

VICTORY DIVISION  
**TARO** FIRST TO FIGHT **LEAF**



**Letters to Ann**  
Korea, 1951





# Letters to Ann

*By Robert Moncur, Company "F", 19th Infantry Regiment, 1950-51. Contains letters SFC Moncur wrote to his new bride, Ann, from Dec. 12, 1950, to August 23, 1951. Mr. Moncur states: "In my early letters, I used the word "Gooks" to describe a Korean civilian, and called Korea "... a filthy hell hole." I was a young man from the U.S. who had seen nothing of the world. It was easy to use words like that when speaking of strange people who spoke in a foreign tongue and dressed so strangely. With time and maturity, I learned to respect and care about these simple people, and hated when they were referred to that way. And I came to appreciate the natural beauty of their country—The Land of the Morning Calm."*

## **Dec. 12, 1950:**

Just a short letter to let you know that I have arrived in Camp Stoneman okay and feeling fine. We got off the train at Oakland, CA and took a bus into camp which was about a half hour ride. We went down to the warehouse today to draw winter clothes which consisted of a new lined overcoat, a pile lined jacket and a woolen scarf. Then we went to the records section and I got the insurance changed over so you will get all instead of half and I also got the address you can write to if you want the allotment sent home instead of to your mother's house.

So far the camp is no different than any other except they say the weather is quite nice here most of the time. We got another shot and vaccination today and we naturally expect a few more. Some of the boys met buddies that were with them at Fort Campbell, but I didn't see anyone I knew.

## **Dec. 22, 1950:** (Moncur's 21st Birthday)

They called out an airlift tonight and there are supposed to be two more plus a ship which is to leave



Bob and Ann—November 1950

some time in the near future. Of course this is only hearsay and there has been nothing definite said, so as usual we just sit around and wonder. This letter has been three days in the writing. I hope you will have already heard by the time you get this letter, but if not, I have received my orders and leave today (Dec. 25th).

We are to leave by plane sometime this morning and we haven't been told where we are going. I will try to get word to you by telephone or telegram before I leave and if I can't, I will have someone else do it for me. There will also be a package of clothes. Both of these will be sent collect but enclosed you will find a check to take care of them. Try to get Les-

ter to cash it and if he can't, just send it to the bank it's made out from. This will be all for now, but more will follow just as soon as I get settled.

## **Dec. 25, 1950: TELEGRAM**

Dearest Ann. Merry Christmas to all. Can't call. Fly today. Write APO 615 Care Postmaster, San Francisco. I love you. Bob

## **Dec. 26, 1950:**

We leave for the airport in 15 minutes. I couldn't call yesterday as there was an eight hour delay on calls and we are restricted to the area. I leave at 2 p.m. I forgot to tell you to add CPS to the address when you write. In case you don't know, APO 613 is Tokyo, Japan and from there we will be permanently assigned.

## **Dec. 29, 1950:**

It's Friday night here in Japan and it's been over two weeks since we have been together. I don't know why, but so far I haven't had the slightest feelings whatsoever toward this whole thing and I'm beginning to wonder when and if I'll have any at all.

The weather here is just about like





home I guess, it's about 30 degrees and except for the Japanese here in camp, it's just like the states in every respect. It was my first real plane ride you know, and I enjoyed it very much. It took us about twelve hours from the air field in California to Honolulu, and it really is a wonderful place even though we were there only a few hours. I was going to send a cablegram from there but I figured I'd wait until we got to Wake Island so I just sent the postcards (one to you and one to the store for the gang).

The trip from Honolulu to Wake was about another twelve hours, and when I saw the place I couldn't believe my eyes. The place was so small I was wondering if there was enough room for the plane to land. Of course, this was an exaggeration but the place was small.

After we had landed we asked one of the men there how big the island was and he said it was four and one half square miles, so you see it wasn't very big. We ate in the Pan American Restaurant, had steaks and then took a walk down to the beach. It was night, but still warm from the days heat. A couple of men were fishing and we asked him about swimming. He said that there were sharks in the water and while the Americans didn't go out, the natives did. As far as the sharks go, he said that if a tiger shark or any like it in size come along, the natives headed for shore quick but otherwise they

just gave them a shot on the snoot and kept on swimming. The only thing there beside the restaurant and a few service barracks, was the airport and the only thing there was a weather station so the cablegram went out the window.

We stayed at Wake about an hour and then took off for the last twelve hours of our trip. That last leg was the only time we had run into any unfavorable weather conditions and that wasn't bad at all. It was mostly storm clouds and some rain so we just got bounced around some but not bad at all. We landed at Honata Air Base here in Tokyo and a bus brought us out to Camp Drake. We just got a partial pay of twenty dollars, changed our money into occupation tender, had our records checked and that brings us up to date.

I was talking (if you can call it that) to one of the Japanese workers here and about all that came out of the conversation was that he was twenty-one and had been taken prisoner during the last war and I told him I was twenty (because that's what he asked), flew over from America and showed him the pictures in my wallet. The only two words he knew in English beside "American" were "nice" and "goodbye." I really wish I could spend some time here and get to know the people.

**Dec. 31, 1950:** TELEGRAM Am getting along alright. Please don't

worry. All my love.

**Jan 1, 1951:**

I guess time has run out on me and in about half an hour I'll be on the first leg of my journey. If you can get in touch with Allen or Esther, see if you can find out what outfit Esther's brother is in as I might get a chance to see him. I'm going to the 25th Division and to be honest about it, I don't even know whereabouts the division is. We don't know how long it will be before we see each other again, but I'll do my best to write as often as possible. I would appreciate if you could send me some T shirts and underwear, about four or six of each.

My new address is 8069 Repl. Bn., APO 301, %Postmaster, San Francisco, CA

**Jan 3, 1951:**

Just a few more rushed lines to let you know that we have reached Sasebo, Japan and we have about an hour before we leave here. It took us about thirty six hours to travel here by train. The ride wasn't too bad and every time we came to a town we would toss out cigarettes, chewing gum and candy to the people. I spent most of the time playing cards and just talking with the boys. Gene and I are here together in the same building until we ship out of here and then we will get sent to different outfits. We leave here at about twelve thirty and the rest of the trip is on an LST for about 12



more hours and then we're in Puson. From there on will remain to be seen.

**Jan. 7, 1951:**

We've been on this train (?) for four days ever since we left Puson and we are now in Taegu. From the looks of it, there just doesn't seem to be any place for us to be at any certain time. As I told you, I was to go to the 25th Division but when we got off the boat at Puson we were assigned to the 24th Division, but so far we are just sitting on the train and going nowhere.

We have to watch the train to keep the Koreans from climbing into, or on top of the cars. Two trainloads of refugees came in last night from Taejon and we had to keep a close watch on them. It really was a terrible sight to see those people with all their belongings, in box cars, flat cars and sprawled on top of ammunition cars. Kids run around without shoes and the women carry their babies on their backs with bundles on their heads. The men carry bundles on their backs that one would figure impossible.

As far as this train goes, we have no heat whatsoever, plain wooden seats and up until yesterday, about four or five windows were out. The only way to get any sleep is to lie down in the aisle or under the seats.



*Bob Moncur on 30-cal. light machine gun. He sent picture to Ann with a suggestion that it be given to the local paper. See letter dated March 1.*

**Jan. 9, 1951:**

I'm still here in Taegu but under slightly different circumstances. Sunday afternoon on the train I started to feel sick with cramps, fever and the GI's. I went to the medic on the train and he gave me six tablets to take. I went back to our car, took them and waited but nothing happened except that I began to feel worse.

I went back again and the medic gave me some liquid to drink and I sat down on the lieutenant's cot and just couldn't get up again. I just kept feeling worse every minute so he took my name etc. to send me to the hospital.

While he was writing up the slip, I started to throw up so I went outside the car and threw my guts out. I felt somewhat better then, but I went to the hospital anyway

They admitted me and gave me more pills and more liquid to take and now I feel much better. I told the doctor about my back but he said it was probably because of the fever and I guess they're too busy to bother with that anyway.

He spoke to me today and said he would let me stay today and mark me for duty tomorrow. I don't know what I'm going to do when I get out because all my equipment was left on the train and I haven't even

got a jacket to wear.

I'm pretty sure the train went up to Taejon but I don't know if they left my equipment here or took it with them wherever they were going. This hospital life sure is swell for me after only a week of C rations and no heat, so I can imagine how it feels to the guys who have been on the line for months.

**Jan. 16, 1951**

Dearest Ann,

I just grabbed this pad and envelope and found a pencil to write this letter. I finally got out of the hospital and got sent to the 8069th Replacement Battalion.

And to what I thought would be a half way decent place. It turned out to be a long building with about ten big rooms in it and a few smaller buildings for the



workers, etc.

For the men who didn't bring any mess equipment, they had us sign for steel trays to put the food in, but no utensils with which to eat. I started eating with some improvised chopsticks but didn't do too well and one of the guys gave me his spoon.

We had cots to sleep on and a little stove for each room, but if you wanted any heat in the stoves you had to buy the wood from the gooks.

I was there for about two and a half days when they called for men going to the 24th Division. At last, I thought I'd stop all this messing around and get to my outfit.

They loaded us up on trucks and headed out for Taegu and when we got there, it started all over again. Nobody knew about us coming and when we finally found someone who did, he had no place to put us.

An R.T.O. man finally put thirty-eight of us up, in a car that was on a siding, so we could have somewhere to sleep. Then we sent someone out to see if we could get some chow and after running around a bit, finally got us some C rations.

We were getting kind of sick of eating C rations so two other fellows and me took some of our extra clothes and went to town to sell them. We got 28,000 won (Korean money) (which is equal to

about 7 dollars) which was nowhere near to what the clothes were worth, but we wanted some chow so we took it.

We found a few G.I.'s and they told us where we could find a place to eat, so we proceeded. We each had two hard boiled eggs, a plate of fried potatoes, and a cup of coffee. We felt much better after that and we headed back for the train and stood around the fire and talked with some Englishman and then went to bed.

We naturally have to be careful of enemy infiltrators so there are guards all over the rail yard and the best thing to do, if you don't want to get shot, is stay around your car. A few men have already been shot here through some kind of misunderstanding or carelessness.

In the morning the lieutenant took us back to the R.T.O. office and the men that stayed in the office the night before told us they were taken over for hot chow the night before.

He finally got us on two cars of another train and we piled in and got as comfortable as possible. Much to our surprise, we had two meals on that train.

There were three stoves in the car so it was quite warm enough to sleep with only one blanket.

We finally arrived here (Kumchon) this morning and we walked about a mile to the 24th Repl. Co.

The story here is much the same as everywhere else, only worse. They were set up to take care of about three hundred men, and with us coming in it gives them about one thousand.

They were getting three hot meals a day but with us here now I think they will cut it down to two meals a day. Of course it's still better than C rations as far as I'm concerned.

The worst part of the whole place is that they don't have anywhere near enough housing for the men and the place is just cluttered with pup tents. I haven't even got that much because they don't know anything about my equipment so I've given it up for lost but I'm going to try to squeeze in one of the few buildings that are here.

I've never felt so lousy in my life as I did these past weeks. It's bad enough just being in this filthy country, worse to be here under the conditions of possible fighting, and then to top it all off you get knocked around so much and no one knows what's going on.

You hear how bad they need replacements and all that and I've been here for two weeks now and still haven't gotten to a permanent station.

Believe me, Ann, I'd rather spend three years in jail than to spend 21 months in a hell hole like Korea. To see the way these people live and the houses and towns here really makes me appreciate the



way they have it at home.

The dirtiest slums of any city would be paradise compared to here. I know if this all turns out okay and we have a home and children of our own that we should really be thankful for what we have.

I guess I've outdone myself, writing so much but I have gotten all these gripes off my chest and even with them all I'm still alive and well so that's all that really counts. I always think of you when I'm down in the dumps and it really makes me feel better even though I miss you so much.

I'll never go back on my promise to be as good a husband, and possibly father, as I humanly can and my love for you will never lessen, and I know it has grown stronger than before. I'll sign off for now so take care of yourself kitten and remember I love you with all my heart and will forever. Yours always

**Jan. 20, 1951:**

I have finally reached my outfit and we are about 40 miles behind the front lines. We are in the battalion rear right now and expect to move up to the company lines in a day or two.

Things have been pretty quiet here and from what we have been told, patrols have been sent out but no contact has been made with the enemy.

Both the mail and supplies are hard to get up here but maybe we

might get some mail in a couple of weeks.

Everyone here feels the same, and that is, they pray one of these cease fire plans goes through or they wise up and get us out of here.

Letters from me will be pretty scarce as we can't get writing material, but I'll try my best to do what I can.

The weather has been cold but so far it's not gotten so cold as to make it uncomfortable, in other words no below zero weather yet.

I have been having trouble with my stomach ever since I got here but nothing too serious. I guess it's because I can't stand these C Rations so I haven't been eating very much.

I still can't figure how these men, who have been here six months or so, can stand it without cracking up. I try to keep occupied as much as I can so I don't have too much time for thinking, or else I guess I could worry myself sick.

Today we are being briefed on some of the tactics these Chinese use and the main thing is that their methods are unorthodox, but still follow some sort of pattern.

I won't bother you with all of that and I'm running out of room so I'll just say, pray that something is done about all this, soon.

New address: Co. F 19th Inf. Rgt.  
APO 24, % Postmaster San Fran-

cisco, CA

**Jan 21, 1951:**

I am now up on the line with the company and assigned to the weapons squad of my platoon as an ammunition bearer. Things have been pretty quiet here and the outfit hasn't been hit since the 4th but the moon has been bright these last few nights so we are particularly on alert.

It turned rather cold last night and I imagine it's around zero outside but our platoon is lucky enough to be in the village where we have some protection from the cold.

The boys all seem like swell guys here and our platoon leader is really ideal. I guess I'm pretty well scared now but as long as the boys keep conversation and joking going on I guess I'll be okay.

I hope the mail will start to come through now so you can try sending a package with some stationery, candy, chewing gum, etc and maybe I'll get it.

I pulled my first guard duty last night and we worked two hours on and four hours off, in pairs. It was pretty light due to the full moon but believe me it was cold.

I pulled five hours altogether and everyone was just as happy as I to see the moon go down and the sun come up. The Chinese always attack at night and usually between midnight and five in the morning so during the day we just pull an hour's guard, on the ma-





chine gun, at a time.

I still have a cold but so does everybody so that means everything is okay.

**Jan. 1951:**

As you can notice by the date at the head of this letter, it doesn't take too long to lose track of the time out here.

So far nothing has happened here on the line and from all the rumors we've been hearing things don't look too bad, but nevertheless we are constantly on the alert.

Last night I got my first real scare when mortar fire began to hit on the ridge across the river. About fifteen rounds of white phosphorous went off and they came from what is possibly enemy territory.

I was on guard at the time but when I got off guard the squad leader told me it was just the second battalion zeroing in their mortars. I don't imagine I have to tell you how much better I felt after hearing that.

Yesterday we got some land mines in so today the squad leader and a few of the men are out setting them around the area in front of us.

Before I forget, if you send a package, put a mechanical pencil and some lead so I'll have it to write letters with.

Aside from the cold itself, we are

all waiting for the weather to break so we can get some of these clothes off our backs. For regular



*Bob Moncur and Billy Stiner, "The Best Machine Gun Team in Korea." Photo taken summer of 1951.*

wear on a day of average cold temperature, I wear on top a summer undershirt, a woolen sweater, an o.d. winter shirt, another sweater and then a fatigue shirt.

On the bottom I wear a pair of winter underpants, a pair of o.d. pants, a pair of fatigue pants and a pair of water repellent field pants. When I go on guard at night I put on a pile jacket and my field jacket and if it's cold enough, either an

overcoat or a blanket.

So, you see it's not too hard to wear yourself out just carrying all these clothes around all day.

The Korean homes are made out of clay and the way they heat them is by building small fires in small tunnels that run under the floor. We are at the opposite end from the place where the fires are built so we don't get too much of the heat.

The other night the boys decided to try to get some heat back to us so they built a real good fire and kept throwing wood on it. They got heat back to us all right, so much that it was unbearably hot, and the floors got so hot that the mats in the front room started to burn and the smoke was all over the place. Now, we just keep a regular fire and use our blankets.

