

April 10, 1943
Saturday.

Dearest Mother,

It is late Saturday night and I've finally got around to writing you. I've been too busy the last three days to write. I've only written Florence once since I've gotten out of the hospital. I got out Tuesday morning and in the afternoon we put on our full pack and pitched our tents for the officers to look at. The pack weighs from 40-50 lbs. But I didn't feel weak. Wednesday, I was a little tired but still felt fine. We went out into the woods Wednesday afternoon with full pack and pitched our tents out there and smeared mud on our helmets and faces for camouflage. On Thursday we drilled about all afternoon and after supper our platoon was detailed to dig a ditch and plant sod. Got my shots that night one tetanus and one typhoid. Arms hurt for a little but that was all. Had to make out a laundry list for Friday, the day they take the wash. After I took a shower there wasn't any time for any letters that night as was the case, Tuesday when I had to arrange all my clothes and straighten everything out from getting back. Friday during the day we had our regular classroom work and drilling. In the afternoon we went for a 3 hr. hike – about 6 miles. Three fell out. This was the 2nd hike for the whole bunch, but my first. We just took our gas mask and canteen without the pack. What makes it so tough here are the long steep hills. It's very pretty though, and I enjoyed the scenery as we walked along rather than think of getting worn out. I made it o.k. with lots to spare. I feel perfect now and think the week in the hospital did me some good. I got to catch up on a lot of sleep and rest. Friday night was no time for letter writing as we had to get the huts and our equipment ready for Saturday morning inspection. It compares to spring cleaning. Had to scrub those board floors by hand – brush and soap. Dusted rafters, used steel wool on our canteens and mess kits, even had to scrub the wood tent pins and tent pole that is in our pack and also the tent rope. Then Sat. a.m. after our beds were made we had to lay a display out on the bed. Braided shoe laces, 3 razor blades, razor, comb, tooth brush, 1 pr. underwear, tooth powder, and everything imagineable (sic). I bought all that for inspection only, so it's always clean. Soap had to have wrapper on it. Very particular. Too much so I think when we have to braid shoe laces which we'll never use. Today was personal inspection, hut inspection and in marching, fieldwork, etc. I got your two letters, the one you wrote last Monday and the one you wrote Thursday. Thanks very much.

I also got the stationery and nail clipper from Dad. And boy did I enjoy the box of chocolates. Thanks a lot. I ate most of them myself. Lasted about a day. I want to write Dad tomorrow. Three of us boys want to go to Little Rock tomorrow. We want to go in the morning so we can go to church and then eat dinner uptown and get back by the 4:30 supper here at camp. First time in 2 ½ weeks that I'll be out of camp. By the way I don't have to put in an extra week or anything. Just learn from the other fellows the important things I missed. Now it's only 9 weeks of basic left. I'm getting used to the Army by now. Sort of consider it as a job. Will write again. Have to close now.

Love,
Johnny.