

March 1, 1943 (Letter)

Dear Folks,

I don't seem to have much ink in my pen so I don't know how far I'll get before I run out. Night before last just before school let out one of the fellas said that my face was all broken out and that it looked as though I had the measles. I thought that it was just a rash from shaving, though, so I forgot about it. Yesterday afternoon when I woke up I was covered with little red blotches so I decided to be on the safe side and go on sick call. It is measles alright. The doc took one look at me and chuckled saying that I was a sight for sore eyes. The rash had been getting worse all the time so they sent me right on over here to the hospital. They didn't seem worried about my spreading it. They (the orderlies at the infirmary) knew what was troubling me but still let me sit next to all the other boys who were on sick call with colds and sore feet. That was hard to understand. I was the only one out of about thirty in the room who had reported measles and they let me stay in the same room until all thirty of them had gone to see the doctor.

Doggonit! This is making me mighty disgusted with everything and everybody including myself. I'll have to stay here for ten long days and to make things worse, I'll have to go back and start all over again on the cannons. It all adds up to my graduating at least two weeks later than my original class.

There seems to be quite an epidemic here. There were two or three men that moved into our barracks just a day or so ago. I think I probably caught it from them since they had just been released from the hospital for measles. One of these boys is or was bunking right next to me so I'm pretty sure that's where I got it. I haven't felt badly at all and hope I won't because just laying here on back will be pretty tough for ten days. We have two radios in this ward so it will make it some easier.

This is the strangest hospital I've ever seen as far as the way it's laid out is concerned. The whole area is made up of one story buildings, each ward in the form of a barracks with the outdoors between each one. Connecting the wards are long hallways, the longest I've ever seen. The one we came down to reach my ward was, I believe, at least two or three-hundred yards long. A man at the far end looked awfully small.

One of my ex-classmates was going to fix me up a date with a girl from the University of Colorado which is here just this side of Denver. It looks like it will have to be called off...

Friday we had a big parade for the latest graduating class and the government of Colorado, or so they said. All I saw was the graduating class [...] and a captain. I believe the Governor ran out on us. It was a rather warm day and we had to dress in our O. D. uniforms with over coats and all. The parade grounds here are far worse here than they were in Miami. It's just a big flat wheat field and mighty rough and dusty. We nearly suffocated.

I got a letter from Fred the other day. He seems to be enjoying his flying even though they are making it pretty tough for him. I'd like to be flying with him.

I'll stop now and write again to-morrow. Hope I can get my stationary by then. I had to borrow this.

Much love,
John.

March 2, 1943 (letter)

Dear Folks,

I got Dad's letter yesterday along with about six others, one from Gene and one from Fred that came through Miami Beach. There was also one each from Ruth and Betty Lowe. I

was surprised to get one from Ruth, but there it was. It didn't take as long for my mail to get to the hospital as I thought it would. I remember getting mail for fellas who had gone to the hospital for three or four days after they had gone before the mail room got things straightened around. Each day I'd tell them where the guys were but it didn't seem to do much good. I guess I'm lucky.

We just got through eating lunch and as we at we listened to some dance music which there seems to be plenty, thank goodness. The announcer said something about "Rocky River" and I thought about Cleveland. Sure enough, he went on telling where it was and mentioning a beautiful golf course and naming several well-known men from there. It seems funny, I never heard any band broadcasting from there, or any kind of program for that matter, before and yet, after I get way out here in the west, this happens.

Dad, I asked one of the orderlies here about an income tax blank and he said that he didn't have any here at the hospital but would try to get one for me to-night. I haven't Gramp's letter here with me, it shows the exact amount that I made at Wellman's last year and I don't think I can get it. The orderlies are or seem to be awfully busy and won't give me any encouragement when I ask about getting my things. The one that is getting this blank isn't going out of his way. All this is the reason I'm still borrowing stationary here and there.

