

**LETTERS FROM SERVICE MEN  
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**January 23, 1941 DON GEORGE, Navy Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida**

We've been kinda busy. We got our dungarees, that's overall and shirts—our books and another medical check-up. That isn't a lot of things but we have to stand around and wait quite a lot. Boy, it sure is a swell place down here. It isn't at all like the Great lakes. There isn't an awful lot of discipline because they are trying to teach us something. We go to school in dungarees and after we get off at 3 in the afternoon we change into undress blues. This morning he assigned the first lesson. It was the history of aviation. We have six books, one is mathematics, drawing, and four engine. They look kind of difficult. The other fellows made it, so I can too. We have lockers to put our clothes in. They are a lot better than a sea bag. I turned in my little thin mattress and have a thicker one. We sleep in bunks or beds. They are double-decked. I sleep on a top one. They really do sleep better than a hammock. We get up at 5 o'clock on week days and we eat at 5:15. That isn't much time. We can just go over when we get ready to eat. We do not have to be there at that time if we do not want to. Chow is really awful good. We always have breakfast food, coffee, all the butter one wants and sometimes we have rolls, bread just like home-made. The other morning we also had two fried eggs and fried potatoes. It isn't the same every morning, but we have lots to eat. We've had pie for dinner twice since I've been here. You can get just what you want. If you want two pieces just ask for it. This is what could be called a paradise. I am gaining some more weight, too.

You should see the planes here. There are all kinds of them. They are just about as thick as flies. A fellow named Hollars and I spent this afternoon watching the planes land and take off. They take us up when they have a vacancy. I tried to get a ride but the ship was all filled. He said to come down Friday night and put in my application and I would get a ride Saturday afternoon, so I will probably be sailing through the blue sky next Saturday afternoon. Some of the fellows got to ride for about two hours. We usually ride with an instructor or a cadet that has just about completed his training. They make us wear parachutes and also helmets and goggles. One kid got to fly with an instructor in formation flying. The planes sure look pretty when they light on the water. The bay is awfully pretty—a deep bluish green. I've ridden on two boats since I've been here. One was about 60 feet long and the one I rode on this afternoon was a sub-chaser and it was about 100 feet long. It sure is swell. We went out in the bay a little ways and then up to another dock. The wind blows a little hard out there. It blows about as hard as at home. Being out on the sea is going to be really swell.

We have a lot of liberty here. On the week days we can go out at 3 in the afternoon and stay until about 6 the next morning and on Saturday we get out at 11 o'clock and do not have to be back until Monday morning.

We have a picture show every day. There is a fair gymnasium and tennis courts. We can also go fishing. They have lots of poles here. You have to furnish the lines and hooks. It is kind of cold to go swimming right now. The temperature is usually between 55 and 70. It rains a lot here. It must have rained at least 3 or 4 times since I've been here.

**January 30, 1941    MAX SIMS, Army    San Diego, California**

We had trouble from the very beginning. Our trains was late to Newton so we missed our dinner there and did not have time to eat even after arriving in Wichita. They met us at the station in Wichita, piled us on a bus and took us to the U.S. post office building where the induction quarters have been set up.

The first thing we had to do, of course, was to fill out blank forms telling our name, parents' names, where parents were born, population of town where we lived, and so on ad infinitum. Then the physical exam began. They check everything but not so carefully as the doctors who examined me for the air corps. Two out of 63 were rejected from our group.

After the physical exam we were taken to a restaurant and given our evening meal. This was certainly welcome to us boys who had missed the noon meal.

In the evening we who had passed the physical exam and were accepted took the oath of allegiance and were in the army just like that.

At 9:30 we left on a Missouri pacific Pullman train for Kansas City. Everything bad that has been said about sleeping on a Pullman is true. Boy, was it noisy. They must have passed every freight train they had in the U.S. that night. Stop and start, then back up, then sit and let another freight go by. The boys had to sleep two in the lower berths. Naturally I grabbed an upper, so I got off better than some.

We got in Kansas City at 7:30 Saturday morning. We ate a 35¢ breakfast (Uncle Sam gave us 75¢ but why spend all that on breakfast) then left immediately for Fort Leavenworth.

Arriving there we were immediately given the intelligence test. It was more fun than anything else, but it certainly got tough on the last page. I did not quite finish all of it, but you are not expected to.

