

Edited Copy

Blank spaces are where personal correspondence have been deleted.

Letters Home. From the military.

6:35AM. 2 others from Shields. Rest city slickers. Two busses to Induction Center in Detroit. Plenty of room.

8:36AM Morning traffic on 3 lanes.

9:00AM Arrived, took aptitudes test.

9:30 Station C. Swear in or be court marshaled Sign list that you don't belong to the hit list of opposing organizations such as the John Burch Society or Communist Party.

10:30 off goes clothes. Test involved, interview, X-Ray, Urinal analysis, Needle in arm for blood, naked exam, rectum check, eyes checked, heart checked, pulse taken, hernia check, ears checked, After station 13 a long wait to station F.

1:00PM Out of physical exam.

The aptitudes test has pictures boxes, English words, simple math, 50 minutes, 100 questions, machine checked.

1:20PM If you're back in line far enough in F, you may get lunch. Someone always gets yelled at for smoking. You're only told once what to do and little time to do it!

Lunch at 2:30PM and wait for food. Lunch of chicken leg over toast, tasteless, scoop of mashed potatoes, salty, String beans, good, Jello, good, old bread, orange juice.

Left to Ft Knox by bus. Another traffic jam on the Edsal Ford Expressway.

So, it begins.

I HAVE ARRIVED SAFELY AT FORT KNOX, KENTUCKY. I AM PRESENTLY UNDERGOING MY INITIAL PROCESSING AT THE US ARMY RECEPTION STATION, FORT KNOX, PRIOR TO BEING ASSIGNED TO A UNIT FOR EIGHT WEEKS OF BASIC TRAINING. THIS PROCESSING INCLUDES STARTING MY MILITARY RECORDS WHICH WILL ACCOMPANY ME EVERYWHERE I GO IN THE ARMY. I ALSO WILL RECEIVE MY ISSUE OF UNIFORMS.

MY PROCESSING AT THE RECEPTION STATION WILL TAKE APPROXIMATELY THREE DAYS. BECAUSE OF THIS SHORT STAY, PLEASE DO NOT WRITE TO ME HERE. YOUR MAIL WOULD ONLY BE DELAYED SINCE IT WOULD HAVE TO GO THROUGH A LOCATOR SERVICE AND THEN BE FORWARDED TO THE UNIT WHERE I WILL BE ASSIGNED FOR BASIC TRAINING.

I WILL WRITE AGAIN IN FOUR OR FIVE DAYS AND GIVE YOU MY CORRECT MAILING ADDRESS.

Ronald Frank Beard
SIGNATURE

Post card sent, December 12th, 1965 from Findlay, Ohio



Dear Mom and Dad;

On the way to Fort Knox, we stopped here for our supper and it was free at the Greyhound bus station. It is just beyond Toledo. The bus made one more rest stop before crossing into Kentucky. Although it was night, you could see miles of painted fences near Louisville. Fort Knox is a half hour drive beyond and is in hillbilly type country. This place covers in number of roads and buildings the size of Hemlock. Mainly we had no sleep last night. We will probably be waked up at 3:00 A.M. and usually done by 7 P.M.. Will write soon again.

Note, there was little or no sleep for the first few days of "hurry up and wait."

Ron.

Dec. 13th, 1965

A postcard from Fort Knox, Kentucky

Sunday, no mailing address yet.

Dear Mom and Dad;

I had all day yesterday and today off. Yesterday we had to clean things for inspection. We were not inspected though. The camp has a PX with goods at reduced prices. One person bought a watch for 13 dollars. It was not a Timex either. There is also an overcrowded game room. Last night I went to a movie. It was named Gorgon the three headed monster. They also showed previews of coming attractions. That brought a lot of whistling and hollering. They say there is no profanity in the army, don't believe it. Even the sergeant use the latest dirty words. We got a chance to sleep in the morning. Some will sleep all day. Today it is pouring rain but still in the 60's.

Ron

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Dec. 14th, 1965

Fort Knox, Kentucky

Monday. Posts card

Dear Mom and Dad;

Today we were all sent to a small theater to see a movie and hear about different programs that are available in the army. This afternoon we took tests to determine what we were best qualified for. After that it was supper at four o'clock. Had to do some KP for an hour but that meant I didn't have to help clean up the barracks. The Sarge is mad at the whole company and has confined us all to our barracks. This place is really busy. Each day about 600 guys come in for processing. After that many may be sent either to Texas or Washington because there is not enough room here. Already about three guys have gone AWOL. They got caught and got a week of KP. They are easy to find due to the GI haircut. Tomorrow is inspection, have to wait till tomorrow to mail this.

Ron

Dec. 16, 1965

Fort Knox, Kentucky

Post card

Called up last night, no answer.

Took officer's candidate test today. It was hard. They shot artillery and Machine guns real close today all morning. I moved to a new barracks today. Half of the series was shipped out, some across the road and some to Washington. We don't know where we are going to be moved for basic. The weather is cold and wet, so we all have colds. Should have an address soon?

Ron

Dec. 1965, Letter 14,

Dear Mom and Dad;

I got up at four o'clock in the morning. It was cold but otherwise nice weather. Had breakfast at 04:30 then went back to the barracks to catch up on sleep. It looked like a battlefield with all the guys sleeping on the floor, as today was inspection. Its odd you can be sound asleep but if someone says that Sarge is coming or an announcement comes on the PA system you're wide awake. At six we went to the testing area and took more tests. Had lunch at 11:00. 500 new recruits came in during the mornings. We can buy newspapers so we heard about the launch failure. Then the worst part of the day.

SHOTS!

Friday we had TB, blood test and took a polio pill, which was good. Today we had a flu, lockjaw, and another all in seconds. How? They have a gun. It works with no needle and under high pressure. It shoots the shot under the skin, is quite painless but the shots themselves are painful, and handles a large number very fast. Then had records made up and mug shots made. Took out service life insurance.

Found out because of tests that I can qualify for aviation officer candidate school. It means three years though. They don't take guys with glasses. May have a chance at other good jobs though. The drop outs and there are a lot of them. I got KP duties today. Right now we are the lowest form of life on the base and draw a pay of \$87.90 a month. We got a \$25 advance in pay yesterday. The pay area was guarded. The money was 1950 series that had never been used before. All dimes and quarters are copper cores. Prices at the PX are 40% lower then elsewhere. During the day, early night you can always hear artillery and machine guns firing all the time.

Tomorrow we move. We may get to stay here. The other group left for Washington today. They will travel all night by plane. Got supper at 4:00 P.M. In bed by six if possible.

Ron

PS, just about everybody has colds. We may get 18 different shots by the end of eight weeks.

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Thursday Dec. 21, 1965 Fort Knox

Dear Mom and Dad;

We moved to temporary quarters. We are going to Fort Lewis, Washington. This will be our permanent station. We leave Monday. I don't know when I can mail this as we are restricted to our quarters and have no mail or telephone in the area.

Today we got an eye test, flu shots and received our altered pants. This took all day of waiting then we turned in our bedding and moved to the other end of Fort Knox. The place has a population of 70,000 people and covers about eight square miles of buildings and storage areas. The whole land is about 25 miles to the side and is part steep hills and gentle rolling land. The gold is stored in a separate area south of Fort Knox. It is supposed to be well guarded.

Friday Dec. 17th

Still confined to our quarters. They pick off half the guys for all day details. I had to go to the warehouse for a dress coat. They run new recruits as fast as they can unpack the boxes to issue them supplies.

The old barracks are built of wood. The new ones are concrete buildings with tiled latrines and wax tile floors. But everything is olive drab, the popular color. Was able to buy a paper tonight. The paperboy snuck up in the building and sold out. Actually this is an open post which means no fence around it. It even has a commercial radio station but is strictly a military city, manned by military personnel and their families.

Sat Dec. 18th.

We leave for Washington at 2:30 Monday morning. Our duffel bags will be loaded on a cargo plane here and flown straight to Fort Lewis. We will take a bus to Louisville and board a plane to Chicago, from Chicago we will take a jet to Seattle and then a bus to Fort Lewis. Actually, we traveled by military transport, DC-8, nonstop to Mc Cord AFB. I will deliver my next letter from Fort Lewis.

Ron

During this period of time, I was able to get a five day pass home for Christmas. What a hassle it was to have a money order rushed to me, get to the airport, and catch a flight home. Could only get as far as Chicago. Had to catch a bus to Saginaw.

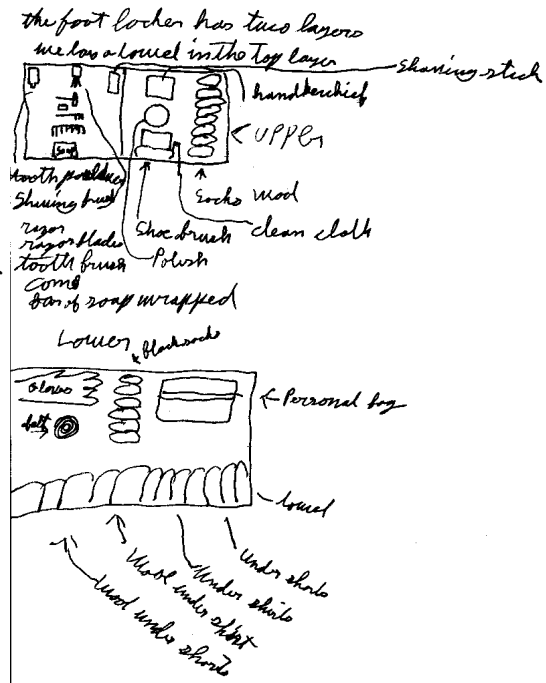
I had reservations back to Ft Lewis, but that was from Chicago. Because of the holidays, I couldn't get a connecting flight from Saginaw to Chicago. I had to be driven to Chicago to make it back.

