

Wed, Jan 27, '43

Camp Davis, N.C.

Dear Fran:

After almost giving up hope for your safety in that cruel world of rationings, shortages, curtailments & the like, I finally received your letter. It was good to hear from you.

Now that our 10-day quarantine has expired, I fear my little vacation with pay (no cracks, please) is coming to a swift end.

Basic training began in earnest yesterday, though we had received lectures on first aid, aircraft identification, the M2, or Garand, rules & regulations, etc., for a few days previously. From 0600 to 1730 (6:00 to 5:30) my time will strictly belong to mine Uncle Sammily.

But on Monday, I hit K. P. with 7 other fellow-unfortunates whose last initials are in the B to D

~~Yep, P. 2~~

range. While the rest of the men were out in the clean, clear air learning the sombre art of sighting a rifle, I languished by the greasy window of the mess hall leaning disconsolately upon a mop and almost suffocated from the nauseating odor of smoking bacon fat. This was the second time in two weeks that I was stationed in the now familiar kitchen. The first time — I think I mentioned it to you before — when the s'gt. came in and asked for 2 volunteers. Thinking it would be for only an hour or two, I got six instead. This latest session was a Zulu. Sweating at mopping, washing, & cleaning, for 14 hours, I did gain the most beautiful soft white pair of hands (beats Italian Balm) this side of masculinity. As a soldier, I am going to make some woman a good wife. If you get nothing

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else out of R.P., you do get a belly-full of good food (was eating full-bodied, juicy tangerines for 4 hours straight, in addition to the 3 squared squares.

U. Not having been classified for any particular branch of A.A. or automatic weapons, I still don't know what I'm going to do in this Army.

They handed us mimeographed sheets, ~~recently listing~~ ^{recently listing} ~~containing~~ 8 possible types of service. The types were: cook, supply, driver, instrument operator, 40 mm. A.A., .50 cal. machines, electrician, and something else, which I can't recall. In order, I choose for my choice of 3 — electrician, inst. op., & driver. However, I don't know whether we'll actually get the choices we indicated.

Recently, too, I spoke to my top-kick, questioning him about ^{possibilities for} the Air Cadet Training. (At Upton, I gained the info that the Army is accepting volunteers for Air Cad.

from the ranks of the inductees
Train, since the flow of enlistments
has been plugged.) Either the Sarge
was irritable, drunk, or in a hurry—
he was very sharp & curt in manner.
From my little discussion ^{with him,} I
gathered that I was just stuck
with this out fit & that he didn't
know his elbow from his ---.

Nothing daunted, I saw one
of our "looseys" the next day, and he
informed me that opportunity
will be given to apply for Air
Cad. Tr.,—to all comers—after
basic training is completed here.
Such is the story up to this
point.

You expect to be in by Feb.,
isn't that right, chum? How come
you don't want to finish as
much school as possible, by
re-enrolling? At least, six more
mos. of school now will mean
six less after all's been done.
Have you any guaranty that you'll
receive any specific training

or schooling, if you get into active ~~school~~ service now? For my part, I see ^{practically} no means of obtaining what I think I might qualify for. It's all a very uncertain proposition, and all you can hope for is that by chance you might get what you want, or something you can easily interest yourself in.

Incidentally, a day or two ago I experienced how a homeless bum feels — our barracks were fumigated that day and guards were posted at each of the two entrances, behind them signs reading:

"Danger
POISON GAS
Keep Out."

We couldn't get into the b'rr'ks all day & part of the evening. Not that we were endowed with too many cockroaches, bed-bugs, and such — but merely as a matter of routine were the b'rr'ks fumigated (with hydrocyanic gas, too. —

You could still smell the stuff 2 days afterwards—probably the small quantity of gas adsorbed by all the clothing & bedding which were sealed in the building.)

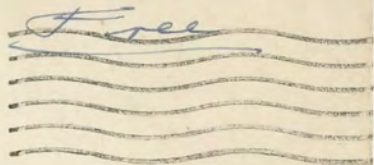
They had to do it just when I had about fully trained a squad of 4 big, intelligent bed-bugs to fix my bed properly for reveille, with the ~~ends of the~~ blankets pulled tight, smoothed, and tucked in according to camp rules.

For now, — enough.

— Write soon.

— Eug. Demb.

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P.S. Am in same
camp & barracks,
but battery design-
ation has been
changed. See front.

Chellie
J. Duffy