It's getting so the two hours of guard are going somewhat faster than at first so it's not

too bad. Last night I was on guard from eight thirty to ten thirty and two thirty to four thirty and after my first relief I stayed up for almost an hour and then went to sleep. I got up later and started to put on my overshoes when the guy next to me asked me if my feet were cold and I said no, I had to go out for guard.

He looked at me kind of funny and said that I still had an hour





and a half before I had to go on and it turned out that I had just dreamed that I had been called for my guard duty and it was so real to me that I was starting to get ready. I guess a little too much of this life would be enough to drive a guy batty.

**Feb. 1951:**

We just got through digging in and it's starting to get dark. The reason I haven't written is because five days ago we left our position in the village and have been on the move ever since.

We moved about 40 miles north by truck and then the following morning we started out on an attack.

We climbed over a few hills into enemy territory without any contact but after we reached our objective, we heard firing. G company on our left flank had run into some Chinese on a hill to our left and succeeded in driving them out. We moved that night to reinforce G company's position and believe me I've never been so tired and freezing cold as I have been in the past 4 days.

Yesterday we went on a patrol about 4 miles as the crow flies and in that distance I guess we covered eight miles up and down and around these wicked mountains.

**Feb. 1951:**

I have some time while waiting to go out on patrol so I will try to get



*Stiner and Frost, May 1951*

this letter off. I have been feeling better now that we have had some rest from all the climbing etc. and also I think because we had a little action yesterday.

It seems funny but I guess it's just after sitting around on watch during the day and guard during the night you feel relieved in some way to have something happen.

Yesterday, early in the morning the Chinese on the hill I told you about started some action and it lasted until the afternoon. I was on rear guard watch so the most I drew was a little sniper fire but none of it was very close. It was all mostly distant fire and no close

fighting but all the same we burnt up quite a bit of ammunition.

One fellow had just come back from the aid station, with bad feet, and yesterday a sniper caught him in the arm so he's gone back to the hospital now.

It may sound a bit funny to say, but I sort of wish I got hit like that yesterday. We also caught some short rounds of artillery from our own guns and our squad sergeant caught some shrapnel in the face and he'll probably lose the sight in one eye.

That was all yesterday for our platoon and they were both probably through mishaps. The jets and

heavy guns have been giving it to that hill for two days now and I guess we'll start feeling it out pretty soon now

**Feb. 1951:**

I'm still okay but getting sicker and sicker of this place all the time. We have moved up on another hill and from information we got from a Chinese who gave himself up, there is supposed to be a large concentration on the next ridge line so we will probably be here for a day or two and let the heavy weapons work it over.

The day before yesterday was the closest I've gotten to actual action when we sent a patrol out to our



flank as we were moving through a pass. The patrol found some enemy and they started opening up with machine gun fire so we moved into the village and looked the situation over.

We spent most of the day in the village while the first platoon poured machine gun fire into the hill and the heavy weapons started to work. We never moved in and as far as we know, it's still got plenty of Chinese on it.

I was so downhearted yesterday that I just had to lay down for awhile for fear I would crack up. We just get little chow and even less sleep than ever and we have to pack our gear up and down these never ending mountains.

**Feb. 11, 1951:**

We have moved twice since my last letter and things have been pretty active lately. According to what we hear, we are about seven miles from Seoul and to the west, but actually we don't know exactly where.

The day before yesterday we were supposed to attack behind the first battalion and when we got there they were just falling back. If we had gotten there about a half hour later, we probably would have held the main position but as it was we had to hold on somewhat lower ground.

The mortars and artillery worked the high ground over and still send some rounds in once in awhile, but it seems as though

there are still some Chinese up there. I don't know why, but we are still having trouble with short shells and two more casualties went on the list due to our own fire.

Yesterday a few of us went down to the village to get the remainder of our sleeping gear and while we were down there we had some "Gohong" or rice and instead of putting sugar on it like the other guys, I tried some of the herb mixture they eat with it.

It is a mixture of some kind of greens and it is quite spicy and I really liked it so I had mine that way. Later after we got back to our position, some of our Korean boys had some in a basket and I was hungry so I had some more. It was a good thing I did too, because we didn't get any chow.

There is a rumor going around that it won't be long before our outfit goes into reserve for awhile and I sure hope that it's true because we really have been going at it these last few weeks.

In case nobody thought of it, you can send some post cards so maybe I can get a line off to a few other people without having to take too much time or worry about stationary.

Navy Corsairs are strafing and bombing that hill now and they're going right overhead and we're just hoping they keep their sights lined up right.

**Feb. 14, 1951**

Dearest Ann,

I am writing this letter in hopes that a kitchen party comes up with chow so I can have it mailed.

Yesterday was quite a busy day as they finally decided that we would try to take that hill again, but after it was all over we were right back where we started. Artillery, mortars, and air strikes were on that hill all day again but those Chinks are so well dug in that it practically useless. We started out around nine-thirty and after it started to get late in the day we had only one more knoll to go and sniper fire had us stopped cold. There were quite a few casualties and we lost twenty-eight men including one missing.

We were supposed to go into reserve the other day but as usual something happened and we are still up here. Most of the men have some kind of ailment or other but they just can't be spared for lack of men.

My toes have had sort of a dead feeling and hurt something awful once in awhile, but as long as I can still walk without too much trouble I'll stay up here.

We also heard that a National Guard division was on the way over here to relieve us in March, and although we're tired of being disappointed, we've got our hopes up again.

The Division has taken quite a beating over here and was the first one to get here so we figure that



there might be a chance that it's true.

Well I guess I can only repeat what I've been saying all along and that is that I hope and pray that something happens over here soon so we can all feel safe again and we can begin again to start our lives together.

I'll sign off now Ann, so take care of yourself and give regards to all at home. I love you and always will.

Yours forever.

**Feb. 19, 1951:**

Once again I've gotten a chance to sit down and write a letter to let you know that everything is still all right. I have heard that they are starting to censor letters over here so I hope that you got my letters in time so you can really understand my position as far as writing is concerned.

The only reason I have this stationery is because a fellow came back from the hospital and brought some with him and I bummed a set. It would be a good idea to send some paper and an envelope in every other letter or so, so I'd be sure of having some on hand.

Yesterday we were supposed to jump off on the attack of a hill and as it was we encountered no Chinese and proceeded to march overland about twelve or fourteen miles and we have now reached the Han River and expect to be here a few days and possibly go

into battalion reserve for awhile.

Yesterday was the roughest day yet as far as physical strain goes as we were continually on the move for about fourteen hours.

Due to the casualties of the last attack we made, I've become assistant machine gunner now, and between the gunner and myself lugging that machine gun on our shoulders all day, we were quite a fatigued pair.

We had no chow last night and no sleeping gear but we were lucky enough to be in a village, so we had some sort of protection from the cold.

Before I forget, be sure to tell Uncle Max and Aunt Kate that I really appreciated the foot powder, but it happens that it was my first mail since I've been here and it only took thirteen days to get here. He had presumed that I'd already received some packages of food stuffs so he sent me something I could use for my feet – but you can tell him I said that if he can get mail here that fast that I'll let him be the postmaster and everyone can give their packages to him to mail.

Which reminds me, I hope this letter can get out of here as we have no transportation up here yet and they even drop our rations to us by plane – so I don't know how soon I can get this one on its way.

My feet were beginning to bother me pretty bad at the start of the

week but I couldn't get to the aid station and now they seem to have quieted down some.

I thought that twenty-one months would not be too bad Ann, but it has only been two months now and it seems like an eternity. I wish more and more each day to get out of here and back home to you and the family again and never have to worry about being separated again.

I miss seeing the gang around, the family arguing about where the cookies disappeared to and Dicky not knowing a thing about it.

**Feb. 22, 1951:**

We are now back in a rest area for five days and I have been trying to write to some of the people I hadn't been while we have the time and equipment. We are supposed to be here for a rest and the ---- have us doing close order drill, squad formations, military courtesy, care and cleaning of equipment and all sorts of other rot seven hours a day when we could be writing letters, and resting and lounging like we are supposed to be.

I got the three cards and three letters today, which were the first letters since I've been here and one of the letters was number "63" so there are still 57 due to me that I haven't yet received.

Today we went down to the aid station for shots and I took my first shower since January 1st and believe me did it feel good.





Our squad leader just came in with a package of cookies to divide among the squad. I wish you would sort of hint around to anyone we know that a package would be greatly appreciated from one or all we know. The finer things like candy, chewing gum, (no cigarettes) and little things like that are really scarce around here and I guess every guy here could go for a box of candy bars a day.

**Feb. 26, 1951:**

As you probably know, we are advancing on most if not all sectors and I hope and pray that either we stop at the 38th or maybe the Chinese might decide to make a deal. Who knows, maybe by Easter Sunday we can be giving thanks for something special but I guess I'm hoping for quite a bit.

Everyone here is hoping that they don't cross the 38th again but I guess it's still up to the wheels behind the desks.

**Feb. 27, 1951:**

I am not feeling well at all. I have had a bad case of the GI's and instead of taking care of it right away I figured it would pass off but it got worse. I'm taking care of it now and it's improved some but I still feel pretty rotten.

They say it's from the polluted well water we have been drinking and washing mess gear in without boiling it first. Someone said that there were snakes in the well that we drink out of and someone else

said there were lizards in it.

Well, on the way down to the aid station, I stopped to take a look and in the bottom were small half snakes, half lizard reptiles. I guess you know I lost all interest in the water from that well.

I did get a package from the family and if I don't get a chance to write them, tell mom thanks millions. Even though it came while I was sick, I enjoyed some and the boys did too. No need to worry about any package going to waste out here.

I don't believe I mentioned it before as I figured mom would know I'd like some cheese if possible, not only because I like it, but it helps to keep the stomach bound and prevents too many loose bowel movements.

I am beginning to wonder if this rest is doing more harm than good because I keep waking up during the night thinking that we are going to move up on the line again. I guess and hope it will be the same as last time though, and after we get back up there I'll feel differently about it again.

**March 1, 1951:**

Guess what! My PFC rating finally came through yesterday so that means a little more money in the bank for us.

Enclosed you will find a snapshot that our platoon guide took and gave to me. All the boys agreed that it was an A1 picture and perfectly suited for the Daily Home

News, so I will give you some information about it and after you have some made you can try getting it in the paper.

I guess you and the family can put the background story and I can just tell you it was taken on a clearing operation in Eastern Korea and I was covering a draw with a light machine gun. I guess that's all I can say and if the paper accepts it, it will be something worth keeping.

We are still back in this supposed rest are and yesterday the Regimental Commander didn't like something or other about the looks of our village area and gave an order for us to move out on the hill.

We proceeded to dig, gather straw and sticks, get our equipment together and we were just ready to move in when it started to rain and they told us to move back to our houses. Of course everything was all messed up and nobody was as comfortable as before but still a roof over your head in the rain sure feels good.

I'm still having troubles with my stomach and the GIs and somehow or other I just feel rotten as a whole. There are times I feel okay and then there are other times I could just pack up and leave this place no matter what the consequences might be.

Today we went on a company problem with live ammunition and it was about the coldest day



we've had here, and after lying around for this time the boys were all pretty well pooped when we got back.

Tomorrow we are supposed to get up about five o'clock and go out somewhere to pick up supplies that have been dropped by plane.

#### **March 4, 1951:**

Today is Sunday and we are in our new area which is just across the Han River about five miles and we have just spent the first night here.

#### **March 6, 1951:**

Right now I am at the 24th Division clearing Station to see if they can do anything for my GIs and if they can't I'll probably go to a field hospital for a check.

We are living in tents with little stoves in them and it is kind of cold unless you are sitting near the stove so that's where I'm writing this letter.

I thought the weather had about broken but last night it snowed a couple of inches again and I guess it will be a few more weeks before this cold weather finally does leave for good.

Your saying something about ice skating reminded me that you are still going to have to put with a husband that doesn't know how. Of course I won't mind learning as long as I have you for a teacher because if you bawl me out for making a mistake, I can always beat you when we get back home!

Really though Ann when I get back we will have so much to do and make up for and believe me we'll have our share of fun together. I was wondering, do you think we ought to look for a car right away or get settled and borrow a car for our honeymoon.

The reason I ask is because I will need a car for work so I'll have to get one even if it's another jalopy.

I miss you and wish that I could be with you now, to wake up in the morning and go to sleep at night with you by my side. To come in from work, find you in the kitchen, give you a kiss and say what have we got for dinner tonight?

#### **March 10, 1951:**

I have been back at the clearing station four days now getting pills and so forth and probably will re-join the company today or tomorrow morning. I can't see as they have done me any good but at least I got a couple days rest out of it.

We are really getting close to the 38th now and we are all hoping and praying that we don't go over it again.

Today there is no sun but it is quite pleasant out and I guess maybe the weather is about to break. The clearing station moved up yesterday from where it was located and we are now set up on the north side of the Han River.

This area is a lot better than the other because it is all sand here

where back there it was all mud wherever you went. The only thing is that there is nothing to do all day unless you can get "butts" on a magazine floating around, or play cards.

Speaking of playing cards, I still haven't had a chance to have that money order made out yet but I still have the money and when I get back to the company I'll try to have it taken care of.

I sure hate to carry that money around because you never can tell, while clambering around these hills, it's not too hard to lose your wallet or anything else for that matter. We see everything from C Rations to fountain pens while moving around this place.

Enclosed you will find a propaganda slip, one of many that were dropped here in the hills to induce the enemy troops to surrender, which you can give to Dick and tell him I will try to get a few more and send them to him. If only they would all work, this nonsense would be over and we could all go home.

#### **March 13, 1951:**

I am now back with the company and as usual we were on the highest peak around the area. There were six of us that left the clearing station and were taken to the company kitchens to be forwarded to the company.

We moved up a few miles more with the kitchen and set up in a new area a little closer to the lines



so the chow could be packed up to the men a little easier.

From the kitchen we moved up another couple of miles to a small village where a lieutenant and a few men were taking care of the carrying parties, etc.

The lieutenant told us we would spend the night there and then go up to the company when they sent up the chow. We pulled some security guard that night and then in the morning, about nine o'clock, we went on our way.

They told us that the company had moved again and they weren't sure just where they were located but they did know it was quite a hike and believe me, they weren't wrong about that. We started up through the valley until it came to an end at the base of a mountain that went practically straight up and it was quite high.

The six of us were at the rear of the party and they kept stopping to rest because of the loads, so another fellow and I just decided that we would start up the mountain by ourselves. We started zig-zagging up the trail while the party was resting so we would be able to take our own speed and then wait for them at the top.

After they caught up with us, we found out how to reach the area and started out again. We passed some Chinese 155mm cannons that we knocked out and we sure were glad to see them in the condition that they were in, but we

sure got a lousy feeling when we saw the U.S. Quartermaster emblem on the projectile canister.

After four hours of hiking and climbing we finally got up here and rejoined the company. We were supposed to move out this morning but they changed their minds for some reason or other, so I am able to write this letter.

We are getting closer to the 38th all the time and the closer we get the more I hope and pray that we don't go past it. I keep thinking how thankful so many people will be if they could settle it soon.

#### **March 18, 1951:**

I got six letters today (finally) and I think that the mail clerk had been sending my mail back because he still thought I was back at the medics.

Thanks a million for the photos, they sure were swell. You look a little different with your new hair-do but otherwise you look just as I picture you all the time.

The puppies sure look cute and I hope they turn out looking like Cockers. I'm glad that Paul (Ann's brother) got into the Air Force because I'd hate to see anyone I know and think as much of, get stuck in this Infantry Army of ours. Did Neil Cooke ever get to report to Fort Dix? I bet it would really be tough on him to have to go back into the army again. I wouldn't wish this place on anyone.

We are now in a rice paddy just

below the hill we were on, but naturally we don't know how long we will be here taking it slow.

Today I took my third shower since I've been in Korea and got some clean clothes and believe me it felt good to be clean for a change. The way we are moving up and getting closer to the 38th I keep hoping more and more that we don't cross it.

#### **March 22, 1951:**

We have been on the move from early morning til evening for the past two days and have only taken time out for chow and sleeping. Yesterday we had quite a hike and it was just late afternoon when we cut off the road up a finger to a high peak.

George and Easy companies were forward and we were bringing up the rear, and when the point companies reached the second highest peak, they drew fire.

We halted and made small fires with which to keep warm and stayed there for about half an hour while George and Easy proceeded to secure the knoll.

We then got the order to saddle up and move out again and we moved through the lead company intending to take the last and highest peak of the mountain.

