

November 20, 1943

Dear Stanley:

I am sorry to be answering your letter of Aug 31 so late, especially since it was so interesting and I was so glad to receive it.

The first six months of my Army life consisted pretty much of jumping around here and there at the sound of whistles, bugles, and orders, but now it has leveled off to something a great deal more calm and steady. From my previous letter you knew that I was in 138th Headquarters Company and you questioned some source as to what kind of work was handled by men in that company. The source of your inquiry was pretty accurate since you told me that Hq Co. covers anything such as ditch digging, driving trucks, or office work. Your assumption though that I was doing office work was wrong. At that time I was taking part in some intensive training which was a review of a little of the basic training I had back in the States. Before this training was over and before I could get settled down to the pleasant and stimulating work of ditch digging, I was transferred to Service Co. of the 153rd Inf. which is my present address. As this typewritten letter indicates, I am now working in an office. My life now is a great deal less strenuous and rugged since I am most of the time indoors and can thumb my nose at the weather (I think I better knock on wood when I say that---so here goes . . .) Also I am now enjoying more Army luxuries which weren't easily available at my other place, such as roomier living quarters, a nearby theater, library and icecream post exchange. This is about the first time I can say that my Army existence is much easier than my civilian life. Back home, you know, I had two jobs to take care of. One was working for a living and the other building up a milk business, but in spite of that

it seems to me I had much more leisure time than I have now. I guess it appears that way because as a civilian I had more freedom to do as I pleased. Here, naturally, my freedom is pretty well limited.

From your letter I was glad to know that it was a pleasure for you to meet your wife's mother and sister. From my experience as an onlooker (of course, not a participator) I have learned that pleasant in-laws are almost as important in upholding a marriage as a good wife. I have a vague and disturbing feeling, though, that I may not be saying this so much from my own experiences as from having listened to too many Anthony Good-Will Hours. Anyway, it looks as if your marriage is on a pretty solid foundation and I am glad to know it.

You made me recall ~~XX~~ the time you came to my home in your Chevrolet way back in 1931 or 1932 and invited me to go along with you to California and then probably to Alaska. I was very eager to go, but the circumstances under which I lived made me very undecided. But I was so much on the verge of yielding that a little more coaxing on your part would have seen me giving up my Detroit life and riding in your put-putting Chevy. When you left, I dreamed of the world that was open to you and a closed door to me. Whenever I thought of the different parts of the country you were seeing, I was sorry I wasn't along and when I pictured you having an adventurous life in Alaska, I was anguished by my decision not to go along with you. There wasn't the slightest doubt in my mind that you would see Alaska before I would. The tricks of life are pretty strange though. Unbelievable as it sounds, I arrived there first. There is no need, however, for you to envy me. I am in some part of the Alaskan section of the world, but about the only way I'll be able to give you a good description of it is from home-made movies which a chaplain showed us in our hut a couple of weeks ago. Otherwise I wouldn't be able to tell you much of what Alaska is like. This may sound strange, but I cannot as yet give you my approximate location

until a couple of more weeks. By that time I shall have been here long enough for the censors to allow me to give you the information.

Your request to have me stake out a few claims for you in a placer gold region really puts me in a spot. I am in a region where if I took a pan and went to a stream, I'd look as foolish as a sergeant caught kissing one of the pin-up girls on his wall. About the only gold that can be found around here is in my mouth. The best I can do in the way of staking out claims is to stake out the southeast section of my jaw which holds a juicy portion of my gold molars. I doubt whether gold has ever been found in the region I am in. At least I have never read or heard of it and I doubt whether I ever will. But I don't suppose you need to worry about this disappointing news because it's quite unlikely times will become so tough after the war as you think. At least that's my opinion. The peace-time demand to satisfy civilian needs after the war won't be an ordinary peace-time demand. I believe it will take about four or five years after the war before this heavy demand tapers off to normal. At least I hope so. I am betting my life savings on it. If tough times hit us right after the war, I am going to be caught with my pants down because my mother, Harry, and I have invested a couple thousand in platinum mink and by the time the war is over a couple more thousand in silver-sable and black-cross mink.

It's almost unbelievable that ships which took two or three years to build can now be built in 23 days, even though they are simplified for emergency. This speed gives me the impression that the men building the ships just mill around like people in a speeded up movie. Of course, I know this remarkable speed in production is not attained in this manner, but it's quite possible that faster movements of the men are playing some part and I hope this speed won't affect your health in the same it was affected in Detroit.

Well, it's about time for me to fold this letter up and eagerly
await your reply, and in case I don't get the chance to write you again
before the holidays, here are ~~XX~~ wishes to you and your wife for a very
Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

From your cousin

Ed
