

Thursday Night May 19, 1945

Dear Mother & Dad:

I'm really tired tonight but will take a few minutes to write and say that my mail began arriving at last this afternoon - it was here for 12:15 mail call today but I was working at the rifle range so did not get it until the 5:15 call! The registered letter has arrived but its at the Battalion Headquarters so I'll not be able to get it until tomorrow.

Let me explain what all the letters in the address mean.

Private R.H. Mahard, 35985568
Company A, 7th Battalion, Basic Training Section
Army Service Forces Training Center
Fort Lewis, Washington

* think it's right!

I think that Charlie McAllister is probably less than a $\frac{1}{2}$ mile from where I am - I'll try to look him up. Probably not tomorrow though because I'm on K.P. from 5:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M. - ain't that sumpin'?

Had a pretty "rough" detail today too. Worked all day on the rifle range walked $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles there and $4\frac{1}{2}$ home again. We had to push the targets up for the men to fire at then we'd pull them down, patch the hole and signal the score they made - it was quite interesting but quite hard and dirty!

It's looking more and more as though we may get going on our "basic" training next week - don't think they're going to move us again after all!

I heartily approve of your idea of writing often - boy, mail means everything here!

Will really have to hit the hay now not long until five!

What did John think about my b'm in the Army?

Love,
Dick

Sunday Morning
May 13, 1945 9:15

Dear folks:

Just a page to tell some news of the past two or three days.

First of all I got the registered letter all O.K. and yesterday afternoon I managed to get the forms all filled in and notarized - got my finger prints taken too. I think the material is all in order so I'll send it in. If it isn't right they can write me and I'll work on it some more - what a lot of red tape.

Friday all day I worked on K.P. and it was pretty tough going - we were up at 4:30^{am} and we didn't finish up until after 7:00. I did everything from crack $\frac{1}{2}$ case of eggs to scrub pots and pans - did the latter job for 6 hours straight. Peeled a few spuds too! The good part was that we had plenty to eat! The mess hall where we worked was one of the ones in the 1st Battalion - that's the one Chuck McAllister is in. I didn't see him but I was busy as the boys came through the line so I might have missed him - then too that Battalion would have several mess halls. I'll try to contact him, perhaps this afternoon!

Yesterday we had our first inspection and I escaped unscathed. Our barracks got along all right except they found some dust on the rafters - they're quite particular aren't they!

The weather you've been having sounds bad indeed - it has been raining here continuously for the past four days - no sign of let up today either!

Rumor has it that tomorrow we start our basic training - hope so! We still don't know whether we'll be moved from this Company and Battalion or not - keep sending mail to the same address until you hear.

Oh say - here's something. I think that somewhere in that filing case in our desk you'll find an envelope with a photo of me. Will you send one please to the following address: Miss LEONA M. REAR

DEPT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, Room 4227
WASHINGTON 25, D.C.

You had better write my name on the back of the photo
and say also "taken in 1941" The photo must be on
file at the personnel office of the Survey. Please
let me know if you manage to find the photo
o.k. ! Thanks a lot.

Have to hurry now to get this in the
mail so it will go out today.

Write often — letters mean so much !

Love,

Jack

Sunday Afternoon
May 13, 1945

Dear Mother & Dad:

Wrote and mailed a letter earlier today but since then the package you sent has arrived - it was a lot of fun to get it and it arrived in good condition. Now I'm writing to ask you to send something more. Perhaps Marian has already written to you about some of the items. Most of all I'm anxious to have those shower slippers - they're in the box in the attic along with all our winter clothes and my gymnasium equipment - I think they are anyway - I seem to remember it's that wooden tea box. At any rate it'll probably be less - but not much less - than a day's work to find them. Next in importance is a number of wire clothes hangers - select about a dozen heavy wire ones all as nearly alike as possible. I thought I might want you to send those wooden ones but now I think not.

Golly, seems as though there was some thing more I wanted but can't seem to think of it at the moment.

We've had a nice day today - got up late (7:30) - went to chapel at 10:30 and to a movie this afternoon - had a lunch at the Post Exchange and now I'm back at the barracks for the day. Going to go to bed early because tomorrow may be a tough day.

