

April 3, 1943 (letter)

Dear Folks,

I saw "Pride of the Yankees" last night. It was a show that I wanted to see before I left home and didn't get around to it. It's really all that it's cracked up to be. I think it's the best show that I've ever seen.

I knew that you folks would answer my last letter in the manner that you did. Thanks for all the advice. I've had everything that you ever told about the weaker sexing mind since I've been in the army plus a training film that we saw at Miami Beach. That film alone was enough to make me very careful and I think that with what I know, you don't have to worry about my getting into any scrapes.

We didn't do much except go to a show last Wednesday night. We saw them the next day and it seemed like all we did was walk around down town. My feet felt as if I had been walking all day in shoes too small. I had a nice blister on the hell of my one foot. I guess my feet have spread wearing my heavy old V.I.'s.

Ruby, the girl I was with is taking entrance examinations for a job in Consolidated Air Craft. She says that if she passes she will be sent through school for about three months here in Denver and then sent out to San Diego to work. She seems to have a pretty fair background in chemistry and the way she talks she got pretty fair grades in high school, always. I really think that they are pretty decent kids though I'll have to admit I still don't know too much about them and am still suspicious. I can't make this letter sound right for some reason or other. Mother, you mentioned going to the U.S.O. dances or the Y.M. to meet girls. Take my word for it they aren't any better than the majority of girls here in Denver. Just trust me—I'll always be careful!

Dad, your right when you say that I haven't much left out of my pay after all the deductions are made. I'm sending along six dollars to help with the watches. I'm hoping I won't have to send home for some of my money. The watches quite a little I imagine and I hope that my contribution will help. I didn't send Fred anything. He said at Christmas time that we were both in the same boat and that it was best that we didn't have any excess belongings. He's right and I don't think he'll send me anything so we understand each other, I guess.

Love to all,  
John.

April 9, 1943 (letter)

Dear Mother & Dad,

You're probably wondering what has happened to me again. It's the same old thing, I guess. Just lazy. I went to the early show last night and just about the time it got dark the lights went out. We had quite a thunder shower last night, in fact, we've had rain for the past three days almost steady. Just a steady drizzle all the time, up until last night when it became a storm. Now the whole field is just a mass of mud and puddles. Some fun!

Mother, you certainly did have fun this last weekend, didn't you? I never heard of so much tough luck happening to one person in such a short time in all my life. The Chambers' also seem to be having their share. How is Aunt Emily? I hope she has pretty well recovered from her fall as well as you, mom.

The brownies were swell! Everybody thinks so. They were all in edible conditions too. They were so well packed or handled that everyone came just as you sent them. Grandma's

maple candy came the day before and weren't in quite such good condition. I believe they must have been tossed around some on the way out here. It was awful good though.

I got a letter from Mrs. Warner yesterday asking me to get in touch with her. I have just one more day off before I finish so I guess I'm lucky in a way, that I was sent to the hospital. My original class finished to-day. I'd sure like to be with them but I guess it's just as well. I'm going to call her to-night and see if it's alright to go over next Wednesday. Darn it! Tommy Dorsey is going to be in town that day and I'll have to miss him.

We went out to the hangers this morning. I guess I'll spend the rest of my school time out there. Two more days on gun sights and then two weeks on live (working on everything I've studied so far) and I'm through. That will be nice! Mighty nice!

I think Ruby has more guts than any girl I ever knew! I told you she was going to school for Consolidated Air Craft. She's taking a course that scares the day lights out of Swietzer who got all A's and B's in school. Technical Drawing, and she seems to like it an awful lot. She is one of a family of ten children all of whom are now orphans. She and two or three of her brothers and sisters have lived with her grandparents for the past few years but I guess they couldn't take care of all the younger children because she has a brother in an orphanage here in Denver. She's got mighty high ambitions and I think she'll make all of them come true. Believe me, she's a swell girl in spite of the way I met her.

Love to all,  
John.