Five of us piled into a cab to go from C-Tac to Ft. Lewis. What an experience.

Wednesday 29, 1965

Dear Mom and Dad,

The letter you sent arrived here before I did. I was on the post by 5:00 PST. Just in time to miss chow. They went and moved us again, so I lost the private room. You better wait until I give the OK to send any packages. This is until I get settled down and can put stuff somewhere. We can't keep our AWOL bags in the barracks they have to be stored. I have the valuables in safe storage and the food stuff and others in the AWOL bag. Will be kept by special permission in Sergeant Kueine office, so I can get access to it. Several other fellows did this too. Today they plan on general inspection, which means everything must be put just so. Each sock must be rolled separately, clothing hung and pressed and beds made tight. Our shoes must be spit shined and underwear and towels rolled up and put in the bottom of the footlocker. A good thing I got two razors and a brush as they are going to be used for inspection purposes only, On the back I will draw a picture of what our foot locker must look like. We got issue weapons today. This is the M-14. It is



a light weight semi automatic rifle. They will probably have to be polished for future inspections. I got cards to stick in my wallet, a rifle issue card and a bayonet issue card.

It was raining yesterday. Today was cold but partly cloudy and did not rain until nightfall. They didn't get the windstorm that was forecasted. It did rain hard and there was a lot of snow on the ground in Seattle.

I only took one picture and that was over the Rockies, near the end of the flight. It was cloudy all the way except for the one hole. It was also too hazy in Chicago to take a good picture. I may take some around here if it clears up sometimes. Bill Miller who lives in Carrollton received a Christmas package today. It was full of cookies, peanuts, and candy. It cost \$6.38 to send it by air mail. Took about two days to get here. So we both got a lot of stuff to eat up. For some reason there is no radio stations close enough to be picked up on the radio. None of the other guys can pick up anything either. Must be some iron under the ground as we should be very close to at least two stations.

This letter will probably get processed tomorrow as mail has been picked up already. Tomorrow we get our first day of Basic training.

Ron

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Sat. Jan. 1, 1966. 2nd letter

Dear Mom and Dad,

Received a letter yesterday postmarks Dec. 30 air mail, must sure be fast. Read the article about Larry Miller and have the addresses of the relations.

If I find a good one at the PX I may buy a radio. One kid has a table model and one has a large Sears transistor radio that picks up a lot of stations. The one I have will pick up a few but you have to hold it near a wall plug. It was nine o'clock when New York issues in the New Year. We have the day off today. Will go to the movie this afternoon.

Yesterday was an inspection. Everybody had to get hair cut the other night for it. I got the sides trimmed and part of the front. We are allowed two inches on top. However if you go some place you're not suppose to like one kid snuck off to the PX without permission, The Sergeant saw to it that you're scalped as a punishment.

Say if it said so let me know what my job in the army is going to be because they didn't tell me yet. I also found out about advancement. At the end of basic training the top 20% are promoted to PVT-E2. It is necessary to serve six more months to be promoted to first class private. 3 more for corporal, 3 more for Sergeant and after a total of 20 months a Staff Sergeant. Our Sarge's age is 21 years old. Then we were told some of the things we would do during basic training.

It rained again this morning but was clear at noon. Clear and freezing is what it did at 6:00 last night. The snow finally melted. I'm going to send the post card I got from the airline the same time I mail this to see what time difference there is in the mailing.

You can send a package any time if you wish. But don't send too large amount of goodies at once as I have limited storage for it. Could you send a little compact chess or checker game? The game room has a pool table and had shuffleboard, a tennis table and a TV and is always too crowded. Since there is lots of room in the barracks at that time I could play chess up here and store the things in the foot locker under this letter book.

Just solved the radio problem. There is a TV aerial lead in cable that passes a window. We pull that next to the window opened a little bit and set the radio next to it. Radio has lots of power then.

Heard the weather report and its raining again. Windy and rain low 32 to 38, high 36 to 38 and it is now 40.

Ron

Sunday Jan. 2, 1966

Went to the PX today bought some saddle soap, a comb, bars of soap, another writing pad, a notebook, some Brasso and a very good radio all for \$21.11. The radio a \$40.00 normal value was \$19.45 is a ten transistors, runs on penlight batteries, has FM and AM, tone control and a rotating antenna. It is a Reltone. It works really well. Much smaller than yours but twice pocket size.

There is a post office mail truck that parks by the PX so I can get stamps there if I need to, after a while.

It was nice and clear this morning but got cloudy soon and snowed again.

The sergeants were in town last night and the PX opened. Some of the guys snuck out of here and came back stone drunk. Then they had a real clumsy fight while most of us were in bed. Some of the guys separated them and sent them to bed. 10 minutes later the Lt. came upstairs to see if we were in bed. The two woke up this morning not knowing what they had really done last night.

Snowing hard again although it melts as soon as it hits the ground. Have to do exercises today but nothing else tomorrow is our first official day of Basic. This will be delivered on the third. Will close now.

Ron

Card mailed Jan. 1, 1966



This is what they served around three o'clock for our dinner after the plane was bounced around over the snowstorm over South Dakota. The plane was at 49,000 feet and making a vapor trail, landed at 4:00 Just heard the temp in NYC is 68, our temp is 35. Plane did not stop in Portland, Ore. Minnesota Jet Northwest airlines, Menu South seas fruit cup, US choice tenderloin steak, sauteed mushrooms, Franconia Potatoes, Belgian carrots. Chefs' salad bowl, French dressing, Butter Vienna Roll, butterpat, Dessert, coffee, tea or milk. Cigarettes.

Monday, January 3rd, 1966. 3rd letter.

Dear Mom and Dad.

First day of basic, mostly lectures and some drill exercise. In the afternoon we had a lecture on the M 14 and some demonstration of its use. The LT caught one guy asleep and gave him Hell about it. I don't know if I mentioned it before but during Friday's lecture when the commanding General was giving a lecture he caught one guy asleep. He didn't do much but that kid sure got startled. He probably didn't sleep that night either. The LT found out about the drunks but they took the wrong men and put them on all day detail. Nobody dared say a thing about it.

I guess from how warm I hear it is at home that the weather here is lousy. The temp stays in the 30's the humidity near 100% and it snowed and partially rained all day. Had our poncho's on all the time we were out.

Tuesday, January 4th,

Received your air mail letter dated January 2nd. As far as weather goes we missed all the wind but it rained and snowed much of the time. Today was cloudy but it felt warmer as there was less humidity but around 4:00 P.M. it rained.

Got some instructions on the operation of the M-14. They showed us how to disassemble and reassemble it. It takes about 15 seconds to disassemble and 25 to reassemble it. The rifle is about 11 lb. in weight can fire either semiautomatic or automatic like a machine gun. It is rugged built for its light weight. It also has a flash depressor to reduce kicks and keep it level.

This afternoon we did some marching then had PT. I had to help serve supper, so I got out of the mile run. They were catching a lot of guys making mistake's over the sarge giving the exercises goofed once and did 10 push ups.

Turned in some laundry yesterday. They have a deal which we can turn in 25 articles a week. We pay a flat rate which is taken out of our pay regardless of what amount we turn in. It comes back Friday. Went to the PX again yesterday and bought some bath slippers, some shoe wax, a brass belt buckle and a popular Science magazine. There are all kinds of crackers except the kind at home and all kinds of candy except Payday's.

They say we will be paid soon. But don't know what pay. I also have a map of the entire post. I hear that a separate plot of land is located across the mountains in the desert. If I stay here for advanced training, they may send me there for a week or a month just for the change of climate and more room.

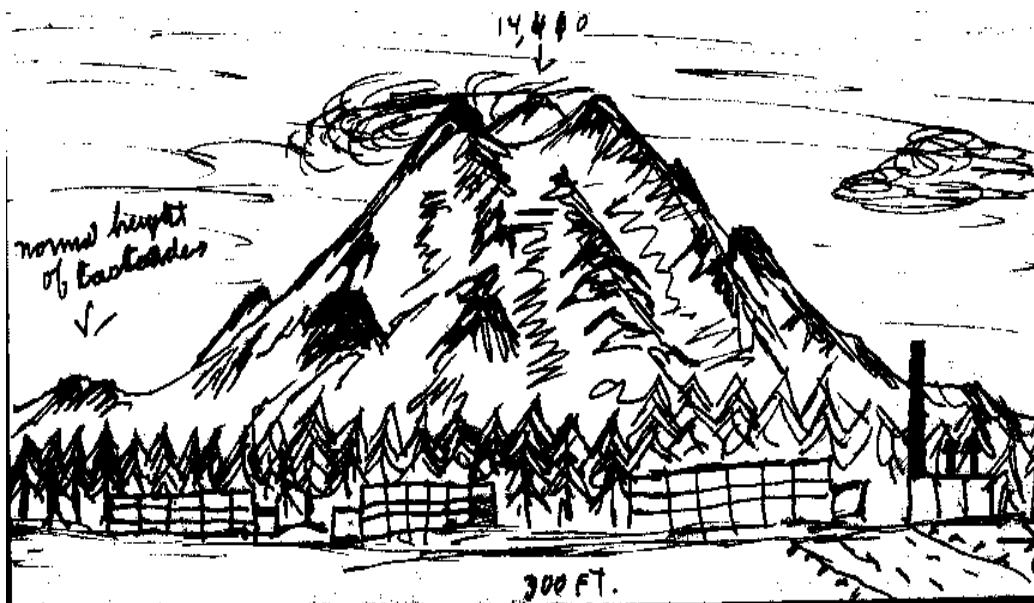
Ron

Friday, January 7th, 1966. 4th letter

Dear Mom and Dad

This afternoon we had physical training tests. We marched a mile to the site located next to the airport. It was a nice warm day today with only high altitude clouds. From there we could see the mountains and Mt. Rainier. It looks like a huge volcano and sticks up quite high compared to the rest of the mountain ranges. From my view I can see three glaciers. One can see at times the wind blowing snow off the top peaks. Where the barracks are, we can only see part of the cascades but Mt. Rainier is hidden by a hill and large pine trees. The best place to see it is the west end of the base or near the airport.