I had a letter from Charlie Hunt saying that the office of the Chief of Engineers had sent a telegram to the Classification officer at Camp Atterbury recommending me for work with the Military Intelligence Division Office, Chief of Engineers. I don't know if the telegram reached there before we were shipped or not. I have written to Hunt asking that he have another telegram sent here - it will be very important to have such a telegram on file when we finish our basic training because at that time the most crucial "classification" of all takes place. Hope it comes through O.K.

Guess that's all for this time. Goodnight, folks
Love, Dick

Thurs May 17, 1945
8:15 a.m.

Dear folks: It's a strange time for me to be writing. Ordinarily at this hour I'd be out on some "detail" or another, but this morning I have received a break. At 9:00 I have to report to the first Sergeant and he's sending me over to the Main Fort (about 1 mile from here) with our marriage license. The license has to be sent to Newark, N.J. to the office of dependency benefits before Marian will receive any more allotment checks. The check which she received the other day was the initial one which is sent directly from the induction station - in my case Camp Atterbury. That first check was all "gravy" none of it came from my pay. In the case of the ones from now on \$22.00 comes from my pay and the Gov't contributes \$28.00.

Speaking of money, we have still not been paid for April and I personally am not expecting to be paid for some time. Some of the boys are getting pretty anxious though - especially those who lost the money they brought with them in a crap game or a poker game. Yes, plenty of gambling goes on, but it's not for me - nor can I understand why the fellows get such a kick out of it!

Well today is the first day in the last eight which has not been rainy and it looks as though the rain is going to start any minute. I guess the fine weather we had the first of last week was very unusual indeed.

Day before yesterday they transferred some of the boys to another Company and yesterday they were issued their rifles and Monday they start their "basic" training in earnest! Golly I certainly wish we could get going, but I'm afraid it may be

quite a while yet. They seem to be having a difficult time getting officers enough - the other day, though, we were sent a new captain and things began to move a little faster.

One of the fellows who came with our bunch from Atterbury is getting a break - guess you'd call it that. He had a hernia and a big tumor on his shoulder. On Monday he was operated upon for the hernia and in a couple of weeks they'll take the tumor off. He'll be in the hospital for 5 or 6 weeks and then they'll send him all the way back to Ohio on a convalescent furlough. Doesn't that make sense? I suppose there were no hospitals closer to Camp Atterbury, Ind. than Fort Lewis, Washington! Well, as they say, there's a right way to do a thing and then there's the Army way!

Marian said in her letter which arrived yesterday that you were sending the hangens and would send the shower slippers - I'm certainly anxious to get them. Thanks very much for all the trouble you've taken!

Guess now that I'd better make this all for this time and get going to see the "Sarge"

So long, folks

Write often

Love,

Dick

P.S. Saw Chas. McAllister the other evening - ran in to him by accident on the bus. He's two weeks in to his "basic" - says it's not so bad. Boy, he's a big fellow - weighs over 220! He's afraid his diabetes may flare up because he's eating so much!

Did you hear that June Travis had an auto accident? Didn't hurt her or the baby but wrecked their car!

Saturday Night
May 19, 1945

Dear Folks: I'm in a new place tonight - made a big move this afternoon & about 100 yards! Am now in "B" Company instead of "A" and am in the 2nd platoon of the company. This is where we'll stay for our basic. The basic training, however will not commence until a week from Monday and will last for six weeks. That means we should be finished on the 14th of July. (Wish that ~~meant~~ meant the end of my stay in the Army)

This next week I suppose we'll do "detail" just as we have been doing these past two weeks, but perhaps not quite so much of it!

The Sergeant who will be in charge of our Platoon seems to be a pretty nice fellow and if that is so it certainly will help a lot! The bunch which came from Atherbury is a little split up because they put us into Platoons alphabetically - I'm located quite close of a couple of the others though!

Am not in much of a writing mood tonight so I think I'll finish this in the morning - it's almost time for lights out anyhow! Goodnight, folks

Love, Dick

Before I forget it again, thanks a million for the airmail stamps!

