

Fort Sheridan and Camp Robinson March 1944 – August 1944

Fort Sheridan
March 25, 1944

Dear Mom and Dad

Well, I'll bet your as surprised as I am. I've been in the ARMY for about three days now. We got in Detroit about 10:00 Monday. We ate in Bay City on our way down. Good meal. We stayed at the Fort Shelby Hotel Monday night. It was really nice. Tuesday morning we got up at 5:45 or thereabouts. Had eggs and cereal, milk and a lot of other stuff for breakfast. Good breakfast. We went down to the induction center and had our physicals. I was a little off in my teeth, but boy were my eyes bad. I was all done about 11:00. As I was on immediate duty they gave me a door pass and hotel tickets, meal tickets, street car tickets and told me to be back Thursday at 1:00 pm. I saw Mrs. Anderson and spent the night with George. Wednesday I went down to S.M. and saw the armament display & stayed with Hank Wednesday night and Thursday I went down to the center. I checked in and the guy asked me Army or Navy. Navy sez I, so he marks a S.A¹. on my paper and passes it to another guy. This fellow looked me over and then says I couldn't ever get to O.C.S. or be on a battleship. I couldn't get any special training on account of my eyes. The only thing I could do would be work detail. In the Army I'm OK for anything, even paratroops so I said OK. I'm in the Army. We were loaded on trucks and caught the train for Chicago. About 80 of us. We got in here at about 1:00 in the morning Friday. We were up at 5:20 and had breakfast. Friday afternoon we took an I.Q., a radio intelligence and mechanical aptitude test. They lasted about 4 hours. Friday night we saw a G.I. movie on venereal disease. Boy, they're scary. Saturday morning we got our uniforms, took our classification and got a shot in the arm. Right now its pretty sore. This afternoon we transferred to Co. C which means we are ready to ship out when our orders come. We can also write letters.

Don't write me till I give you another address because we're liable to move any time. The sooner the better. We sent our clothes home today and got a G.I. or butch haircut. I was surprised at the care they take in fitting our clothes. They really try to fit you right here. All we do now is get work detail till we ship out to basic. Guess I'd better close because I have other letters to write. Don't worry about me because I'm having the time of my life although I was a little disappointed at first.

Love, Don

¹ SA was the induction code for special Assignment meaning there were limitations to the duties he could perform in the Navy.



Fort Sheridan, Ill.
March 27, 1944

Dear Folks,

Well here it is Monday night and no K.P.² yet. I'll probably get it tomorrow though. They just pass it around here and if your number comes up that's tough. Say, when my clothes come home, empty my kit and put my razor, soap container, sewing kit, manicure set, chess set and I guess that's about all. Oh, yes and my writing tablet and pen. Don't send any shoe polish or brush except my cloths brushes which are in the bathroom. And don't send any hair oil or shaving lotions, cream etc. O. K. Send it down here and if I'm not here they'll forward it.

I worked twelve hours last night from six till six and have had today off as a result.

Lights are all set to go out so I'll sign off. Take care of yourselves and tell Dad I still have my \$20 socked away. So long.

Love

Don

² KP duty is "kitchen police" or "kitchen patrol" work under the kitchen staff assigned to junior U.S. enlisted military personnel. "KP" can be either the work or the personnel assigned to perform such work. The U.S. military sometimes uses the word "police" as a verb to mean "to clean" or "to restore to order."

Camp Robinson
April 2, 1944

Hello Folks,

Well I'm now a pvt³ in the US Infantry. What do you know about that. Here I'd just resigned myself to the rank of a "Looie"⁴, and they make me a pvt in the infantry. Like Sherman said "War is He__". Saturday we started drilling and I'm catching on fast. We had a couple of hours drill, about four. You know the more I see of this man's army the better I like it. We're out of doors and get plenty of work, and exercises. Meals are good and up till now I've had good "NCOs"⁵. I just moved to a new battalion and I think I'm permanent so I can write you now. I was in the "105 Bn" until last night and they moved us to the "125 Bn". We left Fort Sheridan on Tuesday and got down here Thursday. We're about 6 miles out – whoops the whistle – well we've just been moved again. New barracks. Like I was saying we're about six miles out of Little Rock, which is the capitol of Ark. It'll be about three weeks before we can go into town though.

Back again. Maybe I can finish this letter to-night. We just had to clean up our place. Boy they really have snap and precision around here. Everything is just so and they mean so.

To-morrow we start our training cycle. Seventeen weeks basic, ten days furlough and bingo. Eight weeks of our basic is drill, marching etc and eight weeks is for special. Right now I'm in communications so they say. I think it's just a glorified Western Union outfit though. Later I think I'll see if I can transfer to the rifle corps, or get some kind of field duty. I don't fancy this messenger service. Well we'll see what gives.

This camp is built in the foot of the Ozarks. I've read a great deal about them and I hope we'll see more of them. We probably will have maneuvers in them so I'll get my wish.

Well all I have to get now is my rifle and bayonet. I've been issued tents, gas mask, foot lockers, cartridge belts and everything under the sun. We're really going to train starting to-morrow.

Well I gotta sign off because it's almost time for lights out.

³ Pvt - Private

⁴ Looie – slang for Lieutenant

⁵ NCO – Non-commissioned Officer. Non-commissioned officers usually obtain their position of authority by promotion through the enlisted ranks

April 9, 1944

Dear Folks,

Got my box and your letters yesterday and it was all very welcome. It was held over in Fort Sheridan for about a week. Your letters both arrived at the same time. We've been having a stiff time around here and they're starting to crack down on the little things such as the hair that stick up in back, the mud on the arch of the shoe, etc. So far I've been lucky but it can't last. We have very little spare time. We get up at 5:15 and have a full day till about 7:00 at night. After that we have to mop the barracks, shine our shoes, clean our rifles (M1 Garand.30) and do any details assigned us. We never get to bed till about 11:00.

Last night was Friday so we GI'd⁶ our barracks for inspection to-day. After-wards three of us who got boxes put on a feed for the fellows who by the way area pretty good bunch. Mostly from around Chicago and lower Michigan. To-day at inspection the "Looie" inspected us and he left so we started to change clothes when the Captain walked in to inspect us. There we were some in shorts, some with our pants down, some had just undershirts on. Now I know what they mean when they say "We got caught with our pants down." It was rather amusing.

I'm getting to like the Army better even though there are things I dislike. Most of our Sgts are young fellows and seem to be a good bunch. We're going to have a crack outfit. The Major looked us over and said we were "Damn Good"

Well I'll sign off.

Love, Don



The M1 Garand is a semi-automatic rifle chambered for the .30-06 (the 30 refers to the caliber of the cartridge and the 06 refers to the year it was adopted – 1906). During World War II, the M1 gave U.S. forces a distinct advantage in firefights against their Axis enemies, as their standard-issue rifles were more effective than the Axis' slower-firing bolt-action rifles. The semi-automatic operation and reduced recoil allowed soldiers to fire 8 rounds without having to move their hands on the rifle and therefore disrupt their firing position and point of aim. General George S. Patton called it "the greatest implement of battle ever devised."

⁶ GI - a nickname for U.S. Army soldiers and equipment (short for Galvanized Iron – to denote equipment made from galvanized iron, such as metal trash cans, in inventories and supply records). Used in the context of this letter it means cleaned the barracks to make it ready for inspection. During World War I, American soldiers sardonically referred to incoming German artillery shells as "G.I. cans". Also during that war, "G.I." started being interpreted as "Government Issue" or "General Issue" for the general items of equipment of soldiers

Camp Robinson, Ark.

April 12, 1944

Dear Folks

Well here it is Thursday and I haven't written yet. I've been very busy. Monday night I was on guard duty. My first time in the guard house. We rotate so I won't be on for another month or so again. We are on two and off four for twelve hours. Tuesday we went thru the gas chamber and smelled gas in the field for identification. I was a little sick from the gas but I'm O.K. now. Wednesday night I was giggered⁷, but I had a makeup class so I got out of it. We were given a first aid class and the one we missed was extended order drill. (We missed it on account guard duty.) We've been having classes in aircraft recognition, map reading, tent pitching and grenade throwing. Also boobie traps⁸. Our platoon is the best in the company so far in grenades and tent pitching. To-morrow we move to the other side of camp - the old part. Now we're living in the new part. Will probably march over with full pack and barracks bags. About 90# and for about 5 miles. We've been carrying full packs along with our rifle and gas masks for a couple of days so it won't be too bad.

The weather here has been a little cool but in the middle of the day it really gets warm. How is it at home. I received your letters and want you to not worry if I don't write because we are very busy and I write every chance I have either to you or Elaine.⁹ I asked the Sarge about the band and he said no soap. They really have a snappy band hereabouts but I've only heard it once.

Say please don't expect me to be a general right away because it will be 17 weeks before we are out of basic and we cannot hold rank during basic. Also all O.C.S¹⁰. candidates are being taken from men who have been overseas or been in the Army a considerable length of time. This training we're getting here is command post communications which has everything from messenger to radio operator. My college training doesn't mean snap here and the less said about it the better. The Army has their way of doing things and any other way is out so we learn the Army way even though it might be an inferior way. Also they take for granted that we are ignorant of anything they try to teach us so you see two years of college are two wasted years so far as the Army is concerned. However anyone who is willing to work and learn will get along O.K. Gotta go to chow now so I think I'll close. My address will not change because I am moving so don't worry about that. Love Don

P.S. chows over. It was fairly good to-day. Say about those marks at school please do not allow them to bother you as they are only bad in Spanish which I will have to take over. The rest of them are O.K. Oh, yes in case something happens and you want me to come home in a hurry tell the Red Cross in Gaylord and they will tell the Red Cross here and I will be home before you can snap your fingers. Love Don

⁷ Giggered – a demerit given in the military

⁸ Booby trap - a device or setup that is intended to kill, harm or surprise a person, unknowingly triggered by the presence or actions of the victim.

⁹ Elaine was one of Don's older sisters. The family was: Elmer Jr, Irene, Elaine and Don.

¹⁰ O.C.S. – Officer Candidate School

Camp Robinson, Ark.
April 18, 1944

Dear Folks,

Got the paper last night and was tickled pink to have it. Noticed an article in it about me and wondered where you got the idea I was in school. I do have a lot of classes but not like those in school. They are all lectures and we have no textbooks. We occasionally have short quizzes which we grade for our own benefit but no records are kept. Our classes are held in buildings part of the time and the rest of the time in the open. Most of the stuff is very elementary it seems to me and it's all just common sense. I suppose it is a school but not as we had in high school or college.

I intended to write Sunday but I got stuck in the kitchen all day. We were supposed to work an hour each meal as table waiters and the cook made us peel potatoes and mop all day. I'm going to put a spoke in his wheel if it's the last thing I ever do. I don't mind detail but I hate to have a T-5¹¹ work out a Saturday hangover on me. I'm writing this letter in chow line. We have to wait about a half hour for chow and you should see the line. If you don't get there first you don't eat. The slogan "The Army gets the best" is a lot of tommyrot as far as this camp goes. Some of the stuff we get here I know we wouldn't be seen with it on our table at home or for that matter we wouldn't feed it to "Laddie". After meals are over we go to the P.X.¹² and fill up. We're restricted to company area to-night because we had a couple of dirty rifles in the company at inspection this morning. They're really getting strict.

We're in our new area now and its very nice. We have six man huts and I've got some nice hut-mates. We get along just fine. Four of them are mature enough to have a stabilizing effect on the rest of us. We have a nice P.X. close by and a couple of theaters. We also have a church about three blocks away. All this is in the company area. I think I'll go into Little Rock next weekend. Oh yes we have a internment camp about a half mile from here with a lot of hunns.¹³ They're all over the place doing detail work such as digging irrigation ditches etc. For the most part they look to be between 25 and 35 years old and very well developed. They are also very

Otsego County Herald Times April 13, 1944

Pvt. Don Parkes is now at Camp Robinson, Ark., going to school. Don had hoped and prayed to get into the navy to carry on the tradition of his father, who served as a sailor in the last war, but Don's eyes couldn't quite take it, so he went into the army, which he reports he really likes.

¹¹ T-5 was the rank of Technician 5th Grade and the technician equivalent of a Corporal.

¹² PX was the Post Exchange which varied in size and stocks but was a general store.

¹³ The disparaging and offensive use of the term Hun likens the Germans to the barbarous and warlike Huns of the 4th and 5th centuries. The source of the comparison was a speech by Kaiser Wilhelm II in 1900, encouraging German soldiers bound for China to act toward the Chinese just like "the Huns a thousand years ago."

intelligent looking. I sometimes wonder what they think when they see us marching and drilling. It must be funny to see their country's enemies drilling and preparing for battle right before their eyes. I know I would feel funny.

Yesterday we did a little dry shooting on a 50 yard range. I had three shots which could be covered by the unsharpened end of a pencil. I hope I can do it when we use live ammunition. They have a very good system of teaching marksmanship here. It's no wonder that the U. S. infantryman is the world's best rifleman. These Garands are also the best infantry rifle in the world. Both Germans and Japs use bolt action guns.

Just got back from dinner. It was pretty good for a change. This afternoon from 1:30 to 5:30 we are going to study fortifications. Every day we have something new and interesting. I'm very glad I joined the service because I feel contented that I am doing my job. Peace of mind is a wonderful thing isn't it? Well I've got to sign off now because we have to fall out soon. So long and

Lots of Love

Don

Camp Robinson, Ark.

April 22, 1944

Dear Mom,

I guess I owe you a couple of letters that I have been very thankful to receive. I could just see you and Elmer fighting over the hose in your dream, and I can see you laughing with your head behind your shoulder and your hand in front of your face say, "Elmer, now don't. Don't turn that hose on me." That's how it happened isn't it? I know just as well as if I'd been there because I had the same dream. It was in the old house and we had the hose out for watering the lawn. Then we put it up in the tree for a shower. Funny how plain a dream can be, isn't it.

Well tonight I'm on guard duty. We've been busy so I haven't had much chance to write. Next week I'm going out on the rifle range for bivouac for about four days so don't worry if you don't hear from me. I will soon know whether I can be a marksman or not.

Well, three more days and I'll be nineteen.¹⁴ I hope my next nineteen years will be as pleasant as the last nineteen. There is only one dark spot to mark up for the past to mar the picture. None of us were responsible and none of us could do anything about it so I'll just have to accept it I guess.¹⁵

My boxes will get here all right. We have mail call twice a day and packages once. Now we are in six man huts in a nice area. Everything is fine and I'm working very hard being a good soldier because it is a type of work I like and catch on to quick. There is only one thing I want and that is to get home as soon as possible. Well so long and lots of love.

Your son

Don

P.S. The tent is a two man pup tent.

¹⁴ Don's birthday was April 25, 1925.

¹⁵ Don is referring to the death of his older brother, Elmer, on July 20, 1943 in a plane crash in the Pacific while serving in the Nav0y on the USS Yorktown.

Camp Robinson, Ark.

April 23, 1944

Dear Folks,

I got your package last night when I came in off the drill field. Being as today was Sunday and it was the only free time I've had for a week and the only free time I'll have for another, I opened them. (I got them both in excellent condition at the same time.) Gosh that ring is really tops. I didn't have the slightest idea what I was getting but I was looking forward to getting some of those home made cookies. I just happened to open the little package out of curiosity and boy was I tickled. I don't think there is a fellow on the post that I haven't shown it to. The cakes and cookies were in good condition but are disappearing fast. I put some away so I could have them next week. Gee I never thought I could have such a nice birthday¹ away from home. I also got a package from Aunt Norvie¹⁶. It had a very nice khaki colored tie and a money belt in it. I just wrote and thanked her. I got a card from Elaine and she said she'd send me from Graceland something. I had a notion to call her on the phone but decided to wait till next week. It only costs about 75¢ from here. It's only about 500 miles. I sent her \$10 and I'm going to send some more payday so she can come down and see me. We have a guest house here on the campgrounds which is very reasonable. She can stay there. Of course I'd like to have you folks come too but I realize its too much. She is coming just after graduation.

Well tomorrow we have our first night problem. An eighteen mile hike. We start at 7:00 pm. I was into Little Rock last night. Had a very nice meal and then I went to the U.S.O¹⁷. They had a fiesta there and it was Mexican style. The hostesses wore Spanish shawls etc. Very bright and pretty. The women and girls were as thick as fleas and boy did they smile when the fellows passed. Not for me. The 66th¹⁸ which was stationed here has a very bad reputation and as a result Little Rock has a very high V.D.¹⁹ rate. I found out we have an LDS²⁰ church in town. I was going to go but got caught in the rain and I looked a mess. I'm going to get my blouse and trousers cleaned and pressed so I'll look slick and go in next week. I'm anxious to meet some of our people. Little Rock is a nice town but they have more soldiers in town than we do in camp it seems. The people there are very friendly. We've had a few nice rains lately and as a result the trees are out very nice. The country is very beautiful hereabouts and nice and warm. Just looks

¹⁶ Norvie was one of his father's sisters. Norvie was a nickname for Norvella.

¹⁷ USO – Uniformed Services Organizations formed in 1941, and made up of several organizations: the Salvation Army, Young Men's Christian Association, Young Women's Christian Association, National Catholic Community Services, National Travelers Aid Association and the National Jewish Welfare Board with the objective to provide moral support to the troops.

¹⁸ 66th Infantry Division, the Black Panther Division, which lost 20% of its men in December 1944 when the Leopoldville was torpedoed off Cherbourg, France.

¹⁹ V.D. – venereal disease

²⁰ LDS – Latter Day Saint

like spring out at white sands. Rolling hills. Beautiful. Well I guess I'd better hit the hay. Just cleaned my rifle so a Major could inspect and not find a speck of dirt. It's really clean. We're going on a rifle range next week. I hope I can get a good rating on it. Goodnight and lots of love folks.

Your son and bro.

Don

Camp Robinson, Arkansas

April 30, 1944

Dear Folks,

Well we really had a scrap the last couple of days. A lot of fellows got their face and shoulders messed up pretty bad. Tangled with an outfit known as the M1 Garand .30 cal rifle. Oh, boy are they nice. I've seen guys get knocked right off their feet with it but it's really sweet. You have to have 'em up and hold 'em tight to make them act nice just like a woman. Be careful of them and they really treat you right. So far I've shot sharpshooter. Next we shoot for record. Maybe I'll be an expert.

Say this P.X. is the Post Exchange. It's a general store that sells candy, ice cream, gum, pop, toilet articles, notions, socks, towels, steel wool, and anything a soldier might need. They also sell beer but it's only 3.2% so I don't imbibe. I like my likker with hair on it.

Our 18 mile hike turned out to be a nice infiltration course where we covered about 600 yards. You know the kind where they have machine guns, flares, barbed wire, mud holes, and dynamite going off. Quite a show, especially the flares.

Say I'll tell you about my hut-mates. First there is Milan Petras who is from Chicago as are the rest of them except one. He's a big stocky fellow with a rough face and he looks like he is a tough bum. He's in his early twenties. Might be a boxer or fighter by looks. Really though he is a very nice fellow who has a beautiful voice. Like opera, symphony and church choir work. Exactly opposite personality from what he looks like. He also likes to gossip. Like a washwoman. I get a kick out of him. He says, "Say you know I hear ____" in a very confidential tone. He's bohemian by nationality and has light hair and a reddish face. Not dark red but light red. He worked in the Chicago Screw Co. before he came in. That's Petras. Then there is Lester Orris. He's about 20, tall, blond, perfect Aryan type. Not too heavy. He's married from Michigan down by Detroit. He volunteered. He has a very nice wife who is now down here. He's rather quiet. He's also protestant. We also have two Irish men in our hut. One is John O'Reilly, young, freckle-faced, and typically Irish. He's 18 and just out of high school. By the way we have a lot of Irish in our regiment. The other Irishman is Sig O'Conner. Sig isn't his real name but he has been gigged so much that we call him that. He's about thirty, a bachelor, attractive, likes to drink beer and leads

a carefree life. The last man in our hut is Peters. That's his last name. He's thirty-four, fat and stubby. He owns, with a bother of his, a bunch of trucks that operate on the "Interstate Lines". Dad's heard of them probably. Has a dislike of Jews or Hebes as he calls them and also has sore feet. On the whole they are a nice bunch of fellows and we get along swell. Well I gotta run to dinner.

Gee I wish I was home for a while now. I could help clean out the pool, trim the lawn and hedges, and also clean out the border, maybe I could give the table a varnish job. Sounds good but what I'd probably do is lay on my back and loaf. Sounds good to hear we're having Boy Scout activity back home. Say the I.R.T.C. stands for Infantry Replacement Training Center and means we're replacements for overseas units. Well my duties as a General call me. Oh yes Colonel Furay was helping me with my rifle practice. He's C.O. of the 80th regiment. Love Don

Camp Robinson, Ark.

May 4, 1944

Dear Folks,

Well I've finally got off the rifle range. We were there for about six days and it was really rugged. I was on pit detail so we got up at 8:30 and walked two miles to the pits and worked till 12:00 setting targets. Then we shot all afternoon. My sweetie and I did fairly well by ourselves. M1 and I shot in the highest class which is expert. Tickled me because there weren't very many that shot that good. I'll send you my medal. I shot 5 bulls eyes and three in the first ring at 500 yards which is about a third of a mile. Well we are all done except for carbines, machine guns, pistols, anti-aircraft guns, and a few other weapons. More fun. I really like to shoot, and boy the M1 is accurate.

This morning we started bayonet practice. Boy that's the dirtiest, wickedest, messiest, effective weapon I've ever seen. If I never learn anything else in this Army I'm going to learn that bayonet use. That's one kind of fighting where it's either kill or be killed and they really tell you about it here too.

Say we've been having a flood here. The sunny south is a lot of subversive propaganda. And when you march you don't walk around the mud either. Why the water on the range was hip deep and I was shooting from a prone position. Next time I'll use a periscope. Well I'll close now. Please send my laundry bag full of shorts as soon as you can.

Love

Don

Camp Robinson, Ark.

May 12, 1944

Dear Folks,

I've enclosed a sheet showing my score along with the score of the rest of the Co. We have an exceptionally good bunch of riflemen. We're about all done studying rifle fire. We've fired rifle grenades. They fit on the other end of the rifle and fire them with blanks. Boy they have a real kick. We aren't allowed to fire them laying down because they'll break the collar bone. We've been studying the technique of firepower, and fire concentration. A squad of 10 men can really blanket an area with a B.A.R. and Garands. A B.A.R. is a Browning Automatic Rifle. It's built to look like a repeating shotgun and fires faster than a light machine gun. Beautiful weapon. Each squad carries one. Incidentally there are four squads to a platoon, four platoons to a Co; four companies to a battalion. Our Co has 190 men in it not counting NCOs.

Well I'll be certainly delighted and tickled to see you when you get down here. I hope you are here while I have a free weekend. That's the only free time we have from Saturday noon till Sunday night. This is the first free night I've had this week. Was on K.P. Wed. and Thur. To get to Lamoni take the puddle jumper to Detroit. Get the next train for Chicago and then change stations and get the next one to Chariton. You have about an hour in Detroit and about 20 minutes in Chicago but the time in Chicago is irregular so you'd better hurry. At Chariton you get a bus to Lamoni. Write and ask Elaine if it's better to get the bus at Chariton or Osceola. The trip should take about 20 hours and you'll get in Lamoni about 8:30.

Well I've signed for a pass this weekend and I hope I make it this time. Three weeks ago I had K.P. on weekend. Two weeks ago I forgot to sing for a pass. Last week I had a cold and sore throat so I stayed in bed. Boy will I cuss if I'm stuck this week. Petras is singing over the radio Saturday at 3:30. He's in my hut and he's a very good singer and sang at operas etc in Chicago.

A lot of our officers are transferred. Our Captain's got the leaf he was working us to the bone for and he's gone. A lot of the NCO's are going over to B Co. We're operating on a shoe string. We've even lost the mess Sarge (goody, goody, now we may get some decent food). This phase of our training is almost over and we're ready to start our communications work. We had a bayonet field bout the other day in which we used scabbards on our bayonets. I was surprised to find I'm very capable with the bayonet. Colonel Furay says I'm an expert and a little combat experience will make me tops. I even took on a corporal and sergeant in an odd bout and got them both. You gotta be fast and move quickly. My left hands all banged up from parrying but I'm really tickled that I can take care of myself. Bayonet work fascinates me.