Our PT test, we did the 40-yard crawl. We put on our rain gear for this as it was all mud with standing water in the starting area. YICK, The expected maximum time is 35 seconds. Some did it in 28 seconds, then there was the grenade throw for points. At the 90-foot mark was a bull's eye area. We aimed for that. Some did good. I didn't but got five of 15 points needed. Next was the vertical ladder off monkey bars. The accepted is 35 rungs. Top score for 100 points are 76 rungs in one minute. I got 60 rungs. 300 points are needed to pass basic at the end of eight weeks. So if some guys don't get this they don't have to worry none. But at the end of eight weeks if they can't get 300 they are recycled. Next was the run dodge and jump. This was a test for quick changing of directions. The accepted time is 25 seconds. I made this in 20. Most average about this as it was very muddy here. Then came the mile run. Yes I ran a mile in 7 min. 30-sec. The accepted time is 8 min. 30-sec. Some got 6 min. 30-sec. Quite a few didn't make it and dropped out. But by keeping a certain pace it can be done without getting so tired that you can't go on. After it was done, I wasn't tired for long although the legs were a little stiff for half an hour. I got a total of 321 points, 21 above 300 needed to pass if the eight weeks had been over. The walk back was rough as it was dark and uphill with our packs.

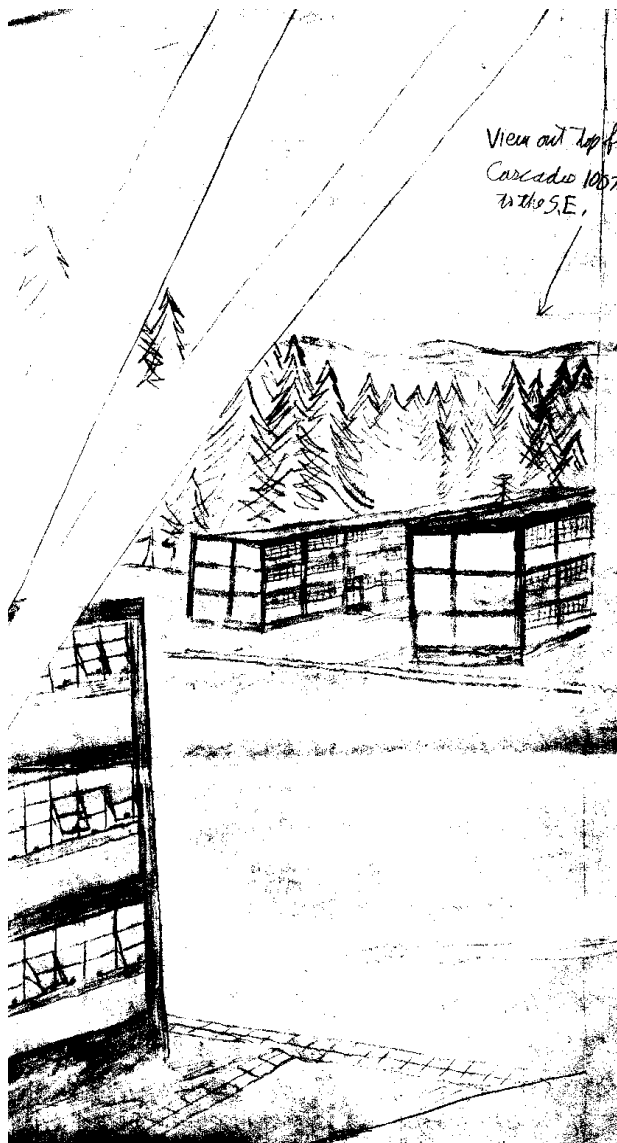


Saturday Jan. *

We had inspection then a written test on last weeks classes. This noon was mail call. Got a letter yesterday from *my sister* and got one today post marked Jan. 7. Rained late last night and was muddy. Today was cooler partly cloudy with rain showers. It's hard to believe it can rain so much around here. At the end of four weeks they will give us a weekend pass if we want one. Unless one had relatives to go to, they'll probably get drunk in town. I'll probably stay here.

Got paid today, only \$33. as I already had a pay advance, about \$3 is income tax. \$2 insurance and the money for a bond are already taken out. This does not total to \$78 but that's because it is early and next month is supposed to total \$83. Bought a book of air mail stamps.

Sunday Jan. 9



Got CQ duty today. It consisted of sitting in the company commanders office and running errands for the Sergeant in charge. Found this place called Yakima pronounced Yack-a-ma. It is a training area in the desert in Washington. 150 miles east of Fort Lewis. It is probably something like camp Greyling as the map marks it as an artillery range. Some of us will go there for a month for our A.I.T. I've got a good chance of staying here as according to the base paper they need personnel and will probably train the group for replacement.

I've got a friend who lives in Germany. He is 25 and came over here on his own to see the country. He was promptly drafted..

Have fun on the plane trip to Florida and all the confusion of getting your flight and checking in which gate to go to.

Ron

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This probably will be postmark the 10th.

Thursday Jan. 13th, 5th letter.

Dear Mom and Dad

Didn't have time to write last night. A new commanding general is taking over so there is going to be a parade Saturday. As a result the company did some ceremonial marching practice till 9:00 P.M. in the pouring rain.

Yesterday morning was more hand to hand combat lessons. In other words dirty fighting lessons. They showed us where a person can be killed with the proper blow from a judo chop or a kick or gouge. Examples, a hard blow across the nose can shatter it and drive bone splinters in the brain. Others are gouge the eyes. Judo chops in the Adam's apple. Knee in the small of the back, Kick in the family jewels and yank arms the wrong way to pull out of joint. They taught us methods and stands to defend ourselves and deliver blows with the hands and feet also ways to break from holds.

Yesterday afternoon we went to the west end of the fort for protective mask classes. After a bit of instructions we went into a room full of tear gas. Our second phase was to show us that it really worked. We took off our masks one by one and said our name and rank. At the end of rank, wham! Eyes watered and stung nose and throat like hot peppers. The instructor immediately ushered us outside to air out. Soon as the guy hollered gas, we took our mask out and put it on then blew to clear it. The room was full of chlorine gas. Anyone who hadn't listened before choked on chlorine gas and would be taken outside fast. Our clothes were wet from the rain so we smelled like bleach for an hour afterward. That is hard on the hair as well. The place was situated on top to the hill so one could see the whole post. This would permit a specular view of the Mts. if it were clear.

Thursday morning we had two hours of classes on guard duty. Then two hours of bayonet classes and practice. We were instructed on various positions to hold a fixed bayonet. Then we had maneuvers and did them just as quickly as the positions were called. This is another class where one is taught hate but this is for our survival in case we must fight with one.

This afternoon we had a four-mile hike with wet weather clothes, rubber boots and full pack. Needless to say we were all tired as the boots and wet weather gear hinders walking.

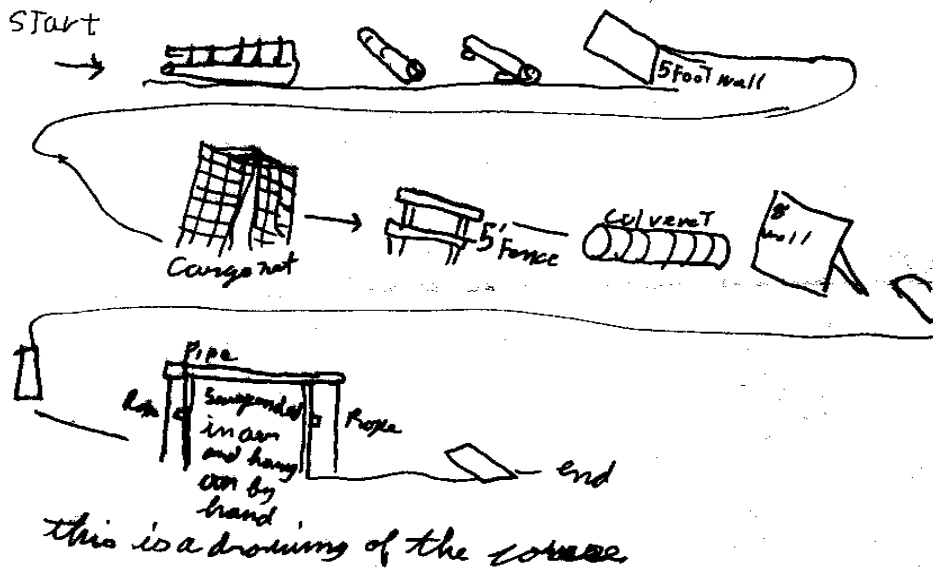
Received the package Wednesday. Today (Friday) received a letter dated Jan. 13. I can't play yatzke as we are not supposed to ever have dice but they can be hidden as I borrowed a knife from the kitchen for the cheese spread.

Today we ran the obstacle course. The first was running through poles set crossways which got up to 2½ feet. About then if the feet won't lift high enough. It tripped one. The second and third were hurdle over logs. No 4 was hand vault up a 5 foot wall, no 6 climb up high, then duck walk through a culvert and then scale a 8 FT wall. Next was a couple of ditches. Finally up a 15 foot rope, hand over hand 15 feet of 4 inch pipe and down a rope.