April 15, 1943 (letter)

Dear Folks,

Well, back to my letters I go. How is Aunt Emily? I gather the paper hanging is coming pretty slow from mother's letter. I suppose it's making it pretty tough on you, mom. It'll be a mighty nice change, though, when it's all up.

I was just about through the chow line this afternoon when I heard someone say, "Hello there, Mr. Henry". I looked up and there was Bruce Thomas. Army life has it's disappointments and such but it's also got pleasant surprises, too. Esther Rice told me that he had washed out and that he might end up around Denver here but I never expected to run into him. He said that he had seen Fred in Santa Ana first before he finished his primary but hadn't seen any other Hiram men since he left home. I guess I've got him beat. I've been three Hiramites so far and I've been in less time than he.

Maybe I'm a little mixed up but, Dad, you said Dr. Hurd told Gene that he ought to have a vacation for a week or so. I thought Dr. Hurd died after a short spell with a bad heart. Perhaps I'm thinking of someone else.

Several of the fellows that I know who have just come out of the hospital are getting furloughs. They have skipped about three classes here at school in order to give the instructors leaves. That leaves those men who have just gotten out of the hospital with no instructors. They would be just a liability if they stayed—so, that gives me an idea—I think I'll get sick.

I thought they were going to skip over us with that gunners exam but I guess we will get it some time this week or the first part of next.

I can't seem to think of anything else to say except that we saw Tommy Dorsey yesterday. Schwietzer and I. It was really swell.

Love to all,

Johnny.

April 19, 1943 (letter)

Dear Mother & Dad,

Well, I've got for more days of school. I hope that the rumor going around about our going east is right. I'd like to start out next Sunday morning heading back over the same tracks we came in on and keep on going straight through St. Louis. I told you that part of class 31 was supposed to be in the east. Atlantic City, New Jersey, I guess. It looks like I won't even get a chance to take my gunners examination. I asked the 1<sup>st</sup> Sergeant about it a week or two ago and he said our time for it would come, but I think it is too late now. I'll be sent to some tactical outfit where I'll get some practical experience as an armorer, probably, and then ship out again after a couple months.

I hope your head-ache is gone, Dad, and that you won't be bothered anymore with them. A bad headache is tough enough when you get them just once in a while. When they become a habit—well, that's makes it plenty tough.

I thought that Fred had probably already shipped. I wrote to him either Friday or Saturday and figured on its having to be forwarded. If not—all the better.

The other day we went out to the athletic field instead of to the hangers for calisthenics. We carried our gas masks out with us in preparation for a real gas drill under combat conditions (that isn't exactly what I meant to say, but it will have to do). They had a bunch of smoke bombs lined up across a rather deep ravine. We went through that first without our masks adjusted. Then they started the gas bombs and we went through that with our masks on before we even got out into the real stuff. The third time through we had to get a good whiff of the gas before we put our masks on. I couldn't detect anything at all when I first got into the gas but the next step I took nearly knocked me off my feet. I thought my lungs were going to burst before I got my mask on. My eyes were watering and blood-shot for the rest of the day. It was really quite an experience for me.

Did I tell you that Virgil Ward (pal from Akron) had gotten himself into a movie produced by the photographic dept. of Lowry Field? I guess it will be quite something since it was directed by some rather well-known directors and other camera men from Hollywood who are going to school there too. Ward says that it will be released to the public. I don't know what the name of it is but I'd sure like to see it.

I thought I'd get a chance to see Larry Brunelle again before I left but it seems that we won't even get a day-off this week to say nothing of just being restricted to the post. Doggone the men in charge of this place! I don't think they know what they want. They keep handing out one order after another. Some of them are the screwiest you ever heard, like changing our section numbers and letting everyone off on Sunday. That, the latter, seems mighty silly. Think of the whole camp trying to get to Denver at once and think of poor Denver when the army gets there. Many of the orders are changed from one day to the next so that we don't know what we're going to do next. I'll be mighty glad to get out of here no matter what direction we go in. Funny how your opinion of a place can change. It's not just my imagination, either. It really has gotten a lot worse here lately.