Well I'd really like to see the lawn and pool now. Grass must be green and nice. See I'd give a pretty for a furlough for a couple of days.

Say don't forget to send my bag down the first chance you get. I am short of underwear but I hate to buy any when I already have it. And when you come down bring a camera with you. We aren't allowed to have any one the post but we can take pictures in town etc.

Well I've got some letters to answer so I'd better close now.

Lots of love

Don

P.S. Will you send me Darwin's address? Someone took my wallet with \$10 and my addresses out of my hut. We have no place to lock them up so its pretty hard to put them in a safe place.

R E S T R I C T E D

HEADQUARTERS
EIGHTIETH INFANTRY TRAINING REGIMENT
INFANTRY REPLACEMENT TRAINING CENTER
Camp Joseph T. Robinson, Arkansas

SPECIAL ORDERS

3 May 1944

NUMBER 26

1. The following named EM (pvt) of Co A 125th ITB, 80th ITR have fired Table IV and V, Record Course "A" FM 23-5 with rifle, cal. .30 M1 on 2 and 3 May 1944 and qualifications are announced as follows:

EXPERT

<u>NAME</u>	<u>ASN</u>	<u>SCORE</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>ASN</u>	<u>SCORE</u>
Adams, Forrest W	36957189	181	Miller, Gerald J	36958462	181
Ashby, Samuel J Jr	38663043	181	Morris, Howard R	38692543	187
Bennett, Madarius W	36959703	182	Morris, Robert S	38652710	187
Berezin, David B	36958415	180	X Orris, Lester L	36958408	186
Brunelle, Walter J	36958213	186	Parke, Donald H	36467643	186
Cannon, Otho (NMI)	38663222	182	Pickering, Robert L	38692670	191
Chapin, Norman G	36959660	184	Pietsch, Edward F	36958088	180
Cornacchia, Frank (NMI)	36958320	183	Pink, John O	36959752	186
Cuthbertson, J. P. Jr	36959138	187	Ragland, William B Jr	38652749	192
Easter, Leland E	36959686	181	Rega, Paul A	36957182	182
Edwards, Robert S	36957637	180	Russo, Frank P	36958335	181
Ekdahl, Ellwood G	36959513	186	Ryan, Donald T	36959193	180
Fay, Lloyd D	36957259	181	Sanders, Eugene B	38692637	188
Gilbert, W B	38692794	181	Sanders, Leslie E	38662618	182
Green, Roland N	38662994	184	Schulz, Eugene G	36467610	190
Gubancsik, Andy Jr (NMI)	38652789	181	Schuman, Robert M	36467645	181
Harter, Richard E	36958448	190	Sherrod, Floyd H Jr	38661784	188
Hawthorn, Herbert R	38652759	186	Shope, Roy N	38663166	180
Hebert, Clarence A	38652364	189	Siggelkow, Edwin O	36958948	181
Henderson, Gerald R	38662990	188	Smith, Wendell D	36959685	183
Jaeger, Herbert W	36959564	180	Snyder, William G	36959825	180
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UNQUALIFIED

Bazer, Bryan P 18213072 112

*The Fellows checked
are in my hat.*

By order of Colonel WEBB:

OFFICIAL:

Philip R. Condron
PHILIP R. CONDRON

PHILIP R. CONDRON
1st Lt., Infantry
Adjutant

Camp Robinson, Ark.

May 16, 1944

Dear Mom,

I just received your letter and will answer it immejutly. The show you saw was "Tarzan's Jungle Mystery" wasn't it? I saw and enjoyed it a lot.

Well our Rifle Basic is over and we started Communications this week. Mostly Morse code so far. Our schedule is a lot lighter now as we don't have any rifles to clean and any after supper work. It's a lot less strenuous too. I'll have more time from now on.

Well I guess I'll make your reservations as the guest house. 3rd, 4th and 5th of June isn't it. I'll make reservations for 4 people. There's a possibility I might get off the Saturday afternoon at about 3:30. Hope so. Boy will I walk the straight and narrow so I don't get any K.P. or gigs. It's going to be trying.

I called Elaine last night. It was nice to hear her talk. Cost \$1.45 for 3 minutes. Say send my picture book that Irene got me if you can. Please excuse the pen as I'm writing from the canteen and its not my pen. Tell Irene I'll answer her letter as soon as possible.

Well so long and lots of

Love

Don

P.S. I wasn't in town last week so I had one of the fellows get the candy for me. I'm glad you liked it.

Camp Robinson, Ark.
May 23? 1944

Dear Folks,

I got your letter when I got back from town today. One of the fellows must have gotten it for me. If I haven't told you I received my shorts and was glad to get them. It seems ages since I had my cold. Time goes so fast. I also received a money belt from Aunt Norvie and I would carry my money there if I had any to carry. My finances at present are 17¢ but I don't need any more. It's no disgrace to be broke in the Army and I've made a few investments which will pull me thru till payday. Namely a book of theatre passes, bus tickets and U.S.O. lunch counter stubs. It pays to plan ahead.

So you'll be here the first Saturday in June. Swell. I have every weekend off unless I'm gigged which I don't intend to be. I'll make reservations for Saturday night and Sunday night for four people. When you get into Little Rock get a bus at the local station for Camp Robinson. I'll either meet you at the gate with passes or if that isn't necessary at the guest house. I'll find out all about it and write the details.

I went to church this morning. It's a small Mormon branch and they hold services in a room at the Women's City Club. I think I go and listen for a while to see what I can learn. It should be interesting.

Petras just came in. He sang in a Presbyterian today. It was really a big church. He's really a good singer.

Well I have to hit the hay so I'll sign off.

See you later.

Love

Don

P.S. This rose petal was pretty so I'm sending it on. I wish I could see your roses.

EIGHTIETH REGIMENT
OFFICE OF THE CHAPLAIN
INFANTRY REPLACEMENT TRAINING CENTER
Camp Joseph T. Robinson, Arkansas

My dear friend:

Your soldier has arrived safely at the Infantry Replacement Training Center at Camp Joseph T. Robinson, Arkansas. Our mission here is to make better men and soldiers out of those who are undergoing basic training. Your loved one is at this center, and we are doing all in our power to help him during his stay.

As chaplain I am deeply concerned with the spiritual welfare of your soldier. I shall do all I can to provide the spiritual guidance and service he needs.

Since I am vitally interested in the welfare of both those in the camp and those at home, allow me to make a suggestion. Do not worry about your soldier. He is receiving the best training that the Army can offer, and good food, good clothing, good housing, and excellent dental and medical care are his.

It is possible that an emergency may arise at home that will make the presence of your loved one a necessity. If such an occasion should arise, it is best for you to contact your local Red Cross and let the request come from them. This will secure the necessary action more quickly than any other method.

By all means keep in constant touch with those in the service. Letters, pictures, and remembrances of all kinds will help greatly. But never say or do anything that will cause the man to worry.

If you should desire to write me, I shall be very happy to hear from you.

Sincerely yours,

Frank E. Bowman

Frank E. Bowman
Chaplain
Eightieth Regiment

(Postmarked May 23, 1944
Little Rock, Ark.)

Camp Robinson, Ark.

June 11, 1944

Dear Folks,

Well, you should be rested up pretty well from your trip. I hope it wasn't too rough on you. Did you have a good time in Detroit? I know the bunch there were glad to see you. I'll bet you visited a lot. Well Elaine how do you like the nail kegs and potatoe crates. Our Mom is clever at fixing them up. Of course with the canvas on the front room floor _ _ _ _ (Ha, Ha).

I'm on K.P. (as usual). I've been on it so much that the fellows are beginning to think I'm the mess Sergeant. Great life isn't it? Well anyhow it's Sunday afternoon and we have a little time off because we worked hard and got our work all done for a while.

Did Irene go to Flint? She was planning on it wasn't she? I got the paper today and all I could find in it was funeral notices. Has everyone in Gaylord decided to die or what. The cowards. Let a little O.P.A.²¹ ceiling price control bookkeeping scare them. Should be ashamed.

We fired the bazooka or did I tell you. Boy do they ever make the noise. If the shell doesn't kill you the concussion will. You can't win. Well here comes the mess Sgt. So I better close.

Lots of love,

Don

²¹ The Office of Price Administration (OPA) was established on August 28, 1941. The functions of the OPA were originally to control money (price controls) and rents after the outbreak of World War II. The OPA had the power to place ceilings on all prices except agricultural commodities, and to ration scarce supplies of other items, including tires, automobiles, shoes, nylon, sugar, gasoline, fuel oil, coffee, meats and processed foods.

15 Jun 44

Dear Folks,

Well has this been a big day. I got two packages and a couple of letters today which makes it big. I hardly got in the door when the candy was gone. The cookies lasted a little longer. Thanks a lot folks. The fellows all said thanks too. I just got in from the field and boy was it hot. We had light packs (don't let that "light" fool you) and rifles. We're supposed to lay telephone, telegraph wires from Regt to Bn. It's a real complicated deal till you get to know it. I'll draw you a diagram. Just to give you an idea.

Tuesday night we had a bond rally or something of the sort. We had a quiz show and then "Blackstone"²² did a little magic for us. It was pretty good. He's the same magician that I saw in Ann Arbor and he's really good. They also had some cute Wac's²³ there, ahem.

Boy have I been making the dough lately. A lot of fellows around here like to get off K.P. on Sunday so far a fee of \$5 I take over. Some guys like to get off at night too so for \$1 I'll work from supper time on. It usually takes about an hour. I guess I'll have a little dough for a furlough. Oh oh – I gotta go to the service club. The NCO's are looking for details tonight and I don't aim to be on one – hold the line. –

Well here we are at the service club. Gee are the rumors ever floating around here. We were confined last night and told to get ready to move. Everyone from the CO down was wondering what was up. It turned out we were supposed to go to P.O.E²⁴. but they got the wrong outfit. Your boy, Don, came very near to going overseas "wit" no furlough. Another rumor has it that all the squad leaders are going to O.C.S. That one doesn't affect me. The third one is that all fellows under 18 and pre-Pearl Harbor fathers are to be trained as coders. We have a few more but they are just run of the mill, three day pass type rumors. The old rumor factory is working over time. Just goes to show that you can't believe half what you hear.

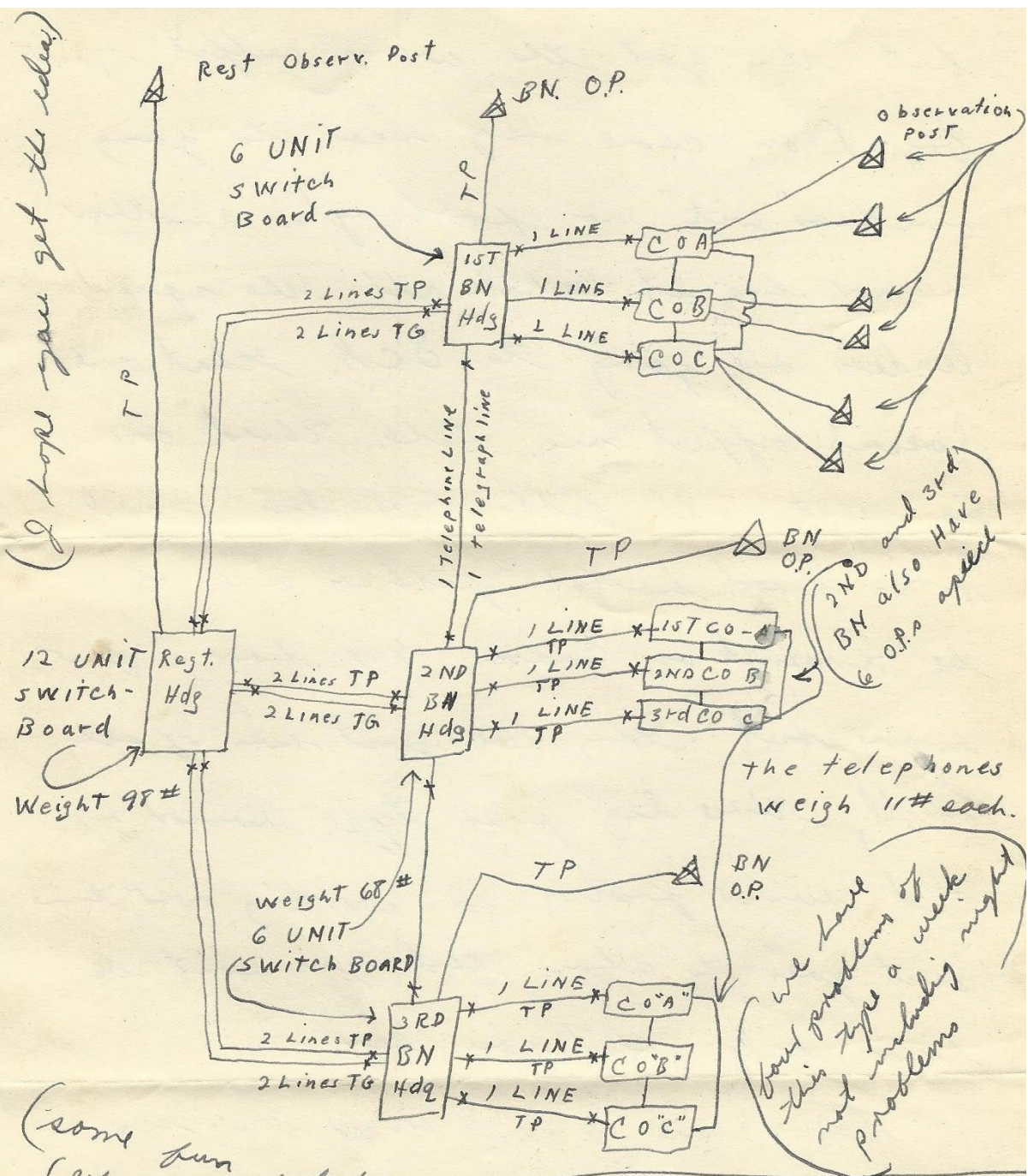
Say Irene I don't know where the negatives are, but I'll find them when I get home (in about six weeks). Well I gotta sign off. Love Don

²² Harry Blackstone was a famed stage magician and illusionist of the 20th century. He began his career as a magician in his teens and was popular through World War II as a USO entertainer. He was often billed as The Great Blackstone.

²³ WAC – Women's Army Corp. Members of the WAC were the first women other than nurses to serve within the ranks of the United States Army.

²⁴ POE – Point of Embarkation, when you leave the US for a deployment.

(I hope you get the idea)



(some fun, what?)
 (It was 1050 F also)

TG - Telegraph line
 TP - Telephone line

This is a Field Problem.
 Set up a Regt wide combat communication in the field.
 We have four switchboards, 22 field phones, 14 miles of wire, 12 telegraph sets and also a radio network of comparable size to set up.

June 29, 1944

Dear Folks,

As usual lately I haven't got much time but I'll try to get this off before the whistle blows.

First, you'd better send me a small suitcase. If you have any smaller than mine send it. I get a furlough in another month.

We're going on an overnite hike tonight. This last week we've really been hoppin'. Night problem every night and when we didn't have a night problem we had detail. They are trying to get us in shape for bivouac. I won't have much time to write in the next few weeks so don't worry if you don't hear from me.

Today in code room I was sleepy so I sketched my desk setup that I will have in my room by my closet and in front of the radiator. I'm going to have a short wave radio on it and have it all built in like the bunks and the rest of the room. What do you think – hmmm. Today is Saturday. We just got back from inspection so I'll try and finish this. Thursday when I started this the whistle blew and we went out on a night problem. Camped overnight and went on the range Friday. We got back about 8:00 Friday and stayed up till two in the morning getting ready for today.

Say have you any of those little pocket penlights? If you have send me one please. They are very handy.

I'm glad to hear that Elaine is working. She'll have a little money to spend on me on my furlough. By the way here is \$25 for you to save for me. I'll have to quit so I'll finish this later.

Inspections over and I passed ok. I'm not even getting a gig. Isn't that peculiar. One of my buddies sister and mother is coming down so I'll have a pleasant weekend. (Heh, heh).

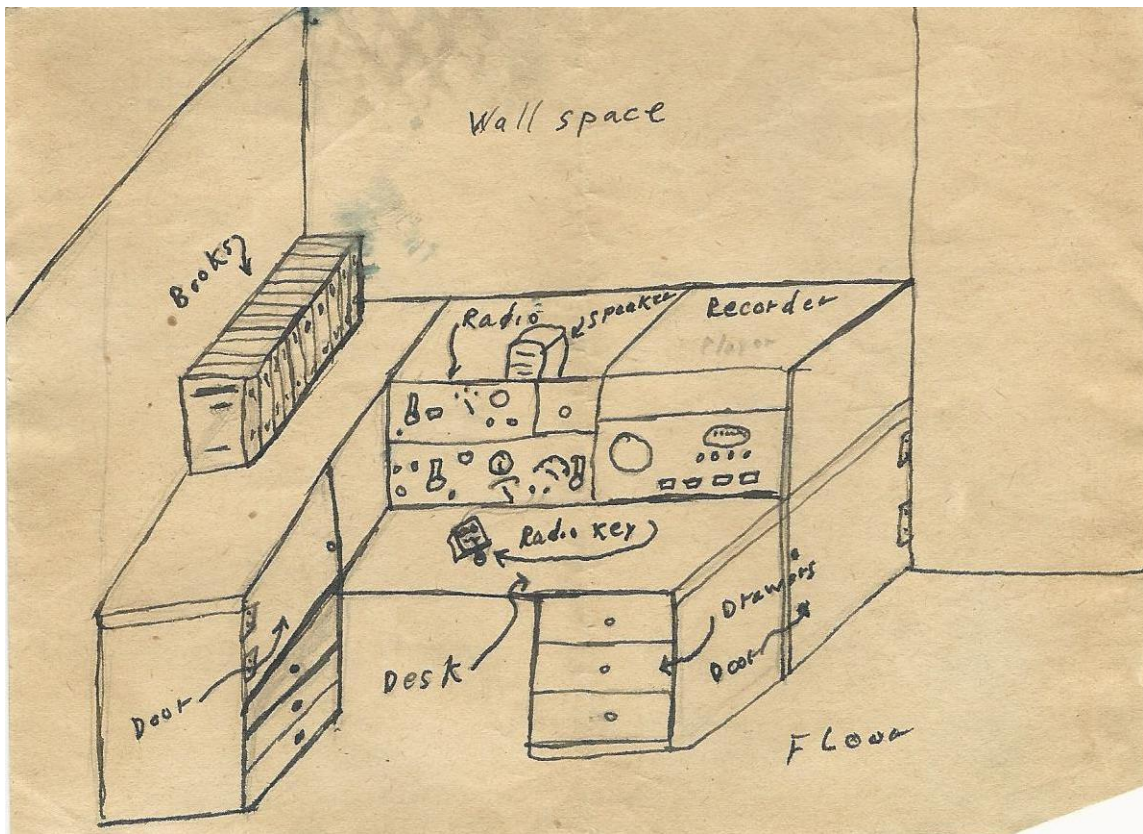
Well I guess this letter is rather disjointed and I'll try to write the next one all at one time. Say when is the "Park"²⁵ open for Reunion? I'd like to go over for a couple of days.

So long and lots of

Love

Don

²⁵ Don is referring to the church campgrounds, Park of the Pines, located on Lake Charlevoix and northwest of Boyne City.



Camp Robinson, Ark
July 1, 1944

Dear Folks,

Boy when I read your letter about shopping at Hudson's and eating at Greenfields I got just a little lonesome. It reminded me of the weekends I spent in Detroit. You know that's the sort of things us fellows are willing to fight for. Just the common things of life.

We've been pretty busy the last few weeks. Our classroom work is about done and we've been putting in a lot of time in the field, marching, working out problems, and running combat and rifle courses. We have a two weeks bivouac coming up next week. From what I hear it's pretty rough. Just think of me about that time because I'll be crawling on my knees with a 65# pack, rifle, cartridge belt, gas mask and a few other articles of equipment. After that over I'll be getting a furlough. (I hope). Well I have to get ready to go. We are working with a SCR 284 this afternoon. It's a portable radio which weighs about 85# and has a 200 mile range. I'm going to have one after the war for a amateur set.

Well I gotta go now so I'll close.

Lots of Love

Don

Well here we are again. The 4th of July. We have an hour free time today because we had a light problem. I got the paper last night and glanced thru it. There was a pretty good article in the Michigan Mirror²⁶ about the infantry soldier. When you read it give me a think. Well next Sunday starts our bivouac. I worked the whole weekend on the range pulling targets for the officers. Boy are they punk shooters. They are a whole lot worse than the average E.M. Well I think I'll close this for good so I can be sure to get it off.

Your Son and Bro

Don

P.S. Don't forget to send me a small suitcase for my furlough.

²⁶ A column in the Otsego Herald Times



The indispensable man in this war isn't the general. No siree!

And it isn't the admiral either, important as he may be.

Our nomination for the honor, and such it should be, goes to the man who, armed with a rifle, cold steel bayonet and a pistol, meets the enemy face to face in actual combat. It is kill or be killed—not a pleasant alternative to choose. You either vanquish the other man, or you become a victim yourself of his rifle or bayonet or perhaps an enemy shell or grenade on which your name has been written.

* * *

Eye-witness experience as an observer at Camp McCoy, Wisconsin, where some 10,000 men are being trained today for infantry duty overseas, prompted the above observation. We offer it in all sincerity, and with full appreciation for the sacrificial service performed by men in other branches of military service.

The impression is reinforced by personal experiences of the writer during World War I, both in this country and in France. We — have met the doughboy before, although our own branch of the service was the horse-drawn artillery, assigned to an infantry division.

As we reported last week, seeing is believing. Sure, you are patriotic. You're doing your part to help win the war. But until you can see for yourself just what this war means in terms of personal sacrifice by the young man in the infantry, you are utterly unable to grasp its real significance.

* * *

What are you going to do tomorrow?

Well, brace yourself for this experience, all in a day's work for

the American doughboy.

First call is at 5:40 a.m. Breakfast follows shortly afterwards. Then you spend a few hours practicing bayonet drill in which you ram cold steel into a stuffed dummy or parry the thrusts of an associate as he practices on you, a make-believe foe. It means plenty of hard, hard physical exertion.

You undergo judo training that is designed to help you out-fight a tricky Jap. Wielding a long machete's knife is just one part of it. It's tough and hard. Kill or be killed. Japs don't take prisoners and neither do we.

Or perhaps you practice hurling hand grenades at distances of 30 to 128 feet into enemy fox holes.

Your duties will depend, of course, upon the task the army selects for you. You may be attached to an automatic rifle team of a 60 to 81 millimeter mortar squad. You may be assigned to a light or heavy machine gun squad or even an anti-tank gun team or the 105 millimeter howitzer cannon which is used by the infantry strangely enough in combat fight out.

* * *

Firing of many infantry weapons must be done on ranges when there is plenty of room for practice shooting.

That involves a nice, long hike there and back.

And the pack on your back—brother, you haven't seen anything. You must carry a rifle, bayonet, pistol, gas mask, field glasses, raincoat, first aid kit, entrenching tool to dig your own fox hole, shelter half with poles and pins, blanket, canteen and cup, mess can, knife, fork and spoon, car tridge belt, three grenades and grenade launcher, anti-tank gren

Camp Robinson, Ark.

July 8, 1944

Dear Folks,

Well tomorrow morning we hit the road at 8:00 with a 85 pound pack and hike 18 miles to our bivouac area. The thing that gets me is that its all on Sunday. No rest for the wicked, is there? It's a wonder that you haven't disowned me for not writing sooner but we have been very busy. Besides a full schedule we've been working every night and also firing on the various combat ranges, so we have to clean our rifles after we're done at night. Our cycle is very near over and I expect my furlough about the sixth of August. (I hope). I'll be able to get over to the Park for a weekend.