Next we were interviewed for possibilities of placement in certain divisions of the army. Every man should know what he wants to be in the army. Of course we can't all be captains but we can do certain things that our civilian life has prepared us for.

Yesterday afternoon we were issued some clothes (?) – relics of 1917 most of them. We will get our regular uniforms when we reach our final destination, wherever that might be. I have to wear leggings that are hard as hell to put on, feel like hell when they are on, and look like hell off or on. One boy in our company had such big feet they could not fit him with shoes. His other clothes don't fit any too well – boy, is he big. What a man for K.U,'s football team. I am sending back my civilian clothes. We can keep any toilet articles, underwear and brown oxfords, but all else must be returned.

The quarters are fine. We sleep in new, two-floor wooden bunk houses that are heated by thermostatic furnaces. There are about 25 men on each floor. The food is good and plenty of it, second helpings if you want to go back after it. They serve us cafeteria style.

The talk is that we will be sent to California, Texas or South Carolina this Tuesday or Friday. Any of the three sound nice and warm to me. Do not write until you hear from me at my permanent station.

So far the life is fine. The only work I have done is make my bunk, sweep under it and help three others hunt snipes around the barracks. You will hear from me again when I reach my own regiment.

**January 30, 1941      GLENN ATWOOD, Army      Camp Robinson, Arkansas**

Well, so far the life in Camp Robinson is going along fine for us Edwards County boys. All we have to do is get up at 5:30 in the morning and have reveille at 6:30. We then eat mess and then have sick call and go to work building sidewalks. We do that until noon mess. After mess we do some work on the sidewalks and some drilling. And they let us off to shine our shoes and to shave for retreat at 5:30 P.M. After that we have our mess again. We are then free to go anyplace in the camp until 10:30 p.m. when the lights go out in the tents and that is the time to go to bed.

We have a fine 137 Inf. Military band. But I think the only songs they know are the "Old Gray mare," and the "Star Spangled Banner." Anyway that is all we hear. We have a fine medical service down here. The other day my brother, Loren, was washing windows of the mess hall and he fell. He got his leg hurt in the fall. He was taken to the infirmary for a checkup and they gave him a dose of salts and sent him back to camp thoroughly cured.

Jack Pickard is on kitchen police now. And we have a hard time keeping him from being too hard on the boys. Bud Thorpe said the other day that he had the voice of a drill sergeant but all he lacked was the stripes. Sergeant Dave Tatum is kept busy these days taking care of us home boys and going to instructor's school for machine gunning. Raymond Schmitt is in the hospital with the flu. We are glad that he is improving. Well, we want to say for our benefit and our friends and parents at home that all of us boys are getting plenty to eat and we all like the army fine. So far Raymond Schmitt is the only one of us that has been on the sick list. And we hope he is the last one. Well, we must close.

**February 27, 1941      MERLE GIFFORD, Army (re-enlisted) Fort Normayle, Texas**

We are having summer weather here now and I've got my face sunburnt today.

I've been to the Niagara Falls and back in the past few days. 24 enlisted men and 3 officers went to Fr. Niagara and brought 377 men Tuesday morning. We rode busses from the Fort to Niagara and then got on a special train. The train consisted of 14 cars. There were 3 baggage cars, one of which carried our baggage while two had our kitchen equipment. The other 11 cars were Pullmans. They had one of us non-commissioned officers in charge of each Pullman car. I had 37 men in the car of which I had charge. They could ask me more questions about the army and San Antonio than I could answer in a year. We certainly got a good, intelligent bunch of men. Some of their names are impossible for me to pronounce, though.

We got back to Normayle on Thursday afternoon, the 13<sup>th</sup>, and I've been on the go here since, getting things straightened out. We took the boys out this morning and drilled them a little.

"I was told this afternoon that I would be made a sergeant soon. I hope so. The boys won't let me alone so I'll sign off now. Write soon.

**March 13, 1941    VERNON H. KIRKBRIDE, Army    Camp Robinson**

I got your letter and it looked good. My permanent quarters are 35<sup>th</sup> Division, Military Police Co., Camp Robinson, Ark. The whole camp here is the 35<sup>th</sup> Division. They are all boys from Kansas, Nebraska, and Missouri. Our M.P. Co. doesn't have a number—we are separate from the rest.