Bob Schwietzer is a funny fella. He has known Rae only about a day in the total number of hours he's been with her and he is already crazy in love with her. He's nuts anyhow but a swell guy at that. He's from Canton, Ohio, and knows Jimmy Poucellor pretty well. He took his

examination for cadet about a month ago and was told to come back when he strengthened his eye muscles. He went back to-day to see about it and I guess the Doc got him pretty bawled up. He came from the hospital thinking he had failed again but later he remembered that they had told other cadets the same thing they told him. He saw the doc file some papers away for him but still isn't sure that he passed or not. I think and hope that he did, because I agree that going across as an armorer doesn't seem like very much.

Love to all,  
John.

April 25, 1943 (letter)

Dear Folks,

I'm almost certain of the direction I'm going in now. The fellow who got our tickets yesterday said that we'd be traveling east for four days. It will be a civilian train and it seems to me that we can expect to do quite a little rambling around the country as we did coming here from Miami because four days is a long time to be traveling in any one direction from here. Maybe you don't think it makes me happy that we're going east!

I've only one regret for leaving Buckley and that is that I'll be leaving Schweitzer too. He's really a swell egg, in fact I think he's been more of a real pal than anyone I've met since I left home. He went to the hospital the day after I did but was there longer than I and consequently got washed back three classes instead of two. He graduates next week and if he doesn't make cadet he'll probably go to the west coast---that's what he thinks anyway.

We haven't very many belongings considering what we had in civilian life but it sure seems like a lot when you start packing them all in one little barracks bag. I was lost for a while this morning trying to sort out my stuff and to get things I would want on the train on top of everything else.

Some of our original class went to Fresno California. They say it's really lousy. I don't think I'd like it without lights, latrines, and they say they've even got to haul water. I don't know how far, but it doesn't sound good to me. I'd really be disappointed if I should in some way end up there, or any place else but east now.

We ship out at 12 this noon.

Much love,  
John.

April 28, 1943 (letter)

Dear Mother & Dad,

You're probably wondering where I am by now. I guess there is something in some rumors but there were so many floating around first before we left Buckley that I wasn't sure what to believe.

We got in this morning around 2:30 after what I thought was a pretty nice trip except for all the soot, cinders, smoke, etc, which flew in the windows. We certainly saw some beautiful country this side of Kansas City, Missouri. Dad, you have been through Kansas or have heard about what wonderful farm land there is out there. I never saw anything like it before. Ground just as black as coal almost and reasonably flat too. We cut down south instead of through

Arkansas and the Ozark Mountains. They were might rugged and pretty. Then through Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia.

They said last night that we would get in rather early this morning but that we would be able to sleep until 6 o'clock or so. Well, as I said, as soon as we got into Savannah they came through and woke us up. A Pullman which is full of soldiers is really a mess when they all get up at the same time.

So far this field seems like a pretty nice place, even though we are living in tents and eating out of our mess kits. We are only about 18 miles from the ocean this time and all the buildings are camouflaged against enemy observation.

I thought we were going to be pursuit armorers but perhaps not. I haven't been able to find out much about this field yet but I noticed "special training" in our new address and most of the planes here are light bombers. B-24's and -25's. The tents are right next to the run-ways and about every five minutes or so one of these planes come in over us and land.

I haven't any airmail stamps so I may have to send this by regular mail unless I can buy some here.

Mom, brownies would make a swell birthday present if you have time.

Love,

John.

May 2, 1943 (letter)

Dear Folks,

I haven't had any mail from you yet but I suppose it's on the way. It's really pretty hard to tell when you do get mail here. The mail man is a dumb little old bunny with a squeaky voice and a inability to pronounce any names over one syllable. He has to spell most of them. Everyone kicks about it but it probably won't do much good. This is my first gripe and probably won't be my last. It seems as though I like a camp real well for my first few days and after that find more and more things to gripe about. I'll have to admit, though, that this place has a long way to go to get as bad as Buckley was when I left.