We fired a BAR (Browning Automatic Rifle) this week and they are pretty nice. The magazine holds a clip of 20 rounds or cartridges. It fires at the rate of 500 rounds a minute. It is fired in bursts of three or four rounds. A nice little weapon. Weighs 20 pounds and looks like a semi automatic shot gun. Today we fired the .50 caliber light machine gun. They weigh a couple hundred pounds and shake your teeth loose. They aren't used in the field anymore except when mounted on vehicles.

Boy has it ever been dry and hot here lately. All the rivers are dry and the sand and dirt is nothing but dust. It isn't like good old Michigan. Say never mind the suitcase. I think I'll buy a little bag here because I don't have very much to carry. Well I have to roll my pack so I will close. I won't be able to write on bivouac so don't worry for the next couple of weeks.

Love Don

P.S. Please find a pair of crutches for me to use while I'm home as my poor stumps are about worn down to my kneecaps from marching.

July 13? 1944

Dear Folks,

Well here I am on bivouac and it's been as rough as I expected. We came out Sunday and it was around 105°. It was some hike. Every place we go we have a couple of ambulances following us to pick up the fellows that fall out or pass out. We've been firing machine guns at radio controlled planes. It's a lot of fun. The plan has a 6 H.P. motor and is about 8 ft long. Cute as the dickens.

Well we just got in from a patrol. We ran into a enemy patrol and got all shot up with blanks. We also acted as the enemy and ambushed a patrol. I got three men but was shot myself. It was a beautiful ambush. The other day we took a hill from a simulated enemy after we had raked it with machine guns and it had been shelled. I guess next week we'll run a couple of communication problems.

So we have a new neighbor do we. Sounds interesting. Say, I'll have something new to see and meet. Unless you've already sent my suitcase don't send it. It's much too large. I'll get a small one here just as a traveling bag.

I got a letter from Dick McKinnon and he said that Bea Olson was married so I imagine that is who you were referring to in your last letter. I'm pretty sure my furlough will start on the sixth or seventh of August. I should have a week so I'll be able to get to the "Park" for maybe a day which tickles me. Well I guess I better close. When I next see you I will either be in a pine box or a very rough tough veteran of a tactical bivouac.

Love

Don

P.S. Mom when you address my letters make the "a" look like a "A" not a "a". My last couple of letters have been missent.

Camp Robinson, Ark.

July 25, 1944

Dear Mom,

I've just got your letter and thought I'd answer right away. As for my furlough you can expect me sometime before the first Sunday in August (I think). We got our orders today. Don't get anything special for me to eat. Just fill the cookie crock, bake a couple of genuine pies (any type), a cake or two and keep the ice box full of Jello, potatoe salad, eggs, jam, honey and a few slices of ham. (If possible). When I'm not eating I will be sleeping so don't get anything special planned. Ha, Ha. I don't even want to be bothered by cute girls of eligible ages. (Ha, Ha, Ha). Well I'll be seeing you (soon).

Say, please don't ever wish Hitler to be dead. He is about the biggest asset the Allies have. I'm serious. After he gets all his older and more competent generals killed or retired we will be sitting pretty. Remember Stalingrad. That was Hitler's intuition as was the invasion of Russia. No Hitler may be a politician but he is no military strategist so leave him live. Give him enough rope and he'll hang himself. Incidentally I heard about Hitler's purge over a SCR 300 which is a frequency modulated radio known as a walkie talkie. That's while I was a radio operator on bivouac.

This week and next we have clothing checks, equipment inspection, tests (physical and mental for the company as a whole). Critiques discussions as to what was right and wrong with the bivouac, and make up classes. We also have orientation and anything else that they happen to think of. They have a lot of what they call "free" time but it's usually an inspection by disguise or something else. It's just all messed up.

Well I think I'll go to town and raise cane tonight. Maybe I can get a chess game going or something. I gotta go eat so I'll close.

Love

Don

Camp Robinson, Ark.

July 24, 1944

Dear Folks & Family,

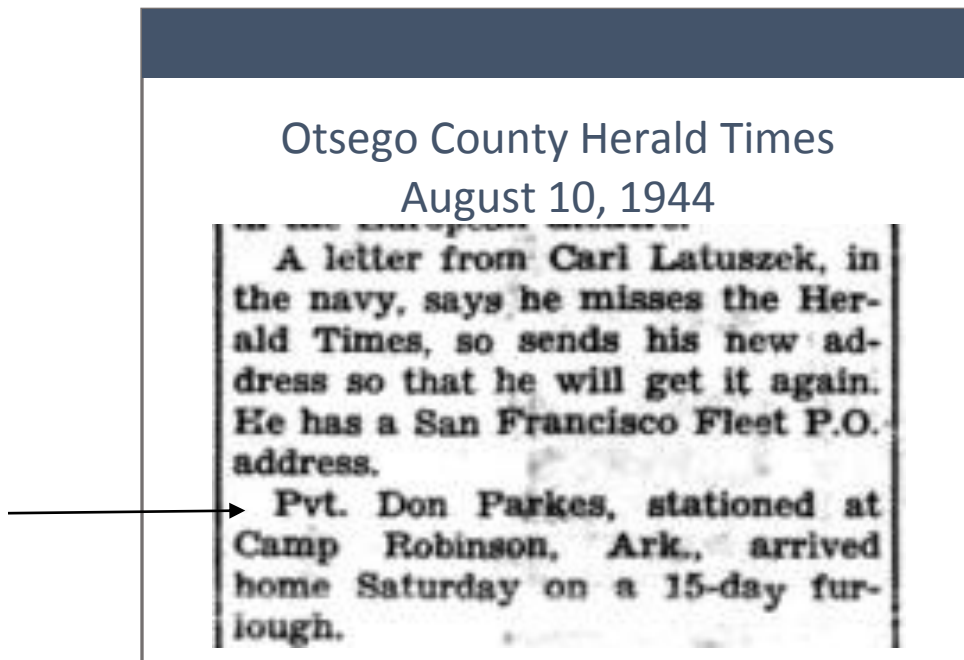
Well we started another week today. It's our last week of Basic training so starting next Monday we will be transferred. Don't know where to yet but I've got my suspicions. You'd better send me the money I sent home as I'm broke and I'll need money to move with. Please send it right out.

We had a 72 hour CPX²⁷ problem starting last Thursday morning. A CPX problem is a simulated battle problem and conditions that occur in a command post. I happened to hit a soft job as radioman for a motorized patrol. I worked a SCR 284 radio which was mounted in a Jeep. It was rough riding but I had a good time. We ran the problem entirely on "C"²⁸ rations. I'll show you some when I get home. General White gave our company a superior rating on our bivouac which is the highest rating a company can have so we were all quite pleased.

I really appreciated getting your letters while I was on bivouac. We'd come in dog tired at night and you should have seen the spirits rise after mail call. I would have written yesterday but was on K.P. when I got in so I didn't have much time.

Well I gotta close because we are having a closing check. Don't forget to send the money.

Lots of Love Don



²⁷ CPX – Command Post Exercise. An **exercise** in which the forces are simulated, involving the commander, the staff, and communications within and between headquarters.

²⁸ The C-Ration was an individual canned, pre-cooked, and prepared wet ration. In the initial Type C ration, there were only three variations of the main course: meat and beans, meat and potato hash, or meat and vegetable stew. Also issued was one bread-and-dessert can. Initially, C ration cans were marked only with paper labels, which soon fell off and made a guessing game out of evening meals. The C ration was, in general, not well liked by U.S. Army or Marine forces in World War II, who found the cans heavy and cumbersome, and the menu monotonous after a short period of exposure.

Fort Meade & Camp Breckenridge

August 1944 – October 1944

Fort Meade, Maryland

August 17, 1944

Dear Folks,

Well I had a very nice trip from Detroit. The train was air conditioned and was one of the best I've ever been on. I didn't see much scenery except early last night and this morning as I was rather sleepy and it was quite dark out. The country around here seems quite hilly though. I stopped in Baltimore for a couple of hours but didn't leave the station. I think I'm going to like the East. It has an air of hurry and bustle about it that makes a distinct contrast with the lazy slowness of the South. The fellows here are from practically every camp in the States. Most of them are GI's with a few Sergeants and officers mixed in.

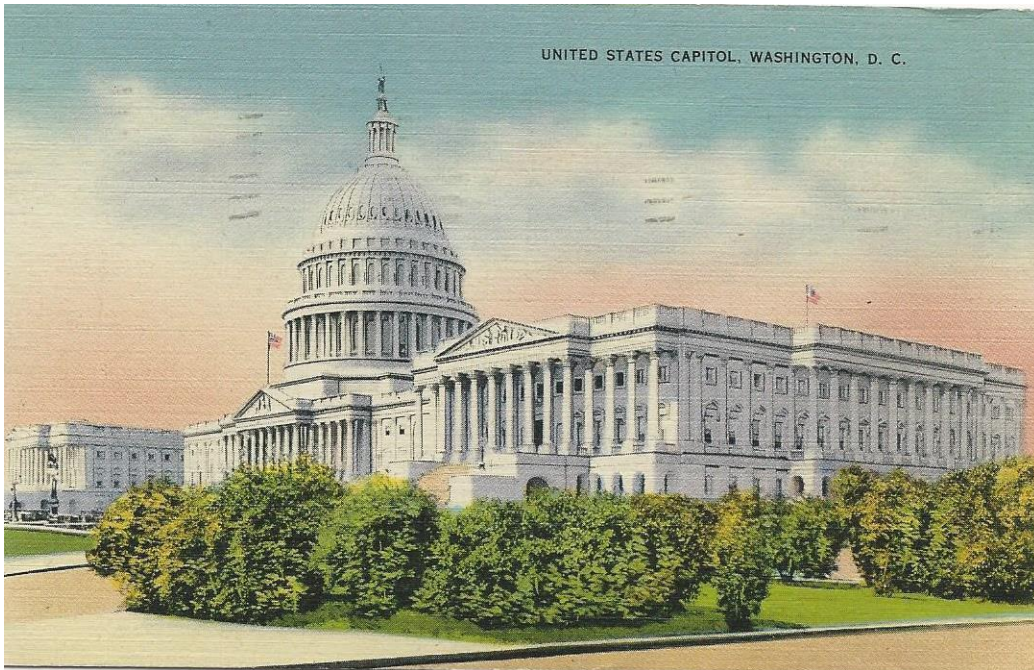
I took out a E allotment today which consists of \$15 a month starting next month. It's made out to you and you can use it to buy birthday and Xmas presents with and when Elaine is in school you can send her a few dollars of it. If you see anything you want for the house and there is any left I'd like to have you buy it for me for the house. I hear I'm to have a \$10 raise so don't worry about my financial status. Have Elaine make me a list of the names and addresses of the kids that live in and around Maryland, Washington and the East here that were in school. I might get a chance to see some of them. Especially Bob Carr.

I saw Chet, George, and Hank²⁹ in Detroit and also their wives. We visited and rehashed their feuds individually (each has a different story). I had quite a time finding Chet's but I did after looking a couple of hours. I got a big bang out of riding the street car because I didn't have to "Pay". I guess I won't be in this camp very long. Not over two weeks from what I hear so write me and let me know all the news and how the "Park" was. It'll be about over when you get this I guess. I wish I could have stayed longer. I guess we can get overnight passes here for the asking. Think I'll go to Washington which is 25 miles. Baltimore is only 18 miles. Well goodbye and lots of love. Don

P.S. Dad still have a civilian insurance policy or has it lapsed?

²⁹ Don is referring to his mother's brothers Chet Buddy, George Buddy and Hank (Henry) Buddy. Henrietta (Aunty) and Henry were twins.

A post card postmarked Fort George G. Meade, MD
Aug 28 1944



Dear Mom,

Well I got orders and its in the states. Will let you know where.

Love

Don

(A post card with picture of Washington Monument postmarked Washington DC
August (date not readable) 1944



Dear Folks,

I was up in this memorial and it's a beautiful view. I've been all over Wash today and went thru most of the Smithsonian Inst. Will write soon.

Love Don

August 29, 1944

Dear Folks,

Well I was to Washington over the weekend and it beautiful. That's the second weekend and I haven't begun to see it all or even scratched the surface. You folks will all have to go sometime. Now I had lots to tell you but I can't think of it now

Say Elaine, do you have a directory of the kids from school? If not wrap up my Acacias³⁰ and send them to me at my next station. I'm going to get 6 more weeks of training I guess. That's the rumor. How are you coming with arrangements at the U of M³¹. I hope you have the arrangements all made for housing etc. Please let me know because I've been worrying.

Well Irene I guess your vacation is over by now. Flo³² said she adopted you at the Park. She thinks a lot of you I guess. She always wanted to visit you anyway. Cute Kid.

Say Mom I'll have plenty of time to get my picture tooked at my next camp so will be sure to send it. You can look for it in about three weeks. O.K.? Well I've gotta close now. Will write you all later. I woe Dad a special letter which I will answer.

Lots of Love

Don

NOTICE OF CHANGE OF ADDRESS
(Sufficient cards will be distributed to each soldier when his mail address is changed to permit him to send one to each of his regular correspondents and publishers.)

Date _____, 194__

This is to advise you that my correct address now is—

Pvt Donald H Parkes 36462643
(Grade) (Name) (Army Serial No.)

Co E 291 Regt. Inf
(Company or comparable unit) (Regiment or comparable unit)

APO No. 451 % Postmaster NEW YORK
(Strike out if not applicable) (Name of post office)

Signature Pvt Donald Parkes

NOTE.—Newspapers and magazines may need your old address for correct processing.

My old address was _____

W. D., A. G. O. Form No. 204* (1 November 1943)
*This form supersedes W. D., A. G. O. Form No. 204, 8 April 1943, which may be used until existing stocks are exhausted. c16-33987-3 GPO

NOTICE OF CHANGE OF ADDRESS

This is to advise you that my correct address now is —

Pvt Donald H Parkes 36467643

75TH DIV.

APO No. Camp Breckenridge, KY

³⁰ The Graceland College yearbook.

³¹ The University of Michigan. Don attended one year at Graceland College and one year at the University of Michigan prior to enlisting in March 1943.

³² Don is referring to Flo (Florence) Anderson.

I joined the 75th division Regiment 291 Co E for combat training at Camp Breckenridge, Kentucky. The 75th division consisted of 3 regiments, the 289th, the 290th and the 291st. I was assigned to a rifle squad in E (easy) company of the 291st Regiment. Companies A, B, and C would be in the 1st battalion. Companies D, E, and F would be in the 2nd Battalion, etc. There were three Platoons in the company. Each platoon had 3 rifle squads consisting of 12-15 men. Each rifle squad had a “Bar” (Browning Automatic Rifle) man and his assistant. The “BAR” man was usually some one pretty large and physically able to carry and fire the BAR either manually supported or from an attached tripod. The assistant helped carry the ammunition for the weapon. This gave the squad a “light” machine gun for more firepower. The remainder of the squad carried the M1 Garand 30 caliber semi-automatic rifle. We also had available the “Grease Gun” which was a light sub machine gun so named after it’s resemblance to the tool used to grease machinery. It was a very cheaply simply made rugged stamped weapon which would fire at the rate of about 500 rounds of 45 caliber bullets per minute and used primarily in close quarters such as towns. Most rifle squads also had a man with a bazooka for attacking tanks (a very risky business). The riflemen usually carried a couple r more grenades and some of the riflemen had grenade launcher attachments for their M1 rifles to reach distances further than they could throw.

There was also a heavy weapons platoon that was equipped with 60 and 81 MM mortars and machine guns. In addition there was usually attached to the division a field artillery regiment for supporting artillery fire.

St. John's Evangelical Protestant Church
(Evangelical and Reformed Church)
John R. C. Haas, D. D., Pastor
Third, Tugle and Market Sts.
Evansville 8, Indiana

Church Office
314 Market Street (S)

Parsonage
903 E. Howell Ave. (13)

Sept. 5, 1944

Mrs. E.L. Porkes
Gaylord, Mich.

Dear Mrs. Porkes:

This past Sunday we had the pleasure of welcoming to our church and its worship service, your son Donald.

Because we are certain you will appreciate knowing your son practices his religious duties while in service, we send this letter, at the same time expressing the hope you will encourage him in this splendid endeavor.

It is our custom to officially recognize our visiting service folk. Their presence with us on a Sunday morning is a decided inspiration. We join with you praying for an end of warfare and a just and lasting peace.

Sincerely yours,

John R. C. Haas
John R.C. Haas, D.D.
Pastor

jrch:cl



Camp Breck. Ky
Sept 6, 1944

Dear Family,

I haven't much time but I'll try and get this off before we pull out this morning. If I haven't all ready told you, I'm in Ky. I'm attached to the 75th division for six weeks but the way things look I'll be here for the next couple of years. How am I gonna be a hero if I never get overseas?

I saw Washington twice while I was at Meade. It's a very interesting place and there's lots to see and do there. I saw the museum, Smithsonian Institute, Washington and Lincoln Memorials, and a whole lot of other things which I wouldn't have room to mention so I'd better not start.

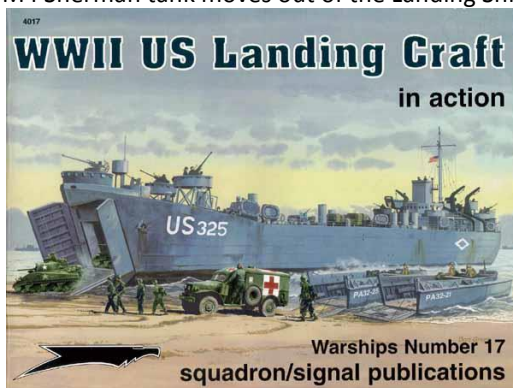
Last weekend I had a pass so I went to Evansville which is a pretty big city in Indiana about 30 miles from here. I didn't like it much. It's so crowded and dirty. They do have a nice U.S.O. and they also build LST's³³ there.

Yesterday we were out on a problem. We had to take a German village. We had 40 rounds apiece for riflemen and the machine guns and mortar were also pretty active. You should have seen the fireworks. Would have put a fourth of July picnic to shame. It's fun to watch but I'd hate to be on the receiving end. Today we're going on another problem. I guess that's what we do in a division is run one problem after another. We do a lot more sitting around here than in basic but when we work we work.

I noticed by the tower³⁴ that there are some kids from Louisville going to Graceland. If I wasn't broke I'd run down and see them next weekend. We don't get paid till the tenth so I'll just miss seeing them.

Well I gotta fall out³⁵ soon so I'll close. Lots of love Don

³³ LST – Landing ship tanks is the naval designation for vessels created during World War II to support amphibious operations by carrying vehicles, cargo, and landing troops directly onto an unimproved shore. In this picture, an M4 Sherman tank moves out of the Landing Ship.



³⁴ The Tower – the Graceland College newspaper.

³⁵ Fall out – Going from one military formation to another.

Sept. 10, 1944

Dear Folks,

I received both of Elaine's and Mom's letters last Thursday. Four letters in one day sure is nice. I'm sorry I didn't get them while I was at D.C. but I guess I'll be going back there so I can look up the people then.

We've been on problems almost constantly since I got here. Everyone is all set to go for a boat ride but I seriously doubt it because this outfit just isn't ready with all the new men in here. These problems are sort of a game that is quite a lot of fun. We go out in the boondocks someplace at night and bivouac. The next morning we are issued grenades, ammunition, and Bangalore torpedoes³⁶ and we attack positions that were prepared the night before by another Bn³⁷. We usually have overhead artillery fire and plenty of mortar fire. After we take the position we dig in a defense and then we sit around till someone decides the firing is over. That night we all go to town and raise Cain. The next day we clean our weapons and get ready for another problem. We all sit in on a bull session and discuss what we did. It's really a lot of fun. I've been a B.A.R. man. A B.A.R. is a automatic rifle or machine gun that will shoot 20 rounds on one pull of the trigger. It's lots of fun also.

We've been doing some village fighting to. Sometimes we use blanks and have a fight with the "Red Army". (We're the Blue Army). If a red Army man shoots a couple of blue Army men he usually gets up and yells, "Hey you, your dead." If there's an Umpire around we're dead but if not we take his rifle away from him and take him prisoner. It's kinda rough at times and you have to watch when you shoot. Just make sure he isn't bigger than you are.

We have only a few fellows here from my old camp. The most of them went to Fort Bragg N.C. where Sam Samoriski³⁸ is. Most of the fellows here are under 20 and we've wash outs from the Air Corp, paratroops or A.S.T.P.³⁹ The camp is so-so and the chow is substantial although it doesn't always please the palate.

I'm glad Elaine got a room so close to the U. \$7 a week isn't too bad for a girl and I'd advise her not to waste time looking for a room till about the end of the semester as at that time some of the girls will move or finish and she'll be able to find something. Right now it'd be a waste of time to look and believe me she'll be busy.

³⁶ A Bangalore torpedo is an explosive charge placed within one or several connected tubes. It is used by combat engineers to clear obstacles that would otherwise require them to approach directly, possibly under fire. It is sometimes colloquially referred to as a "Bangalore mine", "banger" or simply "Bangalore".

³⁷ Bn - Battalion

³⁸ Sam Samoriski was Don's room-mate at the University of Michigan.

³⁹ ASTP was Army Specialized Training Program. Essentially ROTC (Reserve Officers' Training Corp) for technical fields like engineering and electronics. If you failed classes you became infantry enlisted.

Well Irene's vacation is over. I guess all good things must come to an end though. Sometimes it's really nice to get back to work too. I'm going to put in for a furlough soon. As long as I've been in the Army six months and it seems I'll be in the states indefinitely I might as well. I probably won't get one but no harm trying and I'm entitled to one so I may in the distant future get home again. Don't plan on it though.

I got a nice present from Aunty. She sent me the complete works of Shakespeare. I happened to mention that sometime I'd like to buy them and lo and behold here they are. Mom that family of yours for all their clever cutups are a bunch of angels in disguise.

Well I'll try and answer Irene and Elaine's letters soon. Tomorrow if we're not too busy. Guess I'd better close now. Lots of love and so on.

Don

P.S. What is your telephone no?

P.S.S. Who is the new Pastor?

13 September 44

Dear Folks,

Well we just got in from another problem and I found three letters from home waiting for me. We only get mail here every three or four days so I usually get your letters bundled up. I really appreciate your writing so often and I try to write when I can. We go out in the field for three or four days and then we spend a couple of days critiquing our problems and cleaning our weapons. I enjoy these problems because we don't simulate anything. Our heavy weapons Co has their heavy weapons, each squad as a B.A.R., we have bazooka's and everything we should have. It's a lot better than pretending a rifle is a anti-tank gun etc.

Did I tell you that most of our old outfit is in Fort Bragg N.C. where Sam is? I wish I was there. This is a pretty good outfit and I'm getting to like it as we get better organized. The fellows seem to be a pretty good bunch.

I have a pretty bad case of poison oak on my face and hands. It's all over one side of my face and the other side is clear so I look like the hunchback of Notre Dame. The medics put some ferric chloride on it and turned it a spotted reddish brown so I could now scare even a Dracula.

The church I went to in Evansville is very nice and friendly. If I ever go to town again I'll go again.

I'm sorry to hear about Jim Lake being put on K.P. again. That's one of the things about the Army that makes a man disgusted. Especially when you've been trained in a technical subject like Jim.

Boy, those cream puffs Elaine made would just melt in my mouth if they were down here. Hint. Hint. I'm just kidding because I know how busy you all are at home.

Well there isn't much excitement around here and the only thing I can say is I wish I were home. Rain, snow, sleet, hail, slush or shine I love Michigan and the Parkes Mansion better than any place in the world. After the war I'm going to buy Shetlers pasture and make a private landing field there. Then I'll build me a short wave radio station, buy a convertible coupe, and an airplane and settle down and enjoy life. How does that sound? Well I gotta close so by for now.

Love Don

19 Sept 1944

Dear Folks,

Well today is Sunday but it sure doesn't seem like it. This morning the Regt went out to see a plane demonstration. A couple of planes flew over and mock strafed a truck and troop column. It was very boring. We wasted all morning out there and this afternoon we heard the articles of war. Dad can tell you all about them. They all boil down to the fact that if you look crosseyed at a General they can boil you in oil for it. That's true. Ask Dad he knows.

We're going into the field tomorrow for another test. We've been tested by the Battalion, the Regiment, the Division, the 2nd Army, the War department and this is the last test we run. It's reported directly to General Marshall and his staff to see if we are ready for the big push. He'll probably be around somewhere. A poor GI doesn't get no rest.