The afternoon was bayonet classes. We learned various attack moves such as long lunge, short lunge, bash, smash, etc. one kid actually got sick. Actually it is not like that. It is for our own defense.

Tomorrow is the parade. It is suppose to be partly cloudy. that I have to see. It is raining now. Although when there is light rain or showers the ground is less muddy as it is sandy.

Ron



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5+ letter

Dear Mom and Dad

One week down, seven to go. I'll come home at the end of basic as they will only give us leave when there is time. So I might as well not take a chance of missing out. They want to train us in AIT all at once. I believe that the Christmas leave was really a special six day pass. As it probably doesn't count on our 2-week leave. There is a very good chance of staying here we will probably be trained to replace personnel who's hitch is about up.

It was rain showers today. Our duties today were mostly drill and classroom instructions. We also had a class on hand to hand combat and where to hit an enemy in order to kill or disable him with the bare hands.

In addition to his left, right, and to the rear march, I also have to do port around, right shoulder arms, left shoulder arms, present arms, left flank, right flank, mark time double time, etc. But is almost like band marching.

Jan. 11th

Received letter dated 10th. Today, they had classes and drill work. They issued us bayonets for today for drill purposes only. When time came to turn them in, one was missing, so the sergeant searched everything, about halfway through it turned up. One of the sick call class make up had not heard the turn in orders.

Tomorrow we get put in the gas chambers and are going to be taught how to use our gas masks. We also have more hand to hand combat lessons.

I do have access to church at 10:00 A.M. I haven't gone yet but I'll see about going this Sunday. I'm out of airmail envelopes, but have plenty of plain ones. I also have 25 airmail stamps that I bought here.

As far as the weather here it is about the same cloudy with rain showers every day, temperature in the 40's during the day and 20's at night.

Seems I always wake up at 4:15 a.m. each morning, then fall asleep again. This would be 7:15 at home, figure that out?

Ron

Wednesday Jan. 5th

Dear Mom and Dad;

Received Monday's letter Jan. 3rd stamped Jan. 4th.

Today it was pouring rain all day. Today in the morning it was mostly lectures. This afternoon it was wet weather gear and outside. The darn stuff gets wet, heavy and is like wearing a straight jacket. They shortened the mile run today as it took more effort to run it, and many dropped out. It was all mud. The wettest day yet. And according to the paper the average rainfall is way above normal. Suppose to be near 50 tomorrow. You can send a package and send the can of Needfoot oil. I'm about out. No saddle soap. I have a can. I am able to keep the diary up to date and quite a few of the other guys have them as well.

As far as draft call up goes, did you hear that Casus Clay, *Muhammad Ali*, is getting recalled for a physical? Just heard this on the radio and did it start the laughing.

The mail call has a big stack just for our platoon. Some got two or three mostly from girl friends. There is at least a package or two in the mail as well. I may have a hard time buying stamps as the PX doesn't have any. If we're lucky some days, the mail truck is there. Anyway we're all tired today. I guess the mail is picked up in the morning here. I put it in at night so it should be out the next morning.

Thursday Jan. 6th. More movies this morning and some drills. This afternoon we had Physical training, and a lecture on the proper wearing of our dress uniform. Got a gas mask and gun cleaning kit from supply. Tomorrow I will go to the hospital area to get tested for safety glasses.

The weather was clear and warmer at night but by morning it was raining quite hard again. It quit at noon and stayed cloudy. The news has heavy flood warning out for Southwest Washington. Several passes in the mountains were blocked last night by snow slides. They get anywhere from three to 18 inches each day it rains here. It was much warmer today about 50. F.

Will send out another letter Sunday night, which means it will leave here Monday Morning.

Ron

PS The food is fairly good. When they clean out the urn, the coffee is then good but after a few days it tastes lousy.

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Saturday Jan. 15th 6th letter

Dear Mom and Dad.

Got *my brother's* letter today. The address must be Co. A, 2nd Battalion 22nd Division {mech.} infantry. 3rd platoon. You had 3rd platoon, 22nd Division, 2nd Battalion {mech.} infantry. As a result it was sent to the 3rd battalion by mistake and didn't arrive until today.

Send the recipe on Hamburger buns if you can find the one with 125 buns. I'll take it to the mess sergeant someday. They are open for new and simple recipes. As far as being any trouble to bake they happen to make most of their pies in regular size pie tins.

The second platoon lost a bayonet there will probably be a shake down of the whole company in order to locate it.

We had a formal parade for the new Brigade commander and his family and relatives this morning. As a result this was supposed to cancel inspections but as a result of change 99 we had a class a dress uniform inspection.

As usual our barrack clown, "Sad Sack" Shannon, goofed it up but good. He wore shoes which had shoe polish that was not buffed and spit shined. His excuse was, "I was starting to polish them but had to fall out, so I put them on," and he forgot the, "sir." He had his usual silly grin. Boy did the LT. growl at him. In other word's Shannon almost got his ass grassed. Yesterday while the rest of us were working, he was reading comic books.

Believe it or not it didn't rain today, However it was quite foggy and cold wet air went through all insulation. LT. Flick just came in for a shake down 7:30 P.M.. He is a very nice guy and knows how to really search. He kidded about the barber equipment of one guy and all our cookies and goodies.

Sunday most of the guys slept in this morning and it has been quiet all morning. Its 11 o'clock and "Sad Sack" Shannon is still sound asleep as is another guy. Some others are sleeping but they are at least dressed. Had a large breakfast this morning. It is not supposed to rain today but is quite foggy again. Shannon finally got up this noon.

Got a Schedule for the 3rd week. Monday we have the rifle range all day. Tuesday is rifle range and hand to hand combat class. Wednesday is bayonet class other classes and a night march. Thursday is other classes. Friday is practice on the bayonet assault range.

We finally have all the shots we need. Any more, we get our booster shots. They use a needle here but have a way of giving shots without out one feeling it. This was when I got one Dec. 22. Fort Dix guys had to have shots Friday. They said that they were quite surprised that it didn't hurt but the guns do. This was the first year that the new needle less high pressure injection system was used for injections. When they work right, it is just like a needle but faster. When they don't, they cut a hole in the skin and sting.

Looked through the Sunday paper.

The only comic that is the same as home is Little Abner and three adult comics and the children's comics on the front page. All the others are different. TV programs are the same but we have access to the day room only on Saturday afternoon and Sunday if change 99 permits. Change 99 is when those in charge change all the schedules at the last second. It also puts Church service at 8:00 A.M. and chow quite late.

Ron

PS.

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7th letter. January 19, 1966

Dear Mom and Dad;

Got a letter today postmarked 15th. Also, got the package today with the nedfoot oil. One of the gamblers got five dice.

Today we spent all day on the rifle range. It was foggy all day and the moisture and cold penetrates all woolen and insulated that we wore. The morning was mostly instructions with a hot chocolate break. We had our lunch out there. After lunch we were in groups of three. Then one person coached one shot off three rounds, the other ran errands or got warm. For shooting a bullet the size of a 30-30. This gun has the kick of a 22. It is a result of the design and as a demonstration one of the Sargent placed the rifle butt on his stomach, shot a round then he placed the butt on the groin. fired a round and then on his chin and fired a round to prove that it did not kick when held properly.

The three shots I fired to get the feel of the rifle landed within this pattern at 80 ft. This is a Canadian bull target designed to let us adjust the sights, later on tomorrow we will shoot 18 rounds in the morning.

Today Believe it or not it was nice and sunny, high in the 30's but enough of the moisture was gone for us to have our coats off. For PT this morning was the rifle range. We shot off nine shots so as to get tight shot groups although the sights are off. One could see just the top of the mountains. However, it was foggy this morning. After PT the mountain was just above the trees and the sun made it a golden reflection in the eastern sky.

There was another class of hand to hand combat. Were viewed our other movies. Then learned the choke hold such as a one used on TV to put a sentry out of action. Then learned how to break from the hold and deliver a blow. Then, we also learned to break away from a bear hug and in doing so put the opponent in a position to receive a blow. Now I guess it will rain tomorrow as clear weather around here doesn't last long.

Ron

Wed 19th 8th letter.

Dear Mom and Dad;

I got a pair of regulation glasses. They are in the same style of frames as my sunglasses. They never really tested my eyes from a prescription stand point. So they are a little strong. We have to have them at least in our possession. I think I'll wear them only in a situation when there is a risk in losing them or breaking them. Otherwise, I'll wear my own.

Today was an all day session of first aid classes. It was outside or in a cold stadium stand. We took a 2-mile march there and back. We double timed part of the way and got too warm. By the time we cooled down we were then chilled all day. This is the third day of this damp weather that defies jacket, liners and insulated underwear. I've got a headache from it although now that I am warmed up it is not as bad. Quite a few are a little sick from chilling and we all have colds and coughs. So we marched for a few hours at night as part of the schedule.

The temp is now 35 at 9:00 P.M. and it is clear and foggy.

Saturday Jan 22.

Wow, have they kept us busy. I shook of the temperature Tuesday Morning but now got a really sore throat. Thursday morning was classes and marching. After lunch we hiked to a small assault course and had bayonet practice all afternoon.

Friday they took us on a long ride about 10 miles to the main bayonet assault course in the north Fort area. This was an obstacle course with targets in various places and in foxholes. We had to walk log bridges, crawl through square tunnels, over an 8-ft log wall presenting the lowest silhouette possible and under a barb wire fence. It was like this. As you see, it takes a lot of crawling as it is also 10 feet wide. The wire is 10 gauge and has a lot of inch long barbs. When one crawls under it lying on the back and going head first wearing the steel pot you don't tear any clothes or get and cuts. We also carried our rifles with fixed bayonets.