I didn't do a darn thing my first two days here except to get my classification checked over. We played baseball and horseshoes those first couple days and then Friday they caught me for K.P. It was absolutely the easiest K.P. I've ever done. I think I scrubbed out three G.I. cars the whole day and our pusher said that we were the best men that he had ever had in a long time. I can't figure it out. Maybe he was kidding. Yesterday we really worked, though. They put us on truck detail. The first part of the morning we went into Savannah to a warehouse the army has there and loaded big boxes of tent stakes into trucks. We finished all the loading by noon and I thought we had seen the last of the darned stakes, but in the afternoon we went down to the main part of camp and there found they had just dumped the boxes off on the ground in front of our storage house here. We had to shove them all through a small hole into the basement and stack them up in neat rows. The ceiling was so low that we had to lean over all the time and I came out with a pretty lame back plus a pair of sore hands. I haven't done any real labor with my hands since I came into the army and it was quite a while before I left that I did any. I guess I'm pretty soft yet.

Savannah doesn't seem like much of a town for the colored soldiers. There is about 1 white person for every black one and they say that there are only about two places in town where a white soldier can go to have fun.

I'm completely out of money. Do you suppose I could have my birthday present a little early? I don't think we'll get paid for quite a while yet...

Love to all,  
John.

May 4, 1943 (letter)

Dear Mother & Dad,

I've got some pretty good news I think. I believe I can get home in about two weeks. Yesterday, Monday, I was called for K.P. again and a little after noon our duty sergeant came in and asked for me. He said I was being assigned to the 12<sup>th</sup> Airdrome Squadron and should get my things packed right away. There was only one other man called for assignment yesterday and we were the first to leave "tent city" out of the gang who came down from Buckley. I don't know how we happened to be the ones called but it all suits me. As soon as we got here last night we asked about furloughs and the C.O. told us to come back to-day. We just saw him again and it seems we're going out to the range for three days starting Sunday and since it's compulsory he said he would let us know how we stood when we got back. I won't say for sure that I'll get it, in fact, I think the chances are almost slim, darnit! This squadron has been here for four months now, which is longer than the average, and is all packed up for overseas, ready to leave any time. I'll try my darndest when we get back from the range but I'm not going to let my hopes go too high.

Being assigned seems awfully good after being pushed around all over the country making good friends and being split up right away. I guess I'll be with this outfit for the rest of my army career unless something happens pretty soon. Everyone is swell, too. They all know each other and it's just like a big family. The food is really wonderful compared to that at "tent city". In fact all the men were boasting that it was the best on the field but of course they are all prejudiced. They had the cooks who had just gotten out of school at "tent city" and they all took turns cooking. It wasn't bad chow but wasn't good either.

I still haven't gotten any mail. There is something mighty funny about all that. There are a lot of boys who are getting theirs right along, from their home base and also from home and there are quite a few others who haven't gotten as much as a post card like me. I think it will be better down here though, at least they say the mail service is alright.

All the armorers here are with a bombardment squadron and I think it will be pretty tough on Fitzpatrick and I since we are pursuit armorers. I can see right now that we will have a lot to learn about turrets and such. Oh well, we won't have to worry about synchronizing and some of the other things we learned at Buckley.

They checked on our equipment when we came down yesterday and we've got about as much again as we've got now to get. Steel helmet, pistol belt, field pouch, etc. It sounds like fun, our going out to the range. We'll be out there for about three days, sleeping in pup tents, eating out of our mess kits, and they say we do have to shave or do calisthenics or any of the usual things. Just life in the rough. They are making all the armorers instructors in the use of rifles, too. That also sounds interesting.

My first two letters had to be sent by regular mail since I couldn't get any place to get any while I was at "tent city".

I guess that is about all for now.

Love to all,

John.