Well, now, I don't know much about all this yet, but it is slowly sinking in. There is not much to write about—everything is so regular that it is all alike. We have had a couple of hikes out through the hills and they were “pickens.” Some of the boys were all worn out and ready to stop.

We haven't been issued guns yet because they can't get enough of them. They give us a gun to dismantle but we have to turn them back in after class. We had .45 cal. automatic pistols yesterday playing with them—lots of fun.

The airplanes are sure thick around here. They say we will get a 10-day leave in four months. If we do I am going to Wichita on one. The rate for soldiers is \$9 round trip and that is not much more than the train and I will get there a lot quicker. Well, Mom, think four months in advance.

**June 5, 1941    ROY E. STEVENS, Army    Ft. Warren, Wyoming**

This is a good camp since the spring weather has come. When we first came here we sure had the dust storms. We have a replacement center of four regiments. Each regiment has ten or more companies. There are approximately 2500 men in each regiment. Every selective service man will be gone from here by the 9<sup>th</sup> of June. We are just in one place long enough to start to enjoy a place. We had good meals most of the time. We have chicken and ice cream for dinner every Sunday, so this doesn't go bad for a soldier.

**June 12, 1941**

**CHARLES MCFARREN, Navy**

**Corpus Christi**

Dear Mr. Tibbetts: I have been waiting for this chance to sit down and write you and thank you for sending me the Kinsley mercury. It sure makes a fellow feel good to read about what is happening back in dear old Kansas. You don't know how much I appreciate it. I have been thinking of subscribing for the paper but with such a small amount of pay, with insurance and everything, it keeps a fellow jumping to make ends meet. It takes more than a fellow realizes.

We graduated from the Aviation Metalsmith School, in Pensacola, Fla. on May 23. I ranked 15<sup>th</sup> out of a class of 67 with a final average of 3.0402. I really enjoyed going to school and I sure hated to leave there. It was really nice duty there in Pensacola. Our marks in the Navy are quite different than those of civilian life. In the navy 1.0 is 25%, etc. Our school was 16 weeks of training, which seemed to go very fast.

When we left Pensacola to go to our new station, we had 5 days delayed orders, which we could spend anywhere we wanted at our own expense. Of course we will get 3 cents per mile for transportation between stations, which will almost pay for all of our expenses during those 5 days.

My buddy and I stopped off in New Orleans, La. We were disappointed in the city, so we only stayed there 3 hours. When we left New Orleans, we crossed the Huey Long Bridge, which is over the Mississippi River. It is sure a long and tall bridge. We arrived in Beaumont, Tex., Sunday evening, where we stayed until Monday evening. We slept in a new hotel there. Boy! Was it a classy place. Air-conditioned, telephone and rugs on the floor, about 1 ½ inches thick. We also had a good-looking elevator girl. Ha! Ha! When we left Beaumont we came on to Corpus Christi. We came through Houston but we were tired and didn't stop over there. We stayed over in Corpus Christi Monday night. Tuesday afternoon we came on out to the air station to check in.

We are now in what they call division "X" which is where we go through the same training that we had in boot camp, for two weeks. Then we will probably be transferred to the A. and R. Division (assembly and repair). I don't like this station very well. Maybe it is because it is new and not done yet. It won't be done for some time yet. I hope that someday I will get to go back to Pensacola.

Beings there isn't much doing the last three days, we have been going swimming and playing softball. It rains down here every morning about 6. Mosquitoes? Boy! Big as horses. Well, maybe not quite that big, but they sure make you think so. I had a good notion to saddle one of them and ride him around on my watch, to keep from getting tired. Beings there isn't much news here and I haven't been around much, I will close. Thank you for the paper.

**June 19, 1941      ALFRED “Bub” HOLLAND, Army      Fort Riley, Kansas**

I am writing to thank you very kindly for the paper you have been sending me. It has really been a great help in keeping me posted with the news at home.

I am on detached service from the 14<sup>th</sup> cavalry in the military police department. I was transferred out of the 3<sup>rd</sup> infantry at Fr. Crook, Neb., on Feb. 9<sup>th</sup> and have been here ever since. From the way it looks I will get to finish my year's work here.