There isn't an awful lot a fellow can do around here that is different. All we do is train and sit around cleaning weapons when we aren't training. I do know now where we're going and when and what we're going to do when we get there but I can't tell you as it's a deep secret.

There's a good show on – Since You Went Away – I think I'll go see it. We get a lot of good shows here.

I got your box and the fellows are crazy about the cookies. Thanks for the box and especially the cherries. It's not so much that I like the cherries (which I do) but it's the idea that you remembered that I liked them. Well thanks a lot because I really appreciate it. I better close if I'm going to make the show.

Love

Don

20 Sept 1944

Dear Folks,

Well today is Wednesday and we are supposed to have the day off because we were on a problem Monday and Tuesday. Monday we loaded our packs and hiked about 15 miles which is the first marching I've done since I hit the 75th. In the middle of the night after our company had dug in we pulled stakes and moved to cover our left flank left open by I Co. Boy we get all the raw deals. I'm now a company runner so after all that walking I have to tear all over the countryside looking for Captains, Majors, and Colonels. I do get to know what is going on though so I don't mind it.

Well I guess I won't get a furlough because of circumstances beyond the control of the C.O. As for having one at Xmas time I won't be in the "States" then. Things are happening fast around here.

I remember "Rocky Tate". We used to go over to Onaway and a lot of people would make a fuss over us kinds. Rocky Tate used to be one of them. I knew her on sight but that's about all. I'm sorry to hear the bad news about her.

Well the line of gold stars⁴⁰ for Otsego Co is getting longer isn't it? I'm really sorry to her about Forrest Carl⁴¹ but I guess that's the way of wars. It wouldn't be a war if people didn't get killed.

Say thanks again for the box. The fellows were wild about the cookies. Thanks for the cherries. They really hit the spot. Well I think I'll close now. So long and lots of love.

Don

P.S. When does the U of M open?

⁴⁰ The custom of families of servicemen hanging a banner called a Service Flag in the window of their homes began shortly after WWI. The Service Flag had a star for each family member in the United States Armed Forces. Living servicemen were represented by a blue star, and those who had lost their lives were represented by a gold star.

⁴¹ Lt. Forrest Carl was the pilot of a B-24 that crashed in the Nevada desert on September 9, 1944. He was raised in Gaylord, although a few years' older than Don – closer to Don's brother, Elmer's, age.

24 Sept 1944

Dear Folks,

Well here it is Sunday night and if I'm not very much mistaken its Mom's birthday. I'll bet you are having a party around the table with chicken, a big cake, and maybe ice cream and peanuts. You might even have TerWee⁴²'s or some other good friends down. Right? Well I hope you had a lot of fun.

Well here it is Monday morning. This was the soberest weekend I think this camp has seen for a long time. Everyone was too broke to go to town and all the PX's were closed. Most of the fellows were in bed before lights out at 9:00. There wasn't even enough dough around for a crap game. What's this Army coming to?

I saw a good U.S.O. show Saturday night. They had a juggler, some acrobats, dancers, singers, and musicians. Oh yes they also had some girls but I didn't notice them much. MUCH!

After the show we ran into some 2nd Army men who were feeling a little high so we practiced a little judo on them. They didn't know what hit them. We haven't much use for the 2nd Army lately because they've been pulling so many inspections on us lately.

I didn't do much yesterday but read. The Hdq.Co has a fairly good library so I find a lot of good reading material. I'll have to send my Shakespeare home soon I guess. I've been really enjoying it.

Well I guess I'll close now.

Love

Don

⁴² Mr. & Mrs. TerWee were good friends of Don's parents. Mr. TerWee taught the Gaylord High School band for many years and also was the conductor for the Gaylord Community Band.

(Postmarked Camp Breckenridge, KY)

28 Sept, 1944

Dear Folks,

Well I got your box today and do the cookies taste swell. The fellows really like them. Thanks a lot for sending them.

The platoon just left for a problem and as I have to go to the dispensary I didn't go. It's kinda wet out so I don't mind. I guess its about the last problem we'll run till we hit a staging area. They are packing most of our equipment so I don't see how we can run very many more. The other night we ran the infiltration course and it was as dusty and dirty as ever. Boy how I hate that course.

I've been getting my teeth fixed lately. I have an infected gum or something. My face is quite swollen and I look more of a mess than usual. And to top it I've broken my glasses. Everything happens to me.

About this Xmas box, don't send it. If you do I'll have it eaten and forgotten two months before time.

Well as there is little news I'll close. This stationary seems to be a little worse than usual. Say could you send my clippers from my finger nail set and also my hunting knife? It's the one with the heavy blade.

Love Don

<p>CLASS OF SERVICE</p> <p>This is a full-rate Telegram or Cablegram unless its deferred character is indicated by a suitable symbol above or preceding the address.</p>	<h1>WESTERN UNION</h1> <p>A. N. WILLIAMS PRESIDENT</p>	1204	<p>SYMBOLS</p> <p>DL=Day Letter</p> <p>NL=Night Letter</p> <p>LC=Deferred Cable</p> <p>NLT=Cable Night Letter</p> <p>Ship Radiogram</p>
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5 2 317- 4- 57 Int'l
 CD Sans Origina via Mackay Radio

BTM- Mr E L Parkes
 Gaylord Mich

of
 Greetings to the best fathers. Parcel received many
 thanks. Many happy returns.

Donald Parkes
 958AM

THE COMPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SERVICE

Dell
 m 29 17.
 10 45
 can

2 Oct 1944

Dear Folks,

Well here it is Monday night. I guess that explains how I feel. Sort of a wet drizzly wash out and dried up feeling with a ball of cotton where my moth should be. Like the Hoards of Asia had walked across it with their dry dusty bare feet. I'm feeling a little down in the moth because I just found out after considerable bit of figuring that it'll be a miracle if I ever get home on a three day pass. The trains just aren't right. I'm going to get as far as Detroit but I have an all day wait there. Discouraging but maybe it isn't so bad as sit seems. I'm feeling kinda low anyhow. Your telegram is in the orderly rooms I'll pick it up later.

I was in Evansville over the weekend. There isn't much to do but I managed a good time between a skating rink and a couple of shows. The people in Evansville are very friendly and they have a nice USO but they always are shoving girls at you. They have some queer idea that all a soldier wants is to dance and drink. That seems to be the main hobby around here.

Some of the fellows here have some pocket book mystery stories that are really good. Which brings to mind a few things. Namely this Xmas box. I hope you won't send me anything except eats and not too much of them. You see I don't have any occasion to use clothes and anything personal takes up room. When your room is as limited as it is here even the smallest thing such as my chess set takes up too much room. I'll appreciate a letter or home newspaper just as much and neither of us will be inconvenienced. I hope you understand. If you have any snapshots or anything for my room, well that's different. That's one reason I don't like this war. It's such an inconvenience.

I got a letter from Chet. It seems that Mike⁴³ has relatives in Owensboro which isn't far from here (40 miles). I met them in Detroit. She's cute too. About 18, I guess. I'll look them up just to be sociable. Ha!

Well as there is nothing much to write about I guess I'll close. We had stew for supper. The PX has candy bars for 3¢ per each. Morganfield has a population of 1,726 ½. We have one sniper in our platoon. Texas declared war Dec 7, the US Dec 8.

Lots of Love Don

P.S. I'm not batty, I'm Teddy Roosevelt. "Charge!!!"

⁴³ Mike was the name of Chet's wife. I am not sure whether it was a nickname as this is the only name the family ever used when talking about her.

(No date)

Dear Folks,

Well as it stands now I'll have my pass Friday night. I can get a train about midnight which will put me in Chicago Saturday morning. If I make connections I'll be in Detroit about 3:30 in the afternoon. If I miss that train it'll be maybe 6:00 or 7:00. Anyway I'll have plenty of time to get the night bus or train home so I'll be home Sunday morning. I wouldn't advise you trying to meet me in Detroit but if you do I'll call Hank, George and Chet (I always do) to tell them hello. Better make that Hank because I don't know if I have George's phone number and Hank's is in the book. Knowing the car situation I really don't expect you to meet me and wish you wouldn't try. I'll have to leave on the train Sunday night to go back and I'll be about 6 hours late but as long as I am back by reveille I don't think they'll say anything. I don't really care if they do because we are going over soon and I want to go home. Childish aren't I? Well I gotta close so bye now.

Don

P.S. I forgot to mention that I may not get a pass because we have 85 men who have to have passes yet and about half of them will get 2 day passes. Well I couldn't even start home on a two day pass so if you'll cross your fingers that's that best I can do. I think I'll get three days thought because I have a lot farther to go than most fellows. Love Don

P.S. Elaine knows the train schedules between Chicago and Detroit pretty well.

<p>CLASS OF SERVICE</p> <p>This is a full-rate Telegram or Cablegram unless its deferred character is indicated by a suitable symbol above or preceding the address.</p>	<h1>WESTERN UNION</h1>	1204	<p>SYMBOLS</p> <p>DL=Day Letter</p> <p>NT=Overnight Telegram</p> <p>LC=Deferred Cable</p> <p>NLT=Cable Night Letter</p> <p>Ship Radiogram</p>
A. N. WILLIAMS PRESIDENT	NEWCOMB CARLTON CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD	J. C. WILLEVER FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT	

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1 2 NL Paid
Camp Breckinridge Ky Oct 4th 1944

Mr and Mrs E L Parkes
Gaylord Mich

Will get pass Friday or not at all. Be in Detroit
3 30PM and home in the morning but will write details love

Don
948AM

To F Friday morning
ar Det - 8:30 pm
Lv Det - 8:00 p.m. - Friday
ar Gay - 5:00 a.m.
Lv Gay - 11:00 P.M. Saturday

Call msg. 10:30 a

THE COMPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SERVICE

CLASS OF SERVICE

This is a full-rate Telegram or Cablegram unless its deferred character is indicated by a suitable symbol above or preceding the address.

WESTERN UNION

1204

SYMBOLS

- DL = Day Letter
- NT = Overnight Telegram
- LC = Deferred Cable
- NLT = Cable Night Letter
- Ship Radiogram

A. N. WILLIAMS
PRESIDENT

NEWCOMB CARLTON
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

J. C. WILLEVER
FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT

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2 Z NL Paid

Camp Breckinridge Ky 5 th Oct 1944

Mr and Mrs E L Parkes
Gaylord Mich

Dear Folks; All passes over 500 miles cancelled
guess I'll have to see you in my dreams am disappointed
but guess I'll live Love

Don
9 35AM

*Delivered
10/5/44
W. C. ...*

THE COMPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SERVICE

12 Oct 1944

Dear Folks,

Well I hope you got back alright. I was really tickled to see you. It kinda reminds me when Irene used to sneak home from the hospital to see us. Our family can sure cut red tape when they have to. After you left Flo and I drove down to the show but it didn't look good so we sat and talked till about 9:00, then we went home. I left Anderson's about 10:00 and went over to George's. The train trip was uneventful except for the scenery which was typical fall weather with the leaves just starting to turn. It was kinda chilly and when we got in Dansville the USO ladies had hot cocoa and cookies at the train station. I got into camp at 9:00 that night.

It's been rather chilly here but due to my expert management I didn't have to go out for field work till yesterday when we went on the range. I wouldn't have gone then except that it was a regimental order for "all" personnel. I'm getting rather good at bunk fatigue.

All telephone calls have been ordered stopped. All excess equipment is being turned in or sent home and any civilian articles must be gotten rid. Also addressed letters. We are being rushed.

There really isn't much to write but I wish you would send those pictures so I can get them before they stop our mail, or hold it up. I guess they are going to censor them soon.

Well pay my respects to Miss Lane for me and lots of love. Don

A post card postmarked Camp Breckenridge, KY

Oct 15 1944)

NOTICE OF CHANGE OF ADDRESS
 (Sufficient cards will be distributed to each soldier when his mail address is changed to permit him to send one to each of his regular correspondents and publishers.)

Date _____, 194____

This is to advise you that my correct address now is—

Pvt Donald H Parkes 36467643
 (Grade) (Name) (Army Serial No.)

Co E 291 Regt. Inf
 (Company or comparable unit) (Regiment or comparable unit)

APO No. 451 % Postmaster NEW YORK
 (Strike out if not applicable) (Name of post office)

Signature Pvt Donald Parkes

NOTE.—Newspapers and magazines may need your old address for correct processing.

My old address was _____

W. D., A. G. O. Form No. 204* (1 November 1943)
 *This form supersedes W. D., A. G. O. Form No. 204, 8 April 1943, which may be used until existing stocks are exhausted. c16-33987-3 GPO

NOTICE OF CHANGE OF ADDRESS NEW ADDRESS IS:

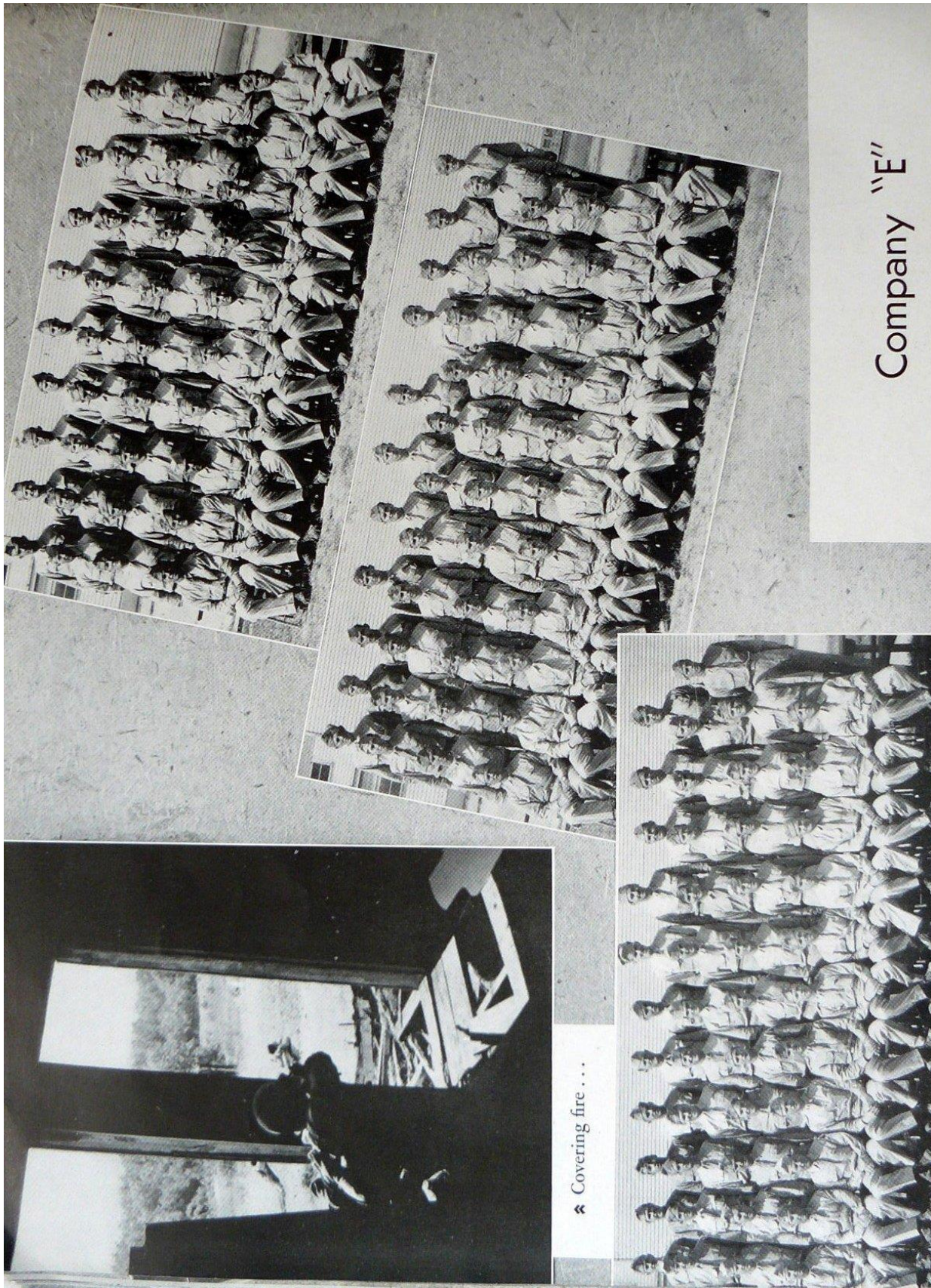
Pvt Donald H Parkes 36467643

CoE 291 Regt. Inf.

APO No. 451

c/o Postmaster New York

291st Battalion Company E – From Yearbook



Company "E"

⌘ Covering fire . . .



Don is in the 3rd row from the bottom, the 8th soldier from the left.

19 Oct 1944

Dear Folks,

This letter will have to be for the whole family because the officers are very busy and don't have time to censor a lot of mail. (Even if I had time to write). We've been busy as can be lately and while we were on the train it was pretty rough to write so I hope you'll excuse my not answering sooner. As you may know I'm somewhere on the east coast. We are allowed to tell you that in the future we will be going overseas. Ha! I rather like this camp. The chow is the best I've had since I hit the Army. Some of the fellows were into New York the Rectangle cut out of letter But it doesn't look like we'll have a pass. They have to be strict around here I guess.⁴⁴

Say I got the knife and pictures in fine shape. It was really a nice job dad did on the knife. Thanks Pop and I never thought to ask for a whetstone but I'm sure glad you sent it. It's one of the few things the Army doesn't furnish and it sure comes in handy. I think I'll keep the pictures here because they are nice to have. Any time you want to send me pictures I'll sure appreciate more than anything I can think of.

I saw a show (USO or something) with Rags Ragland. In person I mean. He played the "Centerville Ghost". He's the big dumb looking fellow but he's plenty smart and he must be a good actor to look so dumb in the movies. Army life has its advantages.

Well I better close now. Love to all and write soon. Oh yes I got a letter from Dingford. He's studying diesels and having a rough time.

Lots of love

Don

P.S. Seems to me I'm forgetting something but don't know what.

⁴⁴ During wartime, mail was opened and any part that was thought to give away the military plans or positions to the enemy were blanked or cut out. This was to prevent the enemy from learning where our troops were should the letter ever fall into the enemy's hands.

24 Oct, 1944

Dear Folks,

Well I guess Elaine is off to school by now. She'll be pretty confused for the first week or so but I wouldn't worry about her. She's got twice the brains that the rest of us have. I even think she had Elmer beat. That's my own opinion of course but they were both pretty smart.

You remember that song, "Time on my Hands"? Well, I've certainly got plenty of that now. Maybe I can catch up on my correspondence. We got mail yesterday and I got a letter from Glen Rose⁴⁵, Aunty, and Flo. Glen says that he hasn't seen a woman for 4 ½ months so he's being true to the home town girl. Aunty's letter had a couple of pictures of Lucy Ann⁴⁶ in it. She's really a cute kid. I think I'll adopt her when I get back. I also got your letter of the 17th. Tell Dad to send the V.F.W. papers because I'll be able to use them by the time I get them.

Do I remember hearing you say that Bud Delamater was home? Seems like years since I've seen any of the old gang. I thought I might get a chance to see Lois⁴⁷ and Dingford but no soap. Oh say, while I think of it will you look in my desk and see if you can find a picture of Lois and send it to me. I've got quite a photo album here.

Say tell the girls if they are going to shoot my rifle they will have to clean it and oil it good. By the way just where are they getting shells? I guess Uncle John still knows how to use a 12 gauge because from what Aunty says he really has been knocking the bunnys over.

Well there isn't much news so I guess I'd better close. You might tell me how much of this letter the censor has cut out. I don't think I've said anything I shouldn't but you can't tell. They have to be pretty careful.

Love

Don

P.S. The censor said it was OK to send the poem. You figure out where I am.

⁴⁵ Glen Rose and Dingford were classmates with Don at Graceland College.

⁴⁶ Lucy Ann Laur was Henrietta's daughter. Henrietta married John Laur.

⁴⁷ I believe Don is referring to Lois Anderson who was Florence Anderson's sister.

I'm Mumble Mumble

*Dear Folks, I'm censored
Can't write a thing
Just that I'm well
And sign my name.*

*Can't tell when its sunny
Can't tell when its rain
All military secrets
Must secrets remain*

*Don't know where I'm going
Don't know when I'll land
Couldn't inform you
If met by a band*

*Can't tell where we sail from
Can't mention the date
And can't even remember
The meals that I ate.*

*Can't keep a diary
For such is a sin
Can't keep the envelopes
Your letters come in.*

*Can't find a flashlight
To guide me at night
Can't light a match
Except out of sight.*

*Don't know for sure
Just what I can do
Except sign this letter
And mail it to you.*

*Love,
Don*

Shipped Overseas

October 1944

When we finished training at Camp Breckenridge, the 75th infantry Division regiments left on the 15th of October 1944, and we were shipped out to Camp Shanks, New York. We embarked from Camp Shanks, New York on October 22, landing in Sawnsea, Wales on 3 November. I heard that it was the second largest convoy of the war. The convoy could only go as fast as the slowest ship so it appeared to take an interminable length of time for the crossing. As far as we could see in any direction there were ships. We were on a large ship and because there were so many soldiers we ate only twice a day. It took about 4 hours to go through the chow line, which wandered about throughout the ship so about as soon as we finished one meal we would get in the line for the next one.

Of course we were all landlubbers so a few days out to sea and most of us got sea sick from the constant pitching and rolling of the vessel. The common joke was that when you get sea sick you get so sick you are afraid you will die, and then it gets so much worse that you are afraid you won't. I don't think anyone ever did die of it but I know many wished that they had during it.

About 3 days out we were given a partial pay. As there was no place to spend it and lots of time on our hands there were a lot of card games and crap shooting going on. By the time we landed one soldier had most of the money on the ship. He was an easy target for anyone who wanted to borrow money for leave while we were in Wales. I didn't play, as I had never learned the rules of the games. Fortunate for me.

Wales

November 1944 – December 1944

After landing in Swansea, E Company (and perhaps others) was stationed in Haverfordwest, Wales. Many of the men in our company were billeted in various homes in the city. Several of us were billeted in a place called "The Hole in the Wall" probably because it was entered through a very narrow alley between two buildings. The building probably was used as a warehouse before the war.

We were warned that the local population were on very short rations so if invited to dinner, we were to stop at the commissary and pick up rations to take with us. There was a local theater and various "pubs" and dances that the soldiers could relax in during the evenings. We soon learned that "Fish and Chips" were also to be had and that there were special rations allowed to the businesses that made them because of the troops presence.

(Postmarked Nov 12 1944)

Dear Folks,

Well I've been wondering how the election will come out. We'll know tomorrow, as tonight is election day. That is if the English print it in their paper. They don't usually print anything about America in the papers. For all we here of them the US Army might as well be non-existent.

We are billeted [REDACTED] near⁴⁸ a town so we see a lot of the British people. I'm learning the language and customs of the people. The language is more difficult than the customs because the words mean different things. Quite embarrassing at times. The people are very friendly on the whole. A couple of us were out to tea Sunday to a British home. The fellow had been in the US for some time and knew a lot about Detroit. The rationing here is quite strict. Much stricter than at home. The homes and buildings are all made of brick or stone and have been here a couple of centuries. The streets and highways including the sidewalks aren't wide enough for two Buicks or Packard Clippers to pass. It's just like a picture of the 17th century. Aside from electric lights, running water and cars I don't think things have changed here since the Magna Carta was signed. The cars are about the size of Austins or Crosly's. I haven't seen a car as big as a Ford or Chevie yet. We are living kinda rough but it's a lot better than some of the fellows have.

If you want me to give you a list of things to send me it is. A camera, any dehydrated food like they have in the A & P for soup, airmail and 3¢ stamps, letters, letters, and oh yes, letters. You could send me a flash light if you can find one. I don't need any of this stuff too badly but its nice to have.

About a line and a half of text cut out of the letter.

and

I'm always walking into buildings. Well I guess I better close. Give my love to all.

Your son

Don

P.S. Send your letters air mail.

⁴⁸ The censor had blacked out the word Don wrote and then wrote the word "near".