Sunday Morning
May 20, 1945

Hello again,

Breakfast over - it was a little later this morning 7:45 - it's strange how a person's idea of late and early can change. In Granville 7:45 was early and 6:00 (the regular breakfast hour here) was simply unimaginable!

Quite a good night last night except that one damn fool came in all beered up at about one o'clock and woke everyone up. I know what I'd like to do to him, but I'd be court martialed for it! He's lying in his bunk just across from me now snoring for all he's worth - Most of the fellows are a pretty nice sort but sprinkled through are some bad ones!

Am going to Chapel after a while and then after dinner will go over to the Main fort area to the service club and some of us are going to try to visit the two boys from our 13 who are in the hospital. One was operated upon for a hernia (he also has a tumor) and the other has a bad knee. That reminds me - for goodness sakes tell John when you see him that to get into the Army is absolutely the last thing a man should want to do! And, believe me, I really mean it! Any means fair or foul used for staying out is justified.

Saw Charlie McAllister march by yesterday when all the men were on their way to the

parade area. He was easy to pick out - being as tall as he is, he is in the front rank of his platoon.

The package with the knapsacks nor the one with the shower slippers have not arrived yet. They are in separate packages aren't they? I hope that this move we made will not delay them. Mail addressed to us at "A" company will go there (100 yards distant) then back to the Main Fort then back here to "B" company. That's the Army! However for the next couple of days we'll try to intercept it down there - that is at "A" company!

Just checked your letters and read that you sent the slippers Monday and the knapsacks Wednesday. Perhaps the slippers will arrive today - we have a mail call right after dinner

That that ends this chapter - will keep you informed of "progress"

Love,
Dick

Thurs. May 24, 1945

Dear folks:

Forgotten when last I wrote to you, but I'm sure it has not been since I received the two packages. The hausers arrived yesterday and the slippers today. I can't figure out why the one sent last arrived first but it may be because the slippers were insured and hence had to go to battalion headquarters where I have to go to pick them up. Thanks very much for sending them!

Have I told you that we have moved again. Yes, it was yesterday - this time we've moved to another area of the Fort about a mile from where we were. But, inasmuch as the whole Battalion moved our address remains exactly the same. So yesterday was a busy day - made even busier because at 5:15 last evening I was told I was one of eight picked for "guard" duty. We had to wash, shave, dress, eat and be ready to report for inspection at 6:00. I walked my beat from 6-8 and then was off for four hours - could not undress, however, - and then was on duty from 12:00 to 2:00. At 2:00 we were allowed to go to bed, but believe me 5:30 came very soon after that. All the guard duty involved was watching for fires - last night we did not carry a rifle but later we probably will!

This morning I "caught" a carpentering detail - repaired the mail box where we mail our letters and fitted a couple of hasps on doors.

(over)

as usual, the task was made as difficult as it possibly could be by the fact that no good tools were available, no suitable wood, and I had to pull and straighten nails and use second hand screws. If the Army has all the stuff that civilians can't get, the Army is going to keep it forever all lined up in warehouses!

Guess I didn't explain why we moved Rumor has it that the area we vacated will be taken over by Negro troops - that's a good possibility because they're certainly moving them in here in great numbers. Others are arriving too - soon, they say. There'll be nearly 10,000 men in the Basic Training Section alone - it is also said that there are 40,000 here at Fort Lewis altogether! I think well really get started on our training on Monday - if so we should finish up about the middle of July - the 14th. If things work out for me as they have for another boy I met who has had graduate training in Geology, I'll then be sent to Fort Belvoir Virginia (50 miles from Washington D.C.) Wouldn't that be something? Hope so! Hope so!

That's the story for the time being. Thanks again for the hangars and

I guess.
slippers!

Am enclosing a check for 25.00. Will you cash it and send me the money by registered mail. Don't tell Marian; want it for a gift for her for June 12!

Love,

Dick

Friday June 1, 1945

Dear Folks:

I have just a few minutes this morning before reporting for duty and I'll put down a few words to let you know I'm still perkin'. First let me say that the registered letter with the \$5.00 arrived safely. Thank you for doing this for me. I think I'm going to try to get a pass to Tacoma tomorrow to do some shopping.