The work here is not hard but it gets pretty tiresome as we have to put in so many hours. I am now walking beat here on the post from 12 o'clock at night until 7 o'clock in the morning. The hardest part of this work is trying to stay awake. I am going to start to work on patrol in Junction City before long and that is rally a job. With 20-some thousand soldiers here at Fr. Riley it is quite a job keeping them under control in a town the size of Junction City.

Our meals here are the best. We have a mess sergeant who is rated the best on the post. I have never heard one of the fellows around here kick on the meals we have.

The fort is really a nice colorful place. There is so much grass and so many trees here it makes a very beautiful scene. The fort is the largest cavalry training school in the world. There are some very fine exhibitions of riding on the parade ground here and it is very interesting to watch.

**August 21, 1941 HARLEY THOMPSON, Jr.**

**U. S. Naval Air Station, Corpus Christi, Texas**

Dear Mr. Tibbettss: I read each issue of the mercury with a thoroughness that will keep me from getting too far behind with news of my home town.

Today completes exactly three month our class has spent in training. We were the fifth class to enter and we have seen a great deal of development.

It is a tremendous task to attempt to describe this base for it is such an enormous plant. It is the largest of the three navel air stations and is designed to train men in every phase of naval aviation. Naval men call it the "University of the Air." For it is the only flight training school in the country training every type of pilot at the same station or field. The station is designed to have two thousand cadets in training when the full complement has been reached. Only about half of that number is in training at the present time.

Perhaps I could more ably explain the organization and stages of training by tracing an imaginary cadet through his training in brief form.

On arriving at Corpus Christi and being designated as an Aviation Cadet, our cadet begins his first two weeks as an indoctrination student. He learns something of naval tradition and organization and a few of the things necessary to become a naval officer. Of course he is subjected to the relentless watchfulness of the upper-classmen who see that he acquires a military bearing very early in his career.

Then comes ground school—everything from the theory of aircraft engines and their operation to aerology (the meteorology pertaining to aircraft) and gunnery. For a period of four weeks he goes to classes from 6:30 in the morning until 4 in the afternoon. Then after the evening meal he can spend his time studying the assignments for the next day. A much busier life than any of us spent as civilians.

The week-ends as spent by most cadets are very quiet. Swimming, fishing or just general loafing on Saturday afternoon, and perhaps a dance at the cadet mess on Saturday evening or a movie. A great many beautiful Texas girls and even more very fine people welcome us into their homes at the slightest provocation. There is very little to do in Corpus Christi, but the attitude towards us as Aviation Cadets makes life very pleasant.

After a month of ground school flight training begins. Every cadet has had 10 hours of dual instruction at an elimination base, where he was chosen as a cadet, but that training is forgotten and every cadet starts from scratch. In quick succession comes the solo, 20, 33, formation and 69 hour checks and the cadet is supposed to emerge some manner of pilot. He has been scared stiff from practically fighting his way on and off the field with several hundred other aircraft, gathered his nerve to try the first immelman, swore trying to hit circles 100 feet in diameter from an 800 foot approach and was amazed that he didn't crack wingtips flying formation. All of that made everyday exciting and worthwhile. I have told this much from experience. The rest is from observation.

Facing primary training our cadet was laboring in ground school trying to solve the mysteries of celestial navigation, the plotting board, the octant and sextant and finally he emerged anything but a navigator. He has the tools to work with and the polish will be applied later.

Basic squadron and being first class cadets comes next. He graduates from the sturdy little Stearman, built it Wichita, Kan. To larger, faster service aircraft. He learns to operate controllable and

constant speed propellers, to use retractable landing gears and wing flaps and practically every type of instrument found on any aircraft anywhere. In quick succession he goes to specializations which might be as a fighter, dive bomber, patrol bomber, torpedo bomber or observation. In some of these squadrons the final touch is applied and the cadet emerges an ensign plus his gold wings. That is the aim of all of us. Then perhaps he is designated as an instructor or sent to a tactical unit in his specialization, perhaps to use the art he has learned to a greater degree than any of us care to. We hope that none of us shall have to use this business we learn in the seriousness it is intended. Anyway, we know that we are being well trained.

I am enjoying this training very much. We have everything from All-American football players to boys who have studied abroad and they are very fine shipmates. We have splendid quarters and good enough food. True we work hard, but for a comparatively short time.

We have three hard months ahead and many of us will fail to make the grade but it won't be because any of us are quitters. It is a demanding business and there is no room for those who aren't pretty good. They make no hesitation in weeding out all but the best.