Dear Folks,

Well I have plenty of time to write today

About ½ the page was cut out by the censor leaving a large hole in the letter

Only two days. Seems to me I remember Dad doing something like that in the last shindig⁴⁹. Like father like son. Aren't you proud of me? Ha! Sunday they had a big parade for the 11th of Nov. We got quite a kick out of the way the British march. It's almost a goose step. They don't like the way we march because there isn't enough show but as we told some Royal Marines, we came over to fight not to put on parades. Incidentally our boys really looked good in the parade.

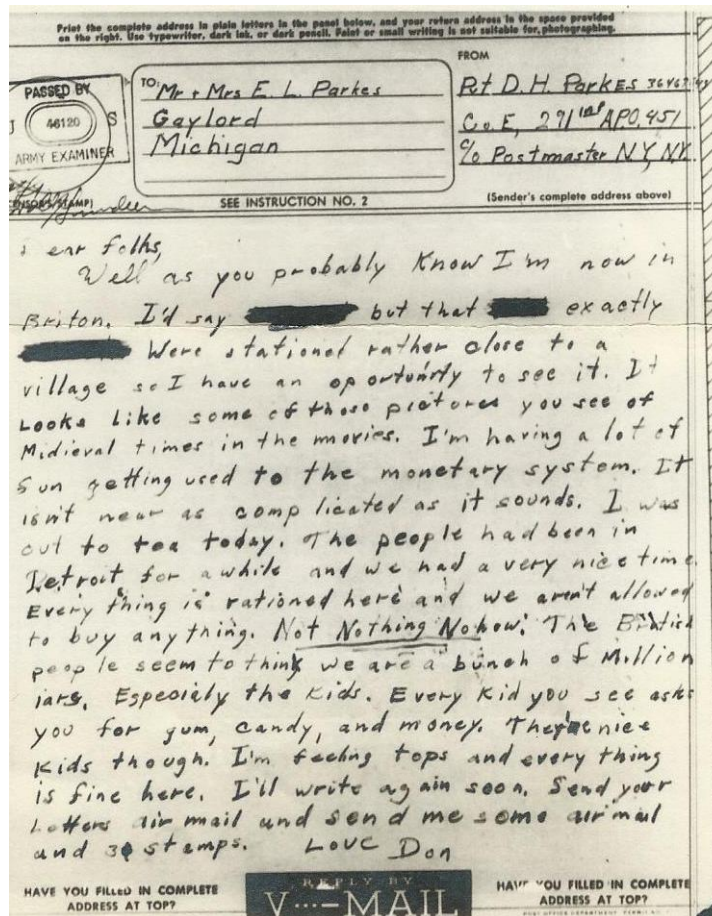
I was on duty as a runner today. All we did was sit all day. I've got a sore ankle so I was glad to sit for a change. It's been raining out again. The sun was out for a while this morning but went in again. We might as well be in the Aluetions the fog and rain is so thick.

Sunday night I went to a concert. They had a very good choir of men who were all vets. There was a elocutionist from the BBC and a violinist who were very good. They had a tenor soloist who had a excellent voice but I didn't enjoy him so much. The choir sang "Abide With Me", and "In The Gloaming". They also sang "God Save the King", and the [REDACTED] National anthem. It seems funny but most of the music here is American. Especially the popular tunes are the ones that were popular a couple of years ago like "Deep in the Heart of Texas". The name of the national anthem is "Hen Fy Fhadduh"⁵⁰ or something like that.

Next Sunday I think I'll go see a cathedral that was built when knights wore suits of armor. It'll be quite a thrill. Well, I better close now. Lots of Love Don

⁴⁹ Don is referring to his father's time in the Navy during World War I.

⁵⁰ *Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau* is the Welsh national anthem.



(Postmarked Nov 20 830 AM 1944)

Dear Folks,

Well as you probably know I'm now in Briton. I'd say [redacted] but that [redacted] exactly [redacted] We're stationed rather close to a village so I have an opportunity to see it. It looks like some of those pictures you see of medieval times in the movies. I'm having a lot of fun getting used to the monetary system. It isn't near as complicated as it sounds. I was out to tea today. The people had been in Detroit for a while and we had a very nice time. Everything is rationed hard and we aren't allowed to buy anything. Not Nothing No how. The British people seem to think we are a bunch of millionaires. Especially the kids. Every kid you see asks you for gum, candy, and money. They're nice kids though. I'm feeling tops and everything is fine here. I'll write again soon. Send your letters air mail and send me some airmail and 3¢ stamps.

Love Don⁵¹

⁵¹ Victory Mail, more commonly known as V-Mail, operated during World War II to expedite mail service for American armed forces overseas. Moving the rapidly expanding volume of wartime mail posed hefty problems for the Post Office, War, and Navy Departments. Officials sought to reduce the bulk and weight of letters, and found a model in the British Airgraph Service started in 1941 that microfilmed messages for dispatch.

23 November 44

Dear Folks,

As usual its raining out so I guess I'll stay in and catch up on my writing. I received about eight letters of yours in the last day or so. They are dated from the 24th to the 28th so you see it takes about a month for them to get here. Kinda slow isn't it.

I got quite a kick out of reading about your wedding anniversary. Wish I could have been there. The girls told me about it when I was home. They sure plan a long way ahead.

Well day after tomorrow is Elaine's birthday. I sent her a cable which should get her right on the dot. Sorry I couldn't send her a present but I'm broke and it wouldn't get there till April anyway. I hope you got her something out of my allotment.

I'm sorry to say I haven't received my watch yet but I'm looking forward to getting it.

Some of the boys got passes to London and I'm anxious to hear about it. There are some young kids around town that were evacuated from there on account of the buzz bombs⁵². They haven't had any gum or candy here for a couple of years and you should see them go for the little bit we get in our rations. The people here like our cigarettes too. Everyone smokes here, even kids 14 and 15, and think nothing of it.

Sorry to hear that Aunty isn't feeling well. I do hope she gets better soon. If you see here give her my love and best wishes.

Guess I'd better close now. Tell the Reverend Ford and bashful Floyd hello for me. I'd give a lot to have seen Mrs TerWee. She gets so excited.

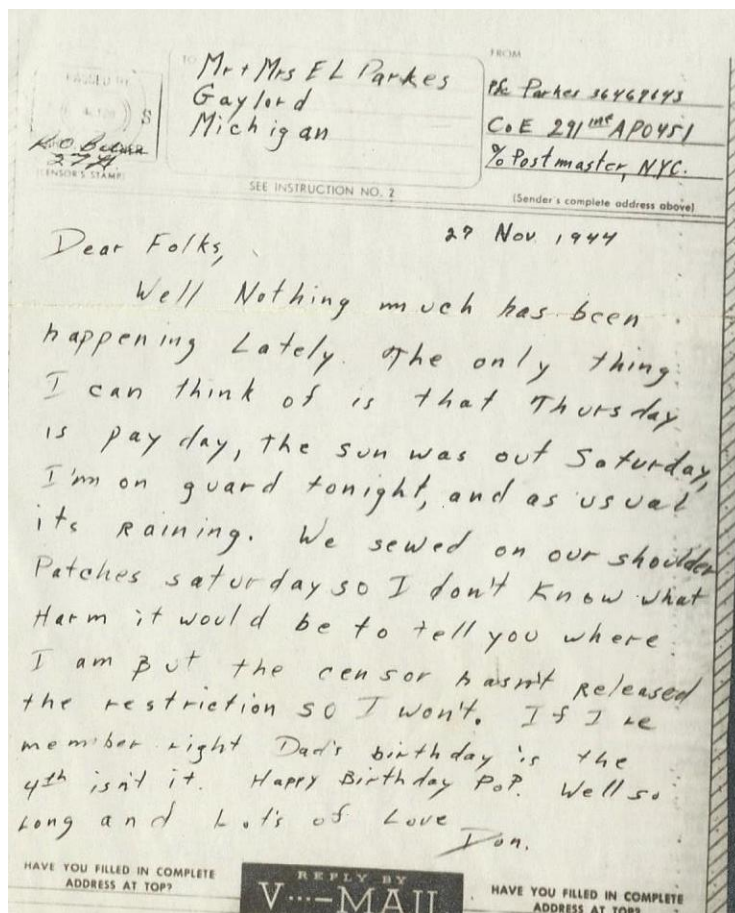
Well so long for now.

Love Don

V-Mail used standardized stationery and microfilm processing to produce lighter, smaller cargo. Space was made available for other war supplies and more letters could reach military personnel faster around the globe. This new mode of messaging launched on June 15, 1942. V-Mail assisted with logistical issues while acknowledging the value of communication. In 41 months of operation, letter writers using the system helped provide a significant lifeline between the frontlines and home.

“The Post Office, War, and Navy Departments realize fully that frequent and rapid communication with parents, associates, and other loved ones strengthens fortitude, enlivens patriotism makes loneliness endurable, and inspires to even greater devotion the men and women who are carrying on our fight far from home and friends. We know that the good effect of expeditious mail service on those of us at home is immeasurable” (Annual Report to the Postmaster General, 1942).

⁵² The V-1 flying bomb —also known to the Allies as the buzz bomb, or doodlebug—was an early [pulsejet](#)-powered predecessor of the [cruise missile](#) or [Unmanned aerial vehicle](#). The V-1 was fired from launch sites along the French (Pas-de-Calais) and Dutch coasts. The first V-1 was launched at London on 13 June 1944, one week after (and prompted by) the successful Allied landing in Europe. At its peak, more than one hundred V-1s a day were fired at south-east England



29 Nov 1944

Dear Folks,

Well nothing much has been happening lately. The only thing I can think of is that Thursday is payday, the sun was out Saturday, I'm on guard tonight, and as usual its raining. We sewed on our shoulder patches Saturday so I don't know what harm it would be to tell you where I am but the censor hasn't released our restriction so I won't. If I remember right Dad's birthday is the 4th isn't it? Happy Birthday Pop. Well so long and Lots of Love.

Don

3rd Dec.
Britain

Dear Folks,

Well, I got your package with the watch and gum last night and was I tickled. I also got two V-mails of yours mailed the 19th and 21st. Friday night we got paid so all in all I'm feeling tops. We have a lot of nice hot rumors floating around so everything looks hunky-dory.

The watch is really swell. I haven't had a chance to check the accuracy yet but I've no doubt about it. It'll really come in handy and I'm really tickled to get it. I was getting a little worried about it because it took so long. Whoever thought about putting in the gum was using their head. We get very little gum and what we do get we give to the kids. Most of these kids haven't seen any gum except ours since the war broke out and are they crazy about it. Of course I like it myself so thanks all the way around.

Sent dad a birthday cable this morning and I've been wondering how long it will take to get there. Did Elaine get her cable?

Glad to hear that Aunty is O.K. Hope you'll keep me posted as to her state of health. She's pretty dear to our family and I'd certainly hate to hear she wasn't going to be all right.

So far I haven't been able to locate any of our church connections. I don't think there are any in this part of the country.

We haven't been doing much and I couldn't tell you if we were so we'll skip that. Much as I hate to admit it the "food" is passable and the housing facilities are warm and dry.

I visited the castle last week but I guess I told you about that. These buildings and streets intrigue me because they are so ancient. Its just like living in the middle ages. Hope the camera gets here so I can snap some of these buildings.

Love

Don

Our training (in Britain) mainly consisted of calisthenics, and marching through the countryside to maintain our physical fitness. On the 9th of December we were told to remove the 75th Division insignia from the left shoulder of our uniforms as we were going to move secretly to another location. As we marched down the street on the 10th of December the children along the street told us that we were going to France. So much for secret movements!⁵³

France & Belgium

December 1944

We crossed the English Channel on December 10th on a British ship. Because of the weather we stayed outside of the harbor of LeHarve for a couple days. There were lots of sunken vessels in the harbor that prevented our ship from docking on any of the piers. As the ship had not been issued any rations for us, they didn't feed us so we got pretty hungry by the end of the second day and our officers arranged a meal for us. We disembarked the ship by climbing down nets that were hung over the side of the ship into smaller boats which then landed us on the beach. The crossing was completed on the 13th and 14th of December, 1944.

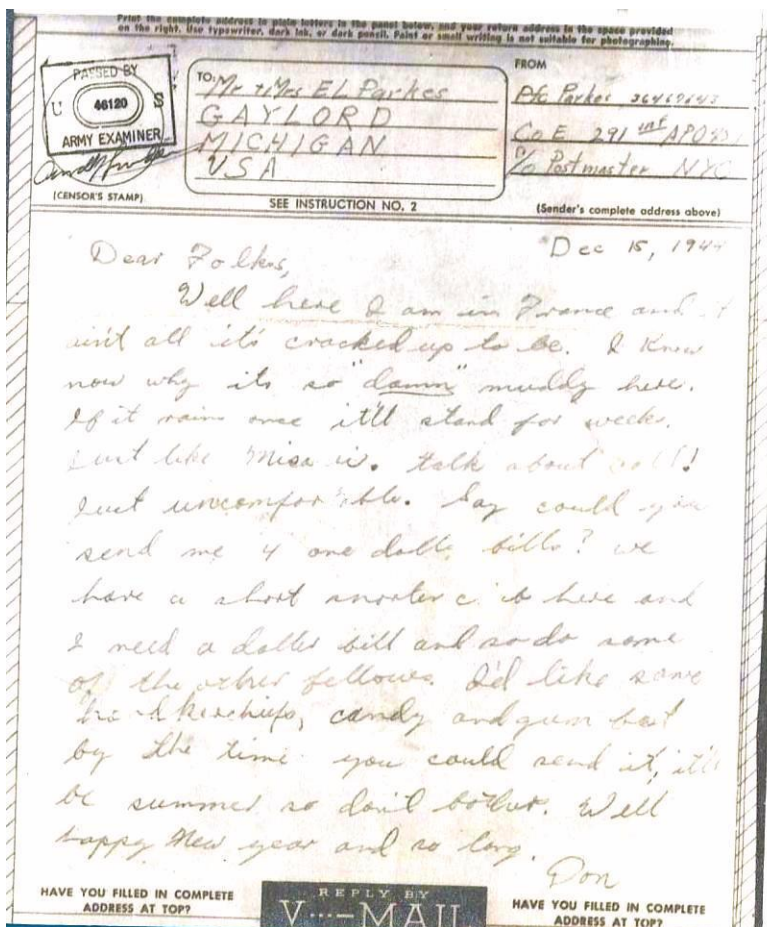
We ate "C" and "K" rations for the most part. "C" rations came in 2 round cans about the size of a normal can of baked beans which a lot of them were. They also contained some meat. "K" rations came in a box about the size of a Cracker Jack box and had cheese and crackers and other mostly dry edible food. We also got a ration of cigarettes – Old Gold, Lucky Strike, and Chesterfield, and chocolate bars. I didn't smoke so traded my cigarettes for chocolate bars to men who wanted the cigarettes.

We assembled in the area near the town of Yvetot, France. Each soldier carried a duffel bag, a backpack, their rifle (or other weapon) and a shelter half. Two of us would team up, lace our shelter half together and make a pup tent to sleep in. The weather was cold, drizzle and not too pleasant.

"On 16 December the Germans had launched their offensive into the Ardennes with the Fifth and Sixth Panzer Armies and the Seventh Army. The Ardennes – a mountainous, broken terrain, steep hills, deep and narrow valleys with a great number of small streams and cross compartments, was thickly covered by fir trees as only many can plant them."⁵⁴

⁵³ By 13 December 1944, most of the troops of the 291st Infantry were bivouacked at St. Paer, France (Source: "The Operations of Company C, 291st Infantry (75th Infantry division) in the Attack on the High Ground Outside Grand Halleaux, Belgium, 15-16 January 1945, Major Allan L. Bogardus, Infantry)

⁵⁴ Major Allan L. Bogardus, Infantry, "The operations of Company C, 291st Infantry (75th Infantry Division) in the Attack on the High Ground Outside Grand Halleaux, Belgium, 15-16 January 1945."



Dec 15 1944

Dear Folks,

Well, here I am in France and it isn't all it's cracked up to be. I know now why its so "damn" muddy here. If it rains once it'll stand for weeks just like the Mississippi. Talk about cold! Just uncomfortable. Say could you send me 4 one dollar bills? We have a short snorter⁵⁵ club here and I need a dollar bill and so do some of the other fellows. I'd like some handkerchiefs, candy and gum but by the time you could send it it'll be summer so don't bother. Well happy New Year and so long.

Don

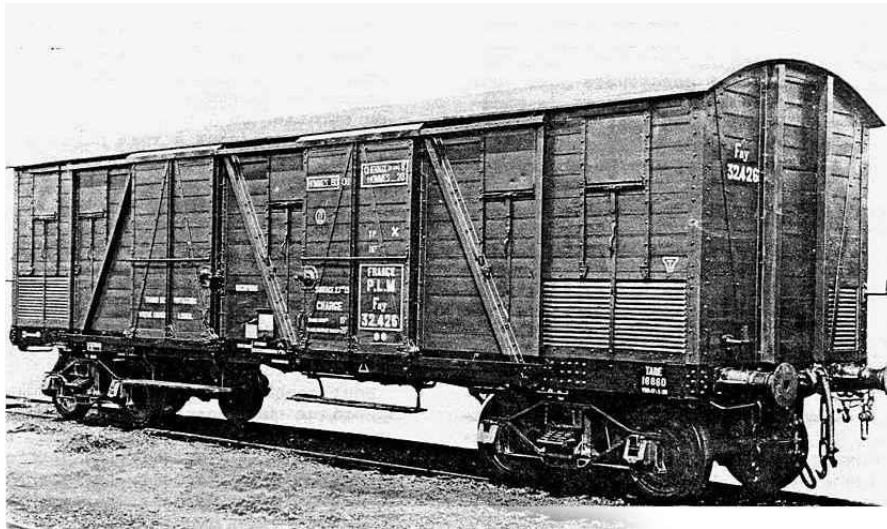
⁵⁵ Short snorter - During World War II military personnel would sign each other's bills creating a keepsake of their buddy's signatures for good luck.

Battle of the Bulge

December 16, 1944 – January 19, 1945

On the 19th of December, the division entrained for Wiljre, Netherlands, a destination subsequently changed to Tongres, Belgium. The Ninth United States Army, to which the division had been attached, had planned an operation for the division in the Geilenkirchen sector in Germany.

We understood that we were going to Holland to be part of General Montgomery's army, which was planning an attack through the Netherlands. After traveling for two days in bitter cold across northern France and a part of Belgium, we arrived at Hasselt, Belgium. The infantry (which I was a part of) made this 250 mile trip in the traditional Hommes 40 Chevaux 8 box cars, while the motorized elements traveled by road.



These were the same “40 and 8” (40 men or 8 horses) boxcars used by the doughboys of WWI. We arrived in Hasselt, Belgium on the 20th of December.

About this time we heard of rumors of the German break through which became known as the “Battle of the Bulge”. The German break through in Belgium necessitated the attachment of the division to VII Corps of the First United States Army. By 2400⁵⁶ on 22 December, the division Command Post had opened and the units assembled at Ocquier, Belgium. The German threat demanded immediate action. We disembarked the train, piled our duffel bags in a big pile and got on trucks to go to our new destination. That's the last I saw of my duffel bag.

There was insufficient time for the division to execute essential reconnaissance and move forward as a unit; consequently, the VII Corps Commander on 23 and 24 December attached

⁵⁶ 2400 is military time for midnight

Combat Team 290 and Combat Team 289 to the 3d Armored Division. (The 75th division had regiments 289, 290 and 291). The remaining tactical elements of the division (291st regiment which we were a part) out posted along L'Ourthe River between Bomal and Grandmenil.

Combat Team 290 was directed to move south from the Hotton – Soy road to a defensive line along the Blier – Hampteau sector, and Combat Team 289 to occupy a defensive line between Grandmenil and Blier. On 24 December the 2d Battalion of the 291st Infantry (which includes my E Company) was attached to the 2d Armored Division, while the remainder of Combat Team 291 was ordered to move to a new assembly area in the vicinity of Sommeleuze, Belgium, as VII Corps reserve.

Around the 24th December 1944, the untried 75th's 291st Infantry Regiment entered into combat. The “Diaper Division,” as it was called had some hard and costly lessons during its initial involvement in the war but would eventually earn the reputation and respect as one of the best fighting units activated during WWII.

Our first combat mission was to clear an area of any German troops. In the early morning we moved out through some fairly open fields riding on top of the 2nd Armored Division tanks. As we approached a wooded area we received a welcome of incoming artillery fire and hurriedly dismounted the tanks, and spread out to avoid being a concentrated target. We skirmished through a wooded area hearing some occasional fire but no serious resistance and finally bedded down for the evening at a crossroads in the woods.

That night, I was awakened from my sleep by some yelling and gunfire. It seems that a German patrol had walked through our bivouac area and stumbled over a sleeping soldier surprising both the Germans and awakening the soldier. Immediately the area erupted with a lot of rifle and Schmeisser submachine gun fire. Someone hollered, “Keep your head down” which I thought was extremely good advice and then I heard someone crying out in German for help. He had been wounded and as I got up to go help a couple of the other soldiers carried him into the camping area. He was sent back for hospitalization. We suffered no casualties and the rest of the Germans beat a swift retreat.

The following day we moved on up through the woods to a slight rise over an open field. On the other side of the field was a small town. The tanks were positioned at the edge of the woods and the field. In late afternoon a couple of our Platoons including the Heavy weapons platoon made an unsuccessful assault across the field towards the town. They were caught in the open and the heavy weapons platoon was forced to leave their weapons in the retreat. I don't know what casualties we sustained. I was in the reserve group at the edge of the woods with the tanks. One of the tankers who was standing up in the tank turret received a stray bullet, which struck him in the head, and he died immediately.

As we waited for further orders a number of us bunched up to keep warm and being exhausted I fell asleep. When I woke up it was getting dark and I looked around for the men in our group.

No one looked familiar. Another group had relieved us and my unit was no longer there and no one could tell me where they had gone. I decided to walk back to the place we had spent the previous night so took off through the woods. As I went along I saw groups of soldiers but due to the poor light could not determine whether they were German or American so avoided them until I reached the crossroad where I met up with my own unit again. What a relief!

The 2nd Battalion, 291st Infantry, which included E company was released from the 2nd Armored Division, and moved to the new area on 28 December, and dug in on the hills south of Villers St. Gertrude where they remained until 29 December. The 291st Infantry relieved elements of the 7th Armored Division in the Grandmenil-Manhay sector on 29 December and the 517th Parachute Infantry Battalion at Manhay on 2 January 1945.

About this time I was told to report to the communications sergeant at company headquarters. He was responsible for maintaining communications between the company headquarters, the platoons and the battalion headquarters. We also were on the billeting party. When we moved into a new area, the billeting party would scout it out for places for the troops to stay. Houses were the first choice but barns with lots of hay also were very desirable. We slept wherever we could. Sometimes in houses, sometimes in barns. The hay was highly prized and most of the time in the woods in foxholes, which in the winter with snow on the ground was very miserable. And we had a few people who went to sleep at night that didn't wake up in the morning.

Communications were maintained primarily by sound power telephone and runner. If we were to be in an area more than a day or so we would lay a wire between the company headquarters and each of the platoons. The wire was on reels about 8" in diameter that held about ½ mile of wire. The procedure was tie one end of the wire to something solid, pick up the reel and start walking in the direction of the platoon with the wire playing out on the ground behind you. If the reel ran out you would splice in a wire from another reel and continue until you arrived at the platoon. As most of the wires were laid along the roads it was not uncommon to see dozens of separate wires along the major roads. They were always getting broken by tank traffic, artillery shells, etc and would be re-spliced when possible if you could determine which ends were the right ones.

One night about 2:00 o'clock in the morning the sergeant awakened me. The platoons were supposed to phone in every hour and one had not phoned in. Go find out why. I picked up the wire, which I hoped led to that platoon and letting it slide through my hand started off. It's kind of a hairy proposition because the German patrols would sometimes cut a wire and wait for the communications man to follow it and capture him for interrogation. Also approaching a platoon in the field at night could lead to some trigger-happy soldier shooting first and asking questions later. More than one dead cow was found in the early morning light. This night the wire led up the road, across the field through about a foot and a half of snow, over fences and finally up to a wooded area about ¾ of a mile away where I found the guards, the sergeant and the Lieutenant all soundly sleeping. Relieved? Yes! Mad? Yes! I woke them up, whistled up the phone and

reported in for them. Then my anger cooled off. After all it's a lot better to wake up from sleeping in a nice warm house basement than to spend the night sleeping in a snow bank in the middle of the woods.

