their heads with slight curiosity at an explosion, then go right on grazing. There were a lot of them here, about one third still upright. So many were killed by shells that there was fresh meat always available for G.I.'s in a butchering mood.

There is time in the rear of a static situation for such things. In one big barn I saw some men butchering three cows at one time. The equipment was there. They had them hung up and were doing a neat job, even to hauling away the offal in a wheelbarrow and burying it. One of the amateur butchers was clowning with a high silk hat he had found in the house and was wielding his trench knife, with gusto. He was working on a heifer and the fellow next to him with the big cow was griping about the heifer being his rightfully because he saw it get knocked off first. Anyway, there were a lot of fresh steaks for a lot of men for a change.

The sky was clear one day and I finally saw two buzz bombs flying at about 1500 feet. It is a weird and fascinating sight. There is a quivering, yellow-red flame almost as long as the bomb, shooting out above its tail. It appears to fly true and straight at a high speed despite the uncertain putt-putt sound of the motor. I stopped to watch these two but they kept going strong until they disappeared in the distance.

Usually we only hear these things as they seem to use more of them in overcast. And this is also their favorite weather for daylight strafing. The plane can keep low enough to be under effective ack-ack and still not be seen by machine gunners. At any time or place they will suddenly dive under the overcast and strafe whatever they see until it gets too hot, then zoom up again into cloud cover. This happened regularly all over the area. On two Sundays in a row, one plane strafed the streets of the town during the church services being held in a partially-whole beer hall. The congregation was devoutly prone both times and no one was hit.

Just across the border in Holland is a huge castle the Dutch underground is using as a training garrison. Recruits came there in large groups, were given a short period of training, G.I. clothing and sent up to the front lines. Their only distinction from our men is the orange coat-of-arms stenciled on their helmets. I have seen them training with an eagerness that is refreshing to watch. They are proud to wear our uniform but are humble in our presence. Their fighting spirit is high and our men are glad to have them alongside them on the line. They haven't had the real test of battle yet, but their earnest, disciplined manner indicates to us that they may make the best free forces in the field.

One night the General gave a "Forty-Niner" party, for officers, far to the rear in a Dutch town. The burgomaster donated the use of the casino and our committee, with the help of the natives, transformed it into a first rate American night club with all the trimmings. A date was arranged for each officer, either an army nurse or an English-speaking Dutch girl. I took a hot bath at the coal mine showers, slicked up in my cleanest OD's, and called for the nurses with five other officers in a 2½ ton truck. The floor of the truck was filled with about a foot of nice soft straw so we had a sort of hayride thrown in.

The party was the nicest experience I've had anywhere on this side. We had the Division swing band and a good dance floor, U.S.O. entertainers, private tables, wine, cognac, hamburgers and cake. The place looked and felt like one of our nicer spots back home. It kept going almost all night. Everyone had a swell time. For a long suffering group of foxholers it was a surprisingly well-mannered affair. The only sour part was taking the nurses back to their muddy field hospital. It was drizzling and seemed an over gloomy ending. But the nurses were not sorry for themselves, if I was, and were still very happy dates when we said goodnight.

This is the only officers' party we've had, but our General continued the setup for the enlisted men. Also he had arranged movies in a Dutch theatre for officers and

men which they could attend when their outfit was relieved from the line and they could be spared from a reserve position. You will never imagine what terrific pleasure it is for a man to attend a dance or a movie fresh from a muddy foxhole and shell-fire. You have to see their crazy delight to appreciate the metamorphosis. For example, at one show there was a sound movie "Community Sing". Back in garrison they hated these shorts and always gave them a strong chorus of razzberries. Here they eat it up, cooperating even to singing the parts for the ladies in high falsetto voices, and all of it volubly.

The weirdest part of static defense is at night. All of us in administration are required to spend 24 hour periods on the front line at regular intervals. I don't mind running around up there in the daytime, but like all other soldiers, I hate it at night. No one sleeps much, if at all, because there is constant activity, most of which is seems is designed to keep the other side awake.

The variety of night noises, intended or otherwise, is completely bizarre. A line officer and I lay out there one night checking each other on the things we thought we heard from the German lines. These are some of the things we agreed on. A wagon was moving around and scraping in the trees. A few burp gun bursts (German machine pistols with a high cyclic rate of fire). Men laughing as if they were having a party. Women's voices and laughter -- probably a radio turned up loud, but it sounded very natural. Sawing of wood. A loud squeaking, like a door on rusty hinges. Blowing of whistles in short and long blasts. Most of the noises were utterly goofy, meaningless and the more strange because of the silence on our side. The only thing that made much sense was an occasional mortar burst. The colored flares they sent up may have made sense, but it didn't seem so because no movement occurred.

