

SARGENTRIVIA

Vol.2

192 Bishop St., New Haven 11, Conn., March 2, 1944

No.4

Ziegler Sargent, editor; Agnes W.B. Sargent, assistant editor.

First Lieutenant David C. Sargent reported in our last number as having gone overseas, wrote on February 9th: "I guess the best way to start this letter is by answering first the question that is probably on your minds. The answer is:- 'I'm still in the United States and somewhere in the east.' The many recent letters from you all have been wonderful to receive. A few of them have traveled all the way to California and back, and, being thus somewhat delayed, have rolled in with the more recent ones in a steady flow of wonderful thoughts from home. ... I have gotten a G.I. haircut - one of those things that are horrible to look at but quite pleasant to feel. The hair bristles out all over the top of my head about 1/2 inch long and a comb has consequently become a superfluous item of my equipment. In my past letters I have described some of the queerer sleeping accommodations with which army experience has provided me, ranging from the hoods of peeps to falling asleep standing on my feet. The night before last added another to the list. It so happened that my blankets were not then available so I tried the experiment of using a mattress from another bed for a blanket. Try it sometime. You sure feel like the inside of a sandwich! The only hitch is that with a mattress on top of you and a mattress beneath you there is still a lot of air space between the two for the cold to get in. My conclusion is that the experiment wasn't a particular success. The ride across the continent was both tiring and restful. It was restful because we managed to forget for awhile at least most of the problems and responsibilities of army life. It was tiring because it was long. One thing about it, though, struck me. You would think that a change of station, such as ours involved, which pointed so directly towards the great adventure which lies ahead - you would think that this would have produced in us a mood of excitement and anticipation. But this was not the case. I found myself no more excited than during an ordinary day working at the headquarters at Camp Cooke. And now with an even greater experience ahead of us - it is still the same. I am neither worried nor nervous. In fact I find I think very little about it all. My thoughts run only from day to day and so are not in the least troubled by what may lie ahead. I find I am unable to explain this mood. But it appears to be common to most of us. We all find we are approaching this experience with complete lack of emotional feeling - and to listen to us talk you would judge that we had nothing ahead of us but dull routine of army life. I guess it is best that it is this way and that we have grown to accept things without much thought or comment. But when this war is done I hope we will again be able to revive the old emotions and enthusiasms. The prospect of a big trip used to give me a real big thrill. I hope the day will come when it will be that way again. But in the meantime I'm grateful that the present can be received with a detachment and calm that still amazes me. Well, I have been philosophical long enough now and must close. ..."

P. Forbes McCance has enlisted in the Army Specialized Training Reserve and is due to report at the University of Maine, Orono, Me., on March 11th.

Chaplain (First Lieutenant) William H. McCance wrote from somewhere in the Pacific on January 21st: "... I am finding it quite an achievement to get on to the secret of travel by sea. Am making out fairly well. Haven't missed a meal or lost one either!! I use the Public Address System on board, which takes a message to all parts of the ship. We have morning devotions 3 times a week. We also go into the troop quarters for services and programs of recreation and music. They enjoy singing, as you know. Most of these troops have never seen the sea before, and they are eager to glimpse the land again. One said to me this morning: 'I feel like I could get down and kiss it!' ..." On January 28th he wrote: "... Last night we connected our movie machine with current from ashore and showed 'Star Spangle Rhythm' until about 12:30. It was really something & the troops got a big kick out of it. Tonight we are to have a visiting troupe of entertainers come on board ... who will entertain our men with songs and skits of various kinds. The library has been a big help, and we have given out lots of magazines and comics. ..." On January 30th he wrote: "... We put on our own amateur show to-night. It was largely musical - 2 quartets - some group singing & a couple of clog dancers. The troops enjoyed it. So did I. One number was called 'That Home Baked Chicken Pie' - it was a hit. Also a spiritual 'Signing Up', which tickled me quite a bit. After the performance I gave the troops a little talk of appreciation for their cooperation in these programs; told them I hoped they would keep them up for I knew they were good morale builders. These negro troops have a pretty healthy attitude toward life, as you know, taking it pretty much as they find it & not expecting too much. ..."