We got paid yesterday much to my surprise and joy. I really thought for a while that I'd have to wait at least until after I was out of this joint and possibly longer before I got it. Anyway, we all whooped when the nurse came in with fists bulging with bills for nearly everyone in the ward. I've got most of mine salted away until after I get back in school then I can send part of it home.

It snowed hard yesterday afternoon and last night but the sun came out bright and warm this morning and most of it is already gone. Snow just doesn't seem to have a chance out here except on the mountains. After the winter you folks have had I can just see the roads since these more "spring-ish" days have come along. How is the hill on the other side of the river? There was a spot on it that has always been had this time of year even after a mild winter.

The "Doc" comes through every morning asking how we feel. He has told me that I could get up in a day or so. It's funny because I've been up and running around since I got here and haven't felt any ill effects from it. These measles don't seem to have any effect on me and now I've completely lost my rash.

Love to all,
John.

March 3, 1943 (letter)

Dear Folks,

I got out of the hospital about 8:30 this morning and just found some free time (12:30). It took me about an hour and a half to finally get out of the hospital after I was released from my ward. I made it through after waiting in line for my money which I had deposited and signing a dozen different papers. When I went to my barracks I found that they had taken my things out and somebody had swiped my bunk. I knew I'd have to be assigned to a different class so I went down to Head Quarters. They sent me down to the school H. Q. and told me to report back after I was finished there. I got back to my squadron about two hours later and they had all gone to lunch. I'm waiting now for them and I think that I'll be all set when they get through with me. I know I'm still on the night shift and that I start school to-morrow night. I'm glad I won't have to

wait for a week or so before I start because I'd be doing K.P. if I did. I hope, though, that I can get back in my old barracks so that I can stay with the friends I made there.

The mail I got that one day was all I got during the time I was in the hospital. I thought it was too good to be true when I got that one bunch. Oh well, maybe I will get a lot of it to-night.

My stay in the hospital was more of a rest than anything. I'm feeling a lot better now than I have in quite a while. There isn't much of any news, so I'll stop now and wait until I hear from you. I think that'll be to-night so---!

Love to all,

John

P.S. I still haven't gotten any income tax blanks but will try to-night.

March 5, 1943 (letter)

Dear Folks,

Got Dad's letter to-night and I'm thinking that one or two of your letters were sent to the hospital yesterday morning. I got out yesterday, I told that though when I wrote you yesterday. I start school again to-night. I didn't figure my time right, these measles will slow me up about three weeks instead of two.

I'm being careful, Dad. The Doc warned me about my weakened condition. I noticed that I was shaking last night but I'd had quite a day running around trying to get re-entered in school. They won't be quite as tough from now on, though.

Unless you folks are having a worse winter than I've ever seen before, our weather here has yours beat. I've never seen anything like it I know. It's colder than blue-blazes and there is a strong wind blowing plenty snow down from the north. I went down to chow this afternoon and, I'm telling you, it's all I could do to keep my eyes open enough to see where I was going. We were all mighty glad when they replaced out drill with a lecture on first aid.

Mom, our course hasn't been shortened. I don't remember saying anything like that. The fact is, I think they are going to lengthen it. There has been talk of a more extensive phase on bomb sights. For that I think we will go over to Lowry Field. Don't either of you worry about the effects of measles, I'll take care of myself and it's going to be a long time before I get out of school. It seems like it now anyway.

Dad, did Dutch take Matty's place as coach? How is he anyway? It's too bad he had to be sick this year when he has such a team. It looks like he and Dutch will be out of a job as far as being physical instructors are concerned unless they take over the army. I got a letter from Esther Rice yesterday telling me how the boys have been leaving. They certainly have been piling our boys into N. View haven't they? I got some first-hand information on this from Bill Kroeck to-day. He's one of the poor unfortunates out there, I guess.

Darn it! I asked to be put back in Bks. 626 but they wouldn't hear of it. Instead they put me in 621, right next door. I can't understand half of the things they insist on doing in the army. But then, I guess we aren't supposed to.

Love to all,

John.