It was just getting dark and we were drawing machine gun fire from our right flank, direct front and sniper fire from the left front, so the place was pretty well protected by fire.





We had just maneuvered to the jumping off point when I guess they decided it was getting too dark so we just turned around and dug in on a lower peak.

It was cold, as usual, and we had no sleeping gear or chow so we felt pretty lousy for awhile. After about half an hour, hot chow came up and that made our guts happy but we were still cold and without bedrolls, but they said a carrying party would return with them.

About ten o'clock the bags finally came, but there weren't enough for everyone to get one and my buddy and I missed out, but they said more were on the way.

It was too cold to sleep but our squad leader gave us a shelter-half to keep the wind out and it made us a little more comfortable.

We got in a couple of cat-naps between shivers and at one o'clock the rest of the bags finally came, so at last we would be warm and get in a little sleep – we thought!

It seemed no sooner had we gotten into our bags when an enemy machine gun opened fire from our right rear. Actually an hour had passed but we had only been sleeping for half the time and when the firing had started we naturally got out of our bags and on the machine gun.

We were really cold then after being nice and warm in our bags and the bullets were going right overhead so we were without sleep for

another hour and a half.

We decided that everything was clear so we tried to catch a little more sleep but I didn't get in my bag again in case I had to use the gun in a hurry.

It turned out that it was a fifteen man Chinese patrol with a machine gun and they had been detected by the fourth platoon.

You might think I finally got a couple or three hours sleep, but at four-thirty we had to roll up and move out to take our objective of the night before, so at the very most I got an hour's sleep after marching all day long and carrying the machine gun most of the way.

It turned out the Chinese had departed during the night, so we just walked up to the peak and here I am.

We heard a rumor about another cease fire plan but I'm not pinning my hopes on much of that any more. Of course, I hope it's true and it works out but I'm not going to count on it.

### **March 24, 1951:**

We have been blessed with another day's rest today. Yesterday morning we started out at four in the morning again and we had three objectives to take for the day's operations.

We naturally we had to start down the ridge we were on so we made like human flies and groped our way down by light of the moon.

It was just daylight when we took

the first of the three, which was called objective "moose" without drawing any fire.

We stopped there and waited and rested while an advance group started for number two which was objective "fly."

They weren't out very long when we heard some small arms fire but it didn't last very long so we figured it was just the men firing at some movements or other.

We moved on ahead and up to "fly" and we passed one wounded man who said he was hit by a sniper and that's what the shooting was about.

We rested again and ate chow on "fly" and started out for number three, "calf" which was last and highest.

The lead company started out a few minutes ahead of us and ran into small arms and machine gun fire so they called for an air strike before attempting to take it. The planes came over in about fifteen minutes and went through the usual napalming, rocketing, and strafing and then took off again.

We moved up to a knoll just before "calf" where the guns were located and they told us that the Chinese just left their positions and took off over the ridge without even firing a shot. We stayed on the ridge we were on and dug in while the lead company proceeded to secure "calf" and the day's climbing was over.

Last night was the first decent



night's sleep I'd gotten in about a week and it sure felt good. We read in the Stars & Stripes today that MacArthur says there wouldn't be much sense stopping at the 38th, when it would take the same amount of men to hold the line as it would to go all the way through.

That would be the biggest let-down for me and so many other guys who are hoping that we don't cross. People will never realize how rotten this place is and yet guys are getting shot up and killed just to hold it. I guess we will just have to keep on hoping and praying for something to happen.

### **March 26 1951:**

I was going to write yesterday, as we were supposed to spend a couple of days on this last hill we moved to, but it was raining when we got up in the morning and it lasted all day.

We had a position dug in for the machine gun but nothing to keep the rain out so we had to do something. We started cutting small trees and proceeded to make a lean-to shelter and covered it with pine boughs. We got all soaking wet doing this and after it was finished we climbed inside and it was all dripping wet anyway.

After staying in there for about half an hour we decided to look for something better. I climbed down the reverse slope of the hill and found a few overhanging boulders that afforded some protection from the rain, so we sat

down under them and built a small fire.

This was much better and at least we didn't get any wetter (if we could) and the fire gave us some warmth. We heated our chow and stayed there for a couple of hours until the rain slowed down a little, and then decided to go down to the village and try to get some mats and straw to keep the rain out at night because we would have to go back into the position and be with the gun.

It was quite a good distance down the hill to the village and we finally got there and got a Korean papason (old man) to carry a load of hay and we got a mat and another load of hay, packed them on A-frames and started back.

It sure was a tough climb back up but we finally made it and fixed us up a good roof to keep the rain out. Of course, by this time we were soaked through so we went to a fire to dry out and get ready to hit the sack for the night.

About 9:30 an order came through to put out all fires. The rain had stopped so I got into my sleeping bag pretty dry.

There have been quite a few good rumors going around, such as reservists called in before the emergency was called, are supposed to be released as soon as possible, and a couple of more just as morale building.

### **March 28 1951:**

Just woke up this morning and

decided that I would write a letter while I had the chance. I got another letter yesterday and it was number twenty-four and I've already received up to number eighty-nine – but still about fifty or so to receive yet.

It rained again yesterday and it looks cloudy today so maybe the rainy season has started. We have been on this hill for about four days now and we've been expecting to get relieved every day – and every day they say maybe tomorrow.

We haven't got it bad here though and it would be alright with us if we stayed here for the rest our time here. Last night and the night before, the second platoon got us all on the alert by machine gun fire, rifle fire and all kinds of nonsense, but no enemy was ever seen.

As you will probably notice the change in the pencil, I'll let you know that I relieved a package from you with the two mechanical pencils, etc. so I'll thank my dear wife for sending it.

I also got six more old letters today and a recent one from you, Uncle Max and Mom so I made out pretty good as far as the mail goes.

We have also come down off the hill this afternoon to go into reserve for a couple of days. We are to sleep at the base of the hill tonight and move to an assembly area in the morning.



I never did tell you that a couple of months ago we picked up a Korean kid and kept him with our squad ever since. He serves as ammo bearer and does odd jobs for us and he is treated just like one of the regular squad members.

There are a couple of other boys with us but I think that "Shorty" is a real nice kid and the others are smart guys and loafers.

I let him wear my watch (the one I got at Dix) one day and never bothered to ask for it back, so I'm going to let him keep it and when we separate for any reason or other, I'm going to give him ten dollars to take with him.

He told us that if the outfit crosses the 38th he will probably leave us and go back to join his folks in Seoul.

In that package I got last week there were those jelly beans so I gave some to him and he got the biggest kick out of them. Just like a kid you would find back home.

While I think of it, ask Bill to send a camera from home or get an inexpensive one and send it, and quite a few rolls of film so I can take some pictures here.

You may not believe this but there is an order from our outfit that says the men WILL be clean shaven and washed, and the area WILL be policed and kept clean. Just like back in garrison!!

**April 1, 1951:**

The weather has been quite pleasant as far as temperature goes, but we have been having some rain almost every day.

I finally got my first haircut in three months today and I sure feel empty on top (that's on the outside only).

I thought the last rest area was bad but here we train, have regular guard with an O.D. and all have to know our general orders and all kinds of other garrison nonsense.

There were church services today so I went and the priest really was good because you could understand what he was saying and he gave a lot more in English than they usually do so I understood a little more of what was going on.

You of course know that U.N. forces have crossed the 38th but I heard today that Britain said they wouldn't cross so maybe it might make a little difference.

It sure was a blow when we heard it over the radio yesterday but are hoping that something happens soon because it will really get rugged if we go into North Korea.

**April 4, 1951:**

We have moved to a different rear area but we are closer to the line and in sort of a third defense line. We are situated in a valley, and this morning the whole company and two others all went up on a high ridge and every man had to dig their positions.



The ridge was practically solid rock and believe me, we had quite a time trying to cut into the ground far enough to do any good. We were told that a half-million Chinese were across the 38th and they are supposed to have three thousand planes so maybe it might make a difference in what they decide to do.

I guess the main reason we dug those positions is that they might counter-attack and we would have the positions already prepared.

I sure hope that they change their minds about going across the 38th because it sure will be rough – and I bet if they do they will be sorry just like the last time. The South Korean's are supposed to have so many men back in Puson, Taegu, etc.

**April 5, 1951:**

We have moved again and it's get-





ting so I'm afraid to unroll my sleeping gear for fear as soon as I do we will be moving again. We have moved some north and some west but are still not up on the line as yet.

**April 7, 1951:**

We have been doing very little in the past few days. One thing new though, we got in some more replacements and we started up another platoon so the gunner went to another squad as assistant squad leader and I am now gunner. That makes me second to the squad leader and affords a good chance for me to make Corporal. More money in the bank!

I got fourteen back letters the day before yesterday but I haven't gotten any recent ones in about two weeks. Boy, I'd like to know just what they do with half the mail that comes and goes thru here! You can tell Bill I got the letter that he send back in January and was glad to hear from him.

We are still on the last hill I wrote you about and have been here three days now.

The water situation is the latest problem because there is no more snow to melt and up here on these hills there are no streams or brooks.

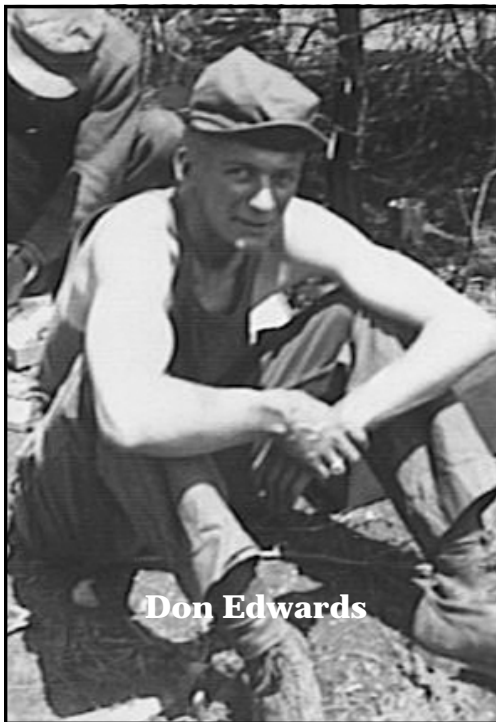
**April 14, 1951:**

We have been on the move for the past four days and really haven't rested long enough to do anything but sleep. We have been doing more climbing in the past few

days, without a rest, than we have in all the time I've been over here.

The whole company is in low spirits about this crossing of the 38th and the whole situation seems to be getting worse and worse all the time.

We hear that the people back home are pretty bitter about the crossing too, but I don't imagine it will make much difference to the "wheels" who are running this operation.



**Don Edwards**

**April 15, 1951:**

I just got my first chance to wash and shave in about five days and I sure feel a lot better. After I finish this I'll start to clean up the machine gun and try to catch a little sleep.

The day before yesterday we took an objective and set up our positions in the late afternoon and

proceeded to wait for our sleeping bags to arrive. It is still quite cold at night and rather uncomfortable without bags and we really need them to sleep.

We were lucky enough to set the gun up in a Chinese bunker so we could make a fire, but it was either keep the fire going and stay awake or let the fire go out and freeze, so we stayed awake.

It turned out that the bags didn't arrive until four in the morning so we got about two hours sleep all told.

Then yesterday morning we moved to a new position, stayed there until about four in the afternoon, then moved and proceeded to wait for the bags again. We had to dig our own positions this time but we had a fire on the reverse slope anyway.

Well, last night it turned out that the carrying party got lost and we got our bags about eight o'clock this morning, so I got about the same amount of sleep again.

The Captain's bag arrived about nine o'clock last night, but he said if the men had to sleep without bags, he would too, and left a couple of the men share his bag between them. He really is quite a regular guy and also a good dependable leader.

The rotation isn't moving too fast right now but is supposed to get better as we go along but I still doubt if I could get home for your birthday, but I sure am praying



that I can.

You know, besides rotation I still have five days R & R to look for, and they just came out with a three day pass to Seoul deal to just take it easy, etc. so it might break up the time somewhat.

We haven't been meeting too much resistance lately but the other day I got so mad at the machine gun that I felt like sticking a grenade in it and blowing it up.

We were attacking a position and I was to throw fire onto it while the rifle squads moved up. The gun would not fire properly and I couldn't get it to fire automatic.

I wouldn't have minded so much but a Chinese got out of his hole, looked around and tossed a grenade; if the gun was working right I could have gotten him right at the start. As it was, a rifleman had to get him. It seems as if they (the Chinese) are still short on supplies because they were using U.S. rifles and they only had one rifle for two men.

The other day we made a good killing by sneaking up on their flank and surprising them. We captured two Chinese and two mortars besides.

I got your letter of the 6th with the pictures of Paul and Esther, Sparkie and the pup and also the Bobby and Ann Jr. And the guys asked me if you were running a zoo while I was away. Who knows what she's liable to do, I said!

Yesterday I dreamt that I was

home and you were so happy to see me that you were running all around and acting so funny that people thought you were crazy.

I'm hoping and praying that it won't be just a dream, and if it is that it comes true real soon.

Then we can both act just as crazy as we want to. And really, Ann, if everything turns out okay I think it will be more of a gain than a loss for both of us.

I've learned to appreciate all I have at home and will have when I return.

#### **April 20, 1951:**

We finally have gotten a break and have gone into regimental reserve for a couple of days, I guess. They brought us off the hill the day before yesterday and we spent the best part of the day setting up a place to bed down, etc.

We finally got all set and just took it easy figuring that we would have time to write letters, etc. during the few days we'd be here.

The assistant gunner and I had to sleep by the machine gun and our squad pulled their guard there.

Everything was fine until about five thirty in the morning when it started to rain. We had no sort of shelter set up so I just put my poncho over my bag and went back to sleep. When they woke me up for chow it was still raining so I ate in the tent that the medic and platoon sergeant had set up. It continued to rain until the early

afternoon, but it was still cloudy and quite cool.

I walked over to the aid station about 5 o'clock and when we stepped outside the tent (after hearing the Yankees beat the Sox), we saw the company rolling up.

No one knew what we were going to do or why, but we sure were in a hurry. We practically ran up a nearby hill and we were told to go to the top and set up a platoon perimeter there. Then our lieutenant told us that all he knew was that we were to block a gap as a secondary line of defense in case anything should happen.

We spent a fairly peaceful night, had a nice breakfast and the captain called and said we were to return to the previous area, and here I am.

I'm sure of getting that corporal rating because the lieutenant came over to me yesterday, asked me how much time in grade I had and also if I felt that I could take over the squad when the squad leader leaves - and I told him I'd sure like to try.

He is a real nice guy and I think he likes me pretty well, so keep you fingers crossed and maybe I will get something out of the deal.

If I remember I will enclose a picture of me and if we can get a few more sets made, I will send a whole bunch of them home. I am only in a few but I'd like some pictures of the guys.

Speaking of pictures, did Bill get



that camera yet? If not, ask him to do so quickly. I can leave it back at the kitchen if I don't want to carry it and then I'll be able to take pictures whenever we come off the line.

I went to church services twice since we've been here and I go every time I get a chance to. The chaplain is a real swell Joe and everyone thinks he is one of the most interesting men they've come across. He is young, quite nice looking and when he starts talking with his Boston accent it's really "cool."

**April 22, 1951:**

This will have to be a short one as it is almost time for chow and we may have to move again today. My squad leader got evacuated the other day, so I am in charge again until such time as he comes back.

I got called to the Red Cross yesterday about not getting any mail and would appreciate it if you would tell mom to let the New Brunswick chapter know that the message reached me.

As for feeling bad goes, you know that I do like to get letters every day but I realize that the A.P.O. has their troubles too, so I just have to wait.

**April 26, 1951:**

I guess by now you have heard the news about the Chinese starting to push again. We were in regimental reserve at the time and we

were alerted to move to either the first or third battalion, whichever go hit the hardest.

About ten o'clock we got the order to move out and we moved about a mile to the rear and set up in some rice paddies to be in mobile reserve.

We had just gotten dug in when we got the call to go up and tie in to the right of "L" company of the third battalion. After walking up a draw for about two miles we set up on a finger and no sooner had we gotten dug in there, we got the order to move out again.

We then climbed to the top of the ridge and we could hear the Chinese below, talking.

The lieutenant said that maybe if we started down the hill and threw some fire that they might decide to bug out.

