

Oct. 17, 1944  
Luxembourg

Darling,

So much has happened since I last wrote you three days ago that I scarcely know how to begin to tell you. Better start chronologically. Day before yesterday Arnie and I took the jeep and went down to visit headquarters at another platoon. When we arrived, Steve Ondash rushed up and congratulated me. I said "That's nifty, what for?" and so I heard. This is the deal. Four team assistants were picked from the 4th Aux. to go to the 5th Aux. to become team chiefs. This is not a temporary thing, but a change in assignment. Needless to say, I was dumfounded, and didn't know what to think. It was an honor, of course, to be picked and a step up to be given a team. It will, in all probability, mean a Majority in the next few months. But it means leaving the 4th where all my buddies are, and also leaving Arnie and our F.H. set-up, where we had been so happy together for so long. I didn't want any old promotion - why couldn't they just leave us alone and let us work? So I was unhappy.

Then that night we went on night duty. There hasn't been a case come in at night for a week, and after a long drive in the rain and black-out, we were cold and tired, and unhappy. So, of course, that night there were four admissions, and we were up and at it all night. We were just about finishing around eight the next morning when the most terrible thing happened that I've ever seen. I had done a Thoracotomy on a lad and taken a hunk of shrapnel out from right next to the heart, finishing the op about 5:30 AM. He was doing okay, and we left him lying on the table getting oxygen & letting his blood run in while we worked on a French soldier who had multiple but not mortal injuries. We were about 2/3rd along when Wally, our anaesthetist, dropped over to see the other boy - "My God" he said, "he's not breathing - he's moribund. So I jumped right over to find out what was the matter. He had vomited in his wash and aspirated the vomitus, and was drowning. While I was busy sucking him out and giving artificial respiration, etc., I looked up and there was Wally & Arnie doing the same thing on the other guy. He had picked the two minutes that Wally was looking at the first patient, to vomit, and he was drowning & choking. What a picture, two guys dying from the same cause at the same time! We've seen that happen here & there in various hospitals, but it had never happened to us. In fact, we had never had a death from anaesthesia before. So there we were, with not one but two guys who should have lived, both of them deadlier than mackerals. It really wasn't Wally's fault. It was a combination of a number of things. But you can imagine how we felt, dead-tired, all upset to begin with, and then that! Arnie went off in one corner and I in another, and just cried.

So we took a little nembutal and went to bed about nine. It wore off around three, and then the only nice thing that's happened to me in four days occurred. The mail came in and I had three letters, Oct. 1, 3 and 4th, telling of the safe arrival of the packages and



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of your receipt of mail after a long wait. I'll read them over and answer them next time I write. About 6:00 P.M. a guy came and said I was to leave that night to report to my new assignment. We told him to go to hell - so we all had a last nip of pooh-pooh juice and felt very sad.

This morning I packed and set off to my new job. I have met my team, but have no definite impression of them yet. I am working at an Evac! and not only that, but one which is new to France and has a reputation of being G.I. as hell. Boy, will that be hard on me. Ties and rules & regulations, etc. Think we're moving into a school-house tomorrow - out of the mud! What a life. Me, I prefer the free & easy ways of the F.R. - mud & all.

So here I am, kicked upstairs, and not xxx at all sure I like it! I've just finished talking with Fletch Wright, who is in the same boat with me. He sayd, that we are only temporarily assigned 5th Aux., but that we will be permanently later on. So who knows what it's all about? I don't. I only know I love you and wish the wars would end so I could come home.

G'nite sweetheart,

H