



UNITED STATES ARMY
CAMP MAXEY, TEXAS

Jan 30, 1943

Dear Jack,

I received your letter today just as I was leaving the hospital, and you will never know how much I appreciated your taking time to write me.

Yes - it does seem like a great period of time has passed since I was a civilian. I feel as if I have entered another world, not to return to cherished scenes for a long time. But, Jack, I don't think I've changed a great deal in my thinking. There is really no occasion for a soldier to change his ideals or opinions. The Army does exact the last ounce of energy, demands undivided attention to duty, and compels instantaneous obedience to orders. The soldier who submits to this pattern is never in trouble. Is not this true of our jobs in civilian life.

True there are comforts and liberties

outside of the armed forces which tend to sweeten and cheer life which the service man is denied. But everywhere the task is worthy of the effort necessary to complete it, and the task of America's uniformed men and women demands the utmost of their brains and strength.

My experience with those in authority over me has been that they are patient and just, and demand no more than capabilities warrant. Of course there are a very few exceptions, but those cases are rare. I have less complaint with my military associates than with those I sometimes had to deal with in civilian life.

Your soldiers are well clothed, warmly housed, medically attended, and splendidly fed. The medical corps sometimes carries its paternalism to extremes, but a man's health is closely watched. I was sent to the hospital when I contracted a bad cold and cough and was not released for eleven days so that I would be completely able to do the work required of me.

The Army encourages the moral and spiritual growth and nourishment of its men. No obstacle is placed in their path



UNITED STATES ARMY
CAMP MAXEY, TEXAS

to the worship of their God and every opportunity is afforded them to do so.

The men are almost pleaded with to be moral, and all of the petty soul destroying practices of a complacent people are discouraged and in some cases prohibited in the Army.

Yes - we are being taught how to kill - efficiently and on large scale, but I have seen no inclination to try to make us hate. We are taught that the preservation of our lives and the maintenance of our ideals depends upon our being a bit better than a skillful, fanatical and courageous foe.

In this, Jack, perhaps my thought is influenced. I am glad to learn the art of destruction and have no misgivings to applying my knowledge ruthlessly if called upon, because that is the only means we know to prevent the triumph of forces which would plunge the world into another "Dark Age".

I am sure that it is God's will that we do just that. "We present our bodies a living sacrifice", if need be, that the ideals of our Democracy and indeed our conception of Christianity may not perish from the earth.

Our earnest prayers must always be that our arms may triumph, and our leaders shall have the wisdom to plan a better world economic and political system and have the courage to execute it. We must have Divine guidance if all of our heartaches, heart breaks, and hardships are not to be in vain. The church must bring this to our people.

Jack, I appreciate your coming down to see me off. One cannot realize how much it boosts a soldier's spirit for just a little show of interest in the sacrifice he is making. I am also grateful for your kind remarks concerning my administration. I am, of course, proud of the record the church has made, but feel that the congregation as a whole working with a splendid pastor is responsible for all of this.



UNITED STATES ARMY
CAMP MAXEY, TEXAS

I know Charles Mann will make a splendid chairman. He has a fine bunch of men to work with and I have no fears of the church failing to function properly.

I receive the Service bulletins and enjoy them immensely. Please express to Mr. Partridge my personal appreciation for his efforts and there is nothing men in service devour so hungrily as news from home. He is to be commended for his thoroughness.

Well, Jack, I frankly didn't intend to write such a long letter, but after starting felt like I wanted to really chat with you. We are severely restricted because of a quarantine and we do experience mighty hard and exhausting work. We long for the days when we can enjoy the luxury of being among our loved ones and home. It is idle to say that we do not

become homesick and blue. We do. We know that soon we may sail to foreign shores, and Jack, we also know, some of us won't ever come home. All of this tries men's souls and only a realization that God is in his heaven can be much comfort. There aren't many atheists in the Army.

Please give my regards to Mrs. Anderson, and at the next board meeting deliver my greetings to the stewards and to Mrs. Thompson. Thank you again for writing.

Sincerely,
Ben.

Pvt. Benjamin C. Willis
Battery C, 251st F. A.
Camp Marsey, Texas



Free

Rev. Jack Anderson
Trinity Methodist Church
Tallahassee, Florida