We started down the hill, threw some fire into them and withdrew to the top again and dug in.

By this time it was morning and we didn't get an hour's sleep all night.

We had no sooner gotten dug in again when we got the order to move out again. This time we went down to the valley and the whole battalion was retreating.

The Chinese were throwing their first artillery at us and it was coming all during the withdrawal but it didn't give us much trouble.

We caught a little sleep on the reverse slope of a small hill and then

started off down the valley about five miles and set up again.

That night was pretty quiet but last night they worked up around us on three sides and we had to withdraw to a new position. By this morning the situation was growing worse so we had to leave again.

The whole battalion had to leave and the rear company had to exchange fire on the way down. We were pretty lucky though, because we did very little actual fighting. Right now we are back below the 38th and we are in those positions I told you we dug a while back.

Our company is supposed to be behind the actual lines in a defense position. From the looks of it we will probably end up in the same position as before.

**May 1, 1951:**

We have just spent two miserable rainy days and today the sun came out so we cleaned up all our weap-





ons as best we could and dug our positions.

Right now we have our backs to the Han River and believe me we don't like it at all.

This week has been the most tiresome of all the time I've spent over here.

Just to give you an idea of how we are moving, it took us exactly six days to withdraw what ground it took us almost two months to take. In all we have ridden on trucks about twenty-five miles and it seems as though we have walked about ten times that distance. We went two days with only one meal of C rations each day and the distance and the mountains have us just about dead on our feet.

When we boarded trucks yesterday, we were in hopes that we would cross the river and set up a good defense, but it seems as though it won't be long before we're back in Pusan again.

Of course this is just the way it seems to us but maybe the high command has something in mind that we naturally don't know about.

Our spirits were about as low as they could get the past few days, but this short break and the sunshine have made a difference.

The platoon sergeant has just told us to be on the alert because an unidentified patrol of six to eight men is heading our way so I will have to hold it up for awhile.

Here I am again! It turned out that the patrol was GI's so everything is okay. I believe I told you that I'm in charge of the squad now and being both squad leader and machine-gunner sure is a job keeping me on the run.

The platoon sergeant told me that I have been put in for corporal and I sure hope it goes through because every little bit counts toward our home.

Before I forget, I want to remind you that I'm all for living in the bungalow and anything you want to buy or do is okay with me. I know you will do right in any choice you make and it is going to be our house, Ann, so anything you, do as long as it within our means, is just swell.

By the way you better be practicing up on that cooking because I sure will want to eat when I get home! We were talking the other day about how swell it would be to have about a gallon of ice cream on some of these hot days, but I guess I'll have to wait til I get back.

### **May 1, 1951:**

I was so mad this morning that I was going to ring somebody's neck because at mail call today I only got twenty-two letters and three packages.

Seriously though, Ann, I was really overjoyed to receive both. It seems so funny because most of the letters are old ones and I keep reading about things that have

changed since you wrote them.

This makes our third day in this position and the captain said we will stay here until we are pushed out or 8th Army orders us out. The engineers strung barbed wire out in front of us yesterday and we have been setting mines, trip flares and booby traps out every day, so if they do come they will run into trouble and we will know about it.

I was sorry to hear about Paul not making the Air Force test but tell him that I said he should try the Navy because sure as heck he will end up in the army.

I know that the navy eye test is also pretty strict but if he could make it he would be sure to go much further in the navy rather than the army.

To give you an example of how this outfit works, when we came into the outfit they sent us right up to the line and said that the old men would have priority on jobs in the rear.

Now they are asking replacements if they can cook, type or do any other kind of work that would keep them in the rear, and we stay up here and do the dirty work.

I won't complain too much as long as I can get out of here soon and get home.

### **May 3, 1951:**

Today I got three letters from you and also the camera that you had Uncle Max send. Thanks for both.



It sure is funny though, I haven't gotten a letter from you with an April postmark yet, but the package was dated April 13th. I guess the A.P.O. must be reading all your letters before they pass them on to me; can't blame them though, because they probably enjoy them almost as much as I do.

We are still situated in the same place as before but there is talk that an outfit is thinking of pushing through us pretty soon.

They sent a patrol out about seven miles today and didn't find anything but brought back a couple of prisoners.

I guess they won't be satisfied until they get us back up there again so the Chinese can knock us around a little more.

I figure that if we stay here and let things stand for a while that rotation will have most of the old men out of the company and maybe they might get down to us pretty soon.

You see, they got very few replacements after August and September and then came us, so if they get rid of most of the old men we might stand a chance.

Last night the company commander said he wanted all positions dug deeper and wherever possible, covers put over the holes. He said this because the night before, an R.O.K. outfit received about three hundred rounds of mortar and artillery fire.

So today we spent all morning digging out our positions and cutting down trees to cover the holes with, and during the course of the day I got myself quite a sunburn. It doesn't bother me now and I hope it doesn't tonight either because you can't go on sick call for sunburn because it is not in the line of duty and you can be court-martialed for it.

It really has been quite nice here in this place and I sure hope we stay here for awhile longer. After the sun goes down it still gets quite cool though but I guess it won't be long before it's nice at night too.

Of course, it won't be nice trudging up and down these mountains in the heat but at least you feel good while you're sitting around.

I really miss you so much Ann and pray every day that his mess comes to an end soon so that all of us can return home again to the ones we love.

#### **May 5, 1951:**

My assistant gunner just came back from the hospital the other day so I bummed this fancy paper from him. Yesterday was another lousy day as it was raining just about all day long, but today the sun broke through.

I made some good use of it and took some pictures and will probably take more tomorrow providing it's still nice out.

I am still hoping that maybe I could get home for your birthday

but no matter what I hope for, the facts add up to – no!

#### **May 7, 1951:**

It looks like rain again today. I have been a Corporal since May 4th but I won't be able to see about getting the allotment changed until we get to a rest area, because the C.O. said that it is too far back to personnel for us to go.

We heard a good rumor the other day that goes in accordance with what I was saying about maybe getting out of here pretty soon if they get all the old men out before out time comes – they might let us go a little earlier.

We were talking yesterday about how many of the ninety replacements that came in with us are present for duty and we figured about thirty-five so if they do get ahead it won't be as long a wait as we figured.

If my squad leader is on the next drop for rotation I hope that I will take over the squad permanently and have things a little easier.

It sure would be nice if I could get home in time for us to enjoy the summer weather for awhile and get in some of that swimming that I'm missing.

Just think, we're just about two miles from a river and we have to stay up here on these hills.

I already took two rolls of film and have two more left and I think I will get them developed when one



of the guys goes on R&R to Japan because it is much quicker than sending them all the way to the states and then waiting for them to come back.

Our platoon shot two pheasants yesterday so I took a couple of pictures of them and then cooked them up. When they were out after them, it sounded like a small war breaking out because just about half the platoon was out there hunting.

The battalion commander was around the area yesterday and naturally we had to clean everything up and look sharp. He just looked around the area, asked a few questions and then walked around some more and took off.

After he left the complaints came down from the C.P. and we had to make all necessary alterations to fit his desires.

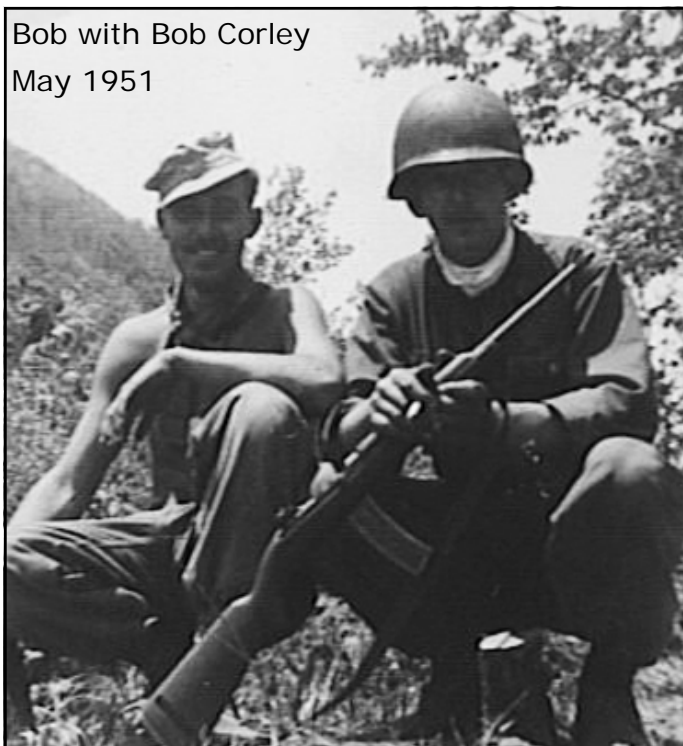
Just like a nagging wife. I bet his wife used to hen peck him all the time so he takes it out on us.

I sure wish I was home so my wife could hen peck me for awhile.

#### **May 8, 1951:**

Right now the rest of the platoon has gone down to chow and I am observing and listening at the phone. It's a little cool right now but it looks like another nice day. We have been busy improving our positions ever since we got here and we have a hole partly covered

Bob with Bob Corley  
May 1951



with timbers (like the Chinese, only different) and sandbags in front of and supporting the machine gun.

It's the best position that machine gun has seen since it hit Korea. My relief has just arrived so I have to stop for now.

#### **May 10, 1951:**

The boys are playing some poker right now so I thought I would take the time to write.

The weather here has been quite hot these past few days and we've just felt like doing exactly nothing all day long.

This morning they took another rotation drop of nine men. I sure hope they start the ball rolling a little faster than it has been going.

I still haven't received a letter from you with an April postmark although I got one from Charlotte

yesterday, postmarked April 21.

A couple of men from the company got out and we were told that their time was up and that's how come they were released at this time.

There are all kinds of rumors about the reserves getting out but the only thing I put any kind of faith at all in about all reserves expected to be out by Dec. 31.

We still haven't gotten any replacements yet but from what we heard, we are supposed to get some in a couple of

days and then the company will be a little closer to proper strength.

Most of our men were rotated, evacuated for some ailment or other, so we are getting lower and lower all the time.

As I told you in my last letter, we are up on line but have a unit in front of us and we are pretty well off as far as getting hit.

Well, last night we had another one of those nights when one man hears something, another sees something and first thing you know the next guy was firing and pretty soon the whole Platoon was all riled up.

They woke us up about eleven o'clock and told us to be on the alert because one of the positions heard movement over toward one of our unprotected spots.

We figured it was all a bunch of





baloney but we had to stay on the alert anyway and after a few minutes just about every guy in the platoon (except the machine gun) was either firing or throwing grenades.

The other two men in our hole all agreed with me that it was just rats or some other animal moving around in the bushes, and just stood around til everything quieted down and then went back to sleep.

I have a nice tan on the upper part of my body and would like to get some on my legs but the flies and bugs are just too much for me to take – and lie down to boot.

#### **May 13, 1951:**

We were playing cards this afternoon and we got a call that the regimental commander was in the area so we had to break up the game and straighten things up a bit.

We had to put our shirts back on and have our weapons and steel helmets handy, and it turned out that he didn't even inspect our company.

After he left, we started to play again and no sooner had we gotten started than they told us the battalion commander and General Van Fleet were in the area so we had to quit again and wait for

them to come around.

It also turned out to be a false alarm so we just started playing again when we had to stop for chow. It wasn't until after chow that we finally finished a full game of five hundred rummy.

All we have been doing for the past two days is arguing about who is going to go to the spring and fill the canteens and each telling the others how lazy they are. Of course, everyone does their share but we just like to have an argument every once in awhile.



"Hey, Joe, can I git in; Moncur has our hole jammed with himself, the gun, all kinds of grenades, his 45, and 5 packages and 36 letters from Ann!

Enclosed is a little sketch of me in my sleeping bag with my sleeping companions which consist of the machine gun, fragmentation grenades, luminous grenades, and incendiary grenade to destroy the gun if I have to leave it, and last

my .45 which sleeps right in my belt with me.

We were told to be prepared to move up by yesterday but it was called off and from what is going on here, we may stick around for awhile yet.

Today they are setting out drums of gasoline which will be set off by an electrical charge and also setting out mortar rounds as booby traps. This is in addition to all the rest of the traps I told you about.

If they keep that up I'll really be sure that rotation will call me

soon because the Chinese will never be able to get to me.

#### **May 15, 1951:**

By the way, you don't really expect me to believe that you were ever using that shovel in the photo, do you? If you really want to put that shovel to work, you can send it to me and I'll put it to good use.

We really could have used it to dig this number one machine gun position. We now have the gun position covered, a place dug out behind

that to sleep in with a covered top, and also a rear exit in case we have to leave in a hurry.

Tomorrow we have to dig alternate positions on the reverse slope in case we should have to fire to our rear.



I think the squad leader will be on the next rotation drop, which will be in a day or two and then if all goes well I will take over the squad.

I don't know if I told you or not, but our platoon leader (who really was a swell guy) was transferred to "C" company and the guy who took his place is just about the opposite. He acts like he's a regular guy but every so often he shows his true colors.

Most of the men know how he is anyway. We got some more replacements in the other day so our platoon is pretty well up to strength now.

#### **May 16, 1951:**

We are still in the still in the same place as we have been for the past fifteen days and we are still improving our positions more and more every day.

We now have every position dug in and covered with logs and also have a trench connecting every position in the platoon.

My squad leader sill hasn't been rotated yet but it will be within the next couple of days for sure (I hope).

Another fellow in the squad should be on the next drop also and every night he dreams something else about rotation. Last night he dreamed that he went to get processed and when he was just about ready to leave he found out that it was someone else's



Goldek with Pheasant

name.

Besides all that he also dreamed that I got rotated before he did and he's been here since July. He keeps saying that he's going home tomorrow and then if he doesn't leave, he swears that it's the next day.

#### **May 18, 1951:**

The weather here has been pretty rotten for the past few days but it is showing signs of breaking up now. We have had a little sun each day but most of the time it was rainy, cloudy and pretty cool.

We haven't been doing anything but improving our positions and keeping a watchful eye to the north. The days here just seem to drag on when it's not nice and the nights are always a threat.

It's not good because it gives a guy too much time to sit around and do nothing but think and wish.

All the old men are sweating out the next rotation drop and even though our time isn't too close I guess we are starting to sweat. I don't think I'll get out of here before my time is up but it won't be long after that unless they cut rotation.

#### **May 21, 1951:**

I am now sitting in the machine gun position with my assistant gunner and we look like a couple of drowned rats.

It was pretty clear last night with only a few clouds in the sky and then during the night

it started to rain. We threw our ponchos over us and stayed pretty dry and when we woke up it wasn't raining anymore.

We had to get up and heat our chow and when we did, it started raining again so we had no choice but to get wet. We saw that it was going to continue so we fixed the ponchos over our hole to keep us dry, but the only thing is, we can't see out very well.

We were reserve company yesterday, but long about evening time we were called to give "G" Co. some assistance.

Naturally they called on the first platoon so we had to move up a draw to the right flank of "G," up to a ridge line.



When we got up there we thought that would be all but they still needed help up on the hill so we had to try a flanking movement up another finger. It was already starting to get dark and I knew that we'd never make it before dark, but we had to move up anyway.

We started up and it was quite a rough climb, as it was a steep angle and plenty of rocks. It was already dark when we got about a hundred yards from the top and the lieutenant sent two squads out ahead and the rest of us stayed to the rear and moved straight up behind them.

Then the lieutenant got a call from the captain to withdraw so he started calling to the lead squads and couldn't contact them.

After about ten minutes we finally got in contact with one of them but to my knowledge the other squad was still out.

The platoon started back and we took it for granted that they had run into the squad somewhere up ahead.

I was still quite sure that the Squad was still up on the hill and I told my squad leader that if they weren't with us when we got back

that I was going to ask for permission to go back and find them.

I remember what you said about



*Young, Shaner, Hall, Hazelwood, and Goldek, May 1951.*

sticking my neck out but they are my buddies and I could never go off and leave them on an enemy hill.

Well it turned out that "Steve's" squad was not with us and it really made me see red to think that they came down and left his squad up there.

The platoon sergeant said something about trying to get someone to go back up with him and I told him that I'd go.

Then my assistant gunner said that we should leave the platoon sergeant behind and just the two of us go.

Naturally the sergeant didn't

mind and said something about having to turn the platoon over to someone if he went, and so the two of us started out.