If all this is done to foul up reports from our listening posts, it is futile. If the purpose is to frighten our men, it certainly does no more than annoy them & they dismiss it as childish, screwball tactics.

I spent one night in a battalion command post. It was a good sized dugout covered with a heavy pine logs, and over that several feet of dirt, which was well camouflaged. It was outfitted with a coal stove and furniture from a wrecked house. There was a rug on the floor, several tables, one a shiny mahogany piece, chairs with cushions, and an overstuffed armchair.

There was so much activity I didn't sleep all night. The telephone was ringing regularly and reports from the companies on enemy activity were coming in every few minutes. This was the nerve center and everything that happened went thru the operations officer. Knowing all positions and the terrain thoroughly, he alerted the proper outfit and called for machinegun, mortar or artillery fire at the right place. Night time made no difference because every square yard of that front was plotted for instant fire.

The more interesting phase was the intelligence work. This officer had several patrols out and was checking their comings and goings on a telephone time-schedule and getting their reports on any changes in the enemy line. One patrol of three men came in personally to report at 0400. They had been out crawling around in the German lines for 5 hours. Their faces were blackened and they were mud from head to foot.

They had found two new machine gun emplacements. That was the most important, but least interesting part of their report. They had stepped on a trip wire which set off several white flares and immediately caught machine gun fire. No one was hit and they quickly crawled into a zig-zag trench. In a moment Krauts were everywhere, running from their foxholes to gun positions. Two groups of them came right next to the trench, they said, and "we thought they were going to get us so we let them have it with our Tommies and ran the hell out of there."

None of the three was over 21 years. They were worn out but calm. They pointed out the exact positions on the airphoto and the officer plotted them in. It was a good job and they were invited to stay there and get dried out. They were grateful, and in a few minutes were curled up on the rug and sleeping soundly. It amazed me at first that they could sleep. But after all, they had worked hard for a long time and the risky experience was just part of a regular job. They were in a warm, safe place enjoying a complete relaxing letdown.

All this was the sort of thing we had over and over again in that tiresome, damnable static defense.

In the middle of one morning a few days ago the clouds rolled away and we saw the sun. It was almost too good to be true. In a little while we heard that good old steady rumble. The bombers were coming and the attack was finally on.

I didn't go forward until the next day. It looked like St. Lo. The ground was all churned up, trees were flat, villages were ground down to brick heaps. All the cattle were dead, there wasn't a living thing anywhere.

I had gone up to see some officers in a field artillery battalion. I found the command post with difficulty in an abandoned German shelter 40 feet under ground. It had a winding tunnel of stairs, timbered up like a mine entrance, the best cover I've seen yet.

It was a relief to get down in the place. The massed artillery there was the most and heaviest I've heard or felt in one area. When all those guns let loose, the whole countryside shook and the roars were deafening.

This particular outfit was in close support of the advancing infantry troops a short way ahead. They were pouring it on for all they were worth. In the relative quiet of this deep dugout they were shifting fire to requested targets, and massing it by coordinating the guns so that the shells from all guns would land on one target at the same instant. There had to be a separate calculation of the correct azimuth and range for each gun to each target, but it took only seconds. Each gun crew figured the proper moment to pull the lanyard and the timing was perfect.

Our idea is to catch the enemy in number above the ground by surprise, and also to shock him sufficiently to keep him down while our riflemen advance. The Krauts often do the opposite, lobbing them in here and there one at a time. This is not effective enough to keep us from moving. The Colonel C.O. there told me that we have a big superiority of artillery and that it is probably impossible for the Krauts to lay down concentrations.

Despite this, movement is slow. Since that first brief sunshine the weather has been steadily getting worse and it is raining most of the time. While we have beaten them in the air, water, hedgerows and forts, we still have to beat them in the mud.

We are looking forward to the promised eggs and turkey for Thanksgiving a few days from now. The weather won't permit us to think about anything so pleasant as a quick end to this thing, and somehow it now looks further away than ever. But, no one is disheartened, because we all have the feeling that a few more months will do the kind of complete job that will prevent a repeat performance. Since the beach, not one soldier anyone has heard of ever doubted we would win all the way. In this final phase we have more stuff than ever to throw at them and, while it may be slow, the end is very certain. So I can say and wish sincerely --

A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

H.R.H.

