

April 4th, 1953.

Hi:

I'm sorry for not writing but I've been pretty busy. Our classes are coming fast with little time between, which means we have to do all our other duties in our spare time. We've finally started classes on our rifles. The first ones were primarily concerned with dismantling them, cleaning them, and how to fire them. We will not go out on the range for another week but we will have plenty of exercise with them in the meantime.

I've finally gotten good news. I have a pass from 1 p.m. tomorrow until 11 p.m. Monday so that I can attend services for the last day of Passover in Evansville, Ind. I do not enjoy the thought of missing some of these classes as they are important. However, I have no intention of staying around here. I do not worry too much about missing most classes as they are common sense or bull. While I'm in Evansville I'll try contacting Is Pastor and his wife (Jeannette Mark) as well as attend services.

Last night I went to Chapel. It meant missing a couple of classes on our rifle and also cleaning the barracks. I did not mind the second in the least altho I had to straighten my clothes and shine my boots when I got back. I finally got to bed at 11:30 p.m.

It is now 1806 hrs. (6:06 p.m.) Mail call and chow came when I left off. After that I had to clean my rifle. It has to be especially clean as it must pass inspection before I leave for Evansville tomorrow. I spent the rest of the afternoon walking around the Post. I finally bought the camera. It is the same as Walter's.

The birthday cake came yesterday and we are getting some ice cream tonight and cutting it up. The cake looks good altho it is slightly crushed. However, the taste will not be damaged.

April 2nd

Please forgive my tardiness in writing but I've been pretty busy lately. Today we had a visit from the Inspector General (an inspection) which meant we had to GI the barracks last night. I missed most of the work as I had to attend a class. When I got back there was still plenty to do on personal items (shine boots, straighten clothes, etc.)

I have a little bad news. My razor came and when I went to use it tonight, I dropped it cracking the case. I'll have to send it back to the factory. I do not mind the cost as much as the inconvenience of not having it as the latrine is usually crowded considering there are only 6 washstands for 60 men. It is impossible to shave in the morning, so I usually shave the night before. At any rate, I did get the pleasure of one shave from my electric razor.

We were paid last night and I got \$40—This is approximately what I should get as I received \$20 at Ft. Meade and have only been in the Army 5/6 of a month. Just think, on my birthday I can say "One down, 23 to go." I sure wish it were the other way around.

Two more days and we'll have finished our first week of basic. This week has been mostly spent in the theater watching training films and listening to training lectures. At present we have been introduced to such courses as First Aid, Military, Justice, Signal Communication, etc. Of course our physical training (PT) cannot be forgotton. We spend at least an hour a day on that and the exercises are not too easy. We have what is known as the Army Dozen, a set of exercises which must be done in a prescribed manner. I have not had too much trouble with them thus far altho I am stiff. Today I managed to work some of the stiffness out. We haven't spent too much time on any one exercise which makes them easier as we use different muscles for the different exercises. From what I hear, PT is the worst part of basic. It depends on how much we are required to do, as I imagine we will be doing more and more each time. I know that I would have found these exercises much easier to do five years ago but that is neither here nor there. There is one thing tho, the push-up is the Army's favorite exercise and plenty are given as disciplinary measures. So far I've been good (or lucky) and haven't done many except when I've just been

horsing around and oing them for fun.

During the second hour of our Signal communication lectures today, I was assigned to be the guard. As we do not take our rifles and equipment (cartridge belt and helmet liners) into the auditorium, it is necessary to have some one watch it. Thus for one hour I marched back and forth guarding our equipment. I didn't mind as it warmed up a little this afternoon and I was not cold. The most difficult part of our lectures is not understanding them, but trying to stay awake. It is especially hard when they turn out the lights for the films. I've slept through a couple myself. I am not worried as a lot of this stuff is just propaganda.

I'll have to close now as, since I just got my clean bed clothing tonight, I have to make my bed. I only have 15 minutes before lights out.

Love, Alan.

P.S. Mom, see about getting me a subscription to the Enquirer untill about July 15th. It would be nice keeping up with the news and I am not interested in the Louisville Courier. Include the Sunday paper also. As there are two other Cincinnatians in the barracks, we would appreciate it. Also, Do not stop baking.

April 11th

Tuesday was a busy day, as we spent it on the PRC (Practice Rifle Circle). We spent the entire day getting into shooting positions and practising trigger squeezes. Tuesday night I was fire-guard from 12 to 2. I had to take a shower and wash my fatigues so that took up most of my time. ~~Wednesday~~ Wednesday morning was spent at the PRC. The afternoon included our first physical training test. We were given three exercises (pull-up, push-up and squat jump), and had to do as many as we could. The results were recorded. There are two other exercises on the first test which we did not do. This entire physical training test will be given two more times during basic. Wednesday night we had a class. During a break, a number of fellows went into the latrine altho they knew it was off-limits. Therefore, for punishment, the entire company had a rifle inspection after we got back from class. We had about an hour and a half to clean our weapons as the inspection was between 2300 and 2400 hours.