March 8, 1943 (letter)

Dear Folks,

Mom's letter came to-night. I don't think you have to worry about us being sick while in the army. The "Doc" came around twice every day to check on how we were feeling and the nurses were even more careful of us and making sure we were all okay. I didn't notice any change in my eyes and still haven't so I guess, though I forgot about what measles did to them, they are okay also. I did do some reading while in the hospital but not enough to do any harm, I'm sure. If I was going to be sick because of a weakened condition I'd been seen some signs of it by now. I am kind of glad, mom, that you didn't send a letter for the doctor. I don't think he would have gotten it in time. I didn't get any letters from you while I was in the hospital. For one thing I was in there long enough and anyway the mail service is awfully slow in the hospital until the mail room orderlies get it through their thick heads that you have moved. I told these guys that I had changed barracks the day I got out, that was Thursday and I'm still getting mail through my old barracks.

I think I told you before that I had started school Friday again. It seemed funny to start all over with guys that have never seen the guns I've worked on. It makes me feel almost like an instructor and I don't think I'd like the job. I hate to admit but think this class is, on the average, smarter than my original class. The new instructor isn't as good, I don't think, in his position as my old one, but he's a nice fella as are the rest of the guys in the class.

They told us last night that from now on all students enrolled in classes and all those coming in will automatically become P.F.C.'s. There hasn't been any official announcement on this so I'll wait a while before I put this in my address. It will be my first rating and I hope not my last. It isn't much but it's a start. There was quite a little discussion about this last night in class. Our present instructor is a "buck private", the same as we are and he says that he has been promised a rating several times in the past six months but that it has never come through. It's got him worried to think that his students will all outrank him. I guess he really expects to see our rating come through, but not his own. I think that would make me feel pretty bad too, if I were in his shoes.

I got a letter from Grandma to-night, too, I'll answer it to-morrow.

Love to all,
John.

March 11, 1943, 1 AM. (letter)

Dear Folks,

Do you remember the fella Akron that I told you I met at Miami Beach? Well, I wrote to his folks about a month ago asking for his address. About a week or ten days later, I got a letter from him saying he was stationed at Lowry Field. Imagine my surprise! Anyhoo, he came over to Buckley last Sunday, I think it was, and we make plans to meet here in Denver to-night. To-day was my day off and to-morrow is his so he planned on coming down after he finished school to-night getting here about 1:00 or 1:30. I don't have to be back until tomorrow at 3 o'clock so we'll have all morning to look over the town---if we don't sleep all morning!

This is my second time in town and I still can't find an awful lot of interest. I guess Fred is better at finding such things than I am. I think this will be my last trip because of this, at least until next month.

By-the-way, our P.F.C ratings did come through; the notice came out yesterday that we had been P.F.C.'s since March 5th. Four dollars more a month will be alright as far as I'm

concerned and that one stripe will make me happy for a while. That's one more stripe than Fred's got!---at present.

The pictures on this stationary make me want to come back out here after the war. Pretty nice looking mountains, aren't they?

I [hope] Ward comes pretty soon, I'm getting sleepy. He's probably enjoying his nice living quarters there at Lowry. No kidding, that field has really got it all over Buckley. They live in nice, big, brick, barracks with day rooms, mail room, chow house, and a recreation room; all that in the same building. I forgot, they've also got a tailor shop and barber shop-shine stand in the same building. There's a theatre just across the street and his class rooms are also very close. That field is my idea of alright.

I met several fellas that I knew at Miami Beach while I was at Lowry this afternoon too. One guy, who was a very good friend of mine there, bumped into me as I came out of their orderly room after trying to find just where Ward was staying. Boy, was I surprised to see him! He happened to be in Ward's class and knew just where to find him, so we finally caught up with him after I had asked around at different places for nearly half an hour.

More later.

Love to all,
John.

March 14, 1943 (Letter)

Dear Folks,

Mother's letter came yesterday. I don't know what has happened to Fred. It's been a couple of weeks since I've heard from him. Maybe I got his address wrong but I don't think so. I suppose it's just because he's so busy. That goes for Gene too.

