

April 12, 1951

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Kohen:

This note is just an attempt to tell you of the marvelous job that your son is doing as Surgeon of the 2nd Battalion, 23rd Infantry. You may be very proud of him, for he has proven himself outstanding, both as a man and as a physician.

He has accomplished the very difficult task of winning the genuine affection of his men while at the same time controlling them as an officer should. He is respected by every officer and man in his Battalion, and in a manner that is accorded few medical officers. I only wish that there were more like him. He may have told you--he has been recommended for the Silver Star, for gallantry. I sincerely hope that he is awarded this decoration.

I am confident that he will become an outstanding physician. He is well-trained, has excellent judgment, and is extremely conscientious. And strange as it will seem, I believe that his experience here, as well as the knowledge of people that he is learning while here, will make of him a much wiser physician.

He is, as you know, an extremely sensitive and perceptive boy, and his experiences have affected him, of course. I assure you that you need not worry in this regard, though. When he returns to you he will be much more mature than the boy who left, and he will probably be--or will seem to be--somewhat more quiet, for a while. He may not want to talk about his experiences. After a month or so, though, it might be a good idea if he did talk to someone about them--and got them entirely "out of his system".

He now has an excellent officer as an assistant, who is doing as much as possible to assist in carrying his responsibilities. He is in extremely good health, and when I talked to him a few hours ago, was in fine spirits. He looked a little tired, but a good night's rest will remedy that.

He is, incidentally, very proud of you both--and you certainly have reason to be proud of him.

Sincerely,

/s/ Robert M. Hall
Capt., M.C.
Surgeon, 23rd Infantry

Capt. Robert M. Hall, M.C.,
O-435168
Med. Co., 23rd Inf. Reg't.
A.P.O. 248, c/o P.M.
San Francisco, Calif.

Note: I answered this letter
April 23rd.

Dear Mr. Kohen,

I am very sorry if my letter caused Mrs. Kohen and you concern over Rolly. He is in perfect health, and I assure you that you have no cause for worry. I do wish that you could see him at the moment and assure yourself of this fact--he is sound asleep, on his cot, about four feet from me as I write this.

I ordered him from his Battalion to the much more secure and comfortable post in the Regimental Collecting Station about two weeks ago--to his infinite disgust and over the vehement protestations of everyone in his Battalion, from the Commanding Officer down to the lowliest private. Their feeling for him was again demonstrated a week later, as he stood by the side of the road as they withdrew from Yangu--literally without exception, their faces brightened as they saw him, each called to him in turn--and Rolly answered each one by name.

Rolly should be leaving us very shortly, and I truly hope that he will be assigned to a Naval Hospital near you, and where he will be able to continue his surgical training. We will miss him very much but will all be the better for having known him.

I believe that his experiences here will have helped him, in the main. The knowledge that he has proven himself and that he is a courageous man, is a source of deep satisfaction to him. He is still very much a boy--but he no longer has doubts as to whether he is a man, since he feels that he has proven himself among other men--which, indeed, he has done. He has been affected by the tragedy and the seemingly utter futility of war, as we all have been, but there will be no lasting scars and you should certainly feel no concern on this score. He feels that he has repaid a debt to his country that was overdue, and has rid himself of a sense of guilt that he was not actually a participant in the last war. I believe that you will find that, strange as it will seem, he would not exchange his experiences here for the world. He may, in time, express regret that he was unable to do more for the casualties that he treated. This is usually the case with the conscientious medical officer, and if he should, it might be a good idea to encourage him to talk, since no one could have done more for his men than Rolly did.

All-in-all--he is in perfect health, is as well adjusted as anyone else to this type of a life, has enough work to keep him busy but with plenty of time for exercise and reading. And sleeping--how that boy loves to sleep! The only time that I have heard him express concern was once when the mail was delayed and he did not hear from you and Mrs. Kohen.

Mrs. Kohen some day. You have a fine boy, and I would like to meet his parents.

Sincerely,

/s/ Robert M. Hall

Major Robert M. Hall
M.C., O-435168
Med. Co., 23rd Inf. Reg't.
A.P.O., 248, c/o P.M.
St. Francisco, Calif.