Footnote: A few days later the communications sergeant followed a wire and I never saw him again or knew what happened to him.

About this time the company headquarters was in the town of Grand Halleaux. We were in a brick home which had stalls for cows attached on the street side. The family stayed in the kitchen and the soldiers occupied the remainder of the house and slept in the basement. On the morning of December⁵⁷ I awoke with a bad case of stomach upset, vomiting, chills, fever, etc. The officer in charge assigned me to guard the baggage while the unit made an advance through the adjacent area. It turned out to be a very bad day. One of the platoons took out a German machine gun nest, but the general advance got pinned down while attempting to cross an open field with lots of casualties and the remainder exposed to the bitter cold until evening when they could withdraw.

The following day I was directed to take up some ammunition and grenades to the troops in that area. I think this was the day that my shelter half buddy decided the war was not for him. He said, "I am not going up there", and turned and walked up the road in the opposite direction. I don't know where he went or whatever happened to him.

I loaded up with bandoliers of ammunition and filled all my pockets with grenades and followed the directions through the town, up a country road to a crossroad, which ran across a field to another road. I think I was optimistic on the amount of ammunition I could carry as the weight made the bandoliers cut into my shoulders and the weight of the grenades seemed to increase with every step. However on reaching the area of my destination, I finally found some of our troops and distributed the ammunition. It was fortunate that they stopped me because I had reached the end of their positions and just up the road where I was walking were the German positions.

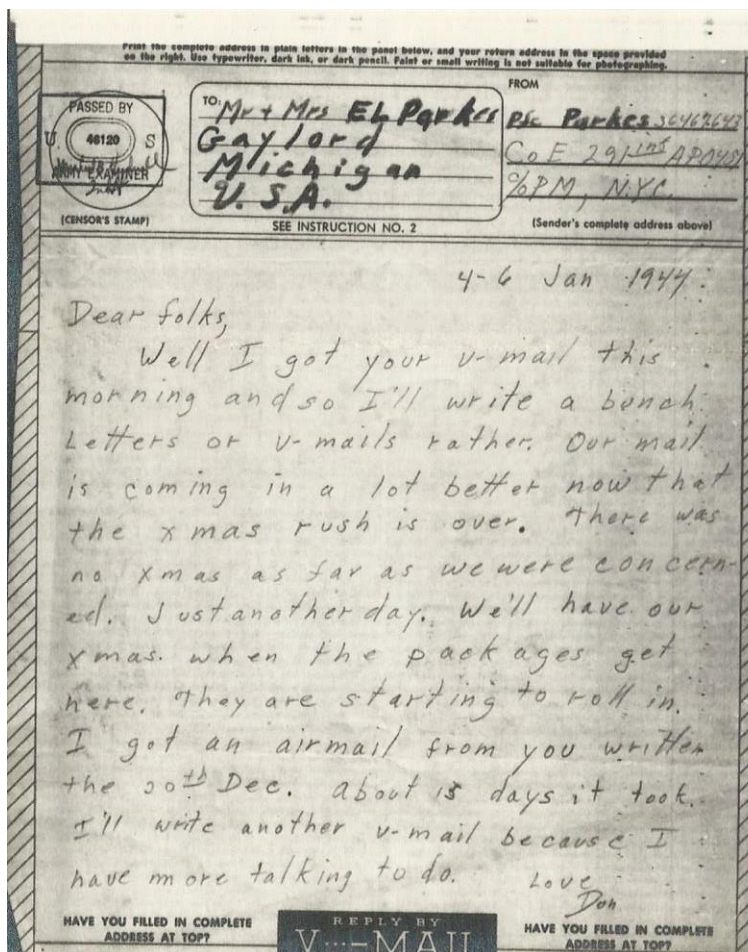
The open field I crossed as I returned sloped so that the single lane road on the right side was level with the field which then sloped downward. On the left side of the road there was a small bank that varied between 2 to 3 feet with a ragged intermittent fence bordering at the top of the bank. From there the field sloped upward to a woods that was a couple hundred yards away. As I followed the road back across the field, I heard an artillery shell going overhead which struck and exploded about 100 yards down the slope to my right and slightly behind me. Looking back, I could see no evidence of tanks or troops in that general area and wondered what they were firing at. A moment later another shell came in to my left about 50 yards up the slope and it dawned on me that I was the target and they had me bracketed. The next shell would be where I was standing. I ducked down below the small embankment on my hands and knees and

⁵⁷ No date is written in Don's document – this was probably December 29, 30, or 31.

scrambled as fast as I could to the end of the open field. Being out of view, I guess they decided not to waste another shell on trying to get me. I was surprised that they would waste a shell and perhaps give away their position in order to kill just one soldier.

“Mud-spattered frozen youngsters in uniform drove their way through portions of France, Belgium, Holland and Germany endlessly bogging down in the deep snows of the fateful Ardennes Forest, suffering from extreme cold in the Ruhr Pocket, and nearly dying everywhere they went...If there were any sharply creased, olive drab uniforms, they were crammed with sweaters, field jackets, and every article of clothing available, issue or otherwise. In place of polished, ox-blood boots, there were outside-in combat shoes, for the green sloping fields of an American army camp. There were rocky, shell torn patches of soil, and always the uneasy, restless noises of things happening.”⁵⁸

⁵⁸ “Pictorial History of the 75th Infantry Division, 1944-1945 Campaigns: photographic cavalcade”, Bangor Public Library.



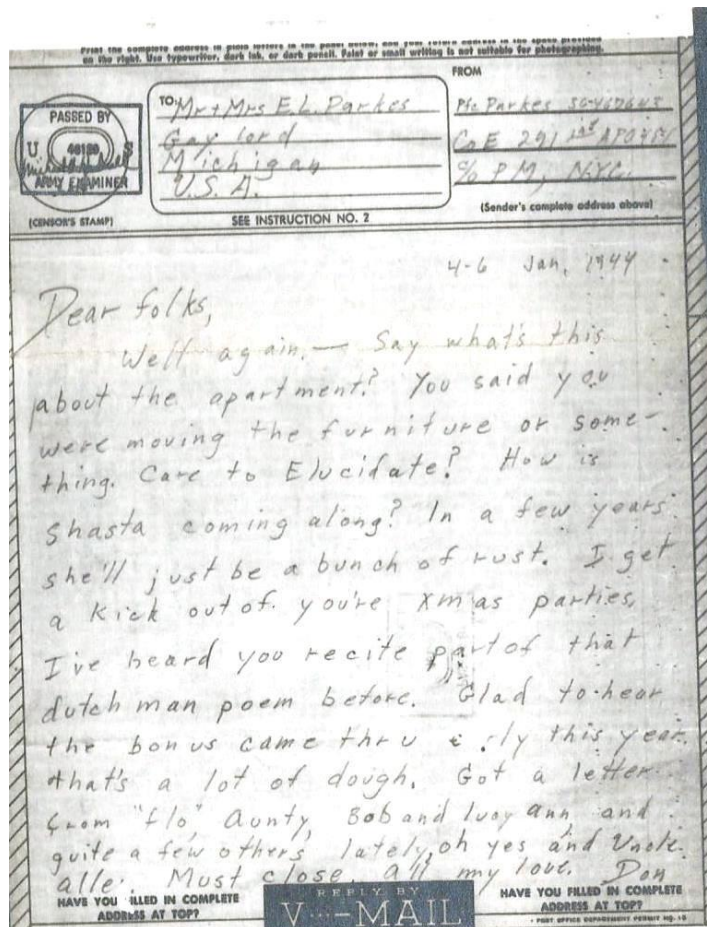
4-6 Jan 1944

Dear Folks,

Well I got your v-mail this morning and so I'll write a bunch letters or v-mails rather. Our mail is coming in a lot better now that the Xmas rush is over. There was no Xmas as far as we were concerned. Just another day. We'll have our Xmas when the packages get here. They are starting to roll in. I got an airmail from you written the 20th Dec. About 15 days it took. I'll write another v-mail because I have more talking to do.

Love

Don



4-6 Jan 1944

Dear Folks,

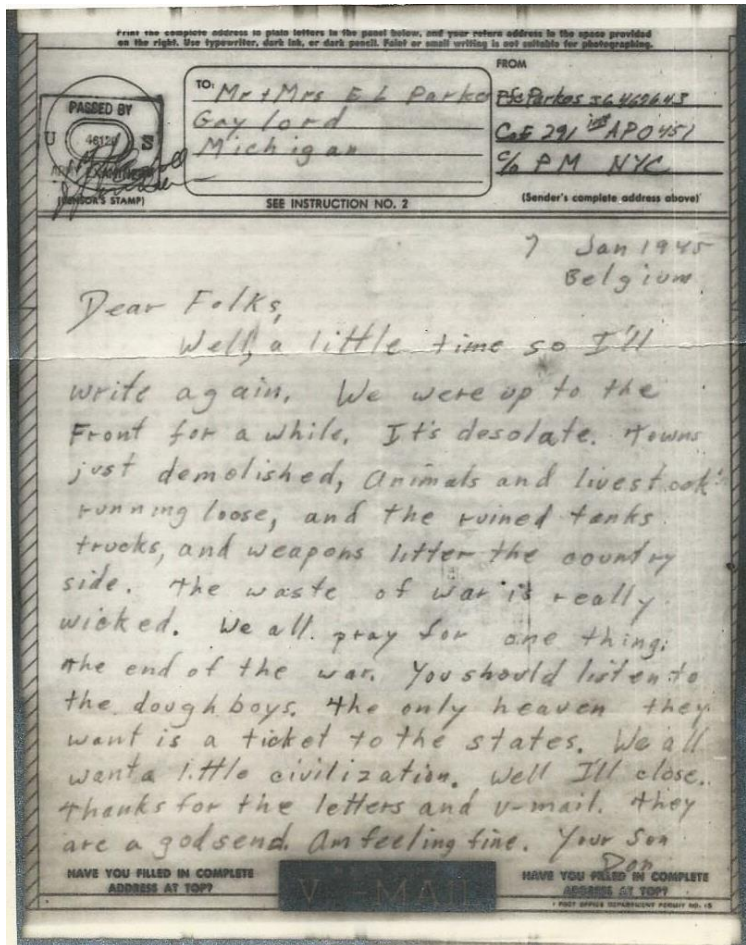
Well again – Say what's this about the apartment⁵⁹? You said you were moving the furniture or something. Care to elucidate? How is Shasta⁶⁰ coming along? In a few years she'll just be a bunch of rust. I get a kick out of you're Xmas parties. I've heard you recite part of that Dutchman poem before. Glad to hear the bonus came thru early this year. That's a lot of dough. Got a letter from Flo, Aunty, Bob⁶¹ and Lucy Ann and quite a few others lately. Oh yes and Uncle Allen.⁶² Must close. All my love. Don

⁵⁹ Don's parents finished the basement in their home as a two bedroom apartment.

⁶⁰ Shasta was the name the family gave their car. It was short for "She has ta (have gas)"; "She has ta (have a battery)" etc.

⁶¹ Bob was Henrietta and John Laur's son and Lucy Ann's older brother.

⁶² This probably refers to Allen Schreur who was a member of the church and Pastor for many years. Don's father worked for him briefly at his car dealership. He (Don's father) took a job at Ford's Hardware because he couldn't sell cars in the winter as they didn't plow the roads then and cars were parked in garages during the winter.



7 Jan 1945
Belgium

Dear Folks,

Well, a little time so I'll write again. We were up to the front for a while. It's desolate. Towns just demolished, animals and livestock running loose, and the ruined tanks, trucks, and weapons litter the countryside. The waste of war is really wicked. We all pray for one thing. The end of the war. You should listen to the dough boys. The only heaven they want is a ticket to the states. We all want a little civilization. Well I'll close. Thanks for the letters and v-mail. They are a God send. Am feeling fine. Your Son

Don

The records show that the action around Grand Halleaux on January 15 and 16 resulted in 73 soldiers of the 291st regiment being killed, most of them from my E Company. I think at that point E Company ceased to exist as a full functioning unit. We went into combat with about 200 in our company. It was over strength.

On the evening of January 18th 1945 we went into Patteaux under cover of darkness to hold the town and be a roadblock to the German withdrawal through it. I found a pile of Hay about 8 feet tall to sleep in but also had to share it with a number of other soldiers with the same idea in mind. In the morning we moved into a stone building, which I think was some sort of a barn.

January 19th 1945. Patteaux sits about ½ way up a valley. The German troops and tanks were at one end and needed to cross through Patteaux to escape out the other end of the valley. In the daytime we could just make them out and they would occasionally fire a shell in our direction. About mid day we got very thirsty and as there was a pump in the middle of the street we would wait until just after the tanks had fired and run out and pump as fast as we could then run back in to the barn before the next shell came in. Probably pretty foolish but it also let them know we were still there. After one of these pumping trips a shell hit just outside the door and the shrapnel came through the door. A piece went through my right arm causing a lot of bleeding and severe pain. I wiggled my fingers and as they responded I thought well at least the bone is not broken. So much for an amateur doctor's opinion. That evening after dark a jeep came in to take out the wounded and some of the German prisoners. We were taken to an aid station where we spent the night. As I was very cold I would ask the attendant if I could have another blanket. In the morning I had accumulated about 10 blankets.

In the morning we went by ambulance, I think it was to a field hospital in Liege. Interesting, one of the men in the ambulance was a wounded German soldier. The hospital had been hit a few days earlier by a buzz bomb. There were about a dozen tables lining each side of the room with an aisle in between and doctors and nurses busily moving from one table to the next attending the wounded. I watched as they cut the leg off one soldier on one side and then they cut the arm off the soldier on the other side. When they got to me, I asked the doctor if he could save my arm. It turned out he was from Traverse City, Michigan he thought it would be no problem. I asked him how soon before I could get back to my unit and he said, "You are not going back. The war is over for you."

CLASS OF SERVICE

This is a full-rate Telegram or Cablegram unless its deferred character is indicated by a suitable symbol above or preceding the address.

WESTERN UNION

1204

SYMBOLS

- DL=Day Letter
- NT=Overnight Telegram
- LC=Deferred Cable
- NLT=Cable Night Letter
- Ship Radiogram

A. N. WILLIAMS
PRESIDENT

NEWCOMB CARLTON
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

J. C. WILLEVER
FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT

The filing time shown in the date line on telegrams and day letters is STANDARD TIME at point of origin. Time of receipt is STANDARD TIME at point of destination

1 Z 29 Gov't
WUX Washington DC 8 36AM Feb'y 5th 1945

Mrs Lucy Parkes
Gaylord Mich

Regret to inform you your son Private First Class Donald H Parkes was slightly wounded in action nineteen January in Belgium mail address follows direct from Hospital with details

J A Ulio The Adjutant General
925AM

THE COMPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SERVICE

Otsego County Herald Times
February 8, 1945

**—WITH THOSE
IN THE U. S.
SERVICES . . .**



DON PARKES WOUNDED
A war department message received Monday morning stated that Don Parke, son of Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Parke, was wounded in action in Belgium January 19.
No further word was received, and all hope and pray the wounds were minor and Don will soon be back on his feet again. Don went across last fall.

England
February 1945 - April 1945

4117 US ARMY HOSP PLANT
APO 63, % POSTMASTER
New York, NY

DEAR Mrs. Parkes:

I am pleased to inform you that on 10 Feb 1945 your
(Date)

son, Pfc Donald H. Parkes 36467643
(Relationship) (Grade, name, Army serial number)

was * making normal improvement

Diagnosis† Wound and fracture of the right forearm.

* Enter present status as—
Making normal improvement.
Convalescing.

† Must be written in nontechnical language.

W. D., A. G. O. Form 234
9 November 1944

Very truly yours,
David M. Kurtz
DAVID M. KURTZ
CAPT, MED ADM C REGISTRAR

16-42109-1 GPO



AMERICAN RED CROSS

Feb 19 45

Dear Pop

I have enclosed \$20 – please send it to Elaine because I figure that she will need it. Girls usually do.

I am getting along very well so please do not worry about me. – I have been wounded in the right arm so I am unable to write. – I'm having one of the fellows write this letter for me. – I'll try to write as soon as I possibly can.

You can write to me by using the address that is on the envelope. – So – Long

Love

Don

4147 US ARMY HOSP PLANT
 APO 63, % POSTMASTER
 New York NY

DEAR Mrs. Parkes :

I am pleased to inform you that on 25 Feb 1945. your
 (Date)

Son, Pvt Donald H. Parkes, 36467643
 (Relationship) (Grade, name, Army serial number)

was * Convalescing.

Diagnosis† Wound and fracture of right forearm.

* Enter present status as—
 Making normal improvement.
 Convalescing.

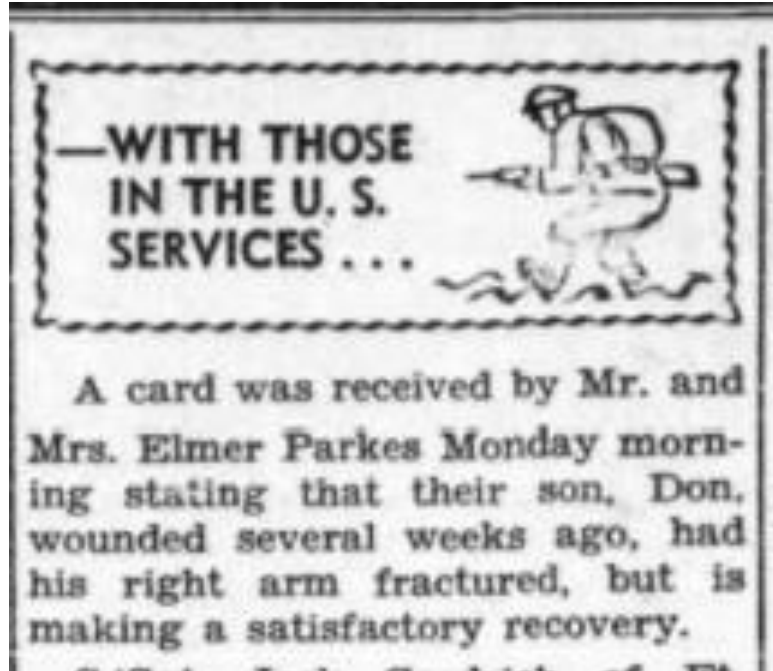
† Must be written in nontechnical language.

Very truly yours,
 David M. Kurtz
 DAVID M. KURTZ
 CAPT, MED ADM C REGISTRAR

W. D., A. G. O. Form 234
 9 November 1944

16-42109-1 GPO

Otsego County Herald Times
March 1, 1945



AMERICAN RED CROSS

4 Mar 45

Dear Sis,⁶³

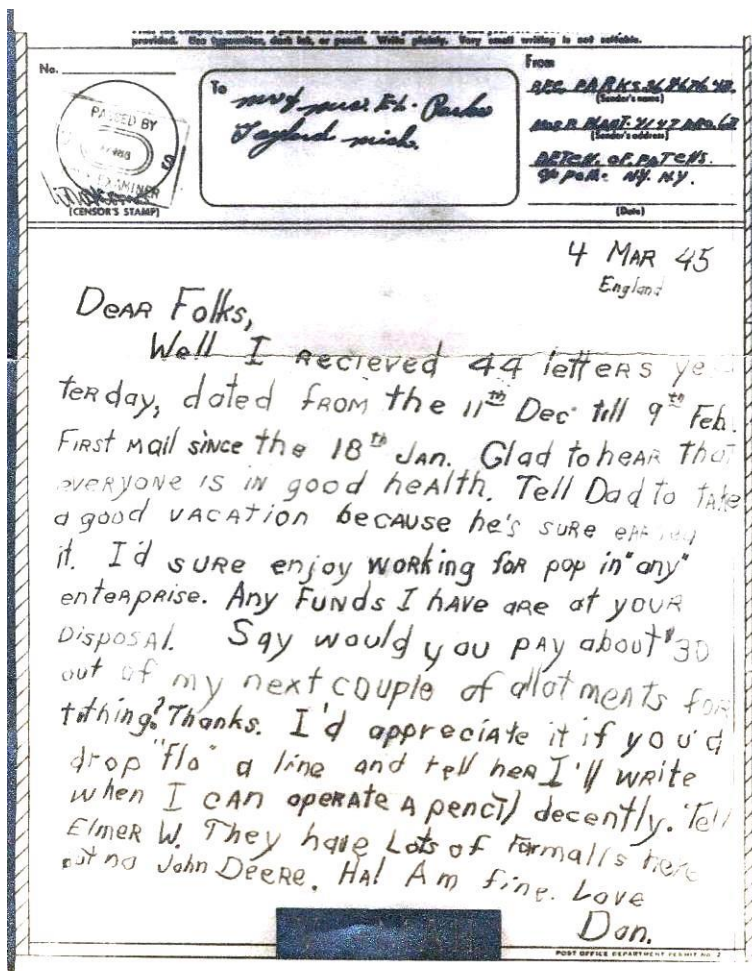
Well I'm really living the life of Rielly. No work, no drill, plenty of sleep, food, and leisure. Boy! This is O.K. They took the stitches out last week. Looks messed up but feels fine. I'll be fit as a fiddle in no time.

Say was Flo up home? Tell me about it. I'm wondering about Elaine. What's the news? Hands tired so I'll close. Write soon.

Love

Don

⁶³ Writing to his sister, Irene.



4 Mar 45

Dear Folks,

Well I received 44 letters yesterday, dated from the 11th Dec till 9th Feb. First mail since the 18th Jan. Glad to hear that everyone is in good health. Tell Dad to take a good vacation because he's sure earned it. I'd sure enjoy working for pop in "any" enterprise. Any funds I have are at your disposal. Say would you pay about \$30 out of my next couple of allotments for tithing? Thanks. I'd appreciate it if you'd drop Flo a line and tell her I'll write when I can operate a pencil decently. Tell Elmer W. they have lots of Farmalls here but no John Deere. Ha! Am fine.

Love

Don



AMERICAN RED CROSS

8 March 1945
England

Dear Folks,

Well, I guess I'll be going to a new hospital for a nerve operation. It isn't serious, so don't worry. This life is O.K.

I got a letter from Irene today written the 26th Feb. Pretty good service. Eh, What? Glad to hear that Flo enjoyed herself while visiting you. She's pretty nice isn't she?

Well I've been wondering how everything is going at home so don't be bashful about writing. Say can you read this? It's a wonder.

So Long

Don

Otsego County Herald Times
March 8, 1945

Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Parkes received from their son Don, wounded in Belgium some time ago, his Purple Heart. They also received a letter the first of the week, the first in six weeks, which he wrote with his left hand, saying he was getting along fine and was in a hospital in England.



AMERICAN RED CROSS

*10 March 45
England*

Dear Folks,

Well I got my glasses last night. Boy are they swell. Thanks folks. I guess I'll never be able to repay you for the way you help me when I get in a jam. I really appreciate it.

My mail is coming regular now. Wish I could write to answer them. Well it won't be long I guess. I think I'll go to Oxford next week to see the sights. Well I'll close now.

Lots of Love,

Don

After the field hospital, I was transferred to Paris General for a few weeks and then flew back with other patients on a C-47 to London. From there I transferred to another field hospital near Oxford, England. This was a temporary hospital made up of Quonset type huts. It was in this hospital that they tried to splice the nerves in my right arm together. A very painful operation because they needed to know when they touched the nerve so they could not use any anesthetic. When they touched the nerve it feels like a red-hot barbed wire poker being run up your arm. They told me that it takes a month to regenerate an inch of nerve. I survived the operation.

When we became ambulatory we were allowed to walk down a path to a little village and spend time in the pubs. Although I didn't drink it was still a very enjoyable pastime to sit around and talk. While I was at this hospital I met one of the platoon lieutenants from E company. He was shot through the butt and showed me where the wound was. He also told me that Sergeant Burkhardt who was one of the company master sergeants had been killed and I felt very bad about that, as he was a very good man. I also realized about this time that I could not remember any of the names or faces of any of the soldiers in E company that I had spent the last several months with. And I could not remember which rifle platoon I had been in.

