

April 18, 1943  
Sunday

Dear Dad,

Today has been quite an eventful day. I'll tell you about it a little later in this letter. I received the letter you wrote a week ago last Thursday this Monday and last Wednesday's letter, Friday. Thank you very much. In your first letter you mentioned that Lt. White had said how rough they treat the men their first 3 months basic training. That is true but we are treated surprisingly well here in this dept. possibly because it is purely a defensive unit and not offensive. I'm very well pleased with our sergeant. He's really swell and has a good character. He doesn't bawl us out. Just the other day I found out that he plays the piano and is a lover of classical music as well as popular. I was very glad to find this out and one night last week he and I had an enjoyable evening at the piano, here in the day room. He had me play Finlandia and Rustles of Spring to him. I really admire him. I weighted myself today and I weigh 142 but that is with my heavy G.I. shoes on and my uniform. I think, though, that I must weigh about 135-7 stripped weight. Last Sunday I weighed 138 in practically the same uniform so I have gained weight during the past week. Topeka is 589 miles from Little Rock. Mother sent me a \$5.00 bill for which I really appreciate but I'm going to try not to use it unless I have to. When I get paid I will send back the money. I'll admit that I only had 90 cents since last Sunday and was trying to make it last till the last day of the month. We have to get a hair cut every week which means .70 for 2 weeks. That leaves about 20 cents for any supplies. It costs .25 round trip to go to Little Rock.

The dance band scare is over. Nothing more was ever said to me about it but I hear a dance band practice so they evidently have a piano player. I really believe I could assist the Chaplain here part time but everything is so upset during the basic that I can't count on being there every Sunday. After I'm assigned at some camp and my routine will become settled I'm going to contact a Chaplain then. I don't think I'll be able to have that as a full time job but would have to assist on the side. That's the way it's done in this chapel. However I can try to be transferred under the Chaplain that I contact, but I doubt if I will get to do that.

The job that Ser. Yancy, Helen Dorothy's boy friend, has in the Medics, is a definite step in removing wounded from the front. This is under organization of a medical detachment to – say, an infantry battalion. The 1<sup>st</sup> man to reach a wounded soldier is the Co. Aid man. He only bandages the men temporarily and stops bleeding etc. treats for shock. The 2<sup>nd</sup> step are the litter bearers who take these men to a Battalion aid station. This is a hidden spot close to the front to where the wounded are brought. From here the men are directed to the field hospital if they can walk or taken in ambulances. The Co. Aid man has the most dangerous position. He is right up on the front right beside the infantrymen. I'm saving all my notes and will bring them home on a furlough. It sounds like Ser. Yancy is in a Bn. aid station which is the 3<sup>rd</sup> step in the removal of wounded. They say when 10 men are standing and a bomb explodes, all 10 will be hit. If all 10 are lying flat only 6 will be hit by shrapnel. If they are in a trench where no part of the body is exposed only 1 will be hit. So even if all the men are in fox holes, according to those figures our casualties will still be 1/10 if on a large scale.

I believe I'd better wait before you send me music until I'm assigned after my basic. Now I want to tell you about what happened today. It has been raining steadily ever since Friday noon and yesterday we were called out in the morning and formed 2 long lines, one on each side of the road that runs alongside the camp. A distinguished visitor was to come. I never saw so many soldiers in my life. We stood for 2 hrs. in that drizzling rain. It was pretty cold just standing in one spot. We were finally called in and it proved to be a practice. The whole company was restricted to the post last night and today. We had to get up the regular time this morning. At 7:40 they lined us up on each side of the road again and as far as the eye can see, soldiers were lined up. For a full 45 minutes, columns of men kept marching by in a steady stream. I hear 20,000 men turned out which is all of Camp Robinson. We stood for 2 hrs. and finally we heard cheering in the distance and some cars approached. We were brought to attention and saluted. Who should be in the first car but Pres. Roosevelt. He passed a bare 3 ft. from me and was on my side of the car. It really was a surprise. I was kind of thrilled even though I don't agree with him. All the officers were lined up together and they did the cheering as he passed. I suppose you'll be reading in the papers of Roosevelt making a tour of Camp Robinson and other army camps. Well, I was there. We were dressed in helmets, dress uniform with a raincoat and a pistol belt, also leggings.