I hope that I will be able to finish the course and be home in time for the holidays during Christmas. It seems a long time since I left although it has only been six months.

Kinsley certainly must be quite a boom town with all the construction activity and a successful crop. The people there deserve some good times for they have seen their share of bad ones. It's as good as any place I have been in and a great deal better than most.

Nearly time for lights out. I hope that all of you are in the best of health and prosperity.

**September 18, 1941      Roscoe C. McVey, Army      Fort Rosecrans, California**

I see by the Kinsley paper that most all the boys from Kinsley who are in the army or navy have written you telling how they like or dislike the army whichever the case may be. Also telling you what they were doing.

At home they always told me that I was always the pig-tail when it came to making up my mind what I wanted to do. So can give that as one reason for not writing you sooner. Another reason is because I've been in the hospital and just got out 3 weeks ago and haven't felt much like doing much of anything since I was returned back to duty.

But as I am now back to duty I feel like it is my turn to write you letting you know what we do in Fort Rosecrans away out here in California.

Before I get too far along telling about the army I had better say this. I can very truthfully say that I am very thankful to you for sending me the Kinsley paper as the paper and the letters I receive from my folks along with the ones I get from my sweetheart, which I will say comes about every week along with your paper, are the only way I have of getting the news from good old windy Kansas.

I believe that writing this letter is one of the hardest things I ever tried to do as there is so much I could tell that I do not dare to tell. So will just have to tell what I can and try not give anything away that I am not supposed to.

The first thing I am going to tell you about is the care of the men here on this post. I am going to come out and tell the truth as I think that is what the people want to know and should know. One of the worse things I have seen here is flat feet. It seems as tho they do not try very hard to fix flat feet up, but they let them go too far before they try to help them any. Then give a man a discharge and say there is nothing they can do for home.

Why they do not discharge a man before his feet go all the way down I do not know, but I do know that some of the men suffer a great deal before they are discharged for bad feet.

I myself have fainting spells which they say are apoplectic spells. I had one and was put in the hospital for a month. I can truthfully say that that month's rest would have done me lots of good if I hadn't had to go on a six mile road hike the day after I got out of the hospital. I have been out of the hospital three weeks now and still feel like I should be back in it. As I have a headache almost all the time. They say there is nothing they can do for me so you see I am not getting any medical treatment except a headache tablet every now and then. Some nights I have trouble going to sleep because my head hurt so bad. So yesterday I went to the doctor, and asked him if he had anything that would put me to sleep and he said he had a sledge hammer that would put me to sleep. So I told him to get to work and use it and he then told one of the boys to give me some headache tablets.

So much for that part of the army. I will try to tell you what we do here that is as much as I dare to tell. About the first thing we do of a morning is have what they call calisthenics which is nothing more than exercises. After that we sweep out the rooms then go to breakfast. After breakfast we police up around the buildings. Oh, yes, by the way we get up at 5:45. At 7:30 we go out for drilling and marching for 30 to 45 minutes then march back to the buildings for a 5 or 10 minute break. After this we go down to the 155 guns for the rest of the morning. After dinner some days we have classes while other days we go back to the 155 guns and drill all afternoon.

The 155 gun is a gun that takes 10 to 12 men to operate it. It shoots from 8 to 10 miles. Shoots a shell that weighs 95 pounds and the powder charge weighs about 25 lbs. The shell explodes when it hits.

On Wednesdays we get the afternoon off to play games. We can play whatever we want to. Of course we have to play some kind of a game.

On Saturday we have inspection and boy! What I mean you had better have your things clean or you'll find yourself on extra K.P. Now K.P. means Kitchen police which is nothing but washing dishes and cleaning up the mess hall. So you see it's better to have your rifle clean than wash dishes. Now this takes us up to Saturday noon where we get the rest of the week off if you are lucky enough not to be on K.P. or guard.

When Saturday afternoon comes all the boys that have money head for San Diego which is just across the bay from this post. You notice I say all the boys that have money. As there is always a crap or poker game on pay day and most of the boys are broke after they are over and 4 or 5 of the boys have most of the money. So the ones that were lucky and have the money go to town. About 12 or 1 o'clock of a Saturday night they come back to camp with just a little too much whiskey under the belts and start blowing about the good-looking girl they had out and what she did to them. They usually say they have another date with her but sometimes they land up in the hospital having a date with the doctor instead of the girl.