May 5, 1943 (letter)

Dear Mom,

Gee, it was good to hear from you! It was my first mail since I left Buckley and that was almost two weeks ago. I can't understand this mail situation down here. Your letter came through in one day as it should have by airmail but the mail going out certainly seems to take it's time. My letters to you was on the road 4 days and that is pretty long even for regular mail. Another thing—Fitz sent two telegrams home the day he got here and he got a letter from his mother yesterday and she never mentioned the wires. I guess she didn't get them at all. I smell a mouse somewhere.

The picture of you and Donnie was mighty nice and I'm sure glad to have it. It isn't too good of Donnie as you said, but you took a good one. I showed them to Fitz and he said in a very surprised tone, "Is that your mother? Why she looks almost as young as my older sister". His older sister is about 25. How do you like that? Course I don't know how old his sister looks, but I'll agree with him that you look much younger than you really are. You've heard that from others sources too. By-the-way, when did you have that picture taken? Gramp Hawley mentioned in a letter written April 13<sup>th</sup> and asked if or rather mentioned the fact that I must have one and asked my opinion of it. What was I to say? You never even mentioned having them taken. Donnie certainly does use his head, I guess. And in a way normal to every growing boy. In the picture he seems to be growing quite a little too. Boy, I sure hope I get my furlough, and my hopes are rising beyond my control. I've talked with several of the men who have been with the outfit for several months and they all think we'll be here until sometime in June. That's all the time I need.

I'm glad the snaps got to you alright even though they were late and the diploma too. I would have had my pictures taken before I left Buckley but I've had to be awfully careful of my money and always thought there would come a day when I would have the time and the money. I've got the time now. Plenty of it!

Say, Dad hasn't taken a really long trip like the one he's on now in a couple years, has he? That is not without you and the rest of us. I'll bet you wish you were with him, don't you? It does sound like quite a nice trip.

Mom, a cigarette lighter would be swell! I'm always running out of matches. I don't know why I didn't think of it before. And don't forget the brownies. Wait though, we're going out to the range Sunday and it would be better if you could send them a day or two late because we won't see camp for three days, maybe four.

The range is about 70 or 80 miles away and we will go in trucks, I guess. Sleeping in pup tents and really living a rough life in the great outdoors for those three days. The rest of the men have been out before and are really looking forward to it this time and I am too except when I'm thinking about it's being what is keeping me from getting home this week. The C.O. was ready to let us go until he found this trip scheduled.

It's really swell being assigned at last. I won't have any more separated friendships. These are the boys I'll go the whole way with and so far they seem like a swell gang. The sergeant in charge of the armament division is what I call a real guy. There doesn't seem to be much of anything to do now so he has us playing baseball or hiking through the woods most of the time. That or just lying in the shade of some tree, just slinging the bull. We have to fall but for

three formations a day and do calisthenics for about an hour each day, but outside of that—nothing much of anything.

There was about 120 of us who came down from Buckley and we (Fitz and I) are still the only ones to be assigned. The rest of our boys are back in “tent city” doing detail for eight or ten hours a day. We have been going over every night to see about our mail and listen to their tales of woe. We certainly were lucky.

Lawrence moved to Madison, Wisconsin quite a while ago.

Well, Mom, I guess I’d better stop. It’s time for lights out so--!

Love,

John.

May 9, 1943 10AM (Letter)

Dear Mother & Dad,

Well, it won’t be long now. We’re supposed to leave about twelve and, boy, have I been busy. Fitz and I got all our field equipment Friday, most of which we had never seen before. Besides our regular jobs we washed clothes and learned how our new things were supposed to go on. That was still Friday and we also had a preliminary field inspection. That was a riot! Fitz and I got over there with about half of our stuff and we didn’t have it arranged right or anything. Yesterday morning we had the real thing. Everybody caught heck for not having their things marked with their last initial and last four numbers of their serial number. Most of the non-coms were at fault there, surprisingly enough, and the major really lit into them. Well, the rest of the day we spent marking and stenciling our whole outfit. Fitz had made arrangements earlier in the week to call his girl in Boston and right after lunch he was called for guard duty. He was worried sick because he hadn’t finished his marking and he didn’t want to miss making his phone call. I had finished and so I was going to go on guard duty for him. I waited around until about 8:30 last night and because of some mix up I was dropped from the list. Everything turned out alright finally, though, and I guess everyone is happy.