I received the check, the other day from the Geol. Survey for the 5½ days I worked there (\$45.12) I sent it home endorsed to Marian by registered mail - It would have been a nuisance to get it cashed here I have to have it signed by the Commanding Officer.

This week beginning Wednesday and continuing through tomorrow I've been doing some special duty. I was selected to take an eleven hour "course" in how to be what is called an "Information & Educational Service" representative. It simply means that I'm supposed to be the fellow in our platoon who leads discussions concerning such topics as war objectives, our attitude toward Britain & Russia, race tolerance etc. The Army you see feels that the fellows are too poorly informed concerning these matters and I'm supposed to be the teacher. The course has been quite interesting but I have missed quite a bit of our regular training which I'll have to catch up on.

Have to go now will try to write more later.

Love, Dick

Dear Folks:

June 7 1945

Just a short note - your letter arrived today Mother. Sorry to hear that John didn't have his visit with you - I don't know what to say about the whole situation because I can't understand it. I'm sorry for John because he has missed out on what I've been so lucky to have - a fine wife. I think that it's something he'll just have to work out for himself - he'll take a beating doing it but we can't help him - you can't and least of all can I help!

The training is getting rough we're terribly pushed from time to get up 5:30 am. until time for bed - Six mile walk Tues, seven yesterday (last four a "forced" march) and today we ran the obstacle course twice with full pack, gas mask canteen, cartridge belt, and rifle and walked three miles in addition! I should be home right now cleaning my rifle - because it took a beating on the obstacle course!

Think however I'm holding up well and will soon begin to thrive on it - have gained some weight about 175 in regular clothes now!

Am going to stop with only this page but I'll try to write again this weekend!

So long, Folks love
Dick

Monday Evening
June 18, '45

Dear Folks: Just a "quickie" to let you know that everything is going along O.K. I'm sorry I can't write more often but we've been terribly busy - being busy coupled with the fact that I'm so tired usually that I go to bed as early as I can leaves little time for writing.

We were on the rifle range all day today - its five miles out there and it seemed ten miles home - my dogs are really barking - I fired a little better today than last week when we were out but I still must improve. Fired well enough to "qualify" today (140 out of 210 is necessary) I made 144 - would like to bring it up to sharpshooter - 165 if I can! Fired from 500 yards today quite a long ways, at a 24 inch bullseye - also fired from 300 yards!

Dad, am sending you some cigarettes tonite - the fellows here are rationed to six packages each week - you can have my last two weeks ration. Sorry they're not all Philip Morris. Marian tells me they're your favorite -

Was hot here today - we've had only one day of rain in three weeks - hope the weather holds up for our sixth week during which we're out in the field on "bivouac" all week. "Basic" was half over last Saturday - today our fourth week began.

Found out today that I'll not be able to "put in" for Officer's Candidate School until after I finish all my basic and "basic" may involve more than this six weeks - it depends upon where I'm sent at the end of this six weeks. I'm going to write again to Washington to try to bring some pressure to bear there. The Lt. told me today it would be a good idea. Am still hoping of course to be sent to Fort Belvoir Va. - after I'm there I might have a better chance to work some of these other angles. got some blisters!

Had better limp over to the Post Office now with the package.

(On my letters write 7th Bn. instead of Bn. 7)

Love,
Dick

Wednesday June 27, 1945

Dear Folks: Lights are out, but I feel I must try to get at least a note off to you tonite.

We've been busy - busy day and night so far this week although tonite we were finished after a late supper after a "retreat" parade we had to march in. Have to be up at 4:30 tomorrow morning so I guess I'd better crawl in as soon as possible.

Your letter with the two dollars arrived safely - Glad you got the cigarettes O.K. Dad - is that you talking or Mother when she says you can get all that's good for you any way?

About the watch - it's awfully nice of you to want to go in with Marian on it - there's just nothing I'd like better or need more. There are no watches to be had around the P.X. here and I think to send to the company in N.Y.C. is the best bet probably. I have sent the literature back to Marian - I told her that she'd better try not to send it to me until we find out what's going to happen to me after next week.