Lawrence waited until after he arrived at his new base before he answered my letter so I've got his new address.

I certainly made a mistake if I said that our course was cut. I still don't remember saying anything like that, but maybe I did. I was out of school only a week, but you see, the course is divided into about nine different places and if you miss any school at all you have to go back and start over again at the phase in which you were absent. I was all through cannons except for the last day and so I had to start all over again putting me back two weeks instead of three behind my original class. It doesn't seem as though I were sick enough to really have the measles. I've thought that right along.

It was pretty risky sending that money the way I did. It didn't seem to me there could be much of anything that could happen to it though. It looked just like an ordinary letter and nothing happens to ordinary letters except in unordinary cases.

They cancelled all our old bond (V.S) contracts and now have a new system by which we will, they say, get our bonds a week after the final payment has been made. So far I've got three bonds paid for and I know that you haven't gotten any of them yet. It's the same way with the rest of the men; they get their bonds about six months after they've paid for them. This new contract starts April 1st and by that time I'll have four bonds. Let me know when you start getting them. I've named Dad as co-owner for them so if you need money at any time you can cash them in.

Was it an examination that washed ((?)) Gene out of all the branches of the services or did he tell them about his ear? It's too bad, I imagine he still feels pretty bad about it, doesn't he? To-night is my last night on the cannons. To-morrow we start on electrical controls.

Love to all,

John.

P.S. I ran out of my other stationary.

March 16, 1943 (letter)

Dear Folks,

Well, I started on a brand new phase last night. It's explosive ammunition and it's just as interesting as machine guns and cannons were. They demonstrated several different types of bonds and different sizes, the bomb rack and shackles. These shackles are really something. They are just thin delicate looking pieces of metal about a foot long and four inches high with hooks and releases. They weigh less than a pound and though they look like they wouldn't hold more than 100 pounds the instructor said that they would carry an 1100 pound bomb easily.

My new instructor is a swell guy. He's rather old, easy going and really knows his business. He likes his bombs alright but also likes to go off on a tangent once in a while. We've been having a lot of fun in class, especially since we can sit down now. Or did I tell you that we had to stand up all during class for last week? Some fun! We couldn't even lean on the tables! Just because someone fell asleep in class. Oh well., that's all in the past now. Explosive ammunition lasts three days and then we go into electric controls. That is also a three day phase. After that we have two weeks on synchronizing and then two more weeks in the hangers working on the assembly of guns, bombs, etc. I've got quite a stay here yet.

Heard indirectly that Bob Harrison just arrived at Fort Lewis, Washington. They didn't waste any time getting him as far away from home as possible without sending him across. I noticed that he has his A.P.O. number, meaning Atlantic, Pacific, Overseas station. I wonder if they are planning to give him his training overseas.

I got a letter from Bert the other day too. Boy, that guy can write just like he talks. There were 2 pages written real fine and on both sides and it took me an hour at least to read it. It was good to hear from him, though.

The food has been a lot better the last week but still doesn't compare to what we had at first.

I'm waiting in the day room and can't seem to think of very much to say what with Bob Hope blaring in my ear. It's getting late anyway so I'll have to stop, I guess. Tell Donnie to hurry up with his letter and also to behave himself.

Love to all,
John.

March 18, 1943 (letter)

Dear Mother and Dad,

Your letter came to-day. These days for airmail is quite a while. I think it must have been mixed up with the regular mail.

It was nice that both of you could be in the spot light at the banquet this year. Mother, I imagine you enjoyed watching the other women work while you sat as one of the honor guests.

I don't know how far I'll get with this before I have to go to school. I've been chasing a hamburger. You see, we have a guy from our section go to the base restaurant every night with

our orders for different things. One of the guys wasn't in our barracks when he came back and he forgot to leave the hamburger this fellow ordered. I was partly responsible so I went after it.

Sounds like there is plenty going on around home; PTA, dinners, etc. Keeping you busy, aren't they?