Of course San Diego is a swell town for the boys that like their whiskey and wild women. As there is a hotel or liquor store on almost every street.

Here's a little bit on what we have to eat which isn't so much at times, while other times we have plenty if it was taken care of like it should be and cooked like it should be. There is one thing sure if you have a good meal you had better eat all you can as its hard telling when you will get that much again. It happens once every 3 or 4 days. Another thing that's not so good here is the price you pay at the canteen for your things you are forced to buy. For instance you pay 15 cents for a package of envelopes which cost 5 cents on the outside; 20 cents for a 10¢ package of razor blades. This may not sound like much to the people on the outside but there is so many little things like this that they soon count up when you are just getting \$30 a month after you take your laundry and dry cleaning bill out which is from 5 to 6 dollars every month.

Of course now we have lots of good points here as well as bad points but as I haven't found them out or seen any of them yet I guess I can't write about them. If I ever find out what they are I'LL write and tell you all about them. But as I said before there isn't much to write about so I will just have to postpone it a while longer until there is something to tell that I dare tell.

Thanking you again for the paper, and hoping everyone in good old Kansas is well and happy.

**November 13, 1941 LLOYD W. DEAVER, Army Camp Roberts, California**

I receive the Kinsley Mercury last week and I want to thank you very much for sending it to me.

I will try and tell you a little bit about this camp. There are about 30,000 men here, both enlisted men and officers. I am in the infantry. Our main gun is the machine gun but we also are going to learn to shoot many other guns. This camp is located about half way between Los Angeles and San Francisco. The nearest town is Paso Robles.

I like the officers fine – most of them are pretty swell fellows. If a person does everything they tell you and does it with a smile they are going to treat you all right.

John Breitenbach, Jr. is here in the same camp. We are living together in the same building. There are around fifty-five of us men living together in this building.

The weather has been pretty nice since I have been here. It hasn't been cold enough for a coat yet only of an evening or early in the morning. It is almost time for the rainy season so I imagine the weather will be a little cooler.

It is almost time for the lights to go out so I had better close. Again I wish to thank you for sending the paper to me.

**November 20, 1941 Clayton L. Shedivetz, Army Ft. Leonard Wood, Missouri**

I have been in the army since Sept. 3<sup>rd</sup>. I have really enjoyed getting the mercury and also reading the other letters written by the boys in different camps. Orville North and Eddie Kennedy are also in the Engineer replacement Center here in Fort Leonard Wood, so it isn't so homesick here for me.

Fr. Leonard Wood is a large place. It covers about 90 square miles and has about 35,500 soldiers here. It is one of the newest camps in the U.S. and is building fast. There are approximately 10,000 boys in Engineer group, the rest belong to the infantry, heavy artillery, antitank, etc. It is located in South Central Missouri, close to the little town of Waynesville—approximately 70 miles north and east of Springfield, 30 miles west of Rolla.

I can't say as I like the army. I have 2 reasons: first, I hated to give up a good job as a locomotive fireman on the Missouri Pacific Railroad; second, I tried to get into the Navy, and was rejected. The physical examination one gets at his Replacement Center is purely routine.

I am beginning to like it much better as the days go by. One of the high-lights I have experience was when our Battalion (1,000 men) stood retreat in mass formation. A pretty sight to say the least. That event alone has made me think several times, "How grand it is for all of us to be able to live in, and salute a flag, belonging to so great a country as this."

They have been working us damn hard since I came here Sept. 10. We get no days off except Saturday afternoon and Sunday. It doesn't make a bit of difference how hard it rains, we still go out to work. We often wade in mud and water over the top of 4-buckle overshoes.

Our spare time at night is usually taken up by cleaning rifles and shoes, etc. Our rifles are our babies. We usually spend from 30 minutes to one hour each night cleaning them. They must be spotless. On Saturday's inspection, the Lieutenant seems to have good eyes. He sees all. But as a group we have a swell group of officers as well as Non-Commissioned officers.

Pay day—the last day of the month, \$21 a day once a month. By the time one pays for insurance, laundry, dry cleaning, etc. his \$21 falls close to \$15. Pay day is a gambler's paradise. However gambling has been stopped in my barracks by the Sergeant. Some of the boys would find themselves broke next day, some \$50-\$60, but I guess it is human nature. I kept what I made and let the rest of the boys keep theirs.