17 March 45
England

Dear Folks,

Just a line to let you know I'm fine and hope you are all like wise. I'm at a new hospital which is O.K. My arm sure looks good and is itching like blazes. Was glad to hear that Elaine was doing so good in school. She was some worried I guess. I know how she felt.

Went to town the other day. It was kinda quiet. Going again tonight. Hands getting tired so I'll close.

Lots of love and write soon.

Your Son

Don

20 Mar 45
England

Dear Folks,

Well its about time to drop you a line so. – I was in Rectangle cut out of letter
Saturday and ran into a couple of fellows from my company. Both left the line before I did so no news but I was glad to see them. Old home week.

It's been very nice here. No snow and lots of sun. I don't think it snows here to speak of. I'd rather be home. This life gets me down but its still better than some places I could mention. Well I wish my mail would catch up but such is life. Write soon.

Love

Don

March 26, 1945

Dear Dad,

I was very delighted to receive the literature you sent me in regards to American Architecture. I figure the culture received is invaluable. I strongly suspect the hon. Floyd Lake would make a good partner in such a business venture as you suggested. Ha!

Well the old arm will soon be as good as new. This is the first letter I've attempted with it and I hope you can read it.

Sure was pleased with the VFW membership. Well I'll finish this left hand. They operated on me again last week. Some fun.

Did I tell you I ran into a couple of fellows from the old outfit here. We had quite a talk. I guess you can imagine. Well I'll close now. So Long For a While.

Your Son

Don

1 April 1945
England

Dear Mom,

Well here I am on Easter Sunday in a stew. The sun just came out so I want to go to town but I can't because I haven't a pass. Such luck. Tch! Tch!!

I'm out of a cast now and am in good shape. Don't worry about me going back to the front though. I'll tell you a secret. I expect to hit the old U.S. when transportation is available. That should keep you from worrying although it won't be for some time. This isn't official so don't say anything except to dad.

My mail has been coming quite regular, but no packages. I think some Hun is probably enjoying them. They got a lot of our mail up there.

Well I'll close now. I think you are the best folks in the world.

Love Don



AMERICAN RED CROSS

6 April 1945
England

Dear Folks,

Well the mail service has sure picked up. I got your last letter in about 10 days. Pretty good isn't it? I got some pictures from Flo of the old homestead and were they welcome. It was good to see you again.

I had a bad toothache the other day so the dentist xrayed it and after they pulled I saw the abscess and it was pretty big. Now my jaw is swollen like the mumps. Do I look funny. Lucky I got it out.

I'm slowly getting caught up on my mail. I guess I'll be getting back mail for months. It sure does pile up.

I saw a show in town the other night and Montgomery was in the newsreel. The British think he is quite a hero. By their news reels and papers it's hard to tell whether we have any troops over here or not. "Monty" is good though.

Well I hope everything is OK and I'll close for now cause I'm sleepy.

Love

Don

7 April

P.S. Got a package today. It had 2 rolls of film, hankies, socks, mitts, candy, gum and razor blades in it. You folks really know how to pack a box and what to put in it. Thanks a lot.

Got a letter from Uncle Allen today. Sure is nice to hear from people like him. I sure have received a lot of mail.

Say if you want to know anything about my arm, ask Elaine. The twerp has been reading up on this type of injury and knows as much as the docs do here. She's even guessed the extent and disposition along with the rest. She'll be a good Dr.

Saw a pretty good show and drew my rations today. 5 candy bars, gum, matches and cigarettes. Well. I'll close now

Love

Don

12 April 45
England

Dear Sis,⁶⁴

Well I'm writing in bed. I don't know how it will work yet. - - - Say I don't know as I've thanked you for your Sunday night letters but I sure enjoy them and the funnies. Just a little touch of home which comes over the big drink and makes me think of you. Sometimes I get a couple of weeks at the same time - lights out. The Star Spangled Banner always sounds beautiful. Listen - there's taps - - - Nite.

Well I heard about the President⁶⁵ the first thing this morning. I wonder how Truman will be?

Boy is the weather ever beautiful. It stays light till about 10:00 o'clock here and even after that its not too bad. I've been to town quite often lately and I certainly enjoy the moonlight.

It sure beats me why you are so anxious to get in the nurse corp. No that isn't true because I remember how I felt but a little Army life sure changes things. I received a bunch of pictures the other day. I like pictures better than anything. I'm afraid I lost a bunch of them in Belgium. Should have sent them home. That's why wars are tough.

Some good symphony on the radio now. I like it. Kinda restful and peaceful don't you think.

They just brought in a new patient. Most of these fellows are bullet cases. Some of them said they never saw or heard any jerry artillery up there. So much the better that artillery is hell plain and simple. Tears big jagged holes while a bullet leaves nice little smooth ones. Ah, me!

Well being in an unusually droll frame of mind I'll wind this up. If you don't hear from me before you get this, I'll be surprised. So Long Twit Don

U.S.A. HOSPITAL PLANT 4149
APO #G3 c/o POSTMASTER
NEW YORK N.Y.

DEAR Mrs Parkes :

I am pleased to inform you that on APR 14 1945 your
(Date)
Son Pfc Donald H Parkes, 36467643
(Relationship) (Grade, name, Army serial number)

was *

Diagnosis † evacuated to the United States, final report

Very truly yours,
Kenneth L. McAllister
KENNETH L. McALLISTER
1st LT. MAC
Registrar . UKB. 2-45/887M/L-13899 (16/44/4 52079) 31815

* Enter present status as—
Making normal improvement.
Convalescing.
† Must be written in nontechnical language.

W. D., A. G. O. Form 234
9 November 1944

⁶⁴ Writing to his sister, Irene.

⁶⁵ Referring to the death of President Franklin Roosevelt on April 12, 1945 at 3:35 pm of a stroke.

Back in the States

April 1945 – August 1946

The hospital ship bringing us back to the states docked in New York City on April 29, 1945. That was the day that the American troops liberated Dachau and Hitler married his girlfriend Eva Braun. The next day Hitler committed suicide. Victory in Europe (VE day) would be declared a short week later on May 7, 1945.

ARMY SERVICE FORCES
Sixth Service Command
Mayo General Hospital
Galesburg, Illinois

Reg No 7984 3 May 1945

Mrs. Lucy Parkes,
Gaylord, Michigan.

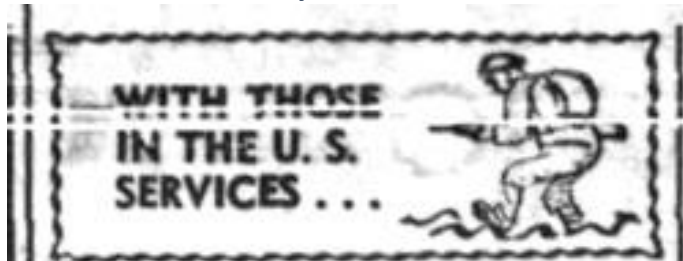
Dear Madam:

This is to inform you that Pfc Donald H. Parkes,
58,467,643, was admitted to
this Hospital by transfer from Debarcation Hospital,
Camp Shanks, NY on 2 May 1945
for further observation and treatment.

Visiting hours at this Hospital are from 2:00 to
4:00 PM and from 6:30 to 8:00 PM.

Very truly yours,
Robert A. Johnston
Robert A. Johnston
1st Lt., MAC
Registrar

Otsego County Herald Times
May 3, 1945



It is now S/Sgt. Mack R. Jaruzel, instead of Sgt. Mack is with the Seventh Army in Germany.

Pvt. Al McGow is now at Fort George Meade, Maryland. He has been transferred into a new outfit.

Allen J. Schreur, Floyd R. Campbell and Robert D. Smith are now at Great Lakes getting their boot training.

Word has been received that Lt. Margaret Mackowiak, who is stationed in England, has been quite ill for some time.

Major Clarence Libcke called home from Miami, Fla., Saturday night to announce his landing, and he expects to get home the last of the week.

A telephone message from Pvt. Don Parkes from New York, announces his landing. He reported feeling fine, but that he was being shipped to a hospital, and he hoped it was near Michigan.

Pvt. Athias A. Athias of Flint

6 May 1945
Galesburg, Ill

Dear Folks,

Well, here it is Sunday. Beautiful day out. Last Sunday I was in New York City. It was nice to see all those buildings even though I don't care for New York. Tuesday we took the train for here. It was a Hospital train so we didn't get to talk to any Civilians. We got in Thursday night late. Of course we had all the red tape of registering so I wasn't assigned a ward till yesterday. It's a nice hospital but they are very slow about giving passes and furloughs. We have Wac's to make our beds and clean up. There are a lot of Cadet nurses here also beside our regular nurses. They really take care of us.

Naturally I am all excited about getting a furlough and the delays seem interminable long. I guess I'll appreciate it more if I have to wait but boy, am I restless.

Well I hope you are all feeling O.K. and I think I'll close now. Hoping to see you soon.

Love

Don

9 May 1945

Dear Folks & RN,⁶⁶

Well I'm sitting on pins and needles wondering whether I'll get my furlough so I can be home by Sunday or not. In order to get anything around here, a person just about has to commit murder. I could have it just as well as not but nobody will take time to fix them. Boy, about tomorrow I'm going to blow up and end in the brig or the nut ward. Well, it's always darkest before dawn.

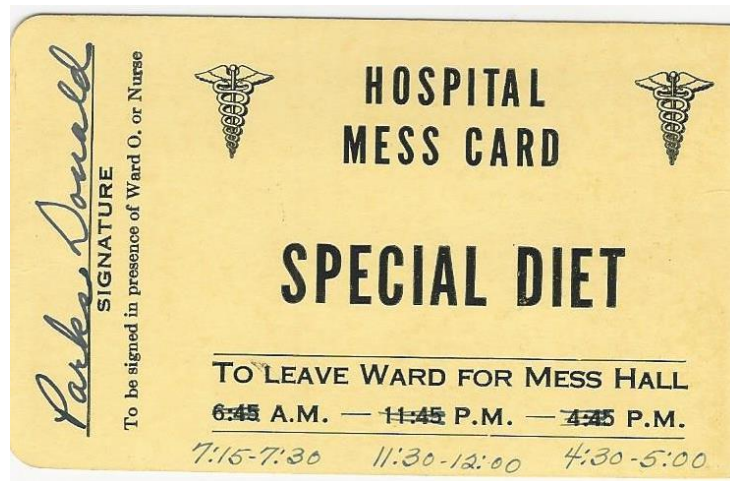
Thanks for all the offers of money but at present I'm all set. I haven't had a full pay in six months so I guess the government has been hoarding it for me. Say I had a big surprise this morning. I went down to the office to get some medals, awards, and campaign ribbons and guess what? They said I was entitled to a "never been caught" ribbon (Good Conduct to you). Boy oh boy, are they easily fooled.

I've been seeing a lot of shows and plays here. The USO and Red Cross are very active and try to keep us busy. Nice of them isn't it. They have quite a few name bands and movie stars here and even a few boxing matches but I guess nothing can make the time go fast when I want to go home. Well I gotta go to chow so I'll see you soon, I hope!

Love

Don

⁶⁶ RN refers to his sister, Irene, who had received her diploma in Nursing from Hurley Hospital.



Otsego County Herald Times
May 17, 1945

Sgt. Jack Culliton arrived home Thursday of last week to spend a part of his furlough with his father, other relatives and friends. He left for St. Louis, Mo. Tuesday, where he will hold a reunion with 3 other close friends, whom he has not seen since their aviation student days in Washington. He is stationed in Texas, and is limping around due to a broken ankle.

→ Don Parkes, who was returned from England a few weeks ago on a hospital ship, and who has been at an army hospital in Illinois, returned home Tuesday morning for a short furlough with his parents, sisters and other friends.

Company E - 291st Infantry,
APO 451, c/o Postmaster, NY, NY,
21 May 1945,

Pfc Donald Parkes, 36467643,
Mayo General Hospital, Ward C-12
Galesburg, Illinois,

Dear Pfc. Parkes,

Your V-Mail of 7 May 1945 was recently recieved. The first recommendations for the combat infantryman's badge were put in on about 20 January, which was two days after you were wounded at Grand Halleaus, Belgium. Since you were not with the company at the time the recommendations were put in, your name was not on the list. As much as we would like to do some thing in order for you to get the badge, which you deserve, there is nothing that we can do.

Many letters have been received from men who are in a similar situation as yours. We have inquired about getting something done in order that they may be given the badge but as yet have not been able to have anything done on the matter.

We were glad to see that you had been returned to the States and hope that you are getting along fine. We have recently heard that Lt. Hudnall will not be coming back to the company. Lt. Tracy returned to the company a few days ago and is looking very good.

I am sorry that I cannot be of any real assistance to you in this matter. If I can be of service in any other way please don't hesitate to let me know.

Sincerely,

Harvey P. Cannon
Harvey P. Cannon
1st Lieut. Inf.,
Commanding.

Otsego County Herald Times
June 14, 1945

Don Parkes left for a hospital in Illinois Tuesday night, after having a five-week furlough at home. Don has a bad right arm, where shrapnel went through it, and which has effected the nerves. He has promise that an operation will help, and possibly restore complete use of his arm and hand.

MAYO GENERAL HOSPITAL
GALESBURG, ILLINOIS

15 JUNE 1945

Dear Folks,

Well I arrived without trouble and on time and as it turned out I was very lucky because that night at our weekly broadcast "Hello From Mayo" we had as our guest star Basil Rathbone in the flesh. Pretty good program if I do say so myself. We have a lot of actors visit us for morale purposes. We are supposed to be very unhappy at being in a hospital instead of where we were. I guess some people will never wise up. Oh well, I should worry.

I think I'll go up to Chicago next weekend and see Lois. I think I can get a 3 day pass so we should have a good time.

Did you get the bonds? They had them all made out so I just sealed the envelope and sent it. I drew my pay and I think I'll send \$50 of it home next week. Boy haven't I got a lotta dough. Next month I can draw all my back insurance premiums on accounta I'm in a hospital. I guess I probably be rich time I get outta the Army. Oh Hum! Wonder what I'll do with it all. Well I'll close for now.

Love

Don

MAYO GENERAL HOSPITAL
GALESBURG, ILLINOIS

25 June 1945
Galesburg, Ill

Dear Folks,

Well I had a very pleasant weekend. Friday my dentist pulled a tooth and finished my fillings so I got my dental clearance. Then I switched wards and about 11:00 the ward boy gave us all passes till Monday morning. I spent Friday night in Chicago and Saturday I went out and saw Lois. She had till Monday off so we spent the weekend together in Chicago. We had a nice visit and saw quite a bit of the place including Sammy Kaye. It's a great place for servicemen.

This ward I'm in now is for outgoing patients. I'm waiting for a 60 day furlough which should come thru this weekend. I would rather wait till payday but they won't let me.

I've been making radios. Right now I'm working on a three tube affair. It's going to be O.K. I'm also making a bracelet out of plastic for Flo. It's a lot of fun and they look nice.

If Elaine is in Detroit this weekend I'll probably see her as Flo has the weekend off I'll probably stay over till Monday anyway. Well must close. See you soon.

Don

July 4, 1945

Dear Folks,

Well I'm out to Chet's and its pretty nice. The cottage isn't much but they have a nice lawn and the lake is pretty. Chet is quite a carpenter so he'll fix the house I guess.

Saw Flo last weekend and we went out to dinner with Hank and Irene. They wanted her to stay overnight so she did. We had a lot of fun and everyone likes everyone else. Chet's invited her out to the cottage this weekend. It would be nice if she could get out of Detroit for the weekend just for a change. We'll see.

Chet is going to drive up to Harold's place next week so I thought I'd wait and go up with him. Have not seen Harold for some time. Well here's my love for the family and will see you soon. I'm getting my vitamins and a nice fan so don't worry about me.

Love

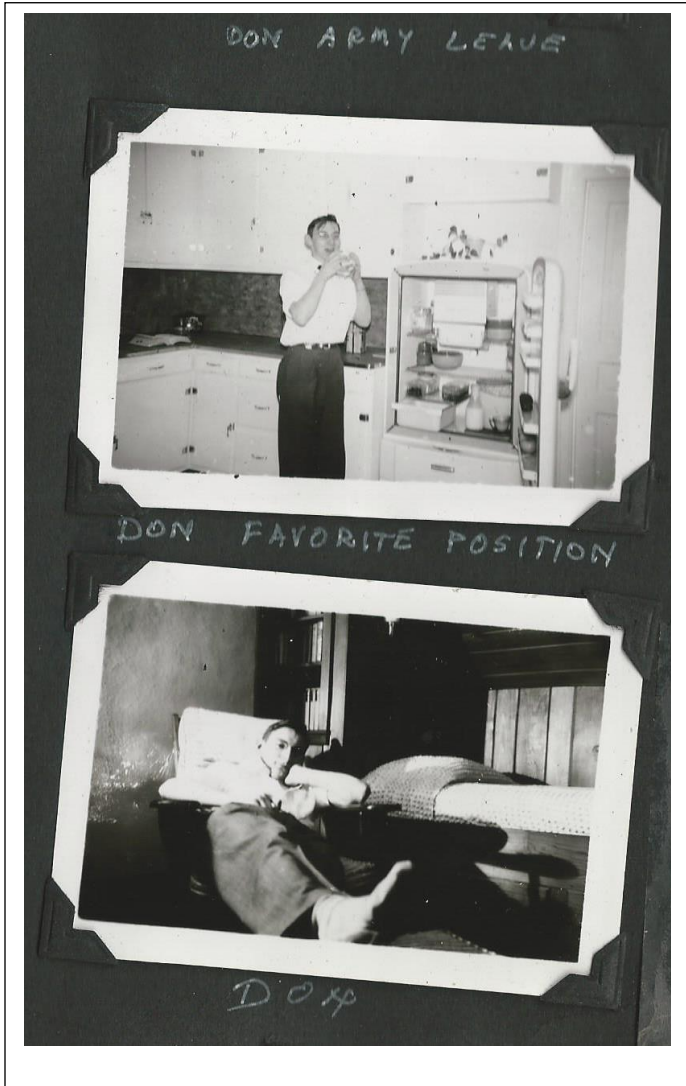
Don

While I was home on furlough I was able to go to Family Reunion at Park of the Pines. One of the fellows and I went into Boyne City to get something (I don't remember what) and there were people yelling and shouting in the streets, smiling, and hugging. We asked someone what the ruckus was all about. "The Japs have surrendered!" someone yelled. That's great news. It was Thursday, August 16, 1945 and the war was finally over!

We went to the gas station and asked the owner if we could get enough gas to go to Gaylord. Gas was still rationed at that time. "Heck, yes, fellows! Fill her up!" So we did. We drove to Gaylord and when we got there the Fire department had their hoses out and were spraying everyone. Just like Boyne City – it was one great big celebration.



This is what I did the rest of the time I was on furlough:



2 September
Galesburg, Ill

Dear Folks,

Well the doctors just made rounds and I'm in line for an operation. They called it a tendon transplant. I think I explained it to you once. I'll be transferred to ward C-7 in a day or so I guess. In the meantime I'll just have to wait I guess.

We got paid last weekend so I'm sending it all and some extra to you. Pay Dad the ten I borrowed from him and bank the rest. I went down to see about my insurance and they said I'd collect my back premiums in about 3 months. After next month I won't have to pay so that'll give me an extra \$6 per month. Oh boy I'll be a Danged ole Millionaire, when I get out of the Army. (I wish)

Well I'll get this off so I can go to dinner. Will write more later. How's Shasta and the lots down at the lake⁶⁷. Is Elaine still working and when is Irene's vacation over. Write soon.

Love

Don

7 / Sept / 45
Galesburg, Ill.

Dear Folks,

Got your letter this afternoon. Thanks a lot. I was intending to write anyway as I have a little business to attend to.

First did you get my medal? Cute, huh. Now if I ever get any kids I'll prove how good I was (ok how smart). It tickles me all over.

Secondly, I would like to have you send that business course to me that came while I was home. I think its in my bunk and there are two books. They should be right together.

I think Kip and I will drive up to Chicago tomorrow. We're going to bring his wife back with us. Maybe I'll get a chance to see Lois.

We went swimming today in the pool. It's O.K. They had some rubber flippers for the feet and boy can you go with them. Think I'll swipe a pair and bring them home. Some fun.

Have you done anything at the lot lately? They haven't told me anything more lately and I don't know when I'll get home. Well so long.

Love

Don

⁶⁷ The family had purchased several lots on Otsego Lake south of Gaylord.

15 Sept 1945
Galesburg, Ill

Dear Mom,

Well here it is Sunday and if I'm not mistaken it's Irene's birthday. I hope she had a nice one. While we are on birthdays what do you suggest we get Elaine and dad. I've been looking at my budget and it says about all I can spare is \$5 a piece. If you and Irene have anything in mind for that price or if you think we should collaborate just let me know. By the way are you allowed to draw money out of my bank account? If so take it out of there. If not I'll send it when I get paid. O.K? Say if you haven't already done it I wish you'd send me \$10. I owe \$5 to a fellow who is going on a 90 day furlough. I think I told you. I went up to Chicago with him and saw Gerald Hansen there. Some fun.

I've been studying my business course and reading a lot lately. I found a good book on chess. Maybe I'll take a correspondence course in Spanish. Who knows?

There are no new developments on the old flipper. I'll let you know what they decide, if and when they decide.

When does Elaine go back to school? How is Bobby Lee⁶⁸? What as Irene been doing. Well I better close now. I think I'm going to be real homesick next week.

All my love
Don

P.S. I just remember I bought Elaines birthday. Start thinking about Xmas.

17 August 45
Galesburg, Ill

Dear Folks,

I got your letter today and the dough. Thanks a lot. I think this is the first time since I can remember that I've been broke flat for more than a week. Of course I have my silver dollar. A guy doesn't really need to spend much around here. I never go on pass and they furnish plenty of entertainment around here. Oh –

Tonight I saw a USO show "Suntan Review", negro cast and was it good. Boy, oh Boy!! It was real entertainment. Those darkie's are good.

I saw the show "Madam Curie" the other night. It was very good. Told all about how they discovered Radium. Very interesting.

I told you that I'm now in C-7 didn't I? After rounds Thursday I'll let you in on the score. The doc here is pretty good.

Gee I'm getting excited about that collie pup. Should have a dog. Cats Phooooeeey!
Well give my love to the Brats (?) and Bobby Lee and I'll close now.

Love
Don

⁶⁸ Roberta Wakely was Don's young cousin. The family called her Bobbie Lee. She was the daughter of Don's mother's sister, Evelyn.

21 Sept 45
Galesburg, Ill.

Good Evening Folks,

Well at last it happened. I've been waiting almost two weeks now. Today they did it. They made rounds and marvel of marvel they actually discovered I was here along with a few other things. I got a real going over and among other things they found out something I've known for some time. Namely that my arm was still broken. Recommendation: x-ray and bone graft, tendon transplant and some other operation I didn't quite understand. Guess I'll be here some time yet. They seemed very capable so I feel quite good about the whole thing. At this rate I'll be a two year man yet. Ha, Hum.

I got the cake today and it was most excellent. I found it rather rich in comparison to this prison fare and most welcome. Thanks very much.

It seems there are certain people who have little regard for rank or station. Mr. Parkes! Be it know unto you that I am attained the rank of Private "first class." Hereafter I would be obliged if you would so address me. Pvt. Hhmpf!

I've been reading a great deal lately. So much so that the fellows have been joshing me. I could recognize a lot of authors now by there writing even if it wasn't on the book. It seems writers have a definite technique which is as easy to recognize as their face. I never noticed it before. Most inject there philosophy of life into their books. The thought comes to me. I should have been a philosopher. Oh well.

I'm really getting to enjoy the swimming pool here. It's seldom crowded so I get to play with no interference.

Well I guess I'd better close as it's getting time for my evening snack.

So long

Don

29 Sept 45
Galesburg

Dear Folks,

Just a note to let you know I'm still kicking. There is not much to do around here now. I've been a bad boy so they restricted me to the ward. Of course it doesn't mean anything because no one ever checks up to see if your there or not.