My "Outdoor Life's" came to-day, too. Thanks. You've asked several times if I'd like cookies and other stuff sent. I sure would! I don't know how soon this weather will let up, but if it doesn't let up soon I could sure use that sweater you spoke of, Mom.

That's if it's not too much trouble getting it. You said you planned to get it when you went to town, mom. I imagine you've gone by now.

Chow seems to be one thing that all of us are anxious to get at. I walked through the mess hall the other night to get in line and when I got about half way across it another section arrived outside and made dive for the door. I was lucky because three big guys got stuck side by side in the door. They must have really been hungry, anyway, as they struggled to get through the door I hopped into line and none too soon, either. And then, night before last, about twenty of us made a dive for the end of the line. I got there about first, I think, but didn't last long because someone hit me from the side. We cracked heads and I got a fist or elbow in my chest. When I picked myself up out of the ditch the line had already formed and instead of being first, I was last. My head didn't bother me but my chest still hurts. Bruised muscle, I think.

I'll add more before to-morrow morning but I'd better get ready for school now.

Continued March 20, 1943

It looks as though I should have sent the first part of this letter. You are probably wondering what has happened to me that I haven't written in a quite a while. Well, last night I was busy right up till time for school trying to get a machine from the supply room. There was quite a line and a lot of red tape to go through and just as they got to me a group of about fifty new men arrived who had to be issued blankets and other things so they drew the line with me. They told me to come back to-night, which I did but it seems that they have changed their minds. The night before I'll have to admit that instead of getting down to business I went to the show intending to write afterwards but found some unexpected work to be done; shoes to be shined and such.

I got Gene's present sent this afternoon finally. I got him a billfold which I thought was pretty nice. He'll probably show it to you.

We started on electric controls last night and I'm certainly glad that we only have three days on it. It's about the most bothersome thing I've run into. I had electricity in physics but there first too much theory to it to make it interesting to me. We have synchronizing for two weeks after this E.C., a week on gun sights and cameras and finally two weeks on the line, assembling and installing guns in the planes.

There is a little Chinese fellow writing to one of his countrymen beside me. What a bunch of hen tracks! But if they can read it it's okay with me. As far as writing goes, though, I guess his letter looks neater than mine.

Dad's letter came to-night. You folks maybe having spring weather but I haven't seen any signs of it here. It's been cold without much let up for quite a while. We change shifts the first of April which makes me happy. It will be fairly warm through the day time when we are in class and our breaks will be easier to take. This business of getting warmed up just in time to take another break and then going outside and freezing all over again isn't much fun.

We have an awful lot of boys from Houston, Texas in our barracks. Was it "Faith Home" that Shas is working at? The mother-in-law of one of the guys works there and if that's Shas'

institution, they may know each other. These boys are a swell bunch, especially Jones, who sleeps in the upper half of my double bunk. He calls me his wife... I'm just taking it for granted that it's no reflection on my character or physique, such as it is.

Love to all,
John.

March 24, 1943 (letter)

Dear Folks,

Boy, my letter writing seems to have a crimp put in it. Our day room has been closed for a couple of weeks for repairs and I hate like the dickens to write here in the barracks. I haven't anything to write on and no place to spread my equipment. For the letter I need plenty of room; answered letters, unanswered letters, stationary box, ink, etc. They are about finished with the repairs, though, and I think I'll be able to get back on my old routine soon.