Thursday I had KP after only 5½ hours sleep. I was excused from KP early (1815 hrs.) as I had to go to a class. I went to the indoor rifle range and shot a 22. I had 6 bulls-eyes out of 6. However, the 22 has no recoil and we had all the time we wanted. As it turned out, we didn't get back to the barracks until 10:30 and I feel in the bed and went to sleep fully clothed.

Friday we went to the 1000 inch rifle range. We spent the entire day there as our mess sergeant brought out lunch on a truck and we ate with our field kits. I didn't do as well as I wanted altho I was far ahead of the company average. I rushed myself too much to be accurate. Besides that, the recoil almost took my shoulder off.

Friday night I went to services. The Jewish Chaplain wasn't there so a couple of fellows took over the services and one of the other Chaplains gave the sermon. He talked on why he thinks Daniel was the greatest of all Biblical characters. I was so tired I almost fell asleep. When I got back to the barracks, I had to take care of my equipment for today's inspection. Today our platoon fouled up and, instead of having the afternoon off, we were out on the drill field.

At present I should be bitter due to that last event, however I'm not. Even tho we were out in the rain all afternoon it was enjoyable as I did learn a lot. We started with most of the Platoon (about 40 men). One by one they dropped out and were sent to the 8-ball group (a group for the supposedly stupid ones). The lieutenant called it dropping the boys from the men. A lot dropped out in the first couple of minutes. One mistake put a person in the other group. At one time the Men's squad was down to 12 (needless to say, I was lucky and managed to stay in that squad). Then some of the others were sent ~~in~~ back. Before they could get in, they were tested and we voted on whether or not we wanted them as one man can make the entire group look like Hell if he keeps making mistakes. By the time we quit (after 3½ hours) we were back up to 18 men.

Needless to say, I had a wonderful time in Evansville and hated to come back to camp. I received fudge from Jo Anne and cookies from Mom. the crescents were mostly crumbs but were good anyway. I also had quite a few birthday cards waiting for me.

Tuesday was a hard day as I didn't know the correct positions and had to learn to get into them, no matter how uncomfortable. That night I went on fire guard duty, and when I got off duty at 0200 hours, I went to bed with my clothes on.

Wednesday morning we went back to rifle practice. About 1000 hours we had a downpour, but had to remain out anyway. I managed to ~~fix~~ load my rifle up with sand and jam it. As we had the class in the evening, I had a nice job cleaning it before inspection. I wasn't giggled altho the lieutenant who was inspecting found a couple of grains of sand in my trigger housing. As I mentioned before, I got to bed a little after midnight and at 0330 I got up for my KP duties.

My KP job was on Sink #3 which meant I washed pots and pans and kitchen utensils. Not only do we have to work, we also have to chip in to buy soap flakes. We could use GI soap but it has a grease base and does not cut the grease off the dishes, etc. At any rate, we had to change our water about every 5 pans. That should give you an idea how much grease the Army uses to cook with. The day wasn't too bad altho we had a lot of work and were dead tired. ~~I fixed~~ I got a bread as I left at 1815 hours to go get some rifle practice. This was supposedly a group of misfits but I had told my platoon sgt. that I was having trouble with my positions so he had me on the list. I was shocked when I found all 6 shots in the bulls-eye. The only bad part of this was that I didn't get back until 2230 hours and had to clean my shoes, etc.

Friday, as we were going to the firing range, we dispensed with our morning run and ate early cloy. After a march to the range, I became part of the detail which was to bring the targets from the shed and set them up. After that, I sat around and did nothing until it was my turn to go on the firing line. My rifle was one of the exceptional ones as the sights were aligned. However, I started firing ~~too~~ too slow and only got 2 shots off in the time allotted for three. These 2 were bullseyes. However, as I was taking too much time aiming, I started rushing myself and the following results were not too good. Out of 67 shots, I only hit the bullseye 9 times. I did have a little trouble with my rifle and had to take it to the Ordnance truck for a new gas cylinder. After firing, I cleaned my weapon and sat around some more. Part of this sitting time was playing with the field telephones. We were to familiarize ourselves with this piece of equipment in our spare time. Friday night, after services, was spent in the usual way, i.e., cleaning the barracks and getting ready for inspection.

The weather here has not been too good as it's been raining pretty much. One day is hot and the next cold and along with the dampness, it is rather unpleasant. However, we now have 2 weeks down and 14 to go.

I might be home next week, provided that neither I nor the rest of the Platoon foult up. and have our privileges taken away. We'll really have to work next Friday night to get the barracks in topnotch form and our drilling will have to improve considerably. It seems that we get worse as we go along, rather than improving.

That's all for now as I have some other things to attend.

Love,

Alan.

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