

March 17th. 1944

Dear George,

I am in receipt of your 3/17 letter, and am glad to hear from you after a three day lapse. None of your mail, other than the letters we both expected to be, were censored. I am surprised to learn of your friend having his mail censored; I never heard of this here before.

George, this letter of yours, staving me in the face, is definitely not what I like to read. Knowing myself, I know that if you write in such a vein, you must be feeling pretty low.

I don't know, I can't picture it somehow. I have many times heard that the army was a great leveler. But George, this may be true of the average man in the

service, but you're not average. I don't have to soft-soap you; you know what I've always thought of you. You're above average; even in the army.

Me. I get blue and melancholy but I never stay that way very long. I always manage to snap out of it in a hurry. When I recall those low moods I get into, I realize how silly I was. I'm low, have been since yesterday, but when I stop and analyze why I feel so low, I realize that it's nothing; nothing definite, just being in the army.

You're worrying unnecessarily, for all is well at home. Florence writes me that everything is fine. Naturally, she misses you very much. She's a pretty capable woman & I she'll always carry the guidon high. Yes man fiere, I get

blue and melancholy at times, but I have always been able to control it somewhat. Don't let yourself go; I've seen such things get awful rough on fellows. Believe me George, you'll have it rougher than this before it's over.

You know, it's funny; everything has some humor attached to it. When Fran was in New York, I spent almost all my leisure time, writing, planning, and dreaming. I have written you how I compassed myself to a convict planning his escape. George, this business with the mind can really do so much to help me beat these despondent days. You'd be surprised, if you think and plan enough. Things start happening. I'm not the kid you once knew. This may be a bad example,

but perhaps you'll see what I mean -
I never saved money before, how well
you know that. Suddenly, how I changed.
I can't be cheap with Fran, but believe
me I am with everyone and every thing
else, even myself. If I ever come out of
this, I know I'll be happy, happy
with nothing. And as much as I alcohol
all this, I am grateful to the best
kaleidoscopic view of life ~~in~~ only
the army can present. Deep down, I
thank the fates I have been subjected
to this. I'll be all the better for it.
So will you.

It's a game 99, the hardest
game you'll ever play. You're in
the last inning with the bases
full, tie score, and you're at bat.
Yes, that's what the first four
or five army months can be compared
with. Once you win this game, it
gets a little easier.

I still feel silly. I really

never imagined myself trying to advise or cheer you. You're so much wiser than I. Yet somehow, I have a good introspective idea of what I've been through. It is only that I have been subjected to this for a greater length of time than have you.

Furloughs are great; they're also terrible things. Remember way back to your first piece. It sort of gets into your hide; you just want more and more. Yet the longer you stay away from it, after a certain time, (4th and 5th month) the easier to stay away it gets. Your 1st furlough will be great while it lasts, and you'll feel a renewed vigor for perhaps several months after it, but then it starts all over again. By the time the fourth month rolls around, your desire

to go home again is even more intense than it was the first time. It's a terrible cycle, a tough one to lick. You're actually got to quit your teeth, and blow off lots of steam. Holding back hurts even more.

Flo and Jim are O.K. if you can only think about it, you'll see this for yourself. It isn't the worry and concern for those at home that has you down. You'll especially know this when you get home. No, it's the desire to know you can do as you please, no more brown stuff, formations and regimentation; it's the basic desire of all men - to be free, and home.

George, I don't know how effective, or how wisely I've written. I have been writing this with a sort of nervous energy. I have assumed that you're pretty blue,

And I've probably written in
 vain. You want to see the loved
 ones you left back home, and nothing
 I can say will alleviate that desire.
 Such is not my intent. It is just
 that I have experienced what
 you're going through, although I
 guess to a somewhat lesser degree.
 I honestly think I'm harder, perhaps
 it's just more dumb, or more
 youthful, than you. Whatever it is,
 I am sort of proud of myself.
 You will be too. Our army
 careers may be wasted years, as
 far as our civilian careers go. Yet,
 we'll come out of this, and you
 know as well as I, we'll be all
 the better for it. I am certain
 you'll win out, and I'm dead
 certain you'll be back home some
 day.

Keep punching George. I'm punching,
and believe me, I'm fed up - to
the ears. What's more, I don't kid
myself. Bombardiers never seldom
return from combat, and I'll swear
as Satan see combat when I'm
commissioned. You're doing O.K., and
so is Flo & Jim. Now's the time to
punch out blindly, just for the
sake of punching. -

Well, I've wrapped myself
all up. I've been trying my
hardest to give you some straight
dope. I hope I've helped a little.
Don't bog down G.G., you'll
always come out on top.

This letter is rather
lengthy all ready, but several
things more must be told, if
you're to know what goes with
me. In fact, I feel like letting my

hair down.

The outfit ships next Wednesday to Las Vegas; I think I am to ^{be} left behind once more. I've been informed this by the secretary of the Allergy clinic. It seems all my allergy reports and latest 64 that I took last week have been lost. Some of the boys saw the new shipping order, and I'm not on it.

I guess it's what I really want. Yet, I'm in a dither. I once read that when a lion roars, the smaller animals become so frightened that it isn't unusual for them to cringe with fear right at his head. I must hear those roars. I almost feel like getting all this over with. Either get my 25 missions in, and return home, or get it over with fast.

If I thought I could get another 6 months
in at this post, I'd like it, but 2-3
weeks here and there seem so
picaresque.

Fran is definitely happy over
the news, and I'm sure Mom and
Pop will be too. There's no getting
away from it, Fran has sure
turned out to be a great help. I
regret not getting hitched long ago.

I hope you don't go through
the same kind of infiltration course
that I did; it's pretty rough. You'll
really begin to appreciate life after
that experience.

You had a writer friend
named DeAngelis, is't-ce pas? He
just had a short story published in
April's Esquire. I'm certain that's the
guy you knew. 31 yrs. old. born
in Mamaroneck, N.Y. newspaper writer.
Keep plugging, B.G. we'll
drink that champagne yet! —
always Bob

Ale R. Stoff Sg. 1st SAA B
Santa Ana, Calif.



Pvt. George Stoff

Co. A. 735 AWY BN OPM

Camp P lauche,

New Orleans, La.

