

1 April 1944

Dear Mrs. Shields;

I was looking forward to having one evening free this past week, so that I might write to you and Dot. Well, I never got back to the barracks until long after lights out. No wonder they believe in three day passes every month on this Post. All the personnel would have nervous breakdowns if they did not go off for a rest cure each month. It has been wicked and doesn't look like we are going to have a let up for a while yet.

You know, I have felt like a new person all week. That's what my visit to New York did for me. It was the first that I had been away from this Camp and it gave me a new outlook on life. I'm the kind of a person who gets in a rut every once in while and it did me a lot of good to get away from my work and the barracks for a few days. Honestly, Mrs. Shields, I have thought of nothing else but that visit since I've been back. Dot told me a lot about her family and I knew them as being pretty wonderful people but it wasn't until I met them that I could appreciate what she had been talking about. Ronnie, Vee, and Betty -- Well, I just loved them and they made me feel like I would like to be an old friend of the family so that I could take a sisterly interest in everything they do. You and the Chief made me feel so welcome and right at home and I think you both are tops. And that guy, Joe!!!!!!!!!!
WOW, You know, I wonder if I'm really alive after meeting

him. He's one in a million and everything that one would expect from his letters and how Dot and I would haunt each mail call for a letter from him. If I had not seen him, I couldn't believe that he is back here again and by the Grace of God, in good health. I'm anxious to hear what Phil thought of his mustach. I thought it kinda cute even if you didn't. Is he seeing all the movies he would like? I would like to have seen the reception he got at Boils. Phil is a lucky girl. She better be treating him right or I'll send our CMS WAC's down there to pamper him. The whole 150 of them. I've got them sold on Joe Shields. Tell him I said^{HELLO} and "HAVE A WONDERFUL TIME JOE!!" Gosh, I'm glad you got in touch with Dot. I'll bet she and Joe had some good gab sessions. This past year, I think she wanted a good long talk with Joe more than anything in the world. I guess you know that she loves her family as much as anyone could but there is an extra soft spot in her heart for Joe

I got my bag, Mrs Shield, and everything in one piece. I can't thank you enough. And for the wonderful week-end. I'm more than grateful to all the family, and to Tuey, and the Troys. It was perfect, every minute of it, and I've thanked you, in my heart, many many times since I've been back. And I keep saying, "What wonderful people, the Shields." I hope to see you again befor too long.

I'm writing this at the office with a million people coming in asking a lot of stupid questions and that telephone!!! I'm ready to pull the D--- thing right out. I've been taken out of the Lab and devote all my time to keeping the office and all the reports in such a beautiful mess that, even I, don't understand

what's going on around here. The boss puts his hat on and takes off for Boston (At a time like this) When this day is over I'm going over to Ward VIII and have one of their inmates move over.

I've got to get on the ball ~~xxxx~~ or I'll be here all night.
So long for now, Mrs. Shields. Loads of love to all.

Very truly yours

Ball