Not to tell you what's happened concerning clerical school which I hoped to enter. Last Monday I was one of several called out to take a clerical aptitude test. I worked fast and think I got most of them right. This noon the names were announced and I wasn't one of them. I was really disappointed and I couldn't understand why. However after I talked to one fellow I felt a little better about it. He said that these schools are purely elementary and they begin from the ground up. They take boys who don't even know how to type and teach them. He himself has practiced medicine in a laboratory and they told him they wouldn't send him to a technician school because it would be duplication and a waste of time and money. He may just complete his regular basic and be assigned to some unit right after his basic or he may even be assigned before his basic is up. The same may apply in my case. The Lieutenant here said that my I.Q. showed O. C. S. quality; officers candidate school. I don't think with 130 I. Q. typing about 50 words per minute, 2 yrs. experience in bank etc. wouldn't qualify me for clerk school. I'm told that if anyone is in line for O. C. S. they cross his name off of my school list. So possibly they have something else lined up for me, possibly even O. C. S. They have an officers preparatory candidate school here on the post which prepares men for O. C. S. I don't know but I don't think I flunked out on the clerical test because I answered 184 questions where the average did about 120. I'm also sure that most all the answers were right. Possibly with my qualifications, I'm qualified for something higher than just being a clerk. I hope so.

Now here's where the problem of my stand comes in. Conscientious objectors cannot enter O. C. S. unless they refute their position. Now here's what I've been wondering about. As you once said most every job is non combatant except bearing arms in actual combat. Now if all Med. Dep't. Soldiers don't carry weapons anyway, then I could give up my stand and still not be working against my conscience. Is that right? Now I don't know if Med. Officers carry weapons or not but if they don't then I could enter that, having changed to regular, and still be doing non combatant work. You can enter in anything you want and I believe I would chose the Medical Administration Corps. I heard from the Co. desk that few of these go across, if any because they

train men over here. That wouldn't be bad at all. Now even if Lts. or higher officers carry weapons, do they help in the actual fighting or merely direct it. I don't know about combat, but I personally think they just direct it. Anyway the officers in the infantry would be more concerned with that than medical administration officers. What do you think about an infantry or any other active combat officer rather than the medics? Would you suggest I stick in the medics where the chances are probably less of using a gun? Allison Schroeder is in the regular armed branch of O. C. S. I may not ever get a chance at O. C. S. but then again I might and these things should be decided before I'm approached so I can be ready with an answer. Please write me what you think about all this and my changing to regular which I would have to do to become an officer. My personal opinion is that I wouldn't mind changing to regular if I could enter O. C. S. in Med. Administration. Today I saw very many officers. They range in rank in this order:

2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut. - 1 gold bar  
1<sup>st</sup> Lieut. - 1 silver bar  
Captain - 2 silver bars  
Major - gold, oak leaf  
Lieut. Colonel - silver, oak leaf  
Colonel - silver, spread eagle  
Brig. general - 1 star  
Lieut. general - 2 stars  
Maj. general - 3 stars  
General - 4 stars

Seeing all those officers and their clothes and the money they make, I really would like to become one and my stand is the only hinderance (sic). But I think I could be an officer and still be right in my own mind. There were lots of majors and a few full colonel (sic). A captain is a commander of a company such as Co. D. A Lt. Colonel is the commanding officer of the 101<sup>st</sup> battalion. There are only 5 full generals that I know of. They are Gen. Pershing, Gen. Marshall (chief of staff), Gen. Eisenhower, Gen. McArthur (sic) and Gen. Arnold, head of air forces.

Before we could go to town we had to know our chain of command. Here it is.

1. Commander-in-chief – Pres. Roosevelt
2. Chief of Staff – Gen. Marshall
3. Commanding general - 8<sup>th</sup> service command (I think Kansas is in the 7<sup>th</sup>) – Maj. General Donovan
4. Commanding officer – Camp Robinson – Col. Graham
5. Commanding general. Med. Replacement Tng. Center – Brig. Gen. Baylis – I've seen him once. He comes around once in a while.
6. Commanding officer 21<sup>st</sup> Reg't. – Lt. Col. Powell. 21<sup>st</sup> is my Reg't.  
Executive officer 21<sup>st</sup> Reg't – Major Ahnfeldt
8. Commanding officer 101<sup>st</sup> Br. – Lt. Col. Numainville – Saw him a lot this morning. He stood close to me for awhile
9. Commanding officer Co. D. – Lt. Farmer – See him every day; is one of the instructors  
Technically he should be a captain.

When one sees these officers it brings it a little closer home. All this may not interest you bit it does me, just showing that a fellow could advance real high. Well so much for that. I'll wait till I hear from you.

Our activities this week consisted of a [?] 3 hr. night hike, a 4 hr. 10 mile hike, digging trenches while lying down, organizing litter squads and using gas mask. They put me through a gas chamber that had tear gas so I knew all about that and knew what to expect. We're plenty busy all the time, even after suppers. I feel very healthy, which fresh air, sun, and lots of exercise does. I would have written sooner if I would have had time. That's about all for the present. I'm getting along fine and sometimes think how tough this training is, is a little overtalked (sic) as I've been able to take everything so far. Hope you are feeling fine.

Your son,

Johnny