To-day was my day off and instead of going to bed right after school, as usual, I got ready to go to town. I planned on doing a little shopping but ran into two fellas from 626 and stuck with them for a while. Quite a while in fact. I got my stuff and then we just walked around town. It was the first time I'd done this to any extent and we really had fun. The three of us met two pretty nice girls in the course of our wanderings. They were here trying to get a job of some sort and are supposed to start to-morrow. Their whole story sounds fishy to me. I don't know what their game is but they said they lived at Fort Morgan about a hundred miles east of Denver and had left home just after high school graduation and had come to Denver to work. Just the two of them. That doesn't sound right but I suppose it's alright. They are staying at a cheap hotel in the down town section. We walked back to their hotel because one of them wanted to get a camera and then went over in Denver's park, a really beautiful place, a lot of bronze statues or memorials to the men who lived in the time of the Wild and Woolly West. It is surrounded by mammoth capital buildings. We spent quite a while here talking and taking pictures until the girls decided they should go back to the hotel. That was about two P.M. and I hung around with the fellas until about four and then started back to the field. They had made dates with the girls for to-night and since there were only two of them and three of us and I was pretty short on cash, I decided I had better head for home. I really had a lot of fun, though. It was my first acquaintance with any girls since I've been in the army.

I do want to chip in on the watches but at present, as I said before, I'm financially embarrassed. Very much so, in fact. We get paid the 1st of April. That will be a little late but it will have to do. I bought Gene a billfold a few days ago, got it wrapped and sent it. Yesterday it came with my mail. Evidently they got our address crossed. I'll send it along, though. He can use both.

I'm pretty tired so---

Love to all,
John.

March 28, 1943 (letter)

Dear Folks,

It must be the spring weather we're having that makes me feel the way I do. It seems awfully hard for me to get down to answering my letters. I've got a lot of them that should have been answered last week. Well—six or seven anyway.

We've really had swell weather, though, the last week. It's been nice and warm day and night. Last Wednesday was about the nicest we've had. It was really warm but there was a nice breeze that kept us from suffering. To-day was almost too warm. We were all sweating pretty badly after calisthenics.

This fellow from Canton, Ohio, Bob Swietzer, and I called up those girls we met last week tonight and made dates for this next week. I'm not sure, though, that we'll even get into town. We get paid and change shifts on my day off. That doesn't sound so good. Ruby, the girl I was with, is singing to-night for a bunch of soldiers. Boy, she really can sing, too!

Did I tell you about my instructor in synchronizing? I never saw such a guy for getting off on a tangent. When we first started on this phase he said there would be no slinging the bull. Within an hour he was telling us about his home in Detroit, the job he had on one of the newspapers there, and everything else. This has been going on for the past week, seven hours out of eight, the eight hour we spent eating and being around in the barracks. It doesn't seem like he expects us to learn anything about synchronizing.

Dad's letter came to-night. Boy was I ever surprised and glad to hear that Larry Brunelle is here at Lowry. It'll really be swell to see him! Virgil Ward, the guy from Akron, is taking the same photography course that Larry is taking evidently. I don't know whether or not that will help me find him. He is probably quite a bit behind Ward.

Darn it! If it's not one thing it's another. I just sat down to write to-night when our flight sergeant came in and wanted to know what section I was in. I told him and he called me down and some other fellows for not being at the chemical war-fare lectures. I haven't heard anything about it but luckily wasn't late although my section had gone down. If I had been late as were some of the others I'd had some K. P. to do. There was no notice about this lecture on the bulletin board and I still don't know when my section found out about it unless it was just after I came over to the day room. Oh well, all's well that ends well.

We go out to the "jeep sheds" to-night to synchronize guns ourselves. They have got plane engines and caliber .30 guns to be synchronized. It'll be a relief to get away from the class room for a while. These bull sessions get kind of tiresome after a while.

Uncle Grant is kind of a funny fellow. He has written me several letters warning me of the girls out here in the west. Saying that they were grasping girls who would take you out on a limb and leave you to hang if not watched carefully. His first one made me kind of sore and I'm afraid my answer sounded a bit sarcastic, though he didn't seem to notice it when he wrote next time.

I've found several fellows from Ohio here lately. One of the fellas in my class is from East Cleveland and caddied at Grant Wood for quite a while. He knows Frank Urabel and the Plank boys real well. Used to run around with them. He knows several fellas from Geauga Lake and Solon, many of whom I know just by name.

Too bad about Fred's troubles. I'll bet he'll pull through alright though.

Love to all,
John.