

re-marks by marks



by **harry marks**
"boots' guardian angel"

Ellis Island was the only place in the entire service where a man could get transferred from liberty — for many a time after a man had checked out on liberty he was stopped by the S.P. at the Barge Office side and shipped as far as the Pacific and just as often to the Eastern Hemisphere.

I derived the name "Mother" Marks (among others) due to the fact that I handled all the trials and tribulations of all the boots that arrived at Ellis Island.

We had all kinds—including play boy millionaires, actors, authors, radio entertainers, movie stars and in one instance, a moving picture scout, as well as a popular song writer (Vernon Duke) who later became a Lieutenant and was instrumental in producing the Coast Guard musical, "Tars and Spars".

I listened to all the boots' woes and my favorite yarn (a true one) is about a boy by the name of Starr who, after being aboard 15 days got his

first liberty and (as I did with thousands of others,) I helped him to arrange himself so he wouldn't look too "bootish". When he got ashore (after I showed him how to shape his hat and fold his neckerchief) he went on liberty and I met him on a nearby subway station standing in front of a gum machine mirror. . . . After fixing his neckerchief about 10 times and pulling his hat down on his head in all different shapes, he turned to me and said, "Why the hell didn't I join the Army?"

Another boy who was curious to know why I had been wearing a hash mark was told that it represented a hitch—so he calmly replied, "Oh, you have to be married to wear that!"

Well, now that it's all over, I want to say I took lots of kidding on that Island about by build but I think I did all right, for when I tipped the scales the other day, I found the only thing I lost was a few hairs. . . . Remember, I was built for criticism not sarcasm. . . .