The brownies arrived in fine shape and were really good. The corporal who sleeps next to me wanted me to tell you, Mom, that you’ve got a secret admirer. The card you sent was also mighty nice. The five bucks that Grandma sent me was a Godsend. I had already borrowed two bucks for a haircut that I needed pretty badly and cigarettes, etc.

My mail is coming through fine now. I’ve gotten two or three letters since about Thursday.

How was your trip Dad? It would have been pretty nice if I had been sent to the New England states instead of down here. You might have been able to drop in then. Too bad Mother couldn’t go along. I can imagine how she wanted to.

I got a letter from Schweitzer yesterday saying that the boys from class 31 who went to Fresno, California got a 15 day furlough and are now on their way over. I’m going to ask about mine Wednesday just as soon as I get back from the range. I still don’t know what my chances are but I’m going to try hard.

Love to all,

John.

P.S. Couldn’t find any Mother’s Day cards but am sending along the same greeting.



May 12, 1943 (letter)

Dear Mother & Dad,

Well, Mom's letter came just before I left Sunday and Dad's while I was at the range. I seem to have lost Dad's in my rush this morning when [we] broke camp. It may be somewhere in my equipment, if so I'll get it later.

Remember, I said I was going to find out about my furlough the day I got back from the range. I was advised to go tomorrow instead, but, darnit, orders came through this morning that we would have to move back to "tent city". That's the whole squadron. I don't know what the idea is but it doesn't look like we'll be able to see the C.O. to-morrow either. He'll be busy and we will too. Let you know what turns up.

You were right, Mother. I'll be on the ground servicing guns. I don't know for sure where we will be headed for when we leave, but I think it will be the Pacific or possibly North Africa depending on conditions there. We haven't anything but light and medium bombers here. They are using heavy bombers in England mostly so I don't think we'll be going there. There is a lot of time for that, though. We may be all packed up and waiting shipping orders but we still may be here for a long time. No body knows.

We had a swell time on the range! There was some excitement on the way out, the drivers of the truck in the back of us kept falling asleep and going all over the road. I thought he was going to hit the ditch several times but he'd pull out just in time. We stopped to stretch about half way out and this fellow in the back was asleep as usual. He didn't realize that we had stopped and kept right on coming. Someone hollered at him and it was just in time because [he] pulled out around missing us only by inches. They were all big heavy trucks and if he had collided it would have mangled someone. The last 15 miles of the trip was on a rough sand road that reminded me a little of some of the roads around home. We were covered with dust and everyone agreed that it was by far the lousiest part of the trip.

There aren't any stock laws here in Georgia and it seems funny to see pigs of all sizes and cows and goats running loose all over the country side. There were a couple porkers in the camp that we almost butchered and would have if the cooks knew how to butcher.

The range is way out about 15 miles into the swamps of Georgia. The first thing that greeted us was a live water moccasin which the cooks, who came up earlier, had cornered. Nice reception! I'd think that those swamps would be lousy with snakes but this one was the only one that we saw. We got there about 3:00 pm Sunday and spent the rest of our time setting up our tents and arranging other things. That night we had church services led by our mess sergeant who seems like a really swell egg and he knows his Bible too. The subject or theme was "mothers" since it was Mother's Day. I'm ashamed to say that it was the first service I've attended since I left home. I'm going to do better from now on. They got us up Monday early enough to eat breakfast and get out on the range when it got light enough to shoot. Fitz and I pasted targets all day. A very tiresome job! Tuesday morning we got to shoot. Fitz does alright in that department too, for a beginner. He almost made sharp-shooter with a score of 151 out of a possible 200. I had 130 which was just enough to qualify me as a marksman. Marksman starts with 130, and sharp-shooter: 160, Expert: 180 on up. Those Springfield's have quite a kick to them and after 65 rounds my shoulder had a nice little lump on it. It's a mighty accurate rifle though. We also got to shoot five rounds on the army's new carbine. Boy, that's a real little

gun! It's weight and size about equals my .22 but it's a semi-automatic gun and naturally packs more of a whallop.