Have absolutely no notion of what will happen - rumors are beginning to fly - the chief one being that many of us will end up at Camp Crowder Missouri. However, I'm inclined to think that my fate will be different than that of the others and I'm still hoping for the Fort Belvoir assignment - at once after finishing basic, but if not then soon after. I understand that some of the fellows in the last "B" Co. were shipped to a different part of this fort at first and then to Belvoir in a week or ten days. That might happen in my case, but I hope not!

This week - day after tomorrow - we fire our rifles on the range for the record. I'm

hoping I can do reasonably well. Fired rifles today on the "combat" range at man sized targets which "popped up" at various distances - it was fun.

Tomorrow we go to the "combat village" have to make a simulated attack on it and probably take a turn at defending it too!

Hare I told you that we will leave this Sunday on our "bivouac" (bi-voo-ak) We'll live in tents and have maneuvers for six days (we come in Friday morning) It all can be sort of fun if the weather's good but I personally wish it were over. We'll get mail out there and can mail letters too if we can find a way to write them and some time!

Glad to hear about the cherries - you should make a nice little profit off them - I read in the paper that the Gov't has bought the entire crop. Glad too that the grapes weren't hurt too bad by the frost this spring

Boy, how I'd like to spend the rest of the summer with you - sometime maybe!

Goodnight Folks

(Love) Dick

Chas. McAllister would have finished his "basic" by now & is probably at some different place here on the fort!
Wouldn't know where!

Pvt. P.H. Mahard 35985568
Plt 3, Co A, 65th Bn. E.T.S.
A.S.F.T.C.
Fort Lewis, Washington

Sunday July 8, 1945

Engineering Training Section

Dear Folks: The above is my new address - for how long I'm not able to say - perhaps for three days, perhaps for 12 weeks! Was moved over here yesterday afternoon along with about 75 other fellows from our training company. As yet nobody knows what the score is but that's not unusual for the Army. This next week we'll just mess around getting the company organized - that means carpentry work and painting and scrubbing etc. etc. We'll probably be sent out to other companies on details too - same old story. Also during this next week we may again be "processed" and sorted into our specialties because this training is largely specialized as I understand it - there is a group of painters, a group of construction foremen, a group of demolition experts, a group of automotive mechanics, etc. etc. but how a geology teacher fits into the picture bewilders me! However, I am interested in this classification process because it might just mean that I would be shipped from this Fort elsewhere to take some training which is not given here - the topographic engineering for example which I think I mentioned once before.

In other words just because yesterday I was transferred to this Engineers part of the fort doesn't mean that I have lost the chance I was hoping for of being sent East. The next few days should tell the story!

Well the basic training is past history. The last week was not bad except for the march out there and the last two days which included the

even more strenuous march back - 16 miles - and a night spent in the cold. I've written the details of the bivouac in my letters to Marian and she'll send them on to you!

I'm sorry to say that my watch hasn't yet arrived. I expect it will be in tomorrow and I'll go over to our old company tomorrow evening to pick it up so that they won't have to mess around forwarding it. Thanks so very much Mother and Dad, for helping to get it for me - I know I'll like it a lot and I certainly need it badly. Also thanks a million for the five dollars - most of it will probably go for ice cream which is my one big vice in the Army. Lost a little weight on bivouac but will no doubt gain it right back.

Well the song says that "Saturday Night is the Loneliest Night of the Week" but I say that Sunday night is - always am a little down on Sunday nights. But in a few minutes I'll be going to bed and will go to sleep and forget it all. Don't even ask what I would give to be there with you on the farm tonight. Always have liked it there and have been so sorry we've not been able to be with you more these past four years or so!

Goodnight, folks

Love

Dick

Sorry I haven't written more but it has been hard to find time and energy lately!

Tuesday, July 10, 1945

Dear Mother and Dad:

Got my watch today and I'm so darn happy with it that I can hardly keep my eyes off it long enough to write this letter! Thanks so very much, folks - honestly I can't say how much I like it and appreciate it! All that and five dollars too - it's just too much!

