

F.V. Loops

SOLDIER'S MAIL

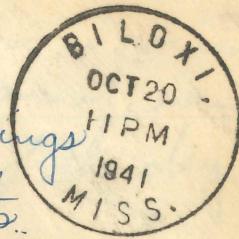
~~"SOMEWHERE IN THE U. S. A."~~

400 S.S. Keesler Field, Biloxi, Miss.

Air Mail



Mr. Frederick C. Loops
Bank of Commerce & Savings
North Capitol & H Sts.
Washington, D.C.



"SOMEWHERE IN THE U. S. A."



Monday afternoon
October 20, 1941

This is me

Dear Joe,

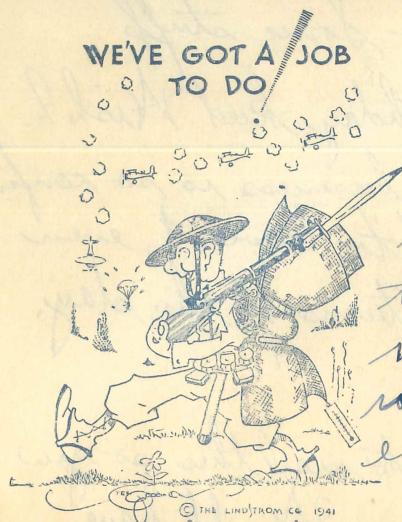
Whatcha know? Just come in from drill and am hot as hades, though we did get a break today. We are supposed to drill from 8 till 11 in the morning & from 1 till 4 in the afternoon. This is during our months training period only. The months training in the air-corps takes place of the 13 weeks in the other branches of the service. Usually we actually drill in the morning hours and attend classes in the "hotter" part of the day. The difference in temperature being about 2 degrees, - personally I can't see the difference! Today, as I said before, we were very lucky. This morning we had the 1st of 8 lectures in chemical warfare, one in the proper care of the body, and one in shop mathematics. - Ha! - the hardest part of these is keeping awake. This afternoon we had a two hour lecture on the care & use of the colt, ^{.45 cal.} semi-automatic service side-arm. - In other words, we learned how to respect a pistol, which will be our only armament in the air-corps, how it works, & how to take it all apart, clean it, and reassemble it. These officers are shockingly serious. They fully expect that we will be actually fighting before long and not on this side of the "drink either. They don't play. - In chemical warfare we learn about each gas, how it's made, works, destroys, & ~~then~~ what gas masks are for, how to wear them, & they assure us that as soon as we

get them here, we will be issued them and compelled to wear them all the time, just like our pants. We are to learn to identify each gas by its smell, being given a sniff of each of the very poisonous, & to be exposed to the lesser ones, like tear gas! - Boy, they ain't kiddin'.

They aren't mean as hard on us in lots of ways as at Lee but there are other factors, too. - We wear fatigue uniforms (jumps) all the time, go to town anytime after work hours by just signing out, and aren't required to wear uniforms. The officers are much nicer, too. - more companionable and not so much cussing when they tell of things. - But the food. - My God, - when they call it a "mess," - they aren't kidding here, & we eat out of our mess kits, so regardless of what we have it's all thrown together anyhow. - By the way, I'm on for K.P. tomorrow night that ^{first time here}. Have to report at 4:30 A.M. and on until after six tomorrow night. - nice short day for a dollar, what? - Say, I lucked one thing, though. If I had gotten into the Air Corps right off I would be getting \$21 the same as draftees, but by being first in the service & then re-enlisting in the air corps I get \$30. I don't understand the difference but why should I, as long as I get \$30?

I'm sending this to you at the Bank cause I didn't want the folks to know what I'm going to say now and thought maybe Mrs. J or Marion might let it slip some-times in conversation when around them.

The camp here has had an outbreak of spinal meningitis. At least, 1 fellow got it & died & yesterday a fellow in the next barrack ^{to me} was taken to the hospital with it. Rumor at noon had it that he had died, too, but apparently it got around to an officer that we were talking about it a great deal & he came out and told us the boy hadn't died & was holding his own. Anyhow, ~~sso~~ it certainly is in the camp.



"SOMEWHERE IN THE U. S. A."

and again rumor has it we are all to be quarantined and given some sort of injections to prevent us from getting it. I don't know a thing more than that. A person hears more ^{else} rumors in the army ~~that~~ than anywhere ^I have ever experienced. Some work out & some don't.

Anyhow there it is, take it or leave it, but don't tell Ma until it is ~~a~~ more developed or extinguished one, for there is no need for her to worry, which won't help things at all, cause this is the Army and they move, but not until they get ready.

See, I didn't mean for this to be so morbid! - Just went to chow - had a selection tonight, either baked beans or dried lima beans. - oh, boy!

Now for another purpose of this letter. Thanks an awful lot for the bill fold. It was sorely needed, but one so nice was out of line. Gosh, that pin seal leather will wear like iron, and such a nice thin one - thanks again.

The country is nice down here but the purpose of the visit defeats the beauties. No foolin', there are big tall long leaf pines and the Gulf is less than 2 miles away. Where we swim is ~~about~~ only about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile from barracks and on a bay, or inlet from the Gulf itself. There isn't any surf bathing here cause about 10 miles offshore is a chain of islands, sort of like the banks in Carolina, that breaks the water. The Gulf is fairly shallow for a long ways out, & from the piers one can often

see porpoises playing around! - Some stuff

Have a good time on your birthday, keed. Wish I could be there with you, but really business is so confining I don't see how I can possibly afford to leave it, even for 2 or 3 days. Many more happy returns of the day, bud, and have a swell time!

Must stop now & go in town to mail this so you will get this in time, so bye for now. Should have written before but know you see my letters to the folks & I don't have an awful lot to say, except the old Army gripe which always seems to have. Write when you can & I'll try to keep you posted.

Love

Joe