

from  
August

1944

Wednesday, March 1,

Dear Friend,

There's an old "rite" in the Army - When one is depressed for any reason he should "Go see the Chaplain."

Well, I guess maybe he should, but I've always felt that a talk with any one he knew real well, could do as good, or better than a Chaplain.

In my case I guess I'm not really depressed, but I have had things on my mind, and by thinking to my self & holding a quiet moment of prayer I can seem to

find things easier, or lighter.  
But that cannot replace  
the ~~the~~ desire to talk to  
some one human - some one  
you know has an under-  
standing heart, and an interest  
in problems which affect  
you & those about you.

After I received your  
letter the other day, I got  
to thinking and I've decided  
I've been a very neglectful  
person in more ways than  
one.

I'd like to talk a bit  
about my work, how it  
affects my daily life & the  
lives of those about me.

Some of the things I mention,  
which deal with military,  
I hope will be kept

confidential; as I am involved in a job which requires a great deal of safety precautions, both now, and in the near future.

I don't claim to be as well educated as my job calls for, (maybe you've already noticed my bad spelling, for I certainly am out of practice) but I'm here to do all I can at it, for the good of all concerned.

I'm now a flight commander, or leader. I'm responsible for 40 men instead of just 10, as I formerly was, with only my crew to think about.

Due to our system of organization those men look to me for

orders, guidance, or directions, daily. It is my job to see that each gets the most from his training, so that when we get over there, each will have a better chance of coming back.

You know the type of men we have. They're all just boys from the home town - Some good, some bad. And all are subject to mob or crowd psychology just like any other bunch of people put together in one place. If one is sad for wanting a furlough, all soon get that way. If one doesn't like a certain part of his work - all are soon the same way.

I have to, as much as possible, keep them from growing tired of their work. Make them realize how important each phase of their work, here, is to their doing a good job later. In short, I have to set an example that is as near perfect, for the job I have to do, as is possible, for I'm the little man who's leadership must be apparent to them every day. The real leaders are too busy with other jobs that they can't see the men every day & I'm their representative who must do that part for them.

Some one told me about a talk you gave in which you mentioned the physical qualifications of a bomber pilot, & how he must stay in shape for the job he has to do.

I can say he really does need to stay in good shape to do the best he can. —

But much to my regret a great number do not.

I must admit that even I am, at present, a few pounds under weight. but I have a good reason for it. I've had irregular meals, and short periods of sleep in order to carry out as much of my work as possible. And then, it seems I'm never caught up.

But when it comes to

physical endurance, I have it on a great deal of the other boys, because I do not waste my sleep periods drinking & gambling, at the club.

yes, it is as bad as that. out here, the only relaxation from work, or recreation, now known to the men & officers in this air force is "Wine women & Song". That cannot be entirely true, for there are a few who don't fall into that category, but for the vast majority it is.

I suppose the biggest reason for it's being that way is because of the

deceit conditions, not only geographically, but Morally as well. It is easy for me to see how a man can loose himself & get lost in such a way of living, because of those conditions, but it is hard, very hard, for me to find a way of saving him from it.

I have kept myself from it because of my strong desire to see my job through & return to a world of joy & happiness as I once knew - But I'm afraid that will be only a dream world if we can't find a way of stopping this wasting of men's lives.

One, heard a few speak of enjoying themselves, before



going to combat to get "Bumped-off". In my own mind they've already "Bumped themselves off" except for the stoping of life itself.

When they get to the point that there's nothing really worth looking for, or waiting for in life, they've already ceased to live. They seem to be looking only for material things, to satisfy their present desires. Some have heard the slogan "It's for the boys in the Service" so that they think the whole world should hand things to them on a silver tray - so to speak.

I like to look at it in the sense that I haven't much to offer, but the whole world wants & needs my services, that my small bit will help to make it that much better.

I have been disappointed very often, to the point that I can't see why I want to work the way I try to, and time after time, I've said to myself it's much more fun to just quit & have a good time with the other boys. But I can't do that, and I have several reasons for it. One, is because I know that some people have faith in me. A part of that same reason is because

I happen to be in love with a particular young lady you know. And whether I ever win her for my own or not, I want her to know that I'm the kind of man who can take a job & do it well, in spite of any handicaps or temptations which may tend to keep me from being successful.

But I guess the greatest reason is one which has been instilled in me throughout my life, by my mother, & by the things I've learned about men who are really great men. One in particular, who I think

is a worth while example is Paul. - Many times I've heard sermons about him and him to be able to say "I have kept the Faith" As something, I believe, that is a man sized job, for any human to undertake.