In the afternoon we went through the short course that is nearby, this consists of several fixed targets on flat ground. We go through the proper movements in sticking each one. The target boards are 18 in. x 18 in. and one inch of tough rubber fiber board. They have to be hit hard and straight to push a bayonet all the way through. After an hour of this we end up tearing holes in them. Afterwards was PT. Thursday evening, we got haircuts. We spent Friday evening getting things ready for inspection. This is why I couldn't mail sooner. I didn't have time to write, neither did the other guys.

They managed to keep us busy all day today. This morning we put up tents in such bad ground we bent and broke aluminum stakes. Each of us has a half tent, three pole section and five stakes. The half a tent snaps together to form a modified pup tent. They can snap up with other halves to form bigger tents. The weather the past week has been quite nice. It hasn't rained to amount to anything. However, it is usually cloudy. Today, Sunday, the sun is out.

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There was a class A inspection Saturday and also a regular inspection. After the last inspection all the guys went to the PX and a lot of them got drunk. I finally got rid of the sore throat. Three weeks down, five to go. The batteries lasted about three weeks of running each evening in the radio.

As far as goodies go I've got two boxes of crackers. Some cheese and candy bars left. There is always a cokecola party going on Sunday and lots of empty cans around with other things from the PX and home packages. Monday morning it will be all gone because there are daily inspections.

Ron

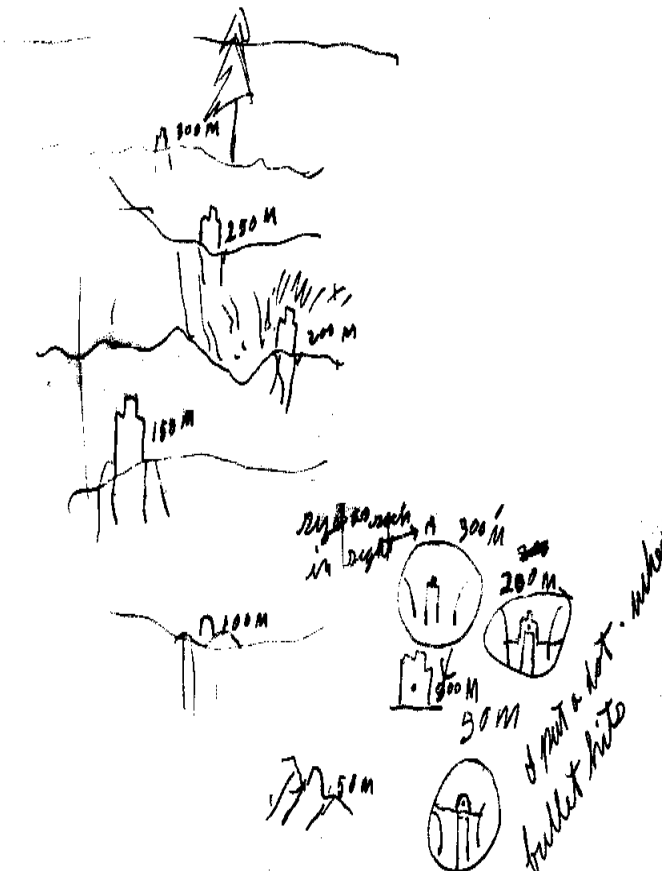
Monday 24th 9th letter

Dear Mom and Dad;

Got a letter dated 21st. It had the recipe in it.

As far as movies go there hasn't been a good one yet although some good ones come on nights we can't go.

There was no training schedule posted yet so I don't know what will happen in the 4th week. Today was rifle range all morning. We had sitting positions the shot groups are closer together. One could be covered with a quarter. All, with a silver dollar. It was nice and clear this morning. Lunch was served on the rifle range. After lunch we marched 2 miles to the target detection range, which is located in the woods. All the wooded areas are like Hartwick Pines. Although the trees are fir, The ground has a lot of moss.



It started a drizzly rain all afternoon. We stayed dry as we were under the trees or a shelter most of the time. Under such conditions it is surprising how an army uniform makes good camouflage and when the guy laid down in the woods 300 ft. off, he seems to blend in the ground.

Tuesday, rifle range all morning. We had standing position, sitting supported, foxhole and a rapid fire, change clip exercise. The standing position was hard to help centered for long. The other two I can put the shots close together in the change clips, rapid fire, We had to get in position fire one shot, change clips, and fire two shots in under 25 seconds. They had to be a tight shop group as well.

Guard duty tonight. I'm writing this in the afternoon before I go on duty. We are split in three shifts of two hours each. I got the second which is the best as it allows more sleep then the others. I will mail this now.

The weather today is very nice and the sun was out all day.

Ron

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Tuesday continued 10th letter

Dear Mom and Dad;

Just completed the first two hours of guard duty from seven to nine. My post is an area of parked tanks, trucks and gas pumps. Kind of surprising guarding such equipment. It is all fenced in and the gate locked. We usually challenge mostly each other as it is quite foggy and hard to see each other. The weather is nice tonight. The next two hours were from 1:00 to 3:00 a.m. Then I slept in the guardhouse until six a.m. when I had breakfast and then one hour of duty. We came back right after the rest of the platoon left for the rifle range. We marched out an hour later. It was sunny in the morning, But as usual it clouded up at noon but didn't rain as forecast. Today we were graded on our shooting. We fired 33 rounds in various positions.

Thursday was nice and clear all morning and part of the afternoon. While coming back from the target detection range, there was a very good view of Mr Rainier with the sun shining on the south side. A north wind blew snow off the south end. It got cloudy this afternoon, which made it easier to see the targets. By night it was raining again. Four more weeks to go as of today.

Going to fill out the laundry slip now. Sending in a towel. One wash cloth, one handkerchief, two under pants, two under shirts, three pair socks, two pants, two shirts, jacket, one wool long johns. They will come back Wednesday. The shirt and pants will be starched. We turn in our sheets at the same time and receive clean ones. We are then charged a flat rate of \$4.50 a month which is taken out of the pay check. Have to get a haircut or trim every week. This cost 90¢.

Got a letter from Grandma. It had a lot of clipping from a newspaper in it.

I also wrote her a letter.

Friday Jan 28th

Got a letter from home. How much flour does it take for the hot rolls for 100?

Today was rifle range. We zeroed our weapons in. Then in the afternoon we shot pop up targets. I got most of the middle and some close and far targets. The range at 75 yards, 175 yards, and 300 yards or 900 ft. The first one is 1 foot by 1 foot. the other 2 foot by 2 foot like half a man and are the same color as the background. On our last time we missed a lot because we could not see the targets as they were vanished by the evening haze. There was a very good view of the mountains and Cascade range. One could see the vapor clouds on the north and south peak as it formed. I will close now, so I can get it mailed tonight.

Ron

11th letter continued of Friday.

Dear Dad and Kenny;

I forgot to mention that I got a crazy pair of glasses to wear inside the gas mask. Both pairs are a little too strong although I can adjust to them in a few minutes. They make the land appear to slope down.

We got shots with the needle today. The apply them in a way that they cannot be felt. It is raining outside again after a nice day. The temp. 46 degrees. Also found out I got KP Monday. They work this on the alphabetical bases so we all get an even amount.

Saturday went out on target detection range and learned more about camouflage. Our teacher was a tough type ranger Lt. He straightened up a few guys. Made them empty their canteens and made the whole company do 30 push ups. Then we had a normal class.

Today we learned more about the trip home for leave. The guys living in Michigan got enough interest aroused. We are going to charter a plane to Detroit. The round trip ticket will cost only \$126. almost the same as a stand by. But it is a sure seat. Our gradation day is Saturday the 26th at 8:00 am , it is done by 10 am. If all goes as planned I should be home before midnight. The leave will be from the 26th to the 14th of march. The Fort Dix fellows have go their charter just about lined up. Will let you know more about this as I find out.

Sunday. Some guys can't figure out which airport to go to so the maps are coming in handy. How about sending me a Michigan map? I don't have one and I could use it. There should be one in my dresser shelve. Send one of Detroit and vicinity, if you can find one. I'll call you up a week or two before the end of basic.

I went to church this morning. The services are very similar to home except the collection plate was full of dollar bills. Went the third Brigade chapel. The weather is cloudy today.

From the news here I hear it is still bitterly cold in Michigan and Chicago had 18 below yesterday. It said there is a massive storm on the east coast. It is raining here and in the 40's.

The schedule this week will probably be our roughest. Monday is rifle range, Tuesday is the quailing for expert in shooting. Thursday and Friday are bibwac out in the woods. We will camp out. There will be extra, such as shooting tracers at night targets, a training obstacle course at night with live machine gun firing tracers over our heads as we crawl along a course getting as far as we can in a certain time.

We will probably get more bayonet course and hand to hand practice. We have yet to throw grenades. At the end of that we will each throw a live high explosive grenades at a target.

The last week we will be turning in many articles and getting ready for our two weeks off. We get paid tomorrow and on Feb 26th before we leave. That is all for now that I know. Tomorrow I have KP in the mess hall all day. Lots of food there to eat.

this mountain from the firing range



12th letter

Dear Mom and Dad,

Today I had KP duty. The other fellows went to rifle range. I ended up washing pots and pans. There are kettles that hold 20 gallons. All you use for dishwashing soap is GI all purpose bar soap (brand X). Worlds worst cleaners. To top it off the cooks have a game of who can burn it the worst. They even burned the soup in the kettle. There was liver for dinner which left three well blackened containers. Good thing I got them while they were still hot otherwise I would have never got them clean. In one container the cooks left ½ inch of charcoal burnt cherries for cherry pie. Someone else cleaned that. The seven KP's worked from 5:30 A.M. to 7:30 P.M.