Have myself a new job - got it last evening. Night work! Last night and tonight and probably tomorrow night too I'm acting as C.Q. (Charge of Quarters) at the 65th Battalion Headquarters - the Major himself is my boss! Now that sounds important doesn't it? But it isn't but it's a good job. All I have to do is answer the telephone and last night it didn't ring once. I have a bed here in the office and I go right to bed at ten o'clock like everyone else and get up in the morning at 5:45 like everyone else. In the morning I have to sweep the floor and clean the wash basins etc. in the toilet. When the Major comes at 7:30 I'm through and I have the whole day off until 4:30^{p.m.} when I report here again.

Got the job ~~yesterday~~ after I had voluntarily gone to the First Sergeant and told him I'd like to work detail for him if he had anything for me. Yesterday all day I messed around at the Motor Pool helping to get a big crane moved but we accomplished exactly nothing - had enough of that kind of foolishness.

Have had no word concerning reclassification or shipping orders although some men in one of the other companies of the 65th

are being sent out on Saturday - some of them
to a camp in Illinois - one of the fellows lives
in Oregon - of course they would send him east
and leave the eastern boys here! I personally
am still hoping!

We've had two very hot days in a row
now and it's really getting dry - you may have heard
about some forest fires out this way - the grass
has entirely dried up - some contrast to the weather
we had when we first arrived here!

I got a pass when I finished work
this morning went over to our old location and got
my watch and then went to Olympia. It was sorta
fun to be there during the week when the stores were
open - have been there mostly on Sunday. One thing
I noticed was that there was plenty of meat on dis-
play in the butcher shops - I was really surprised

I'm getting sleepy now so think
I'll do my work from the bed for the next few
hours!

Goodnight, folks, and thanks once again
for the marvelous watch - it's just perfect.

Love
Duke

Sunday July 15, 1945

Dear folks:

(Well here's the new address - it's sort of hard to keep track of we isn't it?
this can be abbreviated
E.T.S.)

Pvt. R.H. Mahard 35985568
Co B 52nd Engr. Trng. Bn.
Engineering Training Section
Fort Lewis, Washington

Got here about 8:30 last night - was supposed to transfer in the afternoon as the rest of the boys did but I was working for the 1st Sergeant at "A" 65th so he called up here and asked if I could stay on and help him finish up. Which I did do. Don't know very much about the set up here. As near as I can find out the training is basic combat engineering. We'll study a lot about demolitions, bridge building etc. etc. You know all the kinds of work the engineers take care of in combat areas. The training lasts for eleven weeks - that means we finish September 29 - the last three weeks is "bivouac". After the training we'll be shipped to a replacement center and after some processing will be given a 15 day furlough + travelling time - then back to the replacement center, then to a Port of Embarkation - then a long sea voyage!

However don't be too alarmed that's all a very long ways off. Just as soon as I possibly can I'm going to find out what the story is on Officer's Training. I asked the 1st Lt. at "A" 65 about it yesterday and he said he didn't know if I could apply be-

fore I finish this training period or not. Certainly hope I can. If I can apply at once I'm going to do it! They say the training takes about six months and is very hard but it would be better than this. All Officers are trained at Fort Belvoir - that is all Engineering Officers and that's what I would be!

I wrote to Marian the other day and proposed that, if it turned out I'd have to be here 3 months or so more, she consider coming out here. Suppose at first thought it seems crazy, but it really isn't. Am getting pretty fed up ~~with~~ with our being separated, we might just as well be together as much as we can while we can. Of course much will depend upon developments during these next few days - if I can "put in" at once for OCS & if there is a possibility of its coming through at all soon. We wouldn't come. And there are some other things I want to investigate too if I can.

Glad to hear the cherry crop was a success - hope you didn't tire yourselves all out picking them. What you going to do with the vacation, Dad, how about driving out here?

Guess that's about all for this time. My watch is running swell and I like it more and more - thanks again,

Lovely Dick

Wednesday, July 18, 1945

Dear Mother and Dad:

Why the typewriter? Well, I have an office job again tonight. I'm acting as Battalion Charge of Quarters tonight - it's the same job I had for a couple of nights last week when I was with the 65th BN. As a matter of fact I suppose that I was chosen tonight partly because of the experience I had last week at the job.