We had church services Tuesday night, too. It was almost funny the way some of these guys act. It's almost as though they had never gone to church. Sit there with their hats on and lighting up cigarettes through the whole thing. After services we sat around telling jokes, etc. There was one fella who gave us an exhibition "holy-roller" dance. That was quite something.

We finished shooting yesterday afternoon and last night as a finale we had a party, with a swell big fire and eats and drinks for everyone. We sang and told jokes until around 11:00 PM and I'm telling you we've got some real talent in the crowd.

I guess I'm getting so I can sleep almost any place. I was really surprised because I slept well with nothing between me and the ground but a blanket. It rained fairly hard last night and it made us kind of proud of our tent pitching because we didn't get very wet at all. As a whole it was a mighty successful trip as far as I was concerned.

Thanks loads for all the money. I guess I won't go broke now unless I get my furlough and that will be mighty worth it.

Love to all,  
John

P.S. Please send Cousin Mollie's address, I've lost it and feel as though I ought to write her.

**After this point all the letters received went through the Army Censor. All sections that were censored by the officials will be represented by brackets as follows, [...]. This usually meant that something that John wrote was deemed as information that could be used against the army in some way, shape or form and was thereby removed from the contents of the letter. Also starting at this point his address was the Postmaster in San Francisco, which would remain his address for the remainder of the war.**

May 21, 1943 (letter)

Dear Mother & Dad,

Well, we finally arrived, but I'll have to admit that I wouldn't mind going over the whole trip again but right away. We've certainly got some beautiful country! The only thing I got tired of seeing was the plains in the middle west. It was just the same thing mile after mile until I got so sleepy I could barely keep my eyes open. That didn't matter, though, I wouldn't have missed anything if I had gone to sleep.

All my mail will be censored from now on and the list of "don'ts" leaves me with almost no choice as to what I can say and what I can't. It will be awfully hard for a while for me to write but I suppose a guy can get used to most anything. I've found that true since I've been in the Army.

I hope you didn't worry too much after getting that box from me and the absence of any mail post marked Savannah, GA. We got [...] before shipping and we were so busy getting ready that there was no time for letters and even if there was I couldn't have told you when we were leaving.

I'll ship out of here in the same manner of time, and when I do we'll be heading across. Please try not to worry! A furlough for me now just isn't in the books, but there have been thousands of other boys who have gone across without getting home and they had to take it as well as their folks. If they can do it I can and so can you. The war news seems to be all pretty encouraging lately, I think that we will all be home before too very long. Let's hope so anyway.

I've got an awful lot of letters to write by I don't think it'll take long since there isn't anything that I can write about. A lot of my back mail was forwarded from Buckley and came in that last two days. I had quite a pocket full to bring along with me. Before I forget it---send Fred's address in your next letter, will you? I didn't get his last change into my address book. Like a dumb bunny sent his last letters home with my other stuff.

How did Gene come out with his final physical? In a way I hope it isn't 4-7 and then again I hope it is. I can understand how he must feel about getting in to some branch of the service but he will do just as well at home.

This is the second time I've written this page because I knew my first one wouldn't pass the censors. I'll learn---I hope.

I'm pretty darned tired. Didn't get but about [...] hours sleep last night. Think I'll stop and go to bed.

Much love,  
John.

May 23, 1943 (letter)

Dear Grandma & Grandpa,

Your card which was sent first to Savannah came today. One that Mother wrote Friday 14<sup>th</sup> came yesterday. I think some of our mail got here even before we did, and I'm glad, because I hate waiting around about a week for mail to reach a new camp.