Got paid \$73.00 after deductions. This is from the normal \$87.00 paycheck. A two star General came through to visit the mess hall. I talked to him.

There is going to be two nights of bibwac. This starts Thursday morning and ends Saturday. You may not get a letter mailed Saturday morning as there will be no way to write or mail one until Sunday.

I got the pack ready. It contains personal hygiene and toilet articles, a set of fatigues, two sets underwear, sleeping bag, air mattress, cover, shelter half, poles, rope etc., which are fastened to our harness and pistol belt. This also has a field pack with wet weather gear, poncho, mess kit, two ammo pouches, canteen, shovel. This totals about 60 lbs of stuff not including our weapon and blank ammo.

Wednesday we spent the morning at the target detection range. We also practiced some crawls the afternoon was spent on shooting pop up targets.

It was nice and clear all day. I was very much surprised to look towards the north east and see a good sized range of mountains. They are the Olympics mts. and look quite rugged. First time it has been clear enough to see them as they are 125 miles away. No doubt it will probably rain at Bibwac.

Ron

Ps. got 2 letters one from Clearwater, Fl. and one from home, the calendar worked out very well. I haven't had much chance to take pictures, I can get them developed here at a reasonable price.

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13th letter

Dear Dad;

Got the map and your letter at the same time. Change 99. Can't get a charter to Detroit. Charlie company for some reason got our Chicago charter before we could, but about 19 of us talked to the charter representative and we should be able to form up another plane load with little trouble. Only a few dozen of A company were able to purchase a seat before next Sunday, If the airline gets another plane available for charter. We still have enough guys for one

The glasses are close enough to the prescription that I wore them for bibwac. I am still wearing them now. They fit a little better. I've got it written when to call home.

Took a few pictures of the mess after bibwac. Bibwac started as we got our gear together Wednesday night. Thursday morning we got on the bus with our weapons and 60 lbs. pack of gear and went to target detection area for the morning. At noon we marched a short distance to train fire 8 and had chow there. The afternoon was spent in qualifying firing for marksman's badge. It rained all afternoon. As a result it was hard for those with glasses to see the targets at first. We wore wet weather gear.

We had 96 rounds. 40 were fired in foxholes position, the rest at other positions. This included 12 extra rounds. There were 88 targets to hit at various ranges. Targets were 50 m-150 feet, 100 m 300 feet the size of a helmet. 150-450 feet, 200 m -500 feet, 280 m-750 feet and 300 meters-900 feet about 2' by 3' size. All were colored about the same as the background. They are as much as 100 foot separation out of line and the terrain is rugged, To help us there is a bunk on each side to help us see where they will come up so we can see them when they come up. The weapon is zeroed for 300 yds therefore the closer targets are as hard to hit as the 300 yard ones. 300 was easily hit by putting the sight in line with the head. at 150 m one aims near the base and 100 and 50 one aims lower the bullet goes high.

The scoring marked 30 to 45 marksman 40 to 60 sharpshooter 60 and over expert. Under 30 is low which have to shoot over. In spite of the weather I made sharpshooter. I managed to hit most of the 300 m. I missed the one close by shooting over them, A few on the first one I could not see and aimed in the general area. I even hit 300 m ones in a sitting position.

We had chow there. It cleared up so when we started the three point sight, 3.8 mile hike to the bibwac area at 7:00 P.M. there was light by the moon to see. We took a back road through the woods. Lots of lumber size trees, mostly Douglas fir and redwood, Many 150 feet high. The road was muddy, We had one simulation gas attack and we hit the brush twice. At 8:00 P.M. we reached the area which had smaller trees. We sat up our tents under the trees and covered them with branches to camouflage them. I went to bed at nine. The squads had guards posted all night and we had our gas mask where we could find it in case someone tossed a tear gas grenade someplace.

We got up at 5:30 put on wet weather gear to keep warm and ate chow in the dark. I was an odd chow line with guys hiding in the brush and 10 feet apart. We ate in the dark. During the day we had classes. In the afternoon we camouflage ourselves with brush and camouflage stick.

We practiced some assault tactics. It rained in the morning enough to get stuff wet and put rust on some of the weapons which had the oil washed off the day before. In the afternoon we went once through as assault course, the objective a machine gun nest. We went through in groups of three's. We were issued 15 rounds of blanks. We started at low crawl for 20 ft. We wore our gear and field pack. { no bed roll or tent}. Then we high crawled for 30 feet to the fence. Then we rolled over and crawl under being careful not to hit the wire so as to rattle the cans {bobby trap}. When we got through one group fire 2 or 3 shots each { cover fire while the others charge for 20 ft. Then they hit the dirt and the orders reversed. We did this twice. Then we tossed a practice grenade. The cadres told us when it went off. At the moment we all got up and charged the hill firing blanks as we went. Some of us went around back and fired in the back of the nest.

We ran the same course again at night. As usual it was muddy and all our gear was covered with mud. The difference was the fence had flares rigged to the bobby trap. None went off so they turned on lights. We had to freeze and look away. Every once in a while they threw simulator to simulate an artillery attack. The are far louder than cherry bombs and make a big flash and bang. The person throwing them must be over 15 feet away to avoid being hurt by the stuff kicked up from the blast. We used 20 rounds of blanks.

We got to bed at 9:00 pm. I had the tent well camouflaged. Half of them couldn't find it as I slept with a squad leader. We had to show them where it was. We were to expect an attack by the NCO and officers. None bothered us. The guards caught them. At 11 PM we were awakened by a flash and bang. Simulated artillery bombs were going off all night as well as blank fire. The happened several times that night.

We got up for chow at 5:30 am. It rained. We packed our tent in the dark and started back for a 6 mile hike. We didn't go far and we had to hit the dirt as a few helicopters flew over. A few simulators went off. We had a gas attack as well. Got back at 10 am and cleaned up. Boots were terrible. The afternoon we went to bayonet practice and to top it off we had a drill for an hour till 5 PM. Cleaned the weapons after chow. It was a mess of dirt and rust.

We had PX privileges. I bought some crackers, a coke and a box of soap. The place was loaded with bear cans and guys getting loaded.

Got mail after 3 days of being out. 4 letters, 2 from Florida and 2 from home. Will end now.

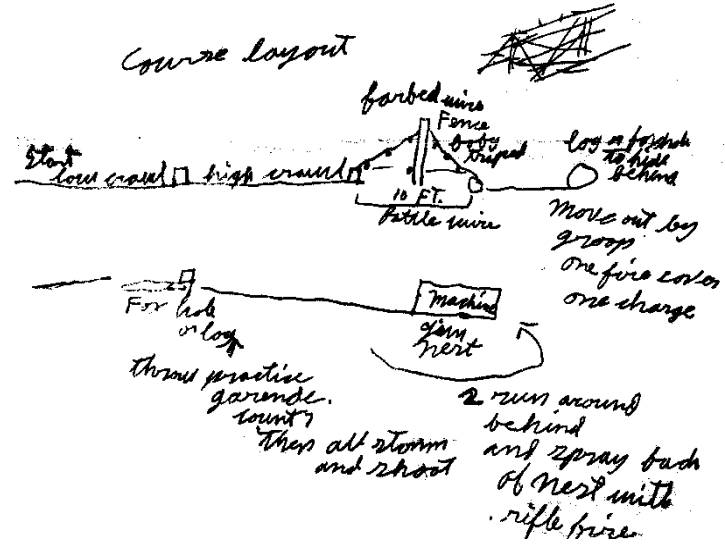
Ron

Sunday Feb 6th. 14th letter

Dear Mom and Dad;

Bought some stuff at the PX. Sent Eddie a post card. Got some shoe polish, can of coke, the post cards, Kleenex, shoe brush and a towel, cost \$1.45. As usual the beer hall was full of guys getting loaded

Quite a few came back loaded but half ways under control. Will get a few tablespoons this week as in the last week they will probably start checking when their silverware suddenly starts to vanish. I found some king-size mark a lots in black and white only they are the 79¢ size only 40 ¢.



There is a good \$100 value Polaroid camera one guy bought one for \$60. It takes good black and white pictures and color. they are smooth edge and it uses an extra heavy color film, which needs no back. Let me know if you want Polaroid film and what kind it is probably cheaper here. There is an 8 picture roll of color film for it for \$4.00 that made good pictures even inside. Color film for my camera is less then \$2.00 black and white. \$1.60 a cartridge, tried to get some flash cubes, they were temporary out.

Monday Feb 7th

Got a letter from Florida. Dated Feb 2. It was mis sent to 3rd battalion. To avoid this the order must be Co A 2 b 22 D {mech} if 3rd plotted. We were back on an easier schedule. We went through the bayonet assault course again. Then had some drill and ceremony this noon. All targets are of 1\2 thick rubberized fiberboard which have to be hit hard to stick a bayonet through. After a few days they are all torn to pieces. Some targets have simulated bayonets to slide aside. Some ones have a give a butt stroke to clobber them.

This afternoon was more marching and our hour of PT exercises. This included double timing half a mile, but there is nothing to that anymore. You hardly get tired. There was a class this evening on night vision. There will be night firing tomorrow night until 11 PM. they may let us asleep in the next day.

Ron

Tuesday Feb 8th.

Had hand to hand combat classes with fixed bayonets. We learned how to defend ourselves against a person with a bayonet and then deliver a blow. When the guy makes the lung, one nearly pushes the weapon aside then use your same arm and hit his face. If one is charged at the stomach, the bayonet is parried {pushed aside} then grabbed with the other hand. When the enemy starts to pull back, he will get a kick between the legs. When one is in a sitting position on the ground and is charged. The bayonet is parried then grabbed. When he pulls back you get up, hook his leg and push him over backwards, then stomp him and stick him through the whole period. The sheath was on the bayonet. Still none was touched by the point no matter how much the other guy tried to when the guy without a bayonet used the correct method. Use the method on the wrong side and one gets clobbered with the butt of the rifle.