K.P. comes around every so often. It doesn't make a bit of difference, K.P. is not for punishment alone—one has to take his turn at it.

One hears a lot of peculiar sayings while here in the army. Some of the more common:

Over the Hill—to dessert.

Stripe happy—An N.C.O. who likes to show authority.

F.O.B.—fetch it on back.

Sugar report—Letter from the girl friend

Bunk Fatigue—day off.

Ohio—Over the hill in October

Mess Sergeant—One who is on K.P. consistently

Dancing dominoes—dice

Schooner dep't—beer joint

There are several more—but this is just an idea.

Fr. Leonard Wood has one of the best hospitals in the army dep't. in the U.S. It is hard to get in, but when one does, it is harder to get out. But the nurses are good-looking so, what the heck.

I answered the sick call one day with the flu. I had a temperature of 101 degrees. They gave me some nose drops, and aspirin tablets then sent me back to duty. That afternoon I had to take an 8-mile hike, with pack and rifle. It was hot, and I really don't believe I could have lasted another quarter of a mile. I was then laid up for 2 or 3 more days.

Our amusements are few. They have 4 shows, which will accommodate only about 8,000 a night, both shows. That leaves 27 thousand out. They sponsor some entertainment and the dance floor will accommodate only 150 couples, so you can see they do not have the facilities to accommodate the mass of boys here.

The give excursion trips to St. Louis quite often, which is a swell thing. It gives the boys a chance to get away from the camp for the week-end. I believe they do better work when they come back.

My battalion got an honor the other day which may seem trivial to some, but it was an honor. We were chosen as the Model Company in the E.R.T.C. (10,000). The platoon I am in was selected No. 2 in the company, so we must try hard to keep up our record.

I could write lots more, but it is probably best I don't.

Mail call is looked forward to every day. Lucky are the boys that get letters, and luckier are those that get some home-made candy or cookies. They are very popular boys around camp for a while.

The prices charged us here at the Post Exchange are too high. We don't pay state tax, but they charge us too much for incidentals—as they do in most camps.

I think I speak very freely and for Orville North and Eddie Kennedy when I give the previous material.

If any of my friends care to write me, they will find that the following address will reach me.

**November 27, 1941      Harry Gifford, Jr., Army      Camp Robinson, Arkansas**

Dear Mother,

Have been so busy have not had time to write. Got back from Kansas City Thursday evening about 9. Sure had a cold and rough ride going and coming. Took us two days and a half going. We stayed at Fayetteville, Ark. the first night. Slept on the ground in tents. Was cold and damp. They gave us a big dance there. Had a swell time. The second night we stayed at Camp Clark, Missouri. Slept in the mess halls and was pretty crowded but at least it was inside. We stayed in the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial hall in Kansas City, Kansas.

They had a big dance at the hall for us. There was only about five girls to every boy there. That's what the army has done. Had a big parade Tuesday. I carried the guide and marched just in front of the band at the head of the parade. (*This was part of Armistice Day program.*)

Came back in two days. Every place we went we were royally entertained. At Carthage, Missouri, on the way back they gave a street dance. We were scattered in buildings all over town. Two men went back with pneumonia from the first night, so there was no more sleeping on the ground. Had a swell time until we got back.

Just got off the trucks and got word to be ready to move in two hours. That order is still standing. We are to go on strike duty if it is not settled soon.

Couldn't get any passes until last night. The men have to be back early. Sure wish they would make up their minds one way or another. Personally I do not think we will have to go. If we do have to leave we probably will not get any leave Christmas.

There was a long string of empty trucks brought in last night from another camp. Don't know what that might mean. Looks like at least they are going to be ready to move out on a moment's notice. I will let you know about the furloughs just as soon as we find out.

Saw Pete Heinz yesterday. He is at Hot Springs. Kyle Lacy and I took him for a ride like we took you when you were here.

Tomorrow we start on a new schedule. Seven hours a day now. Won't have to get up so early. Yesterday I washed all my dirty clothes. Couldn't send them in on account of the strikes. You have probably heard all about it—the coal strikes.

Today is a swell day here. Plenty warm. Couldn't get a pass so I am spending a Sunday of leisure.