First Lieutenant Frederick K. Sargent of the Army Medical Corps completed his course at Carlisle, Pa., on February 10th. On February 14th he reported for duty at Fort Devens. He and Janet, with the baby, are boarding at 15 Court St., Groton, Mass.

Private John M. Sargent has made a shift in company and barracks. His address is now Company 1, Barracks 11, Armory, University of Illinois, Champaign, Ill. The recent War Department announcement that by April 1st 135,000 soldiers from A.S.T.P. would be returned to the troops and that only advanced courses would be continued has Johnny and his buddies guessing. Bob Bennett, a former Yale roommate of John's, wrote: "Sargent & Company is well represented on this ship. From top to bottom one sees the name."

First Lieutenant James C. Sargent wrote from somewhere in the Pacific on January 22d: ".... The existence in New Guinea suits me much more to the proverbial 'T' than any other officer. True, we live in tents, have back houses, and water for showering is rationed. Yet these are things I did from choice. At meal time when the dinner is placed before each man practically every man complains to some extent unless it is a steak and vegetable dinner. Few eat more than half of their servings whatever they may be, and then they sit and grumble. My plate is set before me, salt and pepper are added, and no matter what it was, my plate is always left as clean as a whistle. Sometimes the carrots don't taste quite as good as those taken right out of the garden, but then why should they, for they are dehydrated. But they are nourishing and good food and are placed on the plate to be eaten, and so I eat them." On January 26th he wrote: "Yesterday, as I think I informed you, I left Bomber Command, where I had gone on the 24th and came out to this new base - at least for me. At this point I am beginning to feel more & more as if I were becoming part & parcel of the New Guinea campaign. Our tent, which was built by David DuVivier, whose mother Aunt Libby knows, and by one Jesse Marcel, is right in the Jungle. Behind us for miles are thick trees - rubber - with tremendous vines intertwining throughout. One appreciates from our locality the difficulties of jungle fighting. For your information I am well and full of enthusiasm. I work hard & at times for long hours. I never seem to mind that though I realize in this climate care of one's health is very important."

On January 31st he wrote: "This new assignment is rather an interesting one because it has brought me very near combat flying personnel, which is, in a sense, the zenith to which I have been aiming for so long. I hope, in the not too distant future, that I may be given a squadron of my own where my own thoughts & initiative within the unit can flourish. That will be the day! For the present, though, I am pleased to be able to listen and learn the fundamentals of briefing & interrogation which are the important phases of intelligence. This morning I was surprised to find that the S2 who was supposed to give the briefing did not appear and I was called upon to tell all I knew of the enemy. Fortunately I knew what was needed, but unfortunately I had very poor organization; but at least I gained a certain amount of confidence and understanding of the procedure required which will be of valuable assistance in future attempts. This spot is rather a pleasing one as I think you may have gleaned from my last note. Peculiarly enough most mornings are cool, sunshiny, and cloudless but around noon clouds begin to collect and, about five, it begins to rain. It is odd that this same sequence follows day after day and yet it has its advantages of keeping the black dust to a minimum. In one day under the hot sun without rain the roads are almost impassable because of dust alone, to say nothing of the many holes that large trucks cause especially during heavy rains. Sunday I attended the Protestant service and listened to the chaplain talk about one's trying to spread one's influence so that one would be able to lead others into God's Kingdom. It is strange to me how few men desire to attend such services. I have, in fact on every occasion, tried to persuade others to attend with me but I have met with little success so far. I shall continue my practice, for I feel that just being there gives a man a tremendous uplift morally, and God knows that the average American soldier or officer needs that. My first Sunday in New Guinea passed unnoticed, so far as I was concerned, and when at 11 p.m. I realized the day, I resolved to try & go to the service every other Sunday hoping to make that a special occasion. I derive tremendous satisfaction from just listening and trying to understand the chaplain's ideas on faith. I feel very well in spite of the heat which I find dirties my clothes completely in one day. I have to hustle to keep ahead and spend at least an hour a day in a very refreshing stream doing my laundry. Of course one must take a little yellow pill known as Atabrine which helps to suppress malaria. It is a difficult task to keep from being bitten by the Anopheles mosquito, but one must be bug conscious and perhaps we'll be lucky. A Jap report I read recently said that they had captured the entire crew of a P40. The crew, being the pilot, must have been a big man! When weather reccons are unable to take pictures, they always report 'Nix pix due wix' which sounds wonderful to my ears." Jim celebrated his birthday on February 26th. Many happy returns of the day.