Both of us only have pistols so we borrowed a carbine and an M-1 to take with us. It didn't turn out too bad as we just took our time and worked up about three-fourths of the way up the hill and got vocal contact with Steve and we guided the squad to our position.

When we got together Steve told us that his squad

had reached the top and practically secured our objective by themselves, but it would have been suicide to try to hold and at one time they were nearly surrounded.

We sure were glad that they were okay so we let them rest up awhile and then brought them back to our positions. By the time we got to sleep it was twelve o'clock and that put us on the go for about twenty four hours yesterday.

They still haven't brought up that rotation list and aside from how the men on it feel, I'm beginning to worry over it myself. The longer the old men have to wait, the longer we will have to do the





same.

**May 21, 1951:**

I am writing this letter during a break in our latest operation. It seems the big wheels found that the main body of the Chinese forces was moving to the east, so we have moved out on a push again.

The whole idea is to bring some of their forces back to our sector so they won't be able to make such a great push as they desire.

So, far today we haven't run into any trouble ourselves but we heard a little firing up on the hills.

Our company is in reserve today and our job is to check and clear the road and villages while the other companies go through the hills, so we have it comparatively easy.

The long awaited sun has finally come out but it had to pick the day that we move out to do it. At least it's pretty nice and even though we are on the move, it's better than rain.

The boys on this latest drop still haven't left yet but it's bound to be in the next day or two. We figure that it will take two more drops to get rid of all the old men and then they will start on our bunch.

I don't expect it will be before July sometime and expect it will be about the middle of the month. Of

course if they increase the drops like they are supposed to, it might be sooner but I'm not going to count on that.

There was talk about going into



*Yoge and Medic Paul Lopez*

reserve again but as per usual it didn't ever come about and that was no surprise to me.

**May 23, 1951:**

This will just be a short one because we have been told to get ready to move. This morning I got my first mail in five days, got 16 letters and still the latest postmark is April 26th.

By now I guess the temperature

must be about 90 degrees and every step we take up these hills makes us about one degree hotter.

If they would only get these rotation men out of here maybe I

could take over the squad and get a break from carrying that machine gun for awhile.

When we started on this latest push we were supposed to have objectives from "A" to "H" and the first day we ended up on "J" and were told that we would go on to "O" and when we got there we had to go to "R" which we are in the process of doing today (I think).

I guess when they run out of alphabet they'll just start all over again. We took quite a few prisoners and most of them are around 17 years old.

I am continuing this letter after a four hour climb up a hill that will long be remembered. This hill would

make a mountain goat look like a lamb. I would like to write more, but from here on we'll be busy with setting up positions or moving on again.

**May 25, 1951:**

We are now waiting to move out somewhere and I am taking time to write. Yesterday, or last night I should say, I got another April letter and also the package of that



underwear that I asked for back in Japan.

I am making use of one set and sent the rest around the platoon. When I asked for the underwear I, of course, didn't know that I wouldn't be carrying anything extra so I just had to distribute it out to some of the boys.

We were relieved by a Canadian outfit yesterday and have now moved to a different sector but just what the scare is we naturally don't know.

They put in for more promotions again and I was told that I went in for "staff" but I'm not sure about it.

That rotation I was talking about in previous letters won't be out until the first of the month so I'll have to wait until then to see if I take over this squad or not.

If they don't start hurrying things with that rotations business, I'm afraid it will be a couple of months yet before I can look forward to leaving, but as long as they are sending some, it's better than none.

We also heard a rumor about the reserves getting out starting next month but as I said before I won't put any faith in any rumor no matter how sure it's supposed to be.



**Fran Hall May 51**

An E.R. that just came back from the hospital said that he heard the order himself, but even so I won't count on it.

I just wish that we were back south just going into that defense line instead of having already left it. I am in hopes that we won't run into any tough resistance for a few more days anyway and maybe something will happen.

We are long overdue for division reserve which is ten days so we should be the first regiment from the 24th Division to go into it.

**May 27, 1951:**

Just another short letter to let you

know that we have moved up again and it has been raining all day on and off. They say that the rainy season is July and August but from the way it's been going I'm beginning to doubt it myself.

Yesterday I got another card from you postmarked May 15 and one from Roslyn postmarked the 16th but I'm still missing from April 26th to May 15th and I guess they will catch up to me okay.

It seems as if the Chinese are in retreat again and every day we move a few miles more but we are still in Regimental Reserve.

The first and Third battalions have taken quite a few prisoners and they all are reported to have said they

are being ordered back to the border. Of course this is all hearsay and even if it's true, it's still only the word of prisoners.

We have also heard that this time we would not cross the 38th but I guess you know what happened the last time.

There has been talk for the last week about getting shots from the medics (6 shots) but so far we still haven't gotten them.

**May 30, 1951:**

I am now sitting on top of another hill as usual but the only thing a little different about it is that we're in North Korea again.



Yesterday we were just about three hundred yards from the 38th and then we moved about two or three miles to the place I am now.

The day before yesterday we climbed the highest mountain in Korea and believe there are some pretty high ones.

It was impossible to write since my last letter because we have again been on the move constantly and just have not time to ourselves.

I am pulling guard check now so that's how come I have time to write this morning. I don't know if we are going to stay here or not today but we are due for a break – I know that.

As you will already know by the time you get this letter, we have cut off and by passed a lot of Chinese and though some of them are still “die-hards” we have captured and taken more prisoners than I have seen since we have been fighting them.

Yesterday alone we got the word that some two thousand were headed our way to surrender and according to what we've been hearing that is only a part of the numbers that have surrendered already.

They have all gone from three to five days without food and are pretty weak and tired.

Sunday our platoon had to go on a combat patrol to a hill where there were reported about ninety

Chinese ready to surrender. We went out, climbed the hill about nine tenth's of the way and then drew fire and also hand grenades.

As it turned out, we had come up to about fifty yards of their positions before we saw them. We were about to try to take the position when we drew machine gun and rifle fire from a flank so we decided to withdraw and let the mortars give them a going over.

We went back to the company area for the night and figured that we would be going back up in strength the next day.

We started out about six in the morning, worked our way up the hill and found nobody there except for two wounded men who said about a hundred of them had left during the night.

Something a little funny about Sunday's operation is that my assistant gunner's birthday was Sunday and quite awhile back he bet us we'd probably be in a fire fight – and we were.

By the way, my squad leader finally got rotated and I am now in his place but I'm still on the gun until we get a few replacements because it would leave us with only three ammo bearers.

I mentioned about being put in for “staff” – well the platoon sergeant told the squad leader that I would've made it except for the fact that I don't have thirty days in grade yet.

By the way, three December men

went on R&R today so that means next week us January men will start. I sure am sweating out that talk about starting to release ER's the first of June and boy do I hope it's true. Even if it is, we have no idea of how it will work and how many will go how often.

Enclosed will be some if not all of the pictures that I took and if they all aren't in the letter I will send them as soon as possible. Take special notice of the mustache please.

### **June 1, 1951:**

Well here it is the first of June and we are still sitting on this outpost waiting to be supposedly relieved.

I sure hope that you got the other letters with those pictures in it and I'll have a few more in this letter also.

The lieutenant told us that we would probably be here a couple of more days before we get relieved but I just don't even believe that we will get relieved. Of course, if we do I guess I won't be too angry over it.

It sure is a funny situation here because even though there are GI's all around us, there are also Chinese all around us so we have to be alert every night just as if there were no friendly elements around at all.

We heard that there is a Chinese general around the hills somewhere and that is probably why they are still giving us trouble instead of giving themselves up.





Yesterday we were observing enemy activities on a hill to our rear and had to inform the C.P. about it and yet it was much closer to them than it was to us.

The whole situation is all screwy but it seems to be paying off in prisoners and every one that gives up is one less we have to fight – so it's okay with me.

Today the fellow who brought the rations up said that some kind of list pertaining to the ER's had to be turned into headquarters by today so there might be something in the wind.

**June 3, 1951:**

Guess what! I got seven letters today so I won't have to murder any of those A.P.O. boys after all but it sure was a close call.

Before I go any further I want to say something about that episode at the fire house. First of all I know how you are and how things like that upset you but for the part about us having to get married, I guess people just seem to take these kind of ideas into their heads and it takes just the thing like your appearance to shake them out.

About getting thrown out of your house, I don't know what you told whoever it was, but I'm sure you must have straightened them out on that point.

I guess those people just sit around all day trying to think of things like that to keep themselves from going stir crazy.

Then the part you mentioned about them knowing you're married and living alone, not knowing that I am overseas. I'm afraid I can't see that it would look anything but 'funny' but I can't understand why they haven't been informed about me being here.



It could be that they just listen to the juicy part of the gossip but when the explanation comes along they forget to hear it. There's just one thing to do about the whole thing and that is, clue them in on any misinformation they may have received and then if they have any more to talk about just

don't pay any attention to it.

Just as long as the people who count know the truth, that's all that should matter to us. If I ever hear any of that talk from anyone I guarantee they will wish they had never gotten the idea into their numb skull. So much for the back fence!

Now, about me getting home. I just want to remind you that anything I have said in my letters is purely my personal opinion and I have nothing in black and white to say that it will ever come about.

You of course know that I hope and pray with all my heart that I am out of here next month but as far as putting any dates on it, I'm afraid we will just have to wait til someone else puts a date on it for us.

**June 3, 1951:**

We have moved from the rest of the battalion to an area about three miles away and are digging in another defense

line. It is the same as the last one with bunkers, grenade holes and rear exits. According to Ridgeway, the 8th Army is through pushing so we are setting up this line, but according to the papers we are moving in on the big Chinese triangle now.

So far things are still as mixed up



as ever and we haven't been told one single thing as to when we can even expect to get out of here or what kind of system is going to be used. We can only hope and pray that we get a break for once and maybe I'll be home sooner than I expect.

**June 6, 1951:**

Dearest Ann,

I got a few more letters in the last couple of days and wish to thank you for being so sweet.

We are now off the line again finally so I will have a chance to write some letters.

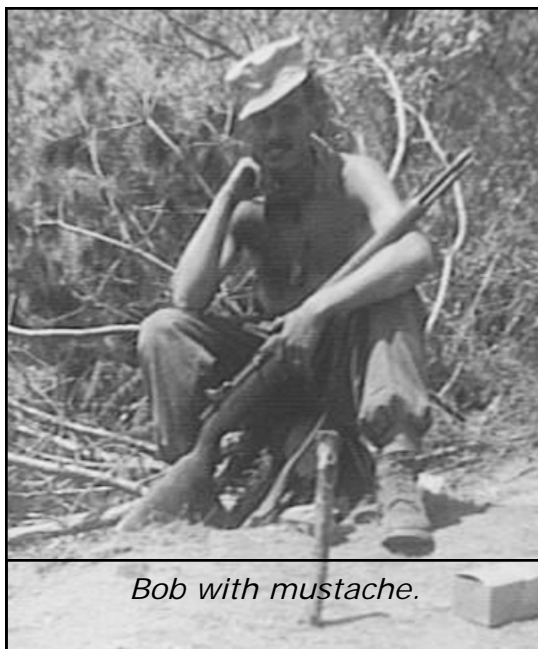
We are supposed to go into corps reserve and as long as the ROK's hold their positions okay we hope to spend a week or two off the line.

As I told you in my last letter, we were more or less in regimental reserve but during that time we had to clear hills that were bypassed by the line. Well, about three days ago we were told that if nothing happened for the next few days we would probably go into some kind of reserve.

We just kept moving up as the line did for a day or two and then they said that as soon as the first and third battalion reached line "Charlie" we would be relieved.

We moved up right behind them and they took "Able and Baker" but ran into trouble after that so we were called in to help out.

We moved up a long finger to the



*Bob with mustache.*

ridge line and started across to the east. It started raining while we were on our way up so we weren't in any too good spirits and then we just kept climbing and walking, walking and climbing until finally the word came from the rear of the line that we had reached the objective.

For some reason or other we still kept on going until we reached the top peak and then sent out a squad to the left and one to the right. The squad to the right had gone only about fifty yards when they ran into chinks but they didn't put up much resistance and after a few minutes we captured four of them.

Billy Stiner and I set the machine gun up in a chink trench and covered the finger from there while the rifle squads cleared the area.

We were just getting things set when we drew fire from a high knob to our front. We threw back some machine gun fire and then it

was returned again. Then I really let some go while a few riflemen fired some also and after we did that it seemed as if all hell broke loose from that knob.

Machine gun fire, rifle fire and mortars were coming in on us and I've never seen such fire in all my time over here.

We were pretty sure, from the amount of fire and the way they fired, that it was G.I.'s so I went over and told the lieutenant to check on friendly elements to our front. He checked with the C.O. and told me that no troops were supposed to be in the area.

I went back to our position, returned some more fire and the same thing happened so I asked the lieutenant to check again and he still said the same thing.

I went back again, but didn't do any firing and just let them do the checking and pretty soon a cease fire order came down and said that the third battalion might be over there.

We stayed there until just about dark and were told that if it was friendly troops, they would fire three tracers in the air and we would do the same. About an hour later the tracers were fired and everything was settled.

It was dark as pitch, foggy and rainy so Billy and I just crawled under our ponchos at the machine gun position, leaving just enough room to see out.

A little while later, I just hap-

pened to turn around to light a cigarette and take a few drags to make sure it was lit up, and heard a rustling noise behind me. I turned around and saw a figure standing under a cape of some sort not thirty feet away from us.

I challenged him asking who was there and all I got was an “uggh” so we threw off our ponchos in nothing flat. I threw a round into my pistol and jumped out of the trench.

It was a chink, but he had no weapon, just a few grenades and some rice.

One of the Koreans can speak a little Chinese and found out that there were still more of them out there and they were trying to find a way to slip out. During the course of the night we took four more prisoners, two rifles, and two Thompson sub-machine guns all loaded, but they all gave up without any trouble.

In the morning we got up and moved around until afternoon and then about five o'clock the ROK unit finally showed up and here I am.

We had a stage show today sponsored by Camel cigarettes and it was really pretty nice. It was the Camel Little Show and I guess you've heard of it over the radio.

There is something I want to say but I don't want you to feel bad because it's nothing definite.

You write about me being home in July and there is nothing I would

rather do than be home, but from the way things are beginning to look from here it will probably be longer than that.

Like I say, I have no proof but the way rotation is going and other talk it seems as if it will be a little longer than I figured on.

It is June now and we still have men that came here last August in the company that haven't been rotated yet.

They said they expected to be rotating 20,000 a month by early summer, but it seems as though it's getting slower instead of better.

They discharge reserves in the states and cut the draft every month but it seems as though a man will have to serve more than six months here before he can expect to get out.

It's starting to get dark Ann, so I'll sign off for now but remember it still won't be too long before I'm home again and maybe sooner than I expect. Take good care of yourself and remember I love you with all my heart and always will. Best to all at home. Yours forever.

### **June 9, 1951:**

We are in reserve now and though I thought we might go back quite a distance, we just traveled thirty-nine miles by truck and ended up about ten miles behind the lines. We are in a crummy location, still can't have lights after dark because enemy was reported still roaming around the hills and we

didn't go back far enough – but with everything wrong we still are off the line so we shouldn't complain.

This place just never seems to run out of rain and it isn't even the rainy season yet. It has rained four out of the last five days and when it rains it becomes quite cool and uncomfortable, but if it comes down more than a drizzle we don't have to train.

The major was around our last area and was quite disgusted with the way the men were lax in their military courtesy, so we have two classes a day to remind us of the proper courtesies due to an officer. We are also running squad, platoon and company problems every day, aside from other training. I might get to go on R&R in a couple of weeks and I will pick up some things and send them home. I am going to put your pajamas on the top of the list and then comes a pair of boots for me. Naturally I will be looking around for anything else that looks nice and probably pick up a few other odds and ends.

The rain finally quit for the day (I hope) so things will be a little more pleasant around the area. I can't make up my mind which is worse, rain and mud and cold, or sun and hot and flies.

If I had a penny for every hundred flies over here I do believe I'd be the richest man in the world. Things are beginning to look so uncertain that I can't even try to





guess just when I'll be coming home but I know that it will be soon and no matter how long we have to wait I know it will be worth every minute of our time apart.

**June 10, 1951:**

Today is Sunday and we have a break in training so I will have some time to catch up on letter writing. It

rained again last night and is still quite cloudy today, but it might clear up later on. Last night when we went to sleep it was perfectly clear out and yet it still rained and that happens just about every day. Today the platoon leaders and platoon sergeants went out to look over some ground where we are to dig positions again and we will probably go out to do that tomorrow.

