

DEC 17 1945

Mennonite Central Committee
C. P. S. #117, EXETER SCHOOL
LAFAYETTE, R. I.

December 13, 1945

Mr. John Klässen
Mr. Ernest Goertz
C.P.S. Camp #31
Camino, Calif.

Dear Men:

Your letter of inquiry came today, and yesterday a copy of your transfer authorization arrived here, so it looks as though we can be looking for you men to pull in here any time now. As soon as possible let me know when you are leaving Camino, how much furlough you have, and when you will arrive in Rhode Island. I would imagine that you will stop at your homes in Kansas before coming here.

The location of Exeter School is in a rather remote section of Rhode Island, about 25 miles from Providence. When you come from New York get off the train at Kingston, R.I., the last station stop before Providence. Be sure that the train you take from New York stops at Kingston; not all of them do. Upon arriving at Kingston call Wickford 4 and ask for Mr. Neff, and I will then come to pick you up. Lafayette is only the post office address of the school, and it is not much of a population center. The only city of any size in this vicinity is Providence. You will be able to go there on your days off. Also, Boston is about an hour train ride from here and you will more than likely want to spend some weekends there sightseeing.

As there is no immediate community surrounding the institution we don't know what community relations are in this Unit. The regular employees of the institution, for the most part, are fair and tolerant in their attitude. To a large degree each man is judged on his personal merits here. This is a small institution and the CPS men are under very close scrutiny by the regular employees. We never have any problems of institution relations unless some Unit member falls down in his work, or conducts himself unlike a C.O. On the whole, I think you will find the atmosphere friendly.

I confess that at the present time I am not too sure what your jobs will be; the personnel of the Unit and of the institution is going through a period of change, so I hope you will bear with us if we are not able to let you know immediately what your jobs will be. Men on attendant duty work nine hours a day; maintenance duty, eight hours per day. More than likely you will be on attendant duty, which consists of a great many things. You will be in charge of a group of patients and you will see that they perform the tasks assigned to them, care for physical needs, supervise play, eating, etc. In short, you will be the "father" of your group. This work holds unlimited areas for the expression of our concern for the underprivileged. This concern, I am sure, is what has prompted your volunteering for hospital work. If your spirit is positive, and you are will-

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ing to learn, you will find little difficulty in adjusting to this work. Of course, you realize that state institutions and the work instate institutions are not a "bed of roses", and sometimes you will wonder if it is at all worthwhile. You will see apparent paradoxes and at times will become discouraged with the multitudinous detail relative to the operation of the institution. I hope you will come through with the attitude that conditions can only be changed through hard work and an enlightened attitude, and that the changing of personalities is a task that needs patience and approach from all possible angles.

This Unit has a quota of 20 men, but discharged and transfers will alter this number, but we hope that the total number of the Unit will not fall below 15 through the coming months. We have two weekly meetings a week devoted to spiritual life. On Sunday nights we have a Unit meeting which attempts to cover and to supplant regular services in camp. On Wednesday nights there is a Bible study-discussion group for those interested. Then time is usually found at odd hours for gathering in rooms for bull sessions, coffee, popcorn, etc. The spirit of fellowship runs

fairly high here, so I think you will not lack spritual contact on a group basis. As in any CPS Unit we like to encourage as much personal devotional time as possible for each man. You will find that this work calls for an unusually high degree of personal devotion.

At the present time there are only two men on night shift, so the men are usually together after duty hours. We have a basketball team which travels to Providence to play teams from the Howard MCC Unit. We hope that you men will be able to contribute mightily to this activity. In summer, the beaches of Rhode Island beckon to those who like a pluge in the cooling waters of the Atlantic.

You will bring with you a normal compliment of clothes. We are not required to wear uniforms of any kind; merely clothes of an every day nature that are neat and presentable. If ~~any~~ either of you is to be assigned to maintenance duty I will try to let you know as soon as possible so that you may be prepared to bring the necessary clothes. If I do not inform you, just bring an outfit of work clothes that you ordinary use in camp.

I hope that I have answered a few of your questions, and if I have missed any items that are on your minds, drop me a line and I will do my best to reply immediately. I will be writing to Jesse Harder as soon as possible in regard to transportation details. We shall hope to see you soon!

Sincerely,

cc: Fred Louwder MCC

Fred H.