P.S's: I've received a little heat lately from some friends who haven't heard from me. I'm sorry for the oversight, especially since I'm using this expedient. When I started this thing suddenly and whimsically while leaving the states, I made up a list and added more during spasms of memory. To those of you who receive this, I hope you will regard it as the personal letter I intend it to be. To those I have overlooked, I hope you will forgive me -- and please give your address to my friend who mails it for me. He is George W. Jacobson, c/o Group Health Mutual, Inc., 2635 University Avenue, St. Paul, Nestor 4896.

To the Folks - In good health and doing well. Received two packages -- Many thanks. I was with the officer in the clipping until a short time ago and he is now somewhere just south of us. It's nice to hear from you so often. V-Mails get here in 8 to 10 days.

Lt. Gordon Hazen - I assumed you had gone far away when two of my letters were returned. It's good to be in contact again. Best of luck with the Japs.

Col. Thos. Sands - Finally in the right job and I like it. I appreciated receiving your letter.

Swing Shift Kazella - You are more prolific than I am. Keep it up -- I love it.

Andy, Bud, Louie, Florence, and the remainder with broken arms -- Thanks for the gossip and good wishes. Still haven't heard what happened to Ferrick. Interested in clippings (from another source) that Johnny and Eddy were there and that Jim, Jr. got his wings. Bill, do you realize how inadequate you are making me feel? Is there any causal connection between your marriage and the discontinuance of your communique?

John McConnelloug - I've been corresponding with Homer, the lucky stiff.

Brother Dick - Glad to hear you are over the malaria and are 1-A again. I hope it doesn't mean that you return too soon. Anyway, best of luck.

Lt. Highberg - It was a pleasant surprise to hear from you again. Still haven't received the book. I remain uninvolved in the sense you suggest.

Lt. Benge - Even as nice as you say it is, I wouldn't want to be back there.

Naomi and Burnie - Your lives, jointly and severally, sound as interesting, busy and pleasant as always. The adventures of the B's makes good reading anytime and I was delighted with that long dilly of a letter Naomi -- and with the many V-Mails from you Burnie. I look forward to opening that morale box. PM would be swell -- nice of you to think of it.

Frank Scherman - It's too far from here and such info is verboten. I'm sorry I can't help, Frank. Good luck in your work and give my best wishes to the Judge.

Lt. Keith Evans - Watta life. I admire and envy you. Bumped into your pal, Lt. Gooss, walking around in the blackout here. I recognized his voice first. He has had some rough experiences but is O.K. and chipper as ever. It was our first meeting since O.C.S.

The Michaels - Thanks for the snapshots of the boys and give them my greetings. Too bad Harold couldn't finish school, but it may be over before he finishes training. Let's hope.

Helen Olson - O.K., next time it's Lupos. Send more cartoons.

Mose Levine - Whether insurance or politics, you missed your calling.

Bea and Burt - Your nice, long letter didn't even hint it, but the surprise is gone because my homing males tell me I'm a cinch to be an uncle again.

Judge Loevinger - Thanks for the news and comment - and congratulations.

Dutch Strout - The clippings and long letters were just what I would have ordered. Please send more when you find time. No duplication to date. Plumb forgot Art Tanem. Will you get his address for George?

Dick Archer - It's always good to hear from you, Dick. I'm terribly sorry to hear about your daughter. It's very nice of you to keep sending me the Digest -- many thanks.

George Feller - I'm afraid I won't be able to bear all the prosperity you tell me is coming. Much obliged, and I'll write V-Mails as soon as it arrives. Say hello and thanks to the gang.

The Engwaldsons - Wish I could have been along on that pheasant hunt.

Joe Donahue - Your letter 11/9 is the first dope I've gotten on local elections and the other happenings you covered. Thanks, Joe, and I hope you will forgive this shot gun correspondence. It's the best I can do and halfway keep up, so help me.

Fred Hall - Received Your V-Mail and the department paper which I enjoy very much. I'm looking forward to those Monday night sessions one of these days. Give my regards to the boys around there.

Judge McNally - This is to reward your modesty and conservatism with a repeated congratulation.

Fred Eiden - Wish I could give you my notions on the peace, but guess I probably shouldn't. Anyhow, your comments are solid and I agree with most of them.

Miss Hartnett - Thanks for the paper. A Minneapolis lawyer is reading it now and said he hoped that Rev. Soltau's troubles are not trivial.