The mail is still coming through slow and I don't remember if I told you or not, but put an air mail stamp on your letters because it takes much too long by regular mail to reach here. I would appreciate it if you would tell my lazy brother to get on the ball and write once in awhile too.

I have been playing a little poker since we got paid and so far I'm still ahead about fifteen or twenty dollars and I'm going to hold on to all my money this month in case I get to go to Japan so I'll be able to pick up those things.



*Bob and fellow squad members, May 1951,*

From what I hear, I'll be going in the next week or so but they keep the whole thing so secret that you would think the outcome of the war is all wrapped up in R& R. Everyone is disgusted about the way the whole thing is being run but they can't do much about it except wait till their name comes up. Anyone who has had time in Japan since being over here isn't supposed to go on R& R but the 1st Sergeant has more time in Japan than Korea and yet he sent himself on R& R this last time. I guess when you're in charge of the company you can do just about anything you want to and get away with it.

Things have been going so slow on rotation that we've just about given that up too. Rumor has it that the ER's are supposed to be on a separate rotation plan but the way the story goes, the ratio is so fixed that some of us will be here till 1955, so as I said before I just don't pay any attention to the

talk and just hope to get out of here as soon as possible. I feel that it can't be too long for us to wait and then I'll be home again for good. For every day we have to wait after my time is up, we will have a year of happiness so just keep hoping and praying for this to end so that all of us can get home and enjoy the things we have taken for granted.

**June 11, 1951:**

Today I got eight letters from you and was glad to see that you have started to use air mail stamps again. Thanks for the picture you sent and also thank Uncle Max for the same.

I guess I told you in a previous letter about having the picture taken and I really was very surprised to see it, especially on the front page of the Telegram. The photographer took two pictures, the one you sent and also one Billy Stiner and I and Billy was disappointed that his picture wasn't there as well as mine.

Before I go any further I want to remind you again that things are so unsettled that I'm beginning to wonder just when I'll be getting out of here. I know that you have your heart set on my being home by the end of July and I did too, but from the way things look now, I'm afraid to even guess just when it will actually be.



We heard that ER's are supposed to start getting out next month but they are supposed to release only one-sixth of the entire amount each month so that by December all of them will be out. Of course, there are still a lot of things to consider aside from the fact that is all hear-say. First is the fact that they may mean having the ER's all discharged by December and they would have to leave here a month or two before dis-

charge date, and then even if the last ones don't get out of here before December that doesn't mean that I have to be one of the last ones. The best thing to do is just keep hoping and praying that our time comes real soon and maybe our prayers will be answered.

Now, for the bawling out I got for going up on the hill after Steve's squad. I guess it's really hard for me to explain or you to understand that it is just something I had to do.

June 16, 1951: Boy, I sure am bad. Back here in a rest area and yet I still can't write you every day. It just seems as though there isn't much to write about but I know that I should write at least every other day. If there was at least

some good news I could write about it would be easier, but it



*Bob with Bob Marks and Grover DeWolfe  
R&R June 1951. (DeWolfe KIA July 1951)*

seems as though every time I turn around I find some other way that the ER's are getting the shaft..

We read in the Stars and Stripes that if this new U.M.T. Bill is passed, (and it's sure to do so) ER's with 12 months of service in the last war will be released upon request after 17 months from the start of the Korean War. It didn't say anything about how long the rest of us will have to serve but I imagine it will be the original 21 months. I know it won't be what we've counted on Ann but just as long as I get out of this place soon we'll still have at least 30 days to ourselves before I get reassigned. Who knows I might even be lucky enough to get stationed at Dix or Kilmer but the main thing is to get out of here and home to you.

I got a letter from Ros the other day along with yours and she told me that you must have bought a thousand copies of that paper and distributed them around. I feel insulted that you only bought a thousand but I'll forgive you because it helps the budget.

**June 19, 1951:**

I guess this letter will come as a surprise but you should know about it as I mentioned it before.

I'm on R&R now and today is my first day and as much as I really

and truly want to call you Ann but I think it better that I don't.

First of all I know that if I call, the first thing that will come to your head is that I'm on my way home and I don't want you to be let down. Secondly is that for the few minutes we can talk and be happy will be followed by a much longer period of loneliness which I know would be no good for either of us.

We have made it over the barriers that came up and though lonely at times I think we have come to the point where we just realize we just have to wait.

I am going to try to pick up those things for you and send them home. I know that my last letters didn't sound too good, but like I said, nothing is sure and if we



keep on hoping and praying I know that our chance will come soon.

I'm writing this letter in the Osaka P.X. while waiting for the stores to open for business and then I'll see what I can pick up. We saw some cloth and though I am no judge of materials, I might send some home. I've about given up hope for the boots I wanted unless I can get someone who is going to Tokyo to get them for me. I really don't need them anyway and the important thing is to get something to send home to you.

**June 21, 1951:**

I have been quite busy these last couple of days so I couldn't write yesterday but now I have some time so I'll do my best to make up for it.

We spent our first night in a Japanese hotel and though it wasn't inner spring beds, it was a place to sleep away from anything G.I. so it served our purpose very well.

It cost us about 1,800 yen or about five dollars which wasn't very much considering that most places charge more for anything half way decent.

We went back to the R& R building for breakfast and we had orange juice, toast, hot cereal, fried eggs, pancakes and milk and believe me it was the best breakfast we've had since leaving the states.

Then we spent the rest of the day looking around the P.X. drinking

milk shakes etc. and looking around the shops. I didn't get paid when I got here because I thought I would have enough money and actually I do but I could pick up so much more if I had gotten paid.

That night we went back to the same hotel, had a few glasses of Japanese beer and went to sleep again. In the morning we slept late so just had a few pieces of toast and later on went back to the snack bar for something to eat.

One of the boys (Bob Marks) has a cousin in Nara so we decided to go out and pay her a visit and naturally the prospect of a chicken dinner didn't have anything to do with it. She told us how to get there by train but we didn't feel like traveling by train so we took a taxi from Osaka and it cost us 5 thousand Yen or about 14 dollars to go the distance of about 25 miles. We got out at the Nara Hotel and waited there until the fellow's cousin came to pick us up..

After getting inside of the hotel we found that the military currency was going to be changed that afternoon and we were afraid we might get stuck for our money and end up broke. The sergeant in charge told us that if we couldn't find a place to turn it in, he would accept it and try to turn it in for us.

We then went down to Camp Nara Headquarters with Marks' cousins and two other wives and found that we could turn it in there but

we would have to wait till the next afternoon (this afternoon). After all the red tape, we finally got there and enjoyed a very good chicken dinner which we gobbled right down.

Naturally, we didn't expect to stay for the night but figured on staying at the hotel, but Laurie insisted on us staying so we finally gave in. After a good night's sleep, we got up, took a bath, shaved, and came down to a breakfast of bacon and eggs, pancakes, toast and butter and coffee.

Then we went out to see the largest Buddha in the world, which was in the largest wooden building in the world, and also a few other point of interest and then went back to H.Q. to check on our pay. We just had to wait about a half hour till it came in and then we went to the P.X. for a few things and then back to the house.

We had another meal, naturally and then I started writing this letter until it was time for us to go to the movie – and I am continuing it after the show.

If I don't have time to think, I can see it through and no matter how funny it seems I know that I will better when I get back to Korea. The one place I hate so much is just where I wish I was now except for being with you. The news gets better all the time about getting out of Korea.

**June 23, 1951:**

We spent the better part of our





five days at Bob's cousin's house and it really made us feel good to get around some real American women again and of course enjoy some real food for a change. We went to the movie twice while we were there.

According to the latest news broadcasts, all the ER's should be en route home by the end of November so at least now we know that the latest I can expect to get started will be October.

Some outfits have already some home and the only drawback is, that we are only going to be released once a month on or around the fifteenth so if I don't make it on one drop I will have to wait another full month.

At least now we know just what the story is so the only thing we have to do now is sit back and wait. Of course now I don't feel too good about going back but at least I know that one of these days I will be coming home.

Laurie (Bob's cousin) is going to send the few articles of clothing and knick knacks home and I guess it will take about a month to get to you.

In a later letter I will explain what should go to who etc and you can do the honors. I didn't get half the things I wanted to because of lack of time so I will have to make that do.

Laurie is also going to send another package and that will serve as your birthday present. I

would've liked to have gotten something especially for you and you alone, but that was the best I could think of under the circumstances.

It is now nine o'clock and we have to report back to the R&R Center at twelve and then leave for the outfit about three or four in the morning.

According to what we can gather from the news, we are back on the line again but we aren't sure. The story when we left was that we were supposed to stay in reserve unless there was a breakthrough and there hasn't been any that we know of.

#### **June 26, 1951:**

When I got back to the company Monday, I found out that we were supposed to jump off Tuesday morning on a task force operation. We got started at about four thirty in the morning and secured our objective at about seven last night.

When it all started, we were supposed to spend two days and nights out here and then return to our previous positions. The first outfits were supposed to start back this morning but from what we hear we may be here longer than expected.

There is no particular name for the operation but my platoon sergeant named it "Task Force Hollywood" because it seems like the whole thing is just one big show-off.

It sure felt funny after having that time in reserve and spending five days in Japan, to start fooling around the hills again.

Before I forget, there are a few things about the package I want to tell you. First of all you will find a Chinese pen, coin and knife which belong to Bill Stiner and I'd like for you to send them on to his wife.

Now for the rest of things – if there are any changes you want to make just do so but this is the way I figured it out. First, for you there is a bed jacket, some materials for skirts, etc., a kerchief, pajamas and an imitation pearl necklace and bracelet set.

For myself is the team jacket, for mom the fan, Dad the belt and buckle, Dick the socks, and tell him I will try to get something better. For Bill is the billfold and cuff links and last, the little jacket (if it will fit) for Phyllis.

At first I was just going to get the things for you and myself but then I figured that it would be selfish so everyone should be happy except Dick because he got the worst of the deal, but I will try to get him something else when the next bunch leaves for R & R.

Three ER's left the company while I was gone and a couple more are supposed to leave soon but I still have little hope for being among the first ten. It won't be too bad if they let us go fast like, but if they stretch it out, I'm afraid I'll still



have a bit of time to put in. A patrol of "B Co" came through our positions yesterday and they told us that their company has already sent twelve home to our three.

**June 29, 1951:**

Got five letters yesterday – 3 old ones from May and two from June 19 & 20 and needless to say, I was happy to receive them.

This is the fourth day out on the task force that was supposed to last forty eight hours at the most. We are starting to move back though and it will either be to previous positions or behind the lines.

Yesterday we moved out to a hill just before the main objective of the task force and were waiting for "George" to clean up a little bunch when Chinese artillery started to come in on us and we also noticed increased enemy activity on the main objective.

It was the first Chinese heavy stuff we've run into since the April offensive and it wasn't too far away. Naturally we were beginning to sweat out the main objective, and then the word came to move back and believe me, that was a relief.

We received mortar and artillery all during the move and finally climbed up a ridge for the night.

It was just about eleven thirty last night when an outfit across from our positions, on lower ground, started firing up a storm. I don't know why it is, but every time someone starts shooting, someone

else picks it up and first thing you know the whole bunch is firing regardless whether they see or hear anything or not.

I was on guard check the first time it happened and I must have gone up and down the platoon five times trying to get them to stop firing. We still had six and a half hours of night to go and they were using up ammunition at nothing.

I can't quite understand you're not getting any mail Ann, but if you aren't getting any, you can be sure that there is a reason for it. I am writing now every chance I get so you should be getting mail pretty regularly unless it is held up.

You say that you are afraid to have your tooth pulled and you've never been afraid of a dentist before and I'm scared stiff of a dentist and the only time I go to one is to have one pulled. If you think you will be afraid, you can have him give you gas and you won't even know anything is going on.

In one of your later letters you mentioned getting three letters and one of them was the eight page job. I guess the reason I could write eight pages was because I didn't have a chance to write before.

P.S. X for Chub (our cat). I know I'll like him and if he keeps you happy while I'm away I couldn't help but love him.

**June 29, 1951:**

Got two more letters today – one

from the 21st and the other the 22nd, so for a change the letters are coming through in a reasonable amount of time.

Enclosed you will find a picture that was taken before I went on R&R, while we were digging those last defensive positions. Don't get excited about the stripes on the helmet though because I just used the platoon sergeant's for the picture. The motor is an engineer power saw that we used to cut down the trees for the bunkers.

Yesterday we finally returned from that task force operation and as soon as we got in, we took showers, got clean clothes and had a nice hot meal.

I don't think the operation reached it's goal but I guess they thought it best to get us out of there seeing that the Chinese were throwing that big stuff in on us and we were five or six miles in front of the lines.

Today we didn't do much except check on equipment, have inspection, the usual class on military courtesy and hand in squad and platoon rosters.

I learned how to play canasta today and like it pretty much. Of course we don't use any penalties because most of us are fairly new to the game.

When I get home you can teach me a little more about it and maybe we can beat some of the gang.

There is so much talk about the



cease-fire going on but I'm still not counting on it, though I hope and pray that it comes about. I told you that I was doubtful about getting home in July Ann, and though I do hope and pray I can get out of here by then, it doesn't look as though I will. I realize it's what you've been counting on, and so have I but why keep believing it and be disappointed all the time. You know, I always expect the worst and hope for the best.

Remember Ann, there are men here going on their eleventh month so how could I expect to get out before them. As far as I'm concerned, all this stuff about rotating twenty thousand a month is just so much bunk.

Even the story about getting line men out first is a bunch of hooey. Guys in Japan and back in the rear outfits are getting out before us and I guess they will keep doing so. I guess I'm just mad at the Army Ann, but if we keep hoping, I know it will not be too long before we are back together.

Return Address Sgt. R. Moncur

### **July 3, 1951:**

We are still back here behind the lines in reserve and will be for two more days at least and then expect to relieve another battalion. I'm sure the news is known back home about the proposed meeting between the Reds and the U.N. and we are all hoping that something comes of it.

Sunday there were church ser-

vices for Protestant and Catholic both and I thought I would go to Protestant services to see just what it was like.

I enjoyed the service and it was easier to understand because it was all in English. Yesterday evening they held a bible class and I went to that also and really enjoyed that more than anything else. I like to hear people who know a lot about the Bible explain just what is meant to be put across in the passages.

I believe I told you that three ER's left while I was in Japan and now Bill Stiner, Bob Corley and another fellow leave on the 5th.

I also know where I stand on the list so at least I'll have some idea when I can expect to leave, according to the speed in which they release us. When the list was made out I was number seventeen and when these three men leave I will be number eleven, so just hope they get us going in a hurry.

Naturally there are still all kinds of rumors going on but at least we know this is straight dope so all we can do is pray and wait.

We have been doing the usual training back here and naturally it's just as much a pain in the neck as always. If things work out for all of us, it won't be long before we won't have to worry about officers, rosters, formations or anything that is at all connected with the Army.

### **July 4, 1951:**

Bob Corley and Bill Stiner leave tomorrow and Bill said that he would probably write to you to see how I'm getting along because he is quite sure that I'll never write to him.

### **July 6, 1951:**

We have moved out of the area in which we were staying and are now in a blocking position slightly in front of the line. We relieved the third battalion and are supposed to be out here for one week. The idea is just to hold the ground we have and send out patrols every day to see where the Chinese are.

They got us up at 1:45 this morning, we ate chow and boarded trucks at about four o'clock and started off. It took us about four and a half hours to get up here and we could have gone an easier way – but the Chinese were shell-ing the road.

It rained night before last and was still raining yesterday morning and I thought sure that we were in for a few days of rain, but it cleared up by noon and then stayed nice.

Of course, the rain made the trails real slippery and we had quite a time getting up the steep slopes. It's really nice out now with the warm sun and a nice breeze blowing. The only thing is these darn flies all over the place and they don't let you alone for a minute.

After today we are supposed to get two meals of C rations and one





**July 10, 1951:**

Forsaking All Others

Love, Honor Obey

In Sickness & In Health

To My Wife on Her 19th Birthday

\* \* \*

To have been with you on this day

And stay with you forever

For that I'd always hope and pray

But better late than never.