There is night firing tonight on the schedule. From what I know my job will be to supply heavy weapon operators. The other jobs range from M-14 cowboy to medics and artillery operators. Heavy weapons are 90's, 106 recoilless or mortar and heavy machine guns. Marched 4 miles to the night fire range, ate supper out there. It was wet, windy and cold. a very black night. There were big targets of standing silhouette at 20 meters and 50 meters. We were able to hit them. We fired 24 rounds of which 9 were tracers. When 90 guys cut loose with tracers it makes quite a fireworks. It takes a long time to clear weapons and check targets, the make sure everybody is back. I took 4 hours for all 250 to fire. We got to bed at 11 PM. they let us sleep in till 7:30, when our Lt walked in and got us all up.

It had been a nice day. I took my camera to the night firing range, in the afternoon in hope of some good mountain pictures, but the clouds came in as soon as we arrived. Whenever possible I'll take it out again. Other guys have done this and got pictures while out on rifle range or target detection, during the break. Of course if there is a bayonet course or hand to hand combat or other rough deal, I'll leave it in the locker.

Will close now so I can get it in the Wednesday noon mail.

Ron



Wed to Fri. Feb 11, 15 Th letter

Dear Mom and Dad

Received three letters,

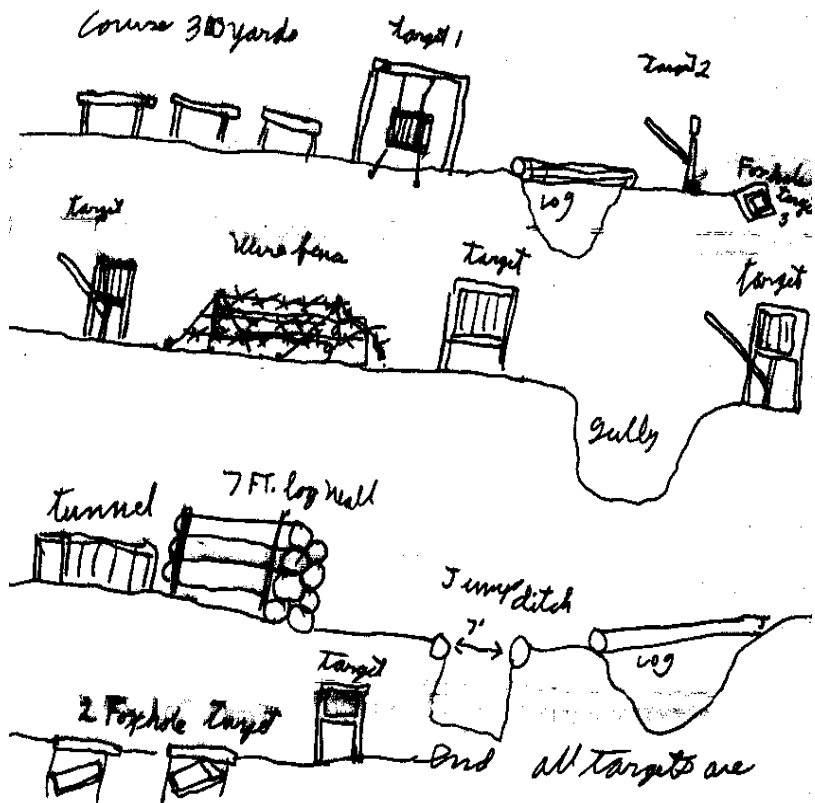
Yesterday we had a Conrac course. This was nothing more then firing as a squad at targets that came closer and closer. Today we ran a close combat assault course, next to the artillery range. I loaded ammo from bandolier, this is a neck sling that is made from disposable light cloth and carries 60 rounds in 5 round clips. It has a loader to help quick load a magazine. the neck band has a safety pin to help shorten the sling. I collected about 3 dozen safety-pins. They are coated with blueing. I'll send a few in this letter.

The simulator used are 2 inch diameter 4 ft long and are electrically exploded they are 2 times as loud as the hand ones. We had hand to hand combat for the afternoon. It was a nice day. today.

Found out more about the charter flight. Depending on where the majority rules It will be either Detroit or Chicago. It will cost \$146.

Can you send \$10 in cash? As when I buy the ticket I will have only less then \$2 to buy more stamps, Pay for 2 more haircuts and other things. That will be enough. I will get paid the 24th and will be able to buy things to take home from that. Yesterday I spent \$1.09 for cleaning bill for dress greens and \$.90 for haircut. I won't be able to cash a check here.

Today it rained all day. and was miserable and windy. Had marching most of the day. It cleared up for PT. Have a full field inspection tomorrow. Also got a letter from Florida Feb 5th



Ron

Saturday Feb 12th #16 Will mail Tues.

Dear Mom and Dad;

Today was a full field class A inspection. We spent part. took a picture of a class field inspection setup. as usual everything had got to be just so.

The weather was clear and cool and the same forecasted for Sunday. We still have no base privilege on our own. there is a good reason for this. They don't want any epidemic of spinal meningitis. Good thing that I am taking Basic here. Fort Knox and 2 others have their personal restricted to base as they have a total of 50 cases there and want to keep it under control. there are 2 guys in the hospital at Fort Lewis. Nothing has happened here and we found out only by a news broadcast.

Next week will be our test week. There is a PT test, a bayonet test and hand to hand combat, to make sure we try to pass they will cancel our leave if we don't pass.

Called home Disregard the \$10 in previous letter \$5 is enough. I have \$146 on me now and will get paid at least \$70 on the 24th. Will call home when I buy my ticket and will buy out of the \$70 things to take home.

Sunday Day off. Tomorrow will be grenade throwing. the rest of the week will be interesting. We still have an infiltration course to go through This will include crawling under live machine gun fire at night.

Everybody buys up flash cubes as fast as they are brought to the PX. Film is \$.85 black and white, \$1.45 color slides and \$4.15 color. Polaroid 3000 is \$1.45 and \$4.25 8 print color.

Bought a souvenir book, bar of soap, 1 coke, box of crackers.\$89 total. Have to take 3 more pictures. I'll buy a cartage of color slide film. there is 20 exposures in that. and it is only \$1.45. Seen some regular indoor color pictures from an Instamatic. They look good.

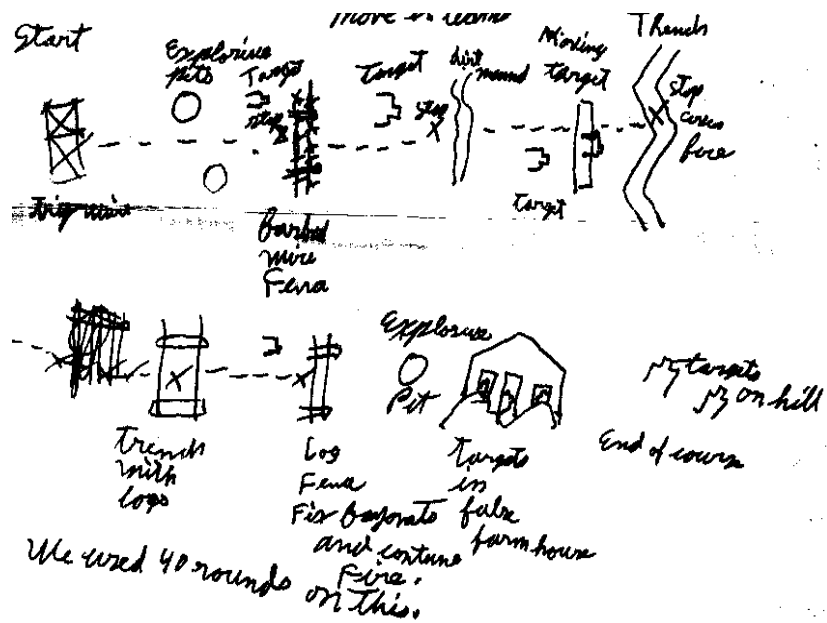
Monday, got all 12 pictures taken. We have an assault course at night so I can't get them to the PX tonight. We did marching this morning.

We went through a dry run of the course. this was a 100 yard crawl over logs and under wire. For chow we had c ration kit. this contained 3 cans, one hot food such as meats, beans, soup, ham, chicken , there are dozens of different 3 can meals. the other bread and a third cookies, crackers, juice or fruit cocktail. Also in that can is jellies and hot chocolate mix. They taste better then the chow we normally get. All 3 cans plus a package containing gum, cigarettes, matches, instant coffee, salt, sugar, instant cream, toilet tissue. Gum came in a 3 x 4 x 6 inch box. this is the same food that they have stored for emergency use. We ran the course at 6 PM. We started from a trench and crawled over logs and under wire and finally in a finish trench. All the while they shot live machine gun fire over our heads and set of 1\4 lb TNT charges in pits. It wasn't too bad. We wore old clothes.

Tomorrow is grenade practice. Will close now.