Sandra Buck, daughter of Dick and Jean Sargent Buck, celebrated her 10th birthday on February 11th. Many happy returns of the day.

Henry B. Sargent celebrated his birthday on February 10th. We hope he had a singing telegram.

Howard L. Sargent, Jr., reached his 15th birthday on February 12th. Peter, having followed Abraham Lincoln by a mere 120 years, finds the day pretty well celebrated.

Dorothy and Bud Wiser celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary on February 15th.

Colonel Theodore Babbitt celebrated his birthday on February 17th far from his family. Many happy returns.

Samuel Fisher Babbitt celebrated his 15th birthday on February 22d. Terry's birthday and that of George Washington are celebrated on the same day, but Terry probably knows that the day when George Washington was born was not the 22d.

Kitty Deming celebrated her 20th birthday on February 23d. Many happy returns of the day.

The Connecticut State Library at Hartford, like many other large libraries, has set up a War Records Department to collect material while current of war activities, both military and civilian, of the citizens of the state. Dr. Thomas D. Murphy, the director, in acknowledging a requested complete file of Sargenttrivia, wrote on February 18th: "I am very grateful for the file of Sargenttrivia. Your 'family history on the march' is, I feel, one of our most important acquisitions to date. ***"

Louise Fisher celebrated her 16th birthday on February 27th. Many happy returns of the day.

Aunt Margaret Sargent celebrated her birthday on February 28th. Many happy returns.

Uncle Lewis Sargent, who died on February 5th, was endowed with a very keen sense of humor. He was a good player of games and sports. His friends called him a lucky player, but his ability to think clearly in the stress of competition made him a good "match" player. He played his best in matches and never seemed to get rattled. He and Uncle Bruce Penn were members of the Friday Night Club of a social-literary nature which met in the homes of its members. For many years he resided at 251 Church Street, New Haven, next door to the Henry B.'s at 247. When the brothers decided to have a telephone they shared an instrument, which was placed at the G.L.'s. The obvious convenience for the latter when they wanted to make a telephone call was perhaps offset by the necessity of going next door to notify the H.B.'s when one of the latter was wanted to answer a call. The fence between the two back yards was removed to make one playground for all the children. When one of the brothers was out of town the other was looked to by both families in emergencies. One Sunday when H.B. was away G.L. was appealed to get rid of a terrible odor at 247. G.L. found the problem was a bit beyond him and after considerable effort got hold of a plumber, who solved the difficulty by removing a deceased feline from the cold air pipe to the furnace.

Willard C. Rappleye, nephew of the Murray Sargents, has been made a Corporal. Bill is somewhere in India.

Roderick Engert, nephew of the Murray Sargents, is reported to have joined the Army and is now in India. He graduated last summer from Harrow School in England.

Becky Jackson Sargent is teaching English at Oldfields School, Glenoe, Md. After Jim went overseas she secured a temporary position at the school, at first teaching algebra and geometry and later some history.

Josephine Tilney and son Timmy are at present at The Barringer, Charlotte, N.C. Bradford at Camp Sutton is near enough to Charlotte so that he is able occasionally to join his family. He was with them when Timmy took his first step.

