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U.S.S. FORWARD, Flagship.

December 11, 1918

My dear Laning:

Your letter just received, and I cannot put my real feelings on paper.

I think you are right, and patriotic to stay where you are for the present and hold the fragments together.

I tried not to bother you too much, but Hoff is now anxious to get away, having an offer of a good job in civilian life, so I hope you can put him on inactive duty.

I have many reasons for not wishing to be in command of the vessel, so I hope you can send a Commander to her later on.

I note that Madden is ordered as Executive.

I have requested that she remain at the yard only long enough for important repairs.

Dorr, late of my staff, is acting as Executive Officer of the FORWARD, and he can also remain in temporary command, inasmuch as she will return to survey duty later on. I will not therefore ask for any other Commanding Officer for her.

I wired, asking that if possible Lieutenant Irby be detailed to fill the vacancy on my staff. They are sending ships back here now, and I may need a little more help.

I am discharging officers and men as fast as possible. You will realize how few regulars I have in my force.

The influenza is still ra in out here, but I have kept it out of the ships almost entirely.

The service will give you credit for your splendid work, and will size up the situation. I am sure

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you will be stout hearted, for the future will look out
for you all right.

With warm regards from us all to you and
Mrs. Laning.

Believe me,

Sincerely yours,

Captain Morris Laning, U.S. Navy,
Bureau of Navigation,
Navy Department,
Washington, D. C.