\* \* \*

There have been times I've made you blue

And this I'll always regret

I hope to soon be home with you

And pray you love me yet

\* \* \*

When night shades fall the voice I hear

The one that sees me through

Is that of you, a wife so dear

The one who cheers me when I'm blue

\* \* \*

A birthday wish to you I send

From far across the sea

A lonesome heart I hope to mend

And hope that it still beats for me

\* \* \*

I know there will be more for you

And I hope some more for me

For them I pray to share with you

And endless they will be

\* \* \*

A happy happy birthday is what I wish for  
you

To enjoy yourself a happy age.

But 'til the day that I'm with you

Life has turned another page.

send you a money order  
as soon as he gets to the  
states. He also has my  
Chinese bugle and will  
send that too.

He was so on edge and  
nervous the last few  
days that he could  
hardly eat or stand still  
for a minute, and every-  
thing you would say to  
him would make him  
angry. Of course I'm al-  
ways teasing him – he's  
a real good guy.

**July 9, 1951:**

In my last letter I told  
you how we moved out  
of the reserve area to  
occupy a hill and send  
out patrols. Well, it  
seems as though the  
wheels changed their  
minds and decided that  
we would stay here for  
one day and then jump  
off in the attack.

It seems funny that we  
wanted to hurry the  
cease-fire meeting to  
possibly save lives and  
then they send us in the  
attack the very day the  
meeting is to be held.

The officers and platoon  
sergeants went out to  
look the area over on

It sure sounded bad and we sure  
didn't like the looks of it. We got  
up at two-thirty and moved out at  
three. Naturally it was still dark  
and we sure had fun moving along  
the ridges in the dark.

We got just across from the objec-  
tive about 6:30 and then they had  
an air strike and threw some big  
stuff up on it. Then we finally  
moved down a finger to a draw  
and started up the objective.

Everything was going swell until  
we got about four-fifths of the way  
up and then we drew fire. I had  
the machine gun set up and told  
them to keep firing on top while  
the rifle squads moved up.

After awhile we got on top and  
started clearing the point. While  
they were in the process of doing  
that, a bunch of Chinese started  
taking off over the ridge line.

We could have gotten all of them  
with the machine gun but there  
were too many people firing at  
them for us to set the gun up and  
as a result most of them got away.

It was a pretty successful day as  
we killed about ten or more and  
wounded as many and captured  
some shoulder weapons, a ma-  
chine gun and a 60MM mortar.

After clearing the hill, we consoli-  
dated and dug in for the expected  
artillery and mortar – and we did  
receive it but in our holes we were  
pretty safe.

This morning at three o'clock we  
rolled up and moved back to our  
original positions where we are

hot meal each day we are out here,  
so it won't be too bad.

Before Bill Stiner left I gave him  
ninety dollars and asked him to

Saturday and said that the Chi-  
nese had the whole area under fire  
with mortar and self-propelled  
weapons.



now, just strictly pooped.

**July 13, 1951:**

Today is Friday the thirteenth but so far for us it has been pretty lucky because we haven't moved from this hill as yet and it is two in the afternoon. We may go back tomorrow and I sure hope so because this operation has been kind of rough.

The Chinese have been using quite a lot of mortar and artillery on us and that's where most of our casualties have come from.

This morning someone told us that the cease fire has been rejected because North Korea wanted too much – but the captain said that he has received no word about it so we are still hoping and praying.

It seems now that every time we go out it gets a little worse. So far today we just had one of the Korean boys hit in the cheek with a small piece of mortar shrapnel and I hope that that is all for today.

We can sit here and listen to the mortar firing across the valley but due to the trees and other vegetation, we can't locate it. An armored patrol was supposed to go out this morning to try and find

the artillery but I didn't hear whether or not they went out.

This makes the third letter I've



written in the past four days and still haven't had the opportunity to mail them. I wrote your birthday card on the tenth figuring that it would take another ten to reach you and it would get there just about on your birthday, but I'm afraid it will get there late.

**July 16, 1951:**

We received some pretty good news about staying back here in reserve for possibly a couple of weeks. Today another drop came down for three more ER's so that puts me three notches closer when they leave.

Lopez, who used to be our platoon medic, is finally leaving after putting a year in over here and most of that time as a line medic.

Tomorrow we start on a training schedule again but I guess we take all the nonsense that they can dish out as long as we are in the rear for awhile.

Last night one of the boys who was on guard was talking with some of us when the Officer of the Guard came up and started asking general orders and giving out with a bunch of stateside nonsense.

They had a movie last night but I didn't go and then I heard that the

picture was "I can get it for you wholesale" which they said was pretty good. Today we had a show put on by the 24th Division Special Services and though hardly professional, it was pretty good.

Our company commander is on R&R and we were told that he is being transferred to S-1 when he gets back so we now have a new C.O. We really hate to see Captain Sutter go because he really was a good Joe and would always do his best to see that we got a fair deal.

I hit it pretty lucky being the last ER to go on R&R before they put a stop to sending ER's. The first sergeant told us today that ER's could go on R&R but if their name came up for rotation while they



were gone, they would automatically go to the bottom of the list. In other words the men who will be among the last to leave anyway will be afraid to take a chance, not knowing where they stand on the list.

The former company clerk is one of the boys who is leaving and I told him to try to get a copy of the list so some of the boys know where they stand. If things keep going the way they have been going it won't be too long before I get home.

### **July 17, 1951:**

We finally had a nice day all day without a drop of rain and even though it was hot, it was nice to enjoy some sunshine for a change. Whenever we get to an area like this it usually does rain but I'd rather have rain here than on the line. At least we can crawl into our tents and play a game of cards or write letters and we don't have to train.

This morning we had physical training for the first time since we have been over here and we did some of the regular exercises and then went for a double-time run down the road. It was rather tiring but it really felt good to get the old legs stretched again after climbing all the time.

Yesterday the battalion commander called all the company commanders, platoon leaders, platoon sergeants and squad leaders in the battalion together to

give us a talk. He said that we are going to be here for awhile and have to do a good job in our training, especially in small unit tactics.

It seems that in our last operation a platoon was going up on the objective and received some small arms fire and the platoon stopped their advance and called back that they were receiving mortar fire and were pinned down. The C.O. knew that no such thing was hap-



pening and when he questioned the platoon sergeant, he was given the answer that "it was suicide to continue the assault" and had to give a direct order to them to move before they would.

It turned out that after the action, three men were court martialed for "misbehavior before the enemy." The colonel therefore stressed that fact that we are the ones who hold the responsibility

for the proper advance of small units and it is in our hands to see that it is done.

He also had some more to say but most of it was in connection with the proper control of small units.

Well, Ann, from what I hear it seems that I should get out of here by the middle of next month providing everything works as it should. Those three men are leaving on the twentieth and then three more are supposed to leave around the twenty-seventh and that should be thirteen men send home – and if the information is correct it should be number four for me.

I still pray every night that something comes out of this cease-fire so we can all get home where we belong.

### **July 18, 1951:**

All you would ever have to do is ask anything Ann, and I would do it for you anytime. I know how hard it must be for you to just sit back and watch Betty and Dom enjoy themselves, and the others too, but please hold out a little longer and then we will have our time at happiness also.

Please send my congratulations to Betty and Dom, wish them all the luck in the world, and I'll hope along with you that it works out okay.

### **July 19, 1951:**

Today we went out on a platoon-





in-the-attack problem using live ammunition and it was pretty good to fire on an objective without having to worry about them firing back. They ran us through the problem a platoon at a time and then after all the platoons were through, the C.O. told us our faults and also our good points. The new C.O. seems like a pretty nice fellow and is also pretty well educated.

It was pretty warm this morning but also cloudy and then after chow this afternoon it started raining and still hasn't stopped.

Today we heard a rumor that we might go into Corps reserve again, but it seems rather doubtful. I sure hope that it is true because if it is, I might stand a chance of getting out of here without going up on line again.

I fell asleep tonight and nobody woke me up for chow and I'm starving to death. This will have to be a little short because it is raining and naturally getting dark earlier than usual.

### **July 19, 1951:**

It is just eleven o'clock in the morning, but I am writing this letter now because it is still raining and I have time to do so before chow.

We thought that because of the rain we would have the day off but headquarters called up and said we should continue the training as best we could, inside of our tents. Five of us decided to brush up on

map reading so we did that for two and a half hours and then decided to break it up so here I am.

Tonight after chow we are supposed to go on a night problem just behind the lines and we have to travel about four miles, get into our position, dig individual positions, and be back in time for breakfast tomorrow morning. It is really a two fold job as it gives us practice in night movement and also it will be our blocking position in case anything should come up whereby we are needed.

The Chinese have pushed in this area three times in order to cut off our main vehicular escape route and our job will be to delay them until the vehicles withdraw. Of course all this is just providing they decide to try again.

We are all hoping that the problem is called off for tonight because the rain is still pouring down and aside from just getting wet, the trails will be slick enough in daytime, no less at night. From the way it looks, this rain will last for a couple of days anyway.

Last night the acting platoon leader (our regular platoon sergeant) said that if he had someone to take my place as squad leader, he would make me platoon guide (assistant platoon sergeant) but my men are fairly new so he is afraid to put any of them in charge of the squad.

I'm just as happy because the way it is, I don't have too much work

to do except with my squad and the other way I'd have too many things to worry about. He did put me in for SFC though but I just did have enough time in grade so I don't know if it will go through or not. That would mean another boost in the allotment in case I don't get out as soon as I get home.

If I don't get right out and I get stationed at Kilmer we will really have it nice. It would be just like having a job, with off post quarters and rations, and coming home practically every night. It will be just like we've dreamed about, being together again every day with no worries about when we will see each other, if it will be days or weeks or months.

### **July 21, 1951:**

There wasn't any mail for the company for the last two days so I guess I'll get a few letters at once again.

That problem we were supposed to run last night was postponed for some reason or other (possibly because of the rain) and we were supposed to leave at seven-thirty this morning. I had just gotten into my tent and, for the first time in ages, decided to take my boots and shirt off and have a nice comfortable sleep, when the word came through that we would get up at two a.m. and leave at three thirty.

It was already eleven o'clock so that left the amazing total of three



hours of comfort. We got up, ate breakfast, and moved out in the rain after all. It was about three and a half miles to the area and it took us an hour and a half to get there.

It is just a small hill off the road but is in a good position to do our job – which is to delay any attack. It was still raining and we moved into our positions and dug in for about four hours and then returned to our company area. This afternoon the rain is not steady but still comes on and off but no sun. This makes four straight days of rain with no relief.

I heard on the news last night that you folks have experienced a little of the same in the form of a wind and rain storm.

Well, those fellows left today so if the list hasn't been changed and I was correctly informed, I should be number six or seven. If I'm number six and they have another drop this month I'll be on the second drop. Of course this is providing that they keep dropping us in three's.

Yesterday a guy came back to the company who was a cook in division rear for three months, cooked for a month or two in the company kitchen, and never saw a fire fight to speak of since he's been over here and he said that he was sent back because he was on the next ER drop.

That just gives you an idea of how they work it. Out of the ten who

have left, Stiner and Corley are the only two men who have left from a rifle platoon so far.

If we should be lucky enough to get into that big reserve that is rumored, I'm quite sure that I'll leave before we go back on the line. If not, we'll just have to continue to sweat out the rest of the time. I'm quite confident that I will be out of here by the middle of next month and if I go past that it will just be a matter of days, I'm sure.

It feels so funny to think how close I might be right now after waiting so long. Every day I think of how happy we will be when we are back together again. Pray for us, and not only for you and me, but all of us so that we may soon all be home.

shade the snowdrift and your eyes shall dimmer grow,

**July 22, 1951:**

Well, we saw quite a bit of sun today, for a change, and boy was it hot when it did show.

**July 21, 1951:**

Happy Birthday Poem to My Wife –

You would ask of me my darling, a question soft and low,

That gives you many a heartache as the moments come and go...

My love you know is truthful, and the truest love runs cold;

It is this that I would tell you: I will love you when you're old!

Life's morn will soon be waning, and its evening bells be tolled,

But your heart will know no sadness, for I will love you when you're old!

Down the stream of life together we are sailing side by side

And we will someday anchor safe beyond the surging tide.

Today our sky is cloudy, though you need not be told;

But the storms will break from round us for I will love you when you're old!

When your hair shall shade the snowdrift and your eyes shall dimmer grow,

You can lean upon me, loved one, through the valley as you go.

I will give to you a promise, for it is to you I'm sold:

It is this I'll say my darling, that I will love you when you're old!

Note from Ann: I read this poem first when I was nineteen years old, and I read it now as I have reached 75 years of age. And I thank God for all His blessings.



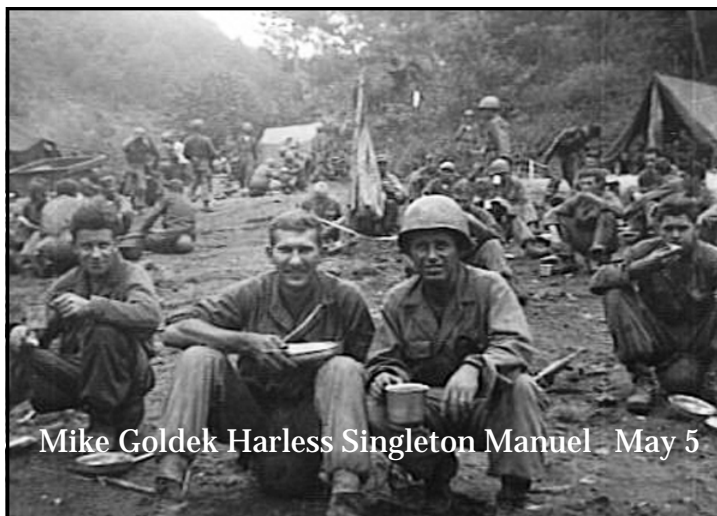
Today was Sunday and I went to services at eleven o'clock and the chaplain baptized one of the fellows.

They have a shower unit down the road about a half mile and this morning we decided to walk down and take a shower. We started on our way and when we got there the unit was closed and the guy in charge said they wouldn't open until one o'clock. Just about the time he said that, I remembered that we were told that the shower unit would be in operation from 1300 to 2100 hours. My wonderful memory working as usual.

We walked back to the company, shot the bull for awhile and then went to services. After services we had chow and then decided to get up a hot game of canasta. It really got going good for my partner and me, but after we got up into the 120 point bracket and the other guys still back at the 50 pt. bracket we started to have trouble.

Just when we got them up where we both needed 120 pts., they called up and said that every man had to have a fox hole by five o'clock and one of the boys didn't have one so we quit for awhile.

When we resumed the game it was pretty close but they were ahead of us. It went pretty good for us considering that we couldn't get a canasta until the deck was pretty well down. They beat



Mike Goldek Harless Singleton Manuel May 5

us but it was really the best game we've had so far.

Well, that brought us up to chow and here I am. We had southern fried chicken and boy was it good.

They said that three more men are supposed to leave around the 28th and that's when I start sweating because I'll either be on the next drop after that or the second drop after that. Whichever it is Ann it isn't much longer now..

#### **July 23, 1951:**

Well our rest is over for awhile, as we move out in the morning to take up a "patrol point" position in front of the ROK's.

The idea of the move is to make the Chinese think that the ROK's have been relieved by the 7th Division. Any letters or cards or anything that would connect us with the 24th Div. must either be destroyed or left behind.

Intelligence is going to spread letters around, from the 7th Div. in front of the ROK's, for the Chinese to pick up. We are supposed to stay out there for three or four

days but you never can tell what they will do.

I guess you know that the Chinese invariably hit the ROK's whenever they do hit, so they figure maybe they can bluff them into thinking the ROK's have been relieved.

We will probably not receive any mail while we are out there and there might

not be too much mail going out, but I will do my best to write. The big trouble now is envelopes because the rain and damp weather has sealed just about every envelope in the company. I'll even have trouble getting one for this letters.

We got the day off seeing as we move out tomorrow so we spent most of our time getting our equipment together. Right now I'm really starting to sweat out that first drop in August and also the possibility of getting into the big reserve that was rumored. If we hit that, I know that I'll get out of here then.

#### **July 26, 1951:**

We have been out here one day now and today George Co. is trying to take an objective to our front where we have been receiving sniper fire.

As far as the terrain goes, the hill is not much more than a razor back rock pile but the Chinese have most of their positions on the reverse slope. George is going





up a finger to the right in hopes of avoiding the big rocks, but they don't seem to be making much headway. The Chinese just stay around the rocks, and the bushes hid them from sight so it's quite hard to get at them.