We have been getting plenty of drill on riot duty since we got back from K.C.

## **December 18, 1941    David Moffat, Army Air Corp    Honolulu, Hawaii**

*(Written Nov. 26, 1941, eleven days before the bombing of Pearl Harbor)*

Your paper, dated Nov. 13, 1941, has just arrived and needless to say, it is a great source of enjoyment as well as much comfort to one so far away from home. Thank you lots.

In as much as you feature letters written from soldiers, I shall add my bit—attempting to make it as interesting as possible under the existing conditions for you all must realize that Hawaii is far different from other posts. We cannot divulge information pertaining to the strength of this department or very much of our work here!

To begin—we are located on the main island named Oahu—but pronounced wahoo. The city of Honolulu is located on this island as well as Pearl Harbor, Bellows Field, Hickam Field, Wheeler Field, Schofield Barracks, and I believe Ft. Shafter. Oahu is approximately ninety miles around, and on the trip, there are many interesting sights, such as native fishermen using spears and nets instead of rod and tackle, and the black beach. In the first instance, the fishermen wear goggles or use a square box with a glass bottom through which they watch for their quarry. Once spotting their fish, the battle is as good as over for the fishermen are excellent spearmen. The Black beach is an interesting sight. The sand being dark in color. It must be caused by lava or some other freak of nature.

Of course, you are all wondering about swimming—at least that was the first thought of most of the men that came over with me! Well, it's a grand sport—diving through or attempting to ride the waves, with or without a surfboard. Also the usual caution is necessary—observe the movements of the waves or get slapped silly and rolled for ages, it seems. The only threat to a peaceful afternoon at the beach is the Japanese Man 'o War—a small organism that has an air pouch and long tail and is blue in color. They have an acid in their system that burns and smarts terribly when it touches the skin. They can be easily avoided however, with a little practice!

Honolulu is a picturesque city, rambling over considerable territory and, like the city of Los Angeles lays claim in one way or another, to all villages in the vicinity! The streets are very straight though I don't believe the city was laid out according to a "square" plan. Also to the shoppers, the finest of articles can be purchased in these stores of Honolulu.

There are good schools and the University of Hawaii is unexcelled. Through cooperation with army authorities, it is possible for soldiers to attend the University and receive credit for their work in any other University in the States!

Waikiki Beach, just ten minutes from Honolulu by bus or taxi is the site of the famous Royal Hawaiian Hotel. Also, there are many night clubs, if you will, and other good places for recreation. The society of Hawaii caters to these places, known as The Tropics, Trader Vic's, and others less well known. Incidentally, Trader Vic's serves the most delicious bar-b-que you may ever have the pleasure to enjoy. It is really good eating!

All in all, prices through considerably higher than in the states, are not unfair when one considers the expense involved in sending the article over two thousand miles of water!

There has always been talk of the beautiful sunsets in Hawaii. How much more beautiful are the sunrises! Of late, being on guard, the sunrise grows more beautiful every day—as if the day might hold good things for you so it appears to be a promise of the things to come. This is truly a land of beauty.

Wishing one and all of you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

**December 18, 1941      Barney Thummel, Navy      Pearl Harbor, Hawaii**

*(Written on Nov. 27, 1941, ten days before the bombing of Pearl Harbor.)*

Dear Mother and Father and All,

I thought I would drop you a few lines. We don't know when the ships come in or go out anymore, so I don't know when you will get this. I received two papers the other day. I went over and bought you folks a few little things for Christmas, not much but it wouldn't be Christmas without something, so I hope you get them; if you don't let me know 'cause I've got them insured. You don't need to bother about sending anything.

How are the roads, Dad? Probably plenty bad.

I think I will knock off writing for a cup of muc, one of the fellows just brought it over to me.

Boy! This is getting to be a tough place over here. These natives catch a sailor or soldier alone and gang him and rob him, and last night some soldier got stabbed in a dive, but they said today he committed suicide. Well, I can't think of a darn thing to write about. I don't know when we are going back to the States, but I heard it may not be true, they changed it from two weeks to a month now, and if that is right, I may get to come home for a week or two, but don't count on it too much.

Well, folks, I guess I will quit for this time. Write whenever you can. I am always glad to hear from you. I hope you are all well and getting along fine.