Joseph Bradford Sargent wrote the following letter from Montevideo, Uruguay on June 25, 1898, to "Messrs Ziegler and Murry Sargent". Bear in mind that this was during the Spanish-American War. "My Dear Grandsons: I received a letter from each of you and I will answer to both of you in one letter. I do so, not because I am limited as to time, but because what I may write will be equally interesting to both and to the family of which you are presumed to soon become, if not already, the leaders, and shining lights as well as delights. We here have had, this week our shortest day of our Winter, as was it not a wonderful coincidence that our shortest day and our longest night occurred exactly at the same time that your longest day and shortest night occurred, but yours was in Summer and

ours in Winter. The fashion, here, among all classes except the few who must be up earlier to make the fires and boil the coffee, is to stay in bed very late, taking some coffee and bread in bed, and getting up to dress after 8 o'clock. There are some families living in the block across the street opposite us, whose servants open the outside shutters not earlier than 9 o'clock. Breakfast, or, as it is called here, Almuerzo is from 11 o'clock to 12 o'clock: so that few people eat anything more than a roll of bread and drink more than a cup of coffee 'au lait' before 11 o'clock. Small retail stores are opened earlier, from 8 to 9, Wholesale Stores are opened at 9 o'clock but the grand owners are not often to be seen before 10 o'clock and almost never between 12 and 2 PM. Those who are absent from their places of business from 12 to 2, must eat two rolls with their morning café au lait. It has proved very generally useless to try to meet a wholesale merchant before half past two o'clock. His hour, or there-a-bouts, before he goes to his almuerzo is usually occupied by reading letters received and in giving orders to the clerks. Therefore, although the heads of retail houses may be seen on business matters in a dull time during the forenoon my experience has taught me that at least during the short winter days and this dull season of the year, the ordinary commercial Vagrant cannot obtain an audience with his serene highness the head of a wholesale importing house except between 2 1/2 and 4 1/2 o'clock. In addition to what I have said about the difficulty and delay in the attempt to introduce new business is the fact that although it never snows here in Montevideo nor 125 miles across the Rio de la Plater in Buenos Aires, yet, as a rule of weather, it is foggy, misty, drizzly or rainy nearly four days out of three, as Mark Twain would say, and thunderstorms shake the coast of the bay about two nights of each week. And such cannonading thunder that is seldom, if ever, heard about New Haven. Another slight impediment to getting familiarly acquainted with upper class importing merchants here is that I am one of "los Yankees" a race of people who are, just at present, much detested in Chili, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay and Bolivia by the Spanish born people doing business here, or in any other occupation or profession, and the near descendants of Spanish people detest "los yankees" quite as much, and all consider that using yankee made articles is very unpatriotic. The French Merchants join in with the Spanish Merchants in preferring French made goods rather than American, and the Italian Merchants will buy what their customers want to use. But competition among the merchants compels them to buy what is wanted by the people and the people who are for several generations born in South America, although of Spanish ancestry, like many articles of American manufacture and will have them. In consequence, American made goods will continue to be sold here. There are many Italian retail merchants, Grocers, Waiters, Shoemakers and cobblers and barbers here, who have no prejudice against "los yankees" and who keep happy. One of them who keeps a fashionable Barber's shop was shaving a Spanish born customer a week or two ago, and when one side of the face of the customer was finished shaving, the Italian barber asked him if the shave was pleasant and smooth? "Oh yes" said the Spaniard, "very pleasant". "I am shaving you with one of the best razors ever made a real yankee made razor" replied the barber. At which the customer became wrathful and left the chair, saying that he would go to another barber shop to have the other side shaved. The Barber finally pacified his customer by showing to him the name of the French manufacturer at Paris, stamped upon the side of the blade of the razor with which he had been shaving his Spanish customer. The barber had a little amusement for his other customers, in fooling the Spaniard. But there is the beginning of a great and rich and populous country in all South America. The different countries into which South America is divided are quarreling on paper or in actual border warfare, most of the time, on boundary questions, but they will be settled before long. Then the priest-rule over Women and, through the influence of the Women, over the governments will have to be dealt severely with so that there can be money and energy to develop the natural resources of the country, and then will grow up a great commerce between North and South America, which you boys and your cousin boys must prepare to enter as participants, as manufacturers or merchants. If the steamer from New Zealand arrives on the 29th (next week) as due, we expect to go in her to London. Give my love to all the girls & boys. and Mothers & Fathers Grandma joins in this request. Affectionately, J.B. Sargent"

Below is a picture of Laura Sargent taken when the family lived in New Britain, Conn. The move to New Haven was made when she was nine years old, in 1864.

