

December 21, 1964

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APO - 256  
New York, New York

Dear Dukie and Family:

Well, it<sup>is</sup> almost Christmas and I guess this will be the first Christmas in many, many long years that you haven't been here with us in our marvelous Mobile. You are in a very great and beautiful city, but there is no place like home.

I was just talking to your marvelous mother, Martha Smith, who has been with us since before you were born, and your father, who was here yesterday to pick up your mother at lunch time. Both of them are doing fine, and Cora Belle was here this morning helping your mother, Martha. We are all getting ready for Christmas. We have decided, since the crowd is so big, that we will go up to the hunting lodge at McIntosh and have the Christmas tree there. We will leave here the night before Christmas, but not have the Christmas tree until Christmas morning.

Little Miss Oelle has a baby now, and her name is Frances. She and her husband live in Birmingham, and little Miss Sandra Lee lives in Memphis, Tennessee, with her husband. He is bigger than Mr. Riley. So, you know he is a great big fellow. These Boykins and Smiths like big men, don't they? Your father, who is such a fine man and who has been with us so long, is retiring from the City sometime next year, and I am going to get him to do some special work up at the hunting lodge. I know how he loves the dogs, and we have about a hundred up there. Bee Watson, who has been with us over 55 years, is still there and doing fine. We were up there the other evening, and in front of the hunting lodge there were over twenty deer within ten feet of the steps - there with all the lights on and everything. Then, the peafowls were out there, and lo and behold, we looked a little closer, and my chauffeur, whose name is Charlie (and a good one, but drives too fast sometimes and gets in trouble with the police and causes me to have to pay these fines) says "There is a big gobbler out there with the peafowls."

Well, they were beautiful and it was a wonderful sight. Mr. Dick said: "Shoot him, Papa, shoot him." But I just didn't have the heart to shoot that turkey, who had trusted us to come up in front of the hunting lodge and see what was going on. So, we left that turkey - with the sun going down and the peacocks with the light shining on their beautiful, beautiful colors -- prettier than a rainbow -- and drove on home.

well, we will miss you, Dukie, and miss your family, but we wish you everything good for Christmas. I remember when we used to go to Washington together - and that was a long, long time ago - when you were a little boy. We had a picture of you at the time we killed a big buck, and we put you up between his legs and took a picture of you. I gave it to Martha, and I guess she gave it to you, or maybe she is keeping it, because the mothers and fathers like to keep the pictures of their children.

well, you all are a great family and a good family. You keep on being good, Dukie, and I know you will, because you surely were raised right. You have a good father and a good mother, and you have so many good friends here. We think and talk about you often, and we are so glad that you have been promoted to the rank of Sergeant in the Army of the United States of America. Well, you had some great days in the Capitol of the United States when we lived at that beautiful place - 2101 Connecticut Avenue. After all of our children married, we moved down to the Washington Hotel.

Miss Frances has a beautiful place. We were down there yesterday evening, and it is not too far from your father's and mother's place. They have over two thousand quail. They are raising quail and pheasants and dogs. Mr. Riley's dog is champion. They have about thirty-some-odd bird dogs, and they just had ten new puppies from a very beautiful dog that we got up in Virginia. They are spending a good deal of time on their dogs - and they have about thirty. They have a lake that covers forty acres. It is down near Theodore - near where Mr. Jack lives. He lives at the old Senator Bourne home - the man who put in parcel post, which has meant so much to us.

We were up at Mr. Dick's place Saturday, and they have their house fixed up with all of the colors in the world. I don't think I have ever seen a house decorated as nicely and as fine as it is. In driving through the woods we saw over a hundred deer in one field, and about 45 wild

turkeys. The river is up and it has them kind of hemmed in. It is a wonderful sight. We didn't shoot any, because we already had a hunt there with Judge Ed Livingston, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Alabama, along with about 25 other Chief Justices from the different States all over the United States. They had a great time. They killed 29 wild turkeys and about 13 deer.

Mr. Dick Boykin's son now weighs 180 pounds -- think of it! You will remember the day he was born. David Lee Boykin, whose birthday was yesterday, when he was thirteen years old, is also a big boy. They look good and are doing fine. David Lee Boykin has killed seven deer this year. We have just picked up a beautiful head that we had mounted for him for a Christmas present, and we will be taking it up to him the night before Christmas, and when we have the blessing (and David Lee is the best prayer we have) we <sup>will</sup> have him to ask the Great Good One to bless you and your wonderful family.

Take good care of yourself; keep us proud of you. God has been good to you and yours, as well as to me and mine, and I know we all appreciate it. I know that Martha, Richard, Cora Belle and all of your family appreciate it - and your other family, the Frank Boykins, appreciate it, too.

I am sending Mr. Riley and Miss Frances, as well as Bob, Jack and Dick and their wives, a copy of this letter. I am also sending your father and mother a copy of it. I was glad to get your address. I would have written you sooner, had I had it.

Martha will be getting her present of a hundred silver dollars on Christmas morning. We will be pouring them down in her lap, as we always have. She deserves anything, because she has looked after our family, and we have tried to look after her family - and that's what it takes - all of us working together. Make them proud of you over there in France. France has been the best friend in the old days that the United States ever had, and I know they are going to always be that way. Anyway, you just do your dead level best, and that's all the Good Lord expects of us.

God bless you, Dukie, and with love to you and all of your family, from all of the Boykins, now and always, we are

Sincerely your old friends,

THE FRANK W. BOYKINS

By: Frank W. Boykin