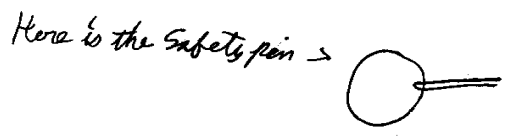
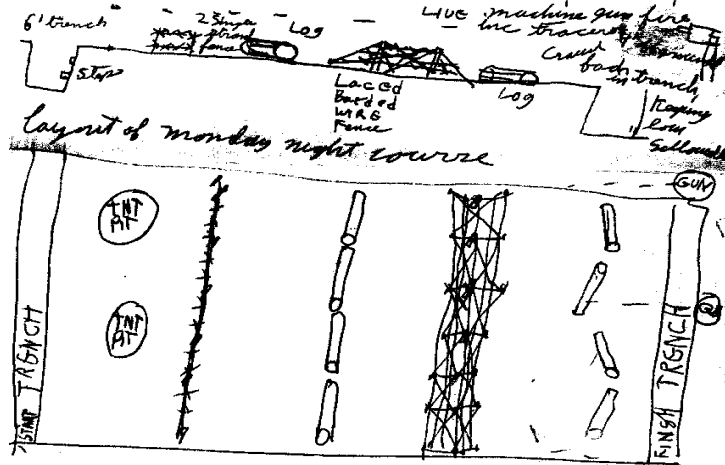
Ron

PS Sunday night, we had 3 drunk guys. One was so loaded he fell asleep in the wrong bed. Several of the guys carried him over to his bed and covered him up. He didn't wake up till this morning. The other 2 staggered in bed and slept if off.



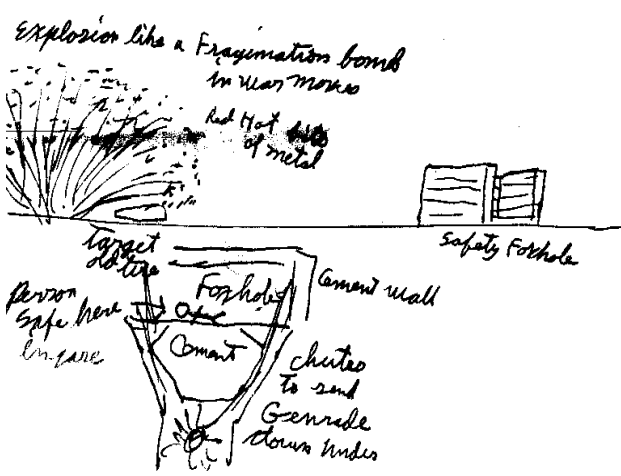
Dear Mom and Dad #17 letter.

Tuesday, Had grenade course today. Here is the safety pin from a live high explosive hand grenade They make an awful bang. Too heavy to send, I'll bring home. We were behind cement foxholes which had safety trenches in case we dropped live grenades. Here is one of the thousand pieces of metal that flew around as far as 500 ft. Everybody threw one. A safety Sargent watched each one of us as we tossed it at a target. There was only one casualty. One person didn't duck quick enough and got cut in the face by a piece of metal, otherwise about 250 of them were exploded safety.



Sent my film in to get developed. Bought a roll of color slide for \$14, correction color film I \$.90 and \$1.50 for processing. B and W is 50 cents.

Received the letter with stamps and \$10. I don't think the charter made it so I will get a standby ticket to Detroit as soon as possible. the earlier a ticket is at the gate the better the chance on getting on a flight. From what I hear a lot of guys are afraid they will have to wait. There are usually 30 to 40 seats available per flight so it shouldn't be hard to get a flight with what few are going to need it and several airlines that are there.



Wednesday. Maybe it is a good thing I missed the charter flight. It has been canceled and the money refunded. this will only make competition at the standby.

Got a letter from home and one from Xxxx. I think I will buy full fare one way to Detroit for only \$125. then get a standby for the flight back. That way I can give you a time of departure in advance and there will be little chance of a change in time of arrival. Today was a real easy day. Tomorrow is our day of testing.

Went to the PX tonight. Bought a roll of film to take home and some flash cubes. Also got some big 79¢ size mark a lots for only \$.45 one black and one white.

Will close now.

Ron

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17th letter Thursday

Dear Mom and Dad;

The Chicago charter flight is canceled. So I went to the phone this morning and called Northwest airlines for reservations. Their flights to Detroit were 11 Am which is too early and 12 midnight for the 26th. So I got reservations for the 1 PM flight to Chicago. I should be able to get to Tri City. With little delay at Chicago. Will buy a one way to Chicago. I can buy a stand by at Detroit when I want to come back here. It will cost \$110 to go to Chicago, one way and probably \$60 at Detroit to come here.

Had PT test today. I ran the mile in 7 min.20 sec. I took pictures of all 5 events. It was mostly cloudy so at times I used the flashbulb to have a slower shutter speed. I took 8 color pictures in the barrack and one outside. The flash failed to fire on one so it was lost. Mailed one letter home and 3 post cards. Friday had to retake the PT test. Not enough points as I couldn't throw grenades. Got plenty of points this time. Did the mile in 7 min and 15 sec, the crawl 40 yards in 32 sec instead 35 and got 76 bars on the horizontal ladder for 100 points the highest number for that event. that is 76 bars in one minute.

This afternoon was the proficiently test. There was eight events. In three, I got the highest number of points. Did good on this. The testing is all done now.

There is a total of 500 points possible on the PT test. Mike Parks and Johnson got 465 points for the highest score of the whole company, they and three others will be allowed to go anywhere on post this week end including the stag club. The next five will have post privileges and bowling privileges, the next five service club privilege. 4th. platoon won a keg of beer for next Friday. For some reason 3rd platoon missed this by one point.

Got my pictures yesterday. Cost only \$.85 to develop 12 black and white prints. They came out very well. Got one letter from home today.

Ron

18th letter

Dear Mom and Dad;

Saturday was a full field inspection outdoors. We pitched tents with the stakes slanting the wrong way. then we blew up our air mattress and laid our equipment on the ground. We spent all morning out there.

Afterwards we had the rest of the day off. The guys went down to the PX. Some came back loaded. As a result they kept the rest of us awake with their goofing off until a LT came in and made them behave.

Got a letter today with the pictures in it and the colored ones.

Sunday a day off. sent 2 postcards.

Right now we are having a shakedown. Some one stole some money last night and there was 2 army investigators looking over everything.

As if that wasn't enough we had a good one today. Monday by the LT. They didn't find anything. Yesterday the envelope that had the money was found in one kids pocket. His leave is canceled until the money is found. They searched everything in his locker. Took 2 pictures of the mess afterwards today.

Well it was such a wild weekend that we are all restricted to area, No PX, no show, no phone. Won't be able to get anything else to bring home.

So in all that happened, there was a robbery of \$51 from a locker, 3 fights, 2 guys in Bravo got section 303 when they were caught without hats out of CO area and a few other instances has grounded us till we go home.

The leave will start Friday as soon as we finish graduation. I will try to get a flight out before or at Midnight the 25th to either Detroit or Chicago. If not, I still have a reservation for 1 PM Sat. The leave ends the 10th although we don't have to be back until the 11th at 1700. May buy tickets

Wed, the temperature reached 64 F today which broke a record.

Tuesday is a holiday so nothing is scheduled. It is cloudy and warm with a high in the 60's at 12 noon 61 degrees. This will be my last letter.

Ron

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Saturday March 12th

Dear Mom and Dad #1

The Tri City flight was delayed by fog, was bussed to Flint. Arrived in Flint at 9:45, got on the plane at 10. It was a 4 engine DC-6 smaller than the one I rode on from Ft Knox. It was raining in Flint. It then was broken clouds. The plane flew over Maple Downs. There are some new barns there and the oval tracks is finished. Had breakfast on this flight. Chicago was a lot of waiting, *missed the connecting flight.* rode first class on the 1:55 PM flight which left an hour late. The flight was nice and smooth.

Got some good pictures of the plains and mountains. Most of the snow was gone but I could see it had snowed and blew hard over South Dakota.

For once, it was clear over Seattle and it was very pretty flying low over the cascades on the glide in. I landed at 4:30 took a taxi back.

Signed in at 6 PM. Lots of guys were late but it is all right. As of today about a dozen didn't come in yet and are now officially AWOL. They will cut the lock on their lockers tonight if they don't show up or notify the base. Then, their gear will be inventoried and they will have to pay for stuff missing. That will be a lot of trouble.

An air force First Lt came on the same plane into Seattle. He was stationed in Wordsmith air force base and was heading home. He lives in Oregon.

I had to move twice but now I am in a small quad room. It has the 4th squad. We all operate on support heavy equipment.

I am a gunner for a 90 mm recoilless rifle. Sabao operates the other 90 mm. We each have one assistant gunner. There are also 2 heavy machine gunners and their assistants. Finally we have a driver, and ammo bearer and squad leader and that makes up our squad. The other squads are fire teams of riflemen some with automatic weapons and grenade launcher but all squads have one driver.

We start Monday. They will get us up at 5 am. the first weeks will be compass classes and marching. PT and first aid. Our next 4 weeks will be individual training of our own trades, then on the first of June we will go to Yakima for 2 weeks of Bibwac training. All between this there is a lots of KP and guard duty.

We finally have post privilege so we can go anywhere on the base we want after they are done with us. I think on weekdays we have to check out for PX and those things but otherwise no PX and haircut formations.

So far it is all instamactic film and cubes. Today bought their next to last black and white. I got 3 old pants I will mail home. I kept one better one someone threw them out. Sunday. Lots of guys came back staggering but not in our room. It was quiet in here.

Got up at 7:30 and had chow. Lots of guys dressing up in civilian clothes and walking around. Some signed out last night and one didn't come back. One of the AWOL'S came back last night.

It rained all night. It is nice today and in the 50's. Guys have brought back all kinds of goodies. Some brought record players and tape recorders. One person made it over to the main PX. He said a portable TV cost \$50.

I guess it is still hard to get stamps here. I just sold 2 to a specialist 4th.who sleeps across the hall. When I get low on stamps I can send you the money for them.

I fixed up the pants I found. They should be good for bad weather use.

Will close now.

Ron

Post card Sat Mar 12.

Dear Mom and Dad;

This is typical of the area which we marched in while going to camping area. This will be mailed the same time with the first letter.

Ron