NORFOLK & WASHINGTON
STEAMBOAT CO

STEAMER "NORTHLAND"

Newport News, Va.
June 25, 1918.

Dear Margaret:

This is the only sheet of writing paper I have, as my trunk has not been delivered yet. But I must write you about my first day here. The usual discouraging statement about rooms met me. I had made no reservations. They aren't worth much anyhow and are often a nuisance. But Dive had my usual luck — at least so far.

At first I was misinformed and believed I would be put up in barracks without jeopardizing my commutation of quarters money. So I engaged a room in the Officers barracks — a room about eight feet wide & two with an iron cot in it and a wooden bath, one small window & one chair & a few nails in the wall. Later I found I was not entitled to room there

unless I had overseas orders, which I had not. So I went out in search of a room. I preferred not to stay in the hotel. A Lt. Shedden took me in tow and we met the usual discouragements. Finally he invited me to ~~just~~ occupy a cot in his room (shared by another Lt as roommate) and learned that there would be a room for rent in the house of a Dr Buxton on Saturday. ~~So~~ All other rooms in a long list had been rented. So I went out there ~~and~~ on the street cars and found an elegant large stone house overlooking the bay — a very modern and elaborate residence. I asked about the room and Mrs. B. told me it opened off a sleeping porch and a bathroom. I supposed of course it would be what out of reach, and

PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE, $300.

asked tremblingly what she would charge. She said she would have to charge $25 for two persons or $20 for one, per month. So of course I took her up at once, and if nothing happens I will be occupying elegant quarters in a house overlooking the sea instead of the dingy boarding-house rooms many are in. But, honestly, dear Sweetheart, I don't care much what I live in when I am alone.

For meals I joined the officers' mess. I thought it would be a little more like military life, and it was well recommended. It will cost me a trifle over a dollar a day, but will give me three meals a day with abundant food. There is white bread, and everything else that Hoover wouldn't like to have us have. But I suppose we are allowed it as soldiers. Perhaps they will have corn bread & signs of frugality at breakfast. Helping are abundant. The help is negro soldiers working under a white mess sergeant with a German(?) accent.

(over)

WAR DEPARTMENT.
OFFICE OF THE SURGEON GENERAL.
OFFICIAL BUSINESS.

Speaking of German accent, Prof. Herms showed me a Berkeley clipping about the whole Weber family, about 5 of them, petitioning the court to change their names to Wayburn in order to take off the German curse. Papa Weber almost has a German accent now, hasn't he? Somehow this repudiation of ancestors ~~on a blood basis~~ doesn't make a hit with me, and I think the name they have chosen sounds foolish. But if they want it, I hope they get it. They must be very unhappy.

I hope that the measly patient is much better, and really happy. I know that your wonderful mother love will insure every comfort and protection to dear little Gertrude, and I wish I were on deck to relieve you from some of the acute pain that that same mother love brings in the presence of Gertrude's discomfort. I shall anxiously await further word. Dear Margaret, how much you mean to all of us! Don't you realize how much we love you?

PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE, $300.
WAR DEPARTMENT.
OFFICE OF THE SURGEON GENERAL
OFFICIAL BUSINESS.

When I saw Cumming in D.C. he was captain, when I saw him first in Newport News he was major, and to-day he is wearing the silver leaves of Lieutenant Colonel. And men like Major Snow, in the army equally long, are only majors! It pays to have a friend dragging you along after him. Cumming is apparently right hand man to Lynch in matters of general sanitation.

Hermes is captain & hoping to be major. I believe Col. Lynch has recommended his promotion.

It has been raining freely to-day. This evening I had no convenient place to work so I saw a movie after supper entitled "Tarzan of the Apes", an African jungle story about a man whose parents died in infancy and who was brought up by a female ape and became very powerful, etc. Ultimately he marries an American heiress. Naturally this event requires several steps. ~~between~~

Dear Margaret, I have thought of you much to-day. I wish you were here to counsel

(over)

and guide me, and particularly to keep me happy and sane and tolerant. You make life worth living from my selfish viewpoint and at the same time you make me much more useful to others. The happiness you bring strengthens and encourages. So let's get together in September and live happily ever after. Until then I shall have to feed on visions of you, and thoughts of your wonderful courage and devotion to yours. Was ever man luckier than I? I haven't spent a day without happy thoughts of our honeymoon at the lake and in Chicago. You revealed your great heart to me as never before. I hope that my big love for you ~~[illegible]~~ was evident and still makes you happy.

Goodnight Darling,
William

P.S. Bedding ~~[illegible]~~ has been [illegible] for two days before being regarded to safe for other persons. Points of special contact can be washed.

WAR DEPARTMENT.
OFFICE OF THE SURGEON GENERAL
OFFICIAL BUSINESS.

PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE, $300.