

March 15, 1918.

To Charles Arnett Sawyer

My dear Boy:-

From what I can gather as to conditions, it would not in the least surprise me if you should be going "Over There" in a very short time. Should such be the case I want to say a few words to you before you leave.

First of all, I want you to know how proud I am of the record you have made as a soldier. And I want you also to know how proud I am of you as a man.

Sometimes I feel that you entered the military service of your Country under something of a handicap in that there were things I had never taught you, which you should have known. You will also realize now that, though you were not allowed to run loose, like so many boys of present times, you had not been under very strict discipline. This was something of a handicap to you also.

It has been very gratifying to me that, when volunteering at the time of the call for the Mexican service, you elected to go into a company made up of strangers to you - officers you had never known and who would not be influenced by any consideration for me. How much better this was than going into the other company, where you had friends and the officers of which might have done something for your advancement on my account. You can now feel that such success as you have attained - reaching the highest point you could at your age - you have won entirely by your own ability and faithfulness in performing your duties as a soldier.

I am proud of you for coming clean through the drudgery and monotony of camps. That is the hardest moral test a boy can have.

Now, as to the future: It is natural that you should, after all these months of drill and drudgery, be impatient to get into the thick of things on the other side. But I want you to realize that every phase and feature of this war is so far beyond anything the world has ever dreamed of before that there cannot be too much care in preparing the men for the work before them. So, whatever you may be doing, wherever the government may put you, you must realize that someone has to do that particular job and you are put at it because it is thought you are fitted for the work. Therefore, no matter what the work may be, give it the very best that is in you! Do not allow yourself to get in the frame of mind that some fellows will fall into - that because you feel that you could be of better service somewhere else - because there is something else you would rather do - it is not worth while giving the work in hand any great effort. Whatever you may be called upon to do I want you to give it the very best ~~that~~ and most conscientious effort you can, with full realization that the work is just as necessary as any

part of the preparation or fighting. Keep in mind the fact that should any part of the work fall down lives will be lost and final victory delayed.

There will be times when you will feel that you have not been treated fairly. That is but human. Don't let such things make you sore and careless in your work. Should you be mistreated in any way by an officer just remember that it is the individual and not your country that is to blame. If an officer is consistently unjust to his men it will not be long before he will be punished in some way. No man in military service, under existing conditions, will last long in his office if he is guilty of mistreating those under him. You in your office must also constantly bear this in mind.

Always be fair to those under you, but remember that if you are so soft hearted as not to report for punishment one who is guilty of intentional misconduct, you may endanger the lives of all in your outfit. Possibly the damage might go much further.

Be careful as to one thing! Never criticize your superiors to anybody. You may think your criticisms, but it will do neither you nor the service any good to voice them. Be at all times very watchful as to the conduct of the men around you. First of all do all you can to encourage them to be sober and moral. Lots of fellows want to live clean lives but are without moral courage to refuse to be led astray, unless they feel that they have the support of someone in doing what is right. Look out for the fellow who is always growling and finding fault with the way things are done. It may be that he is really a patriotic and conceited soldier but in an army made up like ours, it is possible he may intentionally sow discord, with the intent of injuring the morale of the army. You cannot be too watchful for any indications of disloyalty and, while it is never well to be a tattletale, the least suspicion as to the loyalty of any man should at once be reported to the proper authorities - the higher the better. I cannot say too much about watching your own tongue. The very fellow you express a criticism to may have led you up to ~~saying~~ saying something you really do not mean, hoping by your downfall to gain a benefit.

One thing you must try to forget is the question as to when this war will end. I believe that if the American people could just stop dwelling on that question and would make up their minds that the only thing to keep in mind is "How can we successfully carry this thing through" it would not be such a great while - probably a year - before we would have peace. And I believe that if we do not make every effort and are not willing to make every sacrifice, it may be years before it is over. The thing for you to feel is that, now matter how long it take, you are going to do your part for the success of the cause.

Never let any one persuade you that you are fighting for England, France or any other country. As sure as you live, if we did not get into this thing and carry it to a successful conclusion in

Europe, we would have to fight it out on this side, with your mother, sister and all who are dear to you exposed to the same horrors as have the women of Belgium and France.

I have but little patience with the idea that we are not fighting the German "people". We are fighting the people just as much as the Kaiser. If the "people" did not think and feel the same brutality as the rulers they would long ago have stopped the most horrible brutality and barbarism the world has ever dreamed of. There has never been a time in the history of the world when any people have shown themselves such brutes as have the Germans. Keep this fact in mind when dealing with them. No doubt there are civilized and truly Christian Germans, but they are evidently few and far between. Therefore it will not pay to be squeamish in fighting them. Always, if you are in action, think of the fact that you are fighting for the lives and honor of those most dear to you.

As to when the war will end, we should all go in with the belief that it will never end while German armies are this side the Rhine, for Germans must feel something of the losses of property as well as losses of lives (which appear to be valued little by them) before they will be so whipped that they will never want to hear of war again. If we do not finish them now - if necessary destroy them - it is but a question of time until it will all have to be done over again.

You are, my dear boy, fighting for something even above the preservation of your own COUNTRY. You are fighting for the preservation of more than DEMOCRACY. You are fighting for the salvation of all that is good and destruction of all that is bad in humanity, for you are fighting for RIGHT!

When you get under fire "Over There" don't be surprised if you are scared. I don't believe any one can go into such an inferno without fear. But there will be one thing to help you besides your training, that is the greater fear of showing cowardice. Because a man is scared is no sign he is a coward, so don't get ~~so~~ worrying about yourself when you feel afraid. The greatest bravery is shown by the man who is afraid to do a thing but still goes ahead and does it. Any one could go where he was not afraid to go.

I am not in the least afraid of your being a coward. It is not in you. I do want you to be afraid of doing what you know to be wrong. I want you always to remember those at home and to know they are counting on your keeping morally clean. Never let any one get you to drinking nor to running with fast women. These two things lower a fellow more than all else.

You know I have never cared to wear jewelry, but I want you to know Dad is now wearing a service flag pin. There is nothing in which he could feel greater pride except to be able to wear the uniform and be side by side with you.

Affectionately

Dad

(Edmund H. Taylor Sr.)