Here's thanking you and Grandpa for the money you sent me. You probably sent that amount expecting it to help me home when I got my furlough. I guess I hollered too soon but there is nothing we can do now. I was completely out of money, though, when it came and I was really very glad to get it.

I got a letter from Fred yesterday telling of the accidents they've been having there at Chico. He's really getting his share of excitement. I certainly hope he's careful.

We've all been trying to get our clothing and other equipment cleaned up since we arrived. You can go into the washroom anytime of the day almost and see men down on the cement floor scrubbing away with G.I. brushes. There is one reason why I'll be glad when this is all over. I hate doing what is normally called "women's jobs".

Continued 5/24/1943

It's always seems to take about 2 days for me to finish half of my letters. I heard from Dad to-day. His letter was dated the 12<sup>th</sup>. I wish I'd hurry and get letters in answer to those that I have written from here. I think they would be interesting. At least more interesting than mine are at the present time.

I think I'll let this be enough for this time. I've still got a lot to do before going to bed.

Love to all,  
John.

May 28, 1943 (letter)

Dear Folks,

Your letter written on the 20<sup>th</sup>, just after you got my box, came to-day. I hope that you have received those that I sent from here by now, because they will keep you from worrying somewhat. It's good to know just how you folks will take the real thing when it comes and as Dad said, you have both shown your colors so far. Please try not to worry about me from now on! I've learned a lot even in the short time I've been here and feel pretty confident that I can take care of myself. This doesn't sound too convincing, maybe, but I do mean it! I've got an awful lot to come back for and that is reason enough to say nothing of the way I value my life, all this I've thought about through-out the lectures, training films, and many other things I've encountered since I left home. You were very much concerned, or seemed to be, about my becoming a gunner. Well, I'm not flying so be thankful for that. It's about time I dropped this, at least for the time being.

I didn't think I could get a pass that would give me enough time to see Fred but I was looking on the map the other day and decided that I would be able to make it on the passes given out here so asked for one and got it. That was Wednesday. I wired him that I was coming and went to town to see about my ticket only to find that there was only one train going to Chico every day. That settled that there. I couldn't make it because of the short time I had off. It would be mighty nice if he could get out here but, as I said before, I can't give him or anyone else my real address.

I think that I could be really independent if I had to be or wanted to be after the war is over. Since I came down here I've been doing all my washing, sewing, and everything else. I even tried my hand at ironing yesterday and though my suntans didn't look too hot I was still pretty proud of my work. I had quite a little trouble with the sleeves on my shirt, the pleats near the cuff, but I think they looked pretty fair even so. Yes, the army is the place to learn a lot of things, some very helpful in later life and others you might wish you never even heard about.

To-gether with Georgia and California sun I'm getting nice and brown. Browner than I've ever been, I believe. I'm also getting to feel as though I'd been training for football for a couple of months. The army is really a good life for most anyone, I think, healthy anyway.

What's the story on Gene and the army? Donnie must be getting to be a pretty big boy what with all the work he is doing, really constructive work too.

Much Love,  
John

May 31, 1943 (letter)

Dear Mother & Dad,

I got a letter from Fred this morning but I'm still waiting for your's. I suppose I'll get one to-morrow from you, I hope so anyway. I rather imagine my first letter to you took longer to go through our censor than my letter to Fred. Our own officers are acting as our censors and I guess we are keeping them pretty busy.

Without one of your letters in front of me it's pretty hard to say anything at all that I haven't told you in previous letters so, since this is more or less just to let you know that everything is going alright and that I haven't left yet, I'll just write a few lines.

Fred had everything ready for me thinking, of course, that I'd soon be seeing him. A place to sleep, chow, and all the entertainment that I would want including a ride with one of the instructors. Gee, but I wish I could have made it. It would have been swell!

I've tried to call you twice now---once last Thursday and then again last night, but each time it got so late that finally had to cancel them. I waited last night for almost four hours on what was supposed to be a 1 to 2 hour delay. Now they say that we will have to stop all phone calls.

Hope I hear from you tomorrow.

Much Love,  
John