April 1, 1943

Dearest Fletch,

Well, I’ve been here 24 hrs. and already it’s a long story. We may as well start at the beginning as there seems to be no likelihood of getting to an end.

The night I arrived here (about 1 mo. ago) I reported in to the O.D. who found me a temporary room. I ate at the Officers Club as mess closes at 6:00 PM. Spent the evening nursing my feet and reading.

Then today began. We eat breakfast about 7:30. Then began
a long round of reporting here, reporting there, signing this, getting fingerprints taken, etc. etc.
I walked about 10 miles from one corner of the Bonds to another. Even had my blood typed and got my first injection.
Accomplished the following things of particular direct interest to you.
0 AM having my pay check sent to the Brothline Trust Co. All if it goes there. I will have to draw checks here for things & money. Therefore please send me my Brothline Trust Co. check book.
My pay amounts to 283.67 a month. I should get a small check for March (I served 2 days in March). When my April check comes in at the end of the month, it should contain the following:

a) 283.67 - pay
b) 250.00 - uniform allowance
c) ? - travel allowance

In purposes of accounting in your part, I suggest the following:

a) I had 44.15 cash when I left Boston.
b) Start an account in the book called Henry Swan army expenses. Put in that account all the checks which I make out and which you will receive back from the bank at the end of each month. I will keep (I will try anyway) an itemized account but you won't.
have anything but the lump sum.

2) The only exception to this will be any big check, I may write in specific things (i.e., clothes, equipment, food, etc.) For the first one of these, please note a check for $24.60 made out to Post-Exchange Agent for uniforms.

3) While I am thinking along these lines:

1) Please let me know for a while when checks come, in what amount, if everything is going okay as regards their deposit, correct credit, etc.

2) When the time comes for you to move to Beuer, or wherever (I mean that same) we must arrange a new bank account this (joint) so I can arrange a change of arrangements re pay.
I find that I am not yet in the 4th Auxiliary but am in the need Replacement Pool, pending further orders. However, my orders here read "this officer is to be trained for the 4th Auxiliary Group." In other words, my present stay is a sort of basic training period of unknown length, following which, unless some hitch or slip-up occurs, I will be assigned to the 4th Surgical. Don is in precisely the same boat. Bernie, however, is assigned directly to the 4th Auxili.
Unless some cataclysmic mix-up occurs and I'm +2 get sent to Peoria by mistake, there seems to be considerable advantage to our set-up as contracted to Renee's. The Lawrence General is a big General Hospital; with it is associated a Technician Training School, the 4th Auxiliary, and a Replacement Pool. In other words, 4 different groups of army officers are here:

1. Staff of the Hospital - more or less permanent
2. Staff of the Training School - ditto
3. M.R.P. - highly fluctuating personnel - come +90, but while here, assigned to ward work, assisting at dentists (etc., etc.) - I.e. working with patients.)
4th Auxiliary - Quarters in "Little Siberia" at some distance from General Hospital Bombs. Spend time drilling, fatigue duty, first aid training, many other pursuits - have nothing to do with patients. Their routine entirely different. Unassociated with the Hospital.

Map of 1944 -

[Diagram showing locations]


Tech. Training School

Lawson Gun Range

1/2 mile

Atlanta - 9 miles

Navy Airfield
The following facts about the 4th and scene pertinent.

@ It has to date only about 35 officers - it needs 135;
100 enlisted men - needs 200;
no nurses - needs 15.

@ It has only been going about 1mo - no equipment yet, etc.

@ It will probably take 4 or 5 more months at least before it is called out. Maybe less, but previous experiences don't indicate such. (The 2nd took 9 mos to 10.)

@ The training there, while distinctly a toughening up regime, is not much fun after a while & indeed many had psychological problems especially come near the end of the 2nd...

All this being so, (if it is so)
Don & I here at the hospital sound if things work not well, have
Probably got a good thing, providing no slip-up occurs in our being transferred to the 4th Latwm.

We will have 4-6-7 weeks of hospital work, then roughly a similar amount of the real work-out, then off we go. I hope it works out that way. If it does, it offers the possibility of your coming down here in a while anyway this summer.

Various odd items:
A. The food here is definitely excellent, + costs me $1.05 a day.

Breakfast today: Orange juice, doughnut, tea, bacon, 1 egg - coffee.

Lunch: Roast beef, liea beaa, spinach,
tossed salad, milk, hot rolls, fruit, jellies, etc etc. If you think I'm going to
enjoy while I'm here you're crazy.
Undoubtedly will do so later or in the
4th.

B. My shoes will be alright. Feet as a
whole no longer hurt, but have
some areas where blisters are, etc.
These will toughen up.

C. Weather excellent: warm
during day – sunny & lovely.
Cool at night.

D. Allenta is a hot bed of beautiful
women, the boys all say. They should
know – apparently everybody from
the hospital goes in almost every day.

E. I am assigned to a ward
working under a Major Pratt. It is
the officer’s ward. My functions
are not at all clear to me yet but seem to be chiefly learning how to fill out all the forms in triplicate. More of that to come. Walking hours: am 8:30 - 12:00; pm 1:30 - 4:00 daily.

And, now to bed. If tomorrow is anything like today, I think I shall find a pair of roller skates.

It would save my writing arms considerably if you would forward parts 2 and 3 of this letter to Mom and Pop so they can know about the setup.

Lots of love, darling.

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PS. Lots of love to you too, Mom and Pop.