In my own individual case it becomes complicated and hard to reason out what is right & what is wrong. My work is one which makes me have to keep faith on many different ways of thinking in fighting a war, I may be doing that which is wrong according to God. But to keep the faith placed in me by my country & the people, when I took my

oath of office as a soldier,  
I have to be a good soldier  
and do those things. In living  
my daily life I have to  
be that good example for  
those under me, and I hope  
I try hard, to please God  
while doing it.

I also keep a faith for  
that young lady I mentioned  
before - Maybe she may  
doubt it - Youth & the  
proverbial distrust between  
lovers may have a greater  
influence on her than I  
have. But I can honestly  
say that I have & do keep  
that faith as strong as I do  
the others. "Being true" to

to one so far away, when in a wilderness of life, such as I am, is really a big job. But I do it, because I've a bigger job which I have to get done first, and I let my big job take up all my time, so that I can avoid any temptation to forget her.

One thing I have failed in, is support to the Church back home. I used to have time to write letters to the young people's league, and let them know I still thought of them, and the real job they had in making this a better world. My work, here, now takes so much of my time that I

Can't find time to do that any more - I suppose that does, to some extent, make them feel I'm drifting from my thoughts of that work which they are doing, and may cause some to think I'm not interested in their doing well at that job.

One of them once wrote in answer to one of my letters that I should write a book on some of the things I brought out - I deeply wish I had the ability to write a book, if I could manage just one, feel that work for Christian Ideals & Christian Brotherhood is the big

job of our youth to day.

I sincerely feel that youth is being hurt by this war, not just the teen age boys & girls, but young men and women of my own age. I also hope, sincerely, that I am wrong. Because I know this war is being fought for youth, so that tomorrow they may have a better world than we have today. Unless we show them, today, how to live, as we try to correct the world's illness, we may "suffer a plague worse than war."

I am only 23 years of age. When I entered this Army almost 2 years ago I



felt like I was still just  
a kid right out of high school.  
When I get back I want to  
feel like a kid right out of  
school, but right now I  
feel (if my imagination doesn't  
fool me) like an old man,  
who is always tired at the  
end of a day's work. Sure  
I've got what it takes. I could  
go to a dance and stay on  
my feet with a great many  
of the boys & girls who believe  
in really having fun, but I  
have to think of being  
ready for the unexpected  
things that may happen, so  
I have to rest when I  
have the opportunity, so that

my "head muscles" can work instantly and make my body muscles do the right things at the right time. Until the time comes, when I can take enough time off and enjoy recreation which won't affect my work due to loss of sleep or similar reasons, I guess I have to content myself with a dull routine way of living.

It isn't all together dull though, for I'm rewarded for my efforts, by quite a few of those who know the job I'm trying to do - Rewards of admiration, and a real friendly smile and greeting when they see me some where away from the job.

— When I walk through the mess hall or meet them on the streets here on the base — occasionally I've passed through the Club in Class "A" Uniform (dress) and they ask me if I'm on pass, or if I have a date — Am I stepping out? They are used to seeing me in work clothes, and they really do come to me for answers to questions regarding their training or flying. I don't know them all <sup>(ANSWERS)</sup> I don't know half there is to know about this job, but I can usually answer their questions, and if I can't, I

know where to get it for them. That's what makes long hours on my job. I have to fly as much as they, with my own crew. In addition, I have to keep records on each of them, I have to find the answers to their questions. I have to make checks to see, <sup>that</sup> they have all the necessary clothing & equipment necessary to carry to the theater of operations, and I have to see that they all get up on time & meet a formation ahead of them in order to "set that example".

It is a job which I enjoy as far as flying goes. I'd like to fly a small

ship again sometimes, just for the thrill, but I'm not allowed to do that, and any way I couldn't find the time.

It is a job which I'll be glad to see finished, and I hope it will never have to be done again, for the purpose of fighting a war as we are today.

I have been neglectful in making & keeping a pledge to the Church. I haven't given the 10%, I know, and I don't know whether I'll be able to give that much in money or not, but I hope I can in some way make up for any material

shortage with an honest effort of actively working for God's kingdom.

I am Enclosing a check for \$50<sup>00</sup> for the church treasury. I hope that I can do better in the future.

My A. P. O. number will be sent to my mother, and a few others in town in the near future. I do not wish everyone to know I'm going overseas soon, for it is my duty to the rest of my buddies who may be traveling by boat, to keep it secret, but I would appreciate hearing from you, and any who know me, when you have the time for writing and can get my address.

I had thought I would get a short leave before leaving this station, but circumstances do not permit it, so here's hoping I'll see you again, when I get back.

My very best regards to all,

Sincerely,

Laniel