Another reason I have the job though has to do with ^{another} A new job to which I was assigned yesterday - I have been made an assistant squad leader of our Platoon. It isn't much - I have to take roll of my squad in the morning and report the squad "All present or accounted for" when the Sergeant asks for the report. Perhaps later the squad will be split into two groups for training purposes and if that is done I'll be in charge of one-half of the gang! Well as a "reward" for being assistant squad leader, I do not have to draw K.P. duty nor Guard duty, but I do draw this Battalion C.Q. job from time to time - don't really know how frequently it will be

Our training is getting under way. On Monday we had quite a bit of marching and manual of arms which was, of course, in the nature of a review because we had all the same stuff in "basic". Yesterday morning we had a lot of work with knot tying and lashings and that sort of thing, did quite a bit of work with various kinds of block and tackle equipment. In the afternoon yesterday we learned to be carpenters in ten easy lessons - first we attended a movie which showed the correct method of using the basic tools and then we went to a training area where we had a chance to drive a nail, plane a board, cut a board with a saw etc. etc. Some stuff I'll say. Why all this? Well you see a Combat Engineer has to be sort of a jack-of-all-trades because he can never tell just what sort of problem he is going to encounter - that's the general idea anyway, I guess. A lot of the fellows are beginning to gripe about the whole business already, but I don't guess it's going to do them much good.

This morning we continued our training with the various types of tools and equipment. This morning we had a chance to use such tools as the axe, adze, cross-cut saw, peavey, cant-hook etc. and also shovels, picks, and post-hole diggers (the auger type which ~~doesn't work~~ worth a darn.) It sounds silly doesn't it? But on the other hand plenty of the fellows showed signs of never having had a tool in their hands before and they'll certainly need to know something about them when we begin to build bridges etc.

Happy Birthday, Mother, I bought a card for you about two weeks ago, but the date slipped up on me and I just mailed it today. I hope it reaches you in time. I had planned, at Marian's suggestion, to have my picture taken and to send you one for your birthday present, but with all the confusion of the past two or three weeks I just couldn't manage to get it in. When things get settled down a little bit I'll try to manage it.

Guess I wrote didn't I that Marian and I have just about decided that she should come out here to pay me a visit. We've made no arrangements as yet. Don't know how much I'll be able to see her, but even if it's only twice or three times a week it will be worth it. Right now it looks very much as though I'll be here eight more weeks and probably for eleven after which I'll ~~get a~~ furlough. Then, if I don't go to Officer's Candidate School, an overseas assignment is a very strong likelihood - might just as well face that fact right now whether we like it or not!

Think I had better wind this letter up and give up using this typewriter before someone objects. Write often won't you? I enjoy so much hearing about how things are at the farm.

Love,
Dick

July 24, 1945
Tues. 6:00 p.m.

Dear Mom & Dad -

Will try to tell you all the news - yesterday morn. I walked for a long while looking at the Capital grounds - the flowers are beautiful - and for a Room for Rent sign! Hank learned since you have to ask at the door & really hunt for a room! Will concentrate on it tomorrow.

Mrs. Snitch the minister's wife called at noon & asked me to meet her at 3 at the Y.W. & then go home for supper and a music concert in the eve. Did, so, and had a grand afternoon & eve. They are a very friendly family - ordinary, but as friendly! Went in the back door - helped set the table for supper, & played baseball with the 8 yr. old - Andy.

After supper I pressed Cynthia's formal because she was going to usher at the

concert. She goes to college in Sept. Tim, 15 yrs. old, is working in a printing office this summer. The concert was good & they all walked to the hotel after with me.

Today I looked for jobs - & have 2 so far, & worked home 2 more.

(begin mon.)
The 1st is in a factory as an assembler - airplane small parts. Am sure I could do it but to tell you the truth I hate to wear slacks! Well, anyway - There is an ad in the paper for Telephone operators, but hasn't investigated yet because I'm afraid the hrs. would be irregular.

Came to the Fair on the 12 noon bus, and now I have a typist job - civil service - at the Civilian Personnel Bureau at the main Fair, beginning Tues. morn!