Saw the show "Laura" tonight. It was pretty good. Nice plot build up and climax. The acting was also super. Take it in if you get a chance.

I read a good book about the Civil War by Henrietta Bushmiester. I believe it was. You know a person can learn a lot about the causes and effects of war along with a lot of human nature by studying the Civil War. Some times it's hard to know what is right and what is wrong especially when so much truth is covered by propoganda. Listen to me ramble.

Oh by the way I probably won't be operated for three weeks or so so don't worry about it. I'd like to get it over with but seems like it takes ages.

Hit parade is on so I'll close.

Love

Don

2 Oct 45
Galesburg

Dear Folks,

I cannot tell a lie. By the time you get this I'll be cut from end to tother. Just wanted to send some dough home. Got \$58.32 of which I'm sending \$55.00. Pay my debts and if there is any left bank it.

Love

Don

Otsego County Herald Times
October 18, 1945

Pfc. Donald Parkes quite recently submitted to an operation on his arm at the Mayo General Hospital in Galesburg, Ill. Don, whose arm was shattered during the Battle of the Bulge, underwent several operations overseas but they were not successful. Since his return to the States his arm was again X-rayed to show that about two inches of bone was gone and this operation was a graft of a portion of bone from his leg to his arm and is the first one of three that are necessary before full recovery is effected. Of course, he has a leg and an arm each in a cast at present but though confined to his bed most of the time deems himself indeed fortunate in knowing that in time he will recover the entire use of the injured arm. Donald is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Parkes and although just 20 now has been in service over 18 months.

15 Oct 45
Galesburg

Dear Folks,

Just a line to let you know I am O.K. except for feeling a little restless. That'll go as soon as I can walk again. Our wards are connected by corridors and they have a little ramp in between. Makes it rather hard to go any place in a wheel chair. Then only having one hand bothers too. Oh well another six weeks and it will be over. This scribble makes me mad.

I read a book by Lloyd Douglas and was rather disappointed. Nothing behind it. I'm going to read "The Robe". I may like it better.

Guess I'll close while I still have a little temper left.

Don

19 Oct 45
Galesburg

Dear Folks,

I was pleasantly surprised yesterday to receive two packages. They both were in fine shape. The radio plays very fine even in the day. I don't think I'll ever run out of anything to eat. My craving for food is still far from normal. Thanks heaps.

As of yesterday I have only six weeks to go on my big cast. The time goes fairly fast.

I read "Native Son" by R. Wright and also "The Robe" this week. Of the two I enjoyed "Native Son" most. "The Robe" was a disappointment. It lacked power of presentation and historical authenticity. I've read three of L.C.D's⁶⁹ novels and they all seem rather mediocre. I guess I'm not much of a critic.

The nurse just spilled some ether on the ward and it is making me dizzy. Hope I don't get sick.

Lt Polinski, the ward nurse, saw the leaf Irene sent and said she wished it were a maple leaf. She's from Canada and it made her homesick. She's a nice nurse and a lot of fun too.

How is Mrs. Ford these days? I'll never forget how she made fun of her fake teeth. Hope she's getting along O.K. and tell her hello for me when you see her.

Well how was the conference? It's this weekend if I'm not mistaken isn't it? Let me know if anything exciting happens.

Just got a letter from you. Wait till I read it.

Irene told me in her last letter that she was walking to work. I think it is a lot of fun to walk but it sure does work up an appetite. By the way how is Shasta these days? Still ticking I hope.

I'm really not at all uncomfortable and I can get around pretty good in my old wheel chair. Don't worry about me. Everyone ought to be tied down like this once just so they'll appreciate what they are missing and can catch up on any reading they missed.

Well guess I'll close.

Love

Don

⁶⁹ L.C.D. – Lloyd C. Douglas, author of "The Robe".

29 Oct 45
Galesburg

Dear Folks,

It's been some time since I've written but there really hasn't been any news to write about. I haven't been anywhere or done anything except read and loaf.

I started this letter yesterday but I guess I'm lazy. I just got your letter today and a box of candy from Mrs. Schreur. Nice huh? Last week I had a letter from Betty.

By the way is the city putting on a Halloween party for the kids? It was so much fun and I think the grownups enjoyed it as much as the kids.

I've been studying business law and its really quite interesting. It really is just ordinary law that everyone should know. Maybe I'll be a lawyer. Who knows?

Sunday Is about the same as any other day here except we have the funnies. I keep to a pretty close schedule the rest of the week. It wouldn't sound like much of a schedule to you but it is to me.

How is Mrs Ford getting along these days? It's been quite a while since they operated on her hasn't it.

Just heard Eddie Howards orchestra. It wasn't bad.

Well guess I'll close now. I'm feeling fine so don't worry about me.

Love

Don

2 Nov 45
Galesburg

Dear Folks,

Was kinda waiting for your letters. For a change I've got some news for you. I've been doing something. They changed my arm cast so I got a chance to see the knife work. The doc took out 24 stitches and they really came out slick. The scar came out neat also. It's about six inches long. The post-op x-ray shows the graft is recessed in the bone so it is even. It's held in place by three screws and I'm pleased as can be with the whole operation.

We got paid yesterday. When you get my next allotment you better save it for Xmas presents. I think I'm going to be short. You better send my blouse and pants to me. I mean the OD's⁷⁰. I'll have to have them if I go on furlough. There is some talk of a transfer so you better get them off as soon as its convenient. Thanks for getting them cleaned.

We cut the fruit cake you sent today. Boy is it good. Bob had a big cherrie on his piece so I swiped it. Mean aren't I?

Well I have only four weeks to go in my leg cast. Hah!

Guess I'll close now.

Love

Don

⁷⁰ Olive drab uniform

9 Nov 45
Galesburg

Dear Folks,

Well another week has gone by already. Time sure does fly by when your busy. Seems only a couple days ago that I had eight long weeks to lay around. So now I have only three short weeks of the wheel chair brigade before I'll be walking again.

Incidentally I've been teaching a couple of the boys to play hearts. I beat them so much that now they gang me and I can't win. It's fun though.

I read a couple more books on the Civil War. The more I read of it the more interested I get in it. There is so much to be learned from it. Incidentally I think its about time we quit appeasing Russia and started talking tough. No use fighting wars and end up with an appeasement policy. I'm going to be a radio operator in the Merchant Marine in the next war.

The first I heard about Walt Fritz at the store was when you said he wasn't there anymore. I hope Bob Prey makes out O.K. He seems to be nice from what I've seen.

I'm sure glad Elaine decided to branch into Medical Tech. She sure is a loveable little spitfire. The Pot.

I got your stationery all right. It'll have to last till I get out of the Army.

Oh say what date does Elaine's birthday come on?

I took my course test in Business the other day. It was fun.

Well guess I'll close now. Hope you're all O.K.

Love

Don

9 Nov 45
Galesburg

Dear Sis,⁷¹

Haw, I'm going to stick you again. Please find \$10 enclosed. It is to be split on Dad's birthday and Xmas presents. I haven't the slightest idea what you can find and I know it isn't much dough but it's all I can make up right now. Of course I'm open for consultation. Ha!

We had rounds today. Nothing new happened. The Doctors said three more weeks and I'll be ambulatory. It's actually two weeks and five days now. Time flies doesn't it.

I got my OD's yesterday and they were in fine shape. Tell the folks thanks a lot. I also got a box of chocolate from Mrs. Kramer. What do you know?

By the way have my pictures come back yet? Tisn't every day I get reckless enough to throw \$50 around.⁷²

I'm listening to the radio. You'll never know how much I enjoy it. I never really appreciated a radio before.

All furloughs have been cancelled. Some big gun in D.C. got worried about all the empty beds in the convalescent hospitals so the fellows are sent there instead of on furlough. That's Army I guess.

Well I'll close now. Love

Don

⁷¹ Writing to Irene

⁷² Referring to having his formal portrait taken in his Army uniform

11 Nov 45
Galesburg

Dear Folks,

Well here it is Sunday afternoon and I'm listening to the Italian opera "Il Tratore" or something. Makes me feel dreamy. There is a lot of static so we must have a storm coming up. It's kinda dark out.

Say have the Schreur's gotten any new cars in yet? I wonder what the price will be. I hope I can afford one. I'll talk to them when I get home. I expect to get home for Xmas for a short time anyway. Can't tell though. Last year they gave most of the fellows Xmas furloughs. I see that Anne and Lord Twifflepip are getting along O.K. That's fine.

How is Mrs Ford these days? I hope she is getting along O.K. Mr Ford must have had a good time hunting.

Guess I'll close as there is not much news. Love

Don

Donald H. Parkes
Mayo Gen. Hospital
Galesburg, Ill.

12 Nov, 45

Dear Folks,

Boy, you must be mind readers or something. I was going to write for my O.D. cap and low and behold here it is. You're really on the ball and thanks a lot.

I got a box of candy from Mrs. Kramer and I've written her a long letter so that squares accounts. The candy was pretty good.

Glad to hear that Mr. Schreur is back in the car business. From the advertising I've seen, all the Chevies for a while will be 4-door. You can buy one, I'll wait and get a two door. Or a 5-passenger coupe. Ha!

I always thought pet gas would be a good business because after the initial installment its almost all clear profit. Nice racket to be in.

Went down and got my hair cut the other day. Feel kinda light headed.

Tell Mr. Meyoos he can use the rifle because I won't be home to use it. Of course, I'll expect him to save me a venison stake.

Say you better take care of Shasta. By all rumors she won't last till I can get home to renovate it. If you have to junk it, save "my" airplane from the radiator cap. Don't worry though, I'll fix it all up when I get home. Ahem.

Did you know that I am studying Business law? It's quite interesting.

Well here's Bob Hope on the radio so I'll close. Love

Don

Donald H. Parkes
Mayo Gen. Hospital
Galesburg, Ill.

19 Nov 45

Hi Folks,

I read the letters from Mr. & Mrs. Pidgeon. It's nice that they are working together and are both getting along so well. Quite a couple.

I got a scrapbook full of pinups and jokes from Bob Laur today. They are funny and we got quite a bang out of them. He must have spent quite a lot of time on them.

Well who's getting the deer this year? My mouth just waters for a hunk of venison. Sslurp. Save me a piece or I'll disown you.

I've been busy reading, studying, and playing Sheepshead⁷³ so there isn't much to write about. I'm feeling fine and getting just a little impatient to be walking and get home. Hope you are all fine and happy.

Love

Don

P.S. I notice the car prices are out. I'll order one when I get home.

25 Nov 45
Galesburg

Dear Folks,

Well here it is Sunday and me with a pile of mail to answer. I got your box of nuts Wednesday and we just finished them. They were really good while they lasted. Thanks a lot.

Mae sent me a scrapbook full of jokes last week and I do get a big kick out of them. I'll have to write them tomorrow.

We had a nice family style meal for thanksgiving. It was for the fellows who eat from trays on the ward. I really enjoyed it. We had turkey etc.

I don't know when I'll be home. I'll be physically able in about two weeks but furloughs are hard to get now. There is a rumor that everyone will get six days at either Xmas or New Years. So – you see how it is. They've been calling everyone in from 90 days.

Bobbie Lee's marbles were pretty good I think.

They won't be able to operate on me for two months or more.

I got a letter from Elaine the twerp. She says she got her box and opened it before she knew it was for her birthday. Ha!

Well guess I'll close.

Love

Don

⁷³ Sheepshead or Sheephead is a trick-taking card game. It is the Americanized version of a card game that originated in Central Europe in the late 18th century under the German name *Schafkopf*. Sheepshead is most commonly played by five players, but variants exist to allow for two to eight players.

Donald H. Parkes
Mayo Gen. Hospital
Galesburg, Ill.

2 Dec 45

Dear Folks,

Sure was nice to here your voice last night. I'd been sleeping so I felt kinda dopy. Guess I sounded like it.

I'm enclosing a money order for \$60. Better bank it for me. It's my insurance refund. I'm saving my pay check to come home on. If – that is.

Say Mom, in my closet somewhere there is a blue barracks bag. World you send it to me pronto? I'll probably go to Battle Creek so I'll need it. I asked Doc. for a furlough and he said I'd have to wait till I was transferred. My leg is fine but my knee and ankle are pretty stiff.

Guess I'll close now.

Love

Don

Donald H. Parkes
Mayo Gen. Hospital
Galesburg, Ill.

8 Dec 45

Dear Folks,

Well I'm glad Poppa had a nice birthday⁷⁴ but for some reason I kept thinking that it was the 12th, so I didn't send a card yet. My intentions were good though.

I got the Barracks bag and your letter today. It sure came fast. We expect to leave for convalescence next week. Nothing definite yet. Not even sure we are going to Battle Creek. Just cross your fingers for me.

About the pictures fix it up like you said. The Boys (Uncles to me) Mrs K. and the Fords. I think better send one to Flo also don't you think? If there is anyone else you know best.

Say I've been reading what you bought for Xmas. It's all nice but I'll bet I owe you money. Be sure and keep track of it because with \$6.00 in bonds and cash I can pay for my own Xmas presents. Thanks a lot. We will shop some more when I get home (fib).

Not much new around here so I'll sign off.

Love

Don

⁷⁴ Don's father's birthday was December 4th.

10 Dec 45
Galesburg

Hi Folks,

Just got the news. We're leaving Thurs. for Battle Creek. I'll let you know when I get there what furlough arrangements are. Keep your fingers crossed.

Just saw a USO show. It was pretty good.

Elaine wrote. Guess she's pretty busy.

I was really surprised to hear Al on the phone. Must have had a bad connection because I couldn't here most of the time. Well so long for now.

Love

Don

6 Jan 46

Dear Folks,

Well here I am all caught up on my sleep and ready to go. I stayed a day in Detroit and saw Chet and Hank and Irene of course. The bus I took broke down a couple of times so it was a couple hours late getting in.

I got paid Saturday but as near as I can figure the check was about \$6 short. I haven't cashed it yet.

Some of the girls I met this summer sent me a Xmas box. Was I surprised.

I had a consultation with a nerve specialist who said no more nerve operations but maybe a tendon transplant. Ha! The cast is still on.

How is Elaine? Has she gone back yet? Oh yes I got a book from the Herald Pub house also. I don't know who it's from. Do you?

The weather here⁷⁵ is about like spring. It's been rainy and windy but it's pretty nice out now. Well so long for a while.

Love

Don

⁷⁵ The envelope is postmarked Battle Creek Mich

10 Jan 46

Dear Folks,

Well have I ever been a busy little bee. Yesterday I thought I'd better get my affairs straightened up so I went down to see the counselor. Boy does he know his stuff. Well anyhow I had him cancel my bonds and allotment so I'll be drawing full pay soon. Then I went to the legal assistance officer and had him make out a power of attorney for Mom. If we're going in business together she'll need it. I expect to get it soon and I'll send it up.

This morning I went back to see the counselor again about combat pay. He says I have a good chance of getting it plus back pay on it. Somewhere in my desk drawer you'll find the letter I got from my company about it. Would you send it to me?

I'm enclosing the \$5 I owe Dad and I think that will square us up. I haven't seen the Major yet but will write when I do.

Love, Don

14 Jan 46
Fort Custer

Dear Folks,

Well I got your letter today and naturally was very pleased. I thought you said you sold the car and was all set to blow up when I realized it must be the cow. Don't scare me like that. I'm sorry to here that the Meyers are moving. They are pretty nice people. How are the new tenants? What are they like? You want to be careful the OPA doesn't get you for violating price control.

I sent my power of attorney this morning. Just be careful with it.

I had a new cast put on Friday. The xrays looked good and the Major said it would be about two months before it would be O.K. to have the cast off. I'll see him Wednesday and see if I can't get 30 day furlough. Incidentally I saw Helen Wilbur. Her husband is in charge of the coat room.

You must have had a little snow last weekend. We got a little.

I probably need some money if I get a furlough. I'll let you know.

Well I'll close now.

Lots of Love
Don

P.S. Thanks for the two enclosed letters.

SXSC FORM
25 JUL 45

118

AUTHORITY TO WEAR DECORATIONS

STATION

P. J. H. C. Ft. Custer, Mich.

NAME (Last, First, Middle Initial)

PARKES, DONALD H.

RANK

PFC.

ASN

36 467 643

ORGANIZATION

D-1-2

THE ABOVE-NAMED PERSON IS AUTHORIZED TO WEAR THE
DECORATIONS INDICATED ON REVERSE SIDE OF THIS CARD.

DATE ISSUED

16 Jan. 46

VERIFIED BY

[Signature]

Jan 21, 46
Ft Custer

Dear Folks,

Well things are about the same as usual around here. My steam engine is coming along fine and I should finish it this week I hope. All there is to make yet is the piston and cylinder which aren't too difficult. It's pretty cute.

I haven't been able to find out about a furlough yet. I'll go up and see the medical officer Wednesday. Better send me about \$10 just in case. If I don't get a furlough I'm going to Flint this weekend. The Red Cross is furnishing accommodation.

I haven't done anything but sleep and loaf lately. I'm getting lazier every day. Had my blouse cut down to the tune of eight dollars.

Say has Irene got her radio back. Come payday I'll square accounts with her.

Well guess I'll close for now. Will let you know if anything happens.

Love

Don

25 Jan 46
Ft Custer

Dear Folks,

Just a line to let you know how things are. I'm going to Flint this afternoon with the Red Cross. It's a free weekend.

Monday I go down for a orthopedic consultation. Boy how I've been sweating that out. I'm kinda anxious to find out what's going to happen.

I've been bowling the last couple of days. Left hand. I average about 80 with a high game 108. Can't quite get the swing of it.

That furlough seems to keep receding. Might as well kiss it goodbye.

Did Irene get her radio back?

Mrs Scott wrote me and asked if I'd help her with the Juniors at reunion. I said I would. Have you any material on it?

My watch is running fast again. Guess I'll have to get it fixed.

Just got a letter from Elaine the Pot. Well I'll write next week.

Love

Don

On the back of these pictures Don has written R.J. Norris and me April 46



CLASS "A" PASS

HEADQUARTERS OF ISSUE
Fort Custer, Michigan

NAME (Last, First, Middle Initial)
Parkes, Donald H.

SERIAL NO.
36 467 343

GRADE
Pfc

ORGANIZATION
Conv Hospk Co D, 1st Bn, PJHC.

This pass is valid during off-duty hours,
Sundays and Holidays, ~~XX~~ ~~XX~~ ~~XX~~ ~~XX~~ ~~XX~~ ~~XX~~ ~~XX~~ ~~XX~~ ~~XX~~ ~~XX~~

~~XXX~~

~~XXX~~

within a radius of 60 miles of this headquarters

EXPIRATION DATE
31 Aug 46

SIGNATURE OF COMMANDING OFFICER
S. J. Fleming
NAMES **S. J. FLEMING** RANK **2nd Lt MAC**

SIGNATURE OF BEARER
Donald Parkes

Honorable Discharge
August 29, 1946



Honorable Discharge

This is to certify that

DONALD H PAYES

36 457 543 Corporal Infantry Unassigned

Army of the United States

is hereby Honorably Discharged from the military service of the United States of America.

This certificate is awarded as a testimonial of Honest and Faithful Service to this country.

Given at **PERCY JONES GENERAL HOSPITAL, Fort Custer, Michigan**

Date **29 August 1946**

STATE OF MICHIGAN, } ss.
County of Otsego, }

RECEIVED, FILED AND ENTERED

In Scher
No 4 On page 145
Filed 5 day of August A. D. 1946

[Signature]
Clerk

CERTIFIED FOR MICHIGAN
MICHIGAN'S MILITARY

[Signature]
April 12, 1947

M. W. Woolley

M. W. WOOLLEY
Major, MAC

**ENLISTED RECORD AND REPORT OF SEPARATION
HONORABLE DISCHARGE**

1. LAST NAME - FIRST NAME - MIDDLE INITIAL Parbes Donald H		2. ARMY SERIAL NO. SS 487 843	3. GRADE Opl	4. TIME IN SERVICE Inf	5. COMPONENT AUS
4. ORGANIZATION Company E 231st Inf 78th Div		7. DATE OF SEPARATION 23 Aug 46	8. PLACE OF SEPARATION Hospital Ft Custer Michigan		
9. PERMANENT ADDRESS FOR MAILING PURPOSES Caylord Michigan			10. DATE OF BIRTH 25 Apr 1925	11. PLACE OF BIRTH Caylord Michigan	
13. ADDRESS FROM WHICH EMPLOYMENT WILL BE REPORTED Same as Item 9			14. COLOR EYES Green	15. COLOR HAIR Brown	16. HEIGHT 5' 6"
17. NO. DENTURES	18. NO. DENTURES	19. NO. DENTURES	20. NO. DENTURES	21. NO. DENTURES	22. NO. DENTURES
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
21. SKILLS OCCUPATION AND NO. Student-Mechanical Engineering X-02					

MILITARY HISTORY

23. DATE OF INDUCTION 23 Mar 44	24. DATE OF EXPIRATION 23 Mar 44	25. DUTY STATION Detroit Michigan	26. PLACE OF ENTRY INTO SERVICE Detroit Michigan
27. SELECTIVE SERVICE DATA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	28. LOCAL S.S. NUMBER I	29. COUNTY AND STATE Ottawa Co Michigan	30. HOME ADDRESS AT TIME OF ENTRY INTO SERVICE 215 S Thayer Ann Arbor Michigan
31. MILITARY OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALTY AND NO. Message Center Clerk 687		32. DUTY STATION AND NO. (If applicable, specify all military stations, etc.) Combat Infantryman 16 January 1946	
33. BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS Rhineland Ardennes			
34. DECORATIONS AND CITATIONS World War II Victory Medal European-African Middle Eastern Theatre Ribbon with Two (2) Bronze Service Stars Good Conduct Medal Combat Infantry Badge Purple Heart American Theatre Ribbon			
35. PLACES WHERE IN MOTION Belgium 10 Jan 45			

36. SERVICE OUTSIDE CONTINENTAL U. S. AND RETURN		37. SERVICE OUTSIDE CONTINENTAL U. S. AND RETURN	
ARRIVAL	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	DEPARTURE
6 Apr 44	25 Apr 44	13 May 44	Typhus 25 Oct 44
38. TOTAL LENGTH OF SERVICE		39. SERVICE OUTSIDE CONTINENTAL U. S. AND RETURN	
YEARS	MONTHS	DAYS	DATE
1	11	0	6 7
40. GRADE SERVICE		41. GRADE SERVICE	
None		Opl	
42. REASON AND AUTHORITY FOR SEPARATION Certificate of Disability for Discharge Section I AR 475-367 11 Jan 45			
43. SERVICE RECORD ATTACHED None			

PAY DATA

44. MONTHLY PAY	45. MONTHLY PAY	46. MONTHLY PAY	47. MONTHLY PAY	48. MONTHLY PAY	49. MONTHLY PAY
3	5	7	100.00	None	12.80
50. TOTAL AMOUNT, NAME OF MEMORANDUM OFFICER 214.80 J L SHROYER and Lt. P					

INSURANCE NOTICE

51. BASIS OF INSURANCE						52. BASIS OF INSURANCE					
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
53. PREMIUM PAY						54. PREMIUM PAY					
31 Aug 46						30 Sep 46					
6.00						6.00					

55. SIGNATURE OF PERMEE BEING SEPARATED Donald H Parbes	56. REMARKS (This space for completion of above items or entry of other items specified in W. D. Directives) No lost time under AM 107 Legal button issued Soldier entitled to travel pay

7 November 1947

Do not mutilate all previous editions of this form. Retain 37 and 38 for suitable persons subject to 38 Honorable Discharge, which will not be used after passage of this revision.

Otsego County Herald Times
September 5 1946

Welcome Home

Total to date—546



The following names have been added to the growing list of Otsego County men and women who have been honorably discharged and are entitled to wear this little gold emblem.

Respecki, Lawrence C.
Parkes, Donald N.
Wolf, Earl L.
Lovelly, William C.
Nessel, Jack C.
Prusakiewicz, Bennie B.
Robinson, Ralph A.
Schreur, Donald F.
Harrington, Harold B.
Theisen, Elizabeth J.
