

IN REPLY REFER TO SPMCR

ARMY SERVICE FORCES
OFFICE OF THE SURGEON GENERAL
 WASHINGTON 25, D. C.



18 December 1945.

Dr. Fred W. Rankin,
 410 Security Trust Building,
 Lexington, Ky.

Dear General Rankin:

I have just received your very kind and characteristically thoughtful letter of 14 December 1945. Your eloquent message of gratitude has so profoundly affected me that I find myself unable to express adequately my deep feelings of appreciation. I must, therefore, rely upon your extraordinary ability as a perspicacious reader of character and your penetrating knowledge of human conduct in the hope that you will understand how sincerely I value and treasure your kind expression of commendation. It will always remain with me as one of my most cherished possessions with far greater meaning than any decoration the Army could bestow (my Legion of Merit recently arrived) for in it lies the memory of a happy and wonderful association, a pleasant and profitable tutelage, and a profound and enjoyable intellectual stimulation. You speak of my loyalty and enthusiasm which, of course, you obtained wholeheartedly and completely from all of us who had the privilege to work with you. Let me assure you that this loyalty and enthusiasm which gushed forth like a spring from all of us was opened by our recognition in your character and in all your dealings with us of your high purpose, firm resolve, dauntless spirit, and absolute integrity which in essence constitute the traits of a true leader of men. These are some of the traits in a man's character which stimulate loyalty and enthusiasm and which speed energy and efforts and these are some of the reasons why I shall always treasure my associations with you which I know have made me a better man.

With regard to my release from service, I have discussed this again with General Kirk and with Dr. Ochsner when I saw him at the Southern Surgical. The main factor to be considered in this problem is the history and since you have assumed responsibility for its preparation I feel a definite obligation in seeing it through. It is just beginning to show some signs of shaping up into some order and if I should leave now or in another month I'm afraid it would collapse. There is a definite need for someone to remain here to act as the "whipping boy" at least for another couple of months until the organization and preparation of the history assumes more definite form. As you