The weather has been pretty rotten the past few days and most of us are getting colds. It hasn't rained but it's cloudy all day and night and with mist and wind to boot it's pretty lousy.

I got a letter from Bill just before we left to come up here so you can thank him for me and tell him that the shock was so great that he almost got me evacuated.

I guess by the time I get back to the rear again I'll have about six or seven letters from you. They aren't going to bring any mail while we are here so I guess everybody should have some mail when we get back.

I won't be able to write too often because of the stationery situation again. I just have a few envelopes now and this damp weather seals them up so if they aren't too bad I'll be able to get a few more letters off and then maybe we'll get some more.

I talked to one of the boys who was supposed to leave on the 28th and he said that the drop was changed to the 2nd of August, so I'll have to wait a little longer to see if I make the next drop. If everything figures right I'm sure that I will be on the next one, provid-

ing I was correctly informed about where I stand on the list.

With this cease fire so much in the making you would think that these "censored" would let us set up somewhere and await the outcome, but they keep sending us out in spite of everything and every day someone is killed or wounded that might have gotten out of here okay if the cease fire goes through.

They are the ones who wanted to hurry it along so they could save lives and yet the same ones keep sending us out on senseless missions just to get some more casualties.

If I can just make it through for a couple of more weeks, I'm sure that I'll be out of here okay but still I pray every night that the cease fire goes through so all of us can get out of here in one piece.

**July 28, 1951:**

Dearest Ann,

Today we finally came back to our rear area for a couple of days but only after each company had a crack at taking that hill and failing.

Now they say that we are going to go back and take a hill that we had before and pulled off of. That should give you an idea of how much sense there was to our latest operations. We just take a hill, pull back after taking it, and then go back a week later and have to fight for the same hill.

I pray every night that they do something about this cease-fire before these people go completely crazy and have us all either dead or in the hospital.

We took our crack at Razor-back Hill on the second day with our platoon and the third in the attack and the second platoon in reserve.

We were to go up one finger to a saddle and the third was to go to our right up to one of the peaks and give us any help they could.

As it turned out, we were the only platoon engaging the enemy and the third was in no position to help us at all.

We moved out with our bedrolls because if we took the hill we were supposed to hold it that night, and then pull back the next day!

My squad was third in the approach and we were just about up to the top when the lead squad got hit.

They were firing back and forth when I decided to take a look at the situation for the machine-gun. I took off my bedroll because it is practically impossible to move with a blanket swinging on your back. The 'Chinese' were just throwing hand grenades then but as I got up there we started to draw automatic weapons fire from both flanks and the front.

We were in no position to do anything without support so we were ordered to pull back but there were two wounded men that we had to get out.



Most of the men pulled back to the protected slope but there were still a few of us there and we had to get the last wounded man out.

We got the wounded man out of the ditch and down below and then there was just a BAR man and I left to cover the withdrawal.

There were bedrolls laying all over the hill and empty BAR clips (which are almost impossible to replace) so I started heaving rolls back down to the men and stuffed my shirt with empty clips.

By this time the BAR was out of ammo so the gunner had his carbine and I had mine so we just kept firing and clearing the hill of equipment.

By some trick of fate we both ran out of ammo at the same time so we both had to reload our clips right there.

The man who started taking the wounded man out had to leave him, so on the way back I tried to drag him down but he was too heavy so I called Kirk ( the BAR man) to give me a hand.

The 'Chinese' were heaving grenades all over the place and the wounded man had died already but we still tried to get him out.

Just as Kirk got over to me a 'Chinese' grenade landed right in between us so I just yelled "grenade" and we both took off to the side of the hill and it went off

without touching either of us.

By this time the 'Chinese' had moved back down and were throwing out a lot of fire and lots of grenades so we had to leave.

If the man was still alive we never would have left him but there was nothing we could do for him.

After we all got down, Kirk told

answered.

Pray that I make it through okay, Ann, and then we'll have our share at happiness at last. I'll sign off for now so until tomorrow remember I love you with all my heart and soul and pray for the day I can again be with you. Take good care of yourself dearest and pray for all of us.

Best to all at home. I love you. XX to Chub (our cat) too! Yours forever.

**July 30, 1951:**

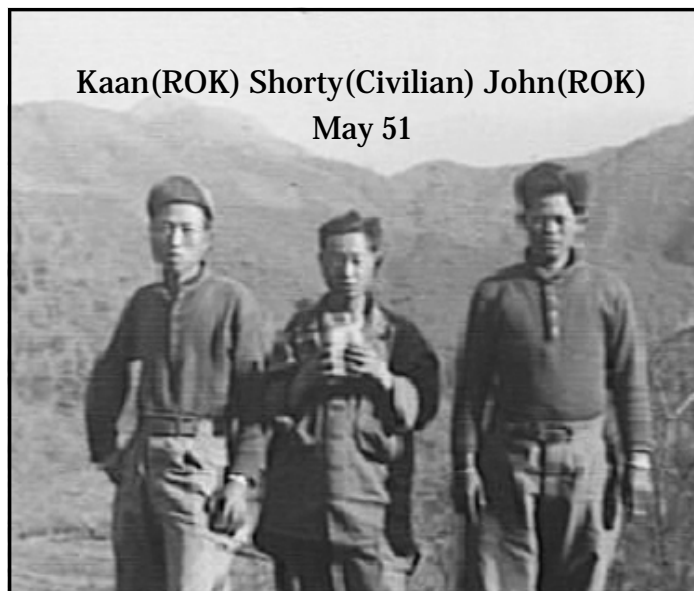
We have had good weather for two days now and it really feels good because I picked up quite a cold on that last operation.

They are doing us a favor and letting us take it easy and no training schedule for us seeing as we only have a couple of days.

Yesterday and today I wrote up two of the men for medals, one for the M.O.H. and the other for the Silver Star and I sure hope that they go through because each of them deserved it.

Last night we had a movie and it was really pretty good. The name of it was "Soldiers Three" with Walter Pidgeon and in it was a part where the Cavalry and Infantry got together and argued just like we do over here about the 1st Cav.

We are still praying that the cease fire goes into effect – that they



me that if I hadn't gone up there and called him, he probably would still be up there.

The platoon sergeant said that he was going to put a few other fellows and I in for a decoration but all I want is to get out of here like I am and also see my buddies get out also.

When we got back today the platoon sergeant told me that he is going to have to find a new squad leader for my squad because I won't be here too long.

I sure hope it means what I think it does and if so I just have to sweat out a couple of more operations and then our prayers will be



stop playing games with each other. There is also some talk that we may be relieved by the 7th Div (they've only been in reserve for a month and a half) pretty soon, but it's rather doubtful.

### **July 31, 1951:**

Today we had it pretty easy again, just got our equipment in order and had inspection. I didn't stand inspection because I was busy writing up a few decorations on the typed forms.

There was very little mail today and I didn't get any of it but there were only three letters for the whole platoon.

Our platoon sergeant was hoping to take over the 'field firsts' job but he said he will have to wait. He's been trying to get a job in the rear for a long time now and he really deserves it so I'm pulling for him.

We have been having rain on and off again but we can stay dry because we have our tents. We go back up for a few days again but I will do my best to keep writing as long as I'm up there.

Yesterday they asked for volunteers for an I & R platoon (Intelligence and Reconnaissance) and a couple of boys from our platoon volunteered. Today one of them told us that tomorrow night they will go five miles behind the enemy lines and try to capture a prisoner and be back before day-break.

Some life, huh. I'm pretty sure

that if I can see this operation through, it will be my last because we are supposed to go into Corps Reserve. We sure are hoping that we don't run into anything too bad out there.

### **August 1, 1951:**

Well, we have moved up again, and again we are in front of the lines. We passed through the 5th RCT and they were kicking because they spent thirty-nine days on the line. They were just sitting and sending our patrols while the 19th was in front of the lines making attacks.

It seems that of all the divisions over here, the 24th has had the least breaks and in the division, the 19th has had the least. They got us up at three o'clock this morning and we never moved out until nine.

We rode trucks up a steep hill and then got out and walked up about twenty of them and believe me we were all pooped. We had to be cautious because the hill was unoccupied but it turned out to be clear except for some booby traps.

That ER drop sill hasn't left yet but they expect it to be any day now and possibly more than three men, so keep your fingers crossed.

You have been so much on my mind both awake and asleep and now that time is so close I just don't know what to do with myself. Every night I just continue to pray that it will be real soon because I'm beginning to wonder if I

can hold out much longer.

### **August 2, 1951:**

Guess what! I'm writing this letter with only one eye. I went to sleep today and when I woke up my right eye was all swollen up and I couldn't open it. Too bad we don't have a camera up here or I would take a pin-up picture for you.

Last night was our first night up here and after we got set up we received the news that the cease fire talks had failed.

It really wasn't too much of a blow because most of us knew that the Chinese had stopped giving in to us and we were just too ---- stubborn to give in just once.

The U.S. has always been a proud nation but when it comes to costing American lives I think that pride can be carried too far.

The biggest issue of the meeting was the withdrawal of troops from Korea and the Chinese let us have our way and then when it got to an issue of where to set up a line, the Americans refuse to give in.

Of course, I realize the military outlook on the situation but when you come right down to it, the Chinese can just as soon knock us back to the 38th as well as ask us. It might cost them a lot of lives but it will cost us too, so what do they expect to gain by the whole thing,

Today there were rumors about another meeting but nothing official has come down on it and I





really doubt if it is true. It looks like the only thing we can count on now is rotation and also the possibility of Corps reserve for us.

They called an ER off the hill today so I guess that drop has come down at last. Just pray that the next drop comes down real soon and that I'm on it too. That makes thirteen now and I'm really hoping that I'll be on the next drop.

I'm beginning to wonder if they are running the way the list was originally or if they're changing it. If the company clerk told me right and the list hasn't been changed, I should be either four or three, so pray that it works out that way.

Things are looking all the more uncertain lately and I'm hoping to get out of here before something big breaks again. We have been apart for a long time Ann, much too long for either of us, and we are long overdue for a break.

### **Aug. 3, 1951:**

I'm now back at the rear CR because my eye got worse this morning and the doc sent me off the hill. When I got down here I got five letters from you.

The talk about reserve seems to be pretty straight so just pray that nothing happens within the next week and I might get out of here while we are in reserve.

This bunch leaves on the 7th and that will be thirteen gone and I hope I'll be next. It all depends on how they are figuring on the fel-

low that got transferred. The fellow who went on R&R with us is one of the boys who is leaving and who knows maybe I'll follow right behind and we might go home together.

One thing I'd like you to understand and that is, nothing I've been telling you is official. About where I stand on the list I mean, so keep that in mind in case I've been misinformed.

It was a pretty reliable source though so keep your fingers crossed. If I have to go up and down that hill a couple of more times I doubt if I'll be in any shape for rotation.

The hill is 1073 meters high and I don't know how long it took us to climb it but it took me four hours to come down this morning. A few more climbs like that I'll have to be carried out. Seriously, though, I'm really optimistic about getting out of here real soon.

### **August 4, 1951:**

Before I do anything else please wish Dick a happy birthday for me and tell him that I would have written him but the envelope situation is becoming more and more acute every day due to this rainy weather. We had another downpour today but it didn't last too long and has stopped altogether now.

I took a ride back to regiment today when the jeep driver took two men back for a court martial. They were charged with being

three days AWOL and got off pretty easy. They each got busted (PFC to PVT) and fined two hundred dollars.

Well, tomorrow I have to report back to the aid station and let the doc take a look at my eye and I'm afraid – as a matter of fact, I'm sure – that he will send me back to duty. There is just a little swelling left in my cheek and my eye is okay, so I guess I'll be marked duty.

I may ask the first sergeant if I can stay back here though, because they should be coming off the hill any time now. The only thing is, I'm afraid he's liable to get the idea that I don't want to take a chance on getting back with the company if they jump off.

The thing is, it's about a five or six hour climb back to the company and if I go up there the sixth and they come down the seventh (which they are supposed to) it will just be practically turning right around and starting back.

Part of the Seventh Division is behind us right now so it is pretty certain that we will go into reserve if nothing unforeseen comes up. It is supposed to be for thirty days so pray that it comes through and maybe I won't have to see the line again.

We're getting closer all the time Ann, and every day I hope and pray that not only I can get out of here and back to you, but that these cease fire talks accomplish



something and we can all get home in one piece.

**August 6, 1951:**

Sorry for not having written yesterday but something unexpected came up. As I told you, the first sergeant said that I could stay back with the rear CP until the company came down.

Well, the next morning he sent two men who had been court martialed up on the hill and they turned around and came back saying that they couldn't make it. He called the captain and he said that the first sergeant should have me take them back up and if they stopped without my permission to give them an order and then let him know if they disobeyed it.

I guess they knew what they would be in for if they disobeyed me so they were quite agreeable. This all happened about three in the afternoon so by the time we got back here it was just about dark so I didn't have time to get off a letter. The date for our relief has been pushed up to the ninth now so we have a couple of more days to put in on this hill.

As usual we are set up here all by our lonesome and we also have the OP group with us so we have to be in uniform, clean and shaven etc but it sure will be well worth it if we get back in reserve.

We didn't do anything today but change our positions and clean our weapons up. A few officers from the Seventh Division were

up here looking around today so that is a pretty good sign that this thing might come off.

Right now Jim and I are brewing up some "corned beef hash" and "beef stew" with a couple of onions we got hold of. They are about the two worst rations but when you add the onion it makes all the difference in the world.

**August 7, 1951:**

Here I am again and though a little sore, I'm feeling just the same as always.

We have bunker type holes here you know and we had a bit of a rain last night so we had to change a few things around. After we moved everything out of the way I dug out a bit more from the back of the hole where we had the ammo so could get in and out of the leaks in our cover.

Well, I had just been laying down for about ten minutes when it seemed like the whole mountain caved in on me. It wasn't the whole mountain but it was practically three feet of dirt from the back of the hole. Nothing much happened except that I got another earful of dirt and a knock on the head from a rock.

Today we just sent out a squad patrol from our platoon, to a ridge across from us and they didn't run into anything so now I just hope that we don't have anything tomorrow and then get relieved on the 9th.

From the rumors we hear, we are

supposed to have a six week training schedule set up for us and providing nothing happens to change it, just about all the ER's should be getting out during that time.

I just hope that this new rotation plan doesn't pertain to ER's because I have an idea that the plan will hold men here in Korea longer than they would have had to stay. Of course, there are men in other parts of "Fecom" that would like to get out but I think that the only ones to rotate should be the boys here in Korea.

After all, at least the fellows on other islands know that they will go home after a period of time, but the guys over here don't know if they are going to live to get home at all.

Today we spent most of the day catching up on sleep lost on guard last night and playing cards.

To think that that is all the 5th RCT has been doing for the past forty-five days and yet they were kicking about it. Some guys would kick if they went in swimming.

We found out that we were supposed to get relieved today but the 7th Division asked for two more days to get things straightened out.

I heard rumors that they have started talking cease fire again but nothing official has been said about it. I sure hope that they are because if this thing doesn't get settled now, I'm afraid it will be a long time before anything IS done



about it.

I doubt if the Chinese will ever knock us off the place and I know that we will have a hard time trying to push them back to Manchuria so it would just keep going on for months and months like it has been – back and forth and then forth and back.

I love you so much and miss you more and more every day and when we are together again we will have our chance to make up for all that we have had to sacrifice these past months. We will never have to be lonesome again for each other, and when we feel blue, we can remember what we've gone through and then wonder if we have anything to feel blue about.

#### **August 12, 1951:**

I have finally gotten a chance to write again after about a week now. I realize that it's about the longest time I've gone without writing but it really couldn't be helped.

While we were up on the hill I tried to write a couple of letters but the one (I mailed) had to be put in a new envelope the morning after I wrote it and the next one was even worse. The rain has been something terrific these last few days and it has made it impossible to get any mail and what packages they did have got all soaked and quite a few of them fell apart – and the contents were

all over the place. If this letter I wrote before is in any kind of shape, I'll send it out.

We have now been relieved by the 7th Division and are now waiting to go back to our reserve area. The night before we got relieved I was standing guard in our bunker and it started to rain and it turned into a regular hurricane that lasted for about an hour.

Well the rain was coming straight

warm and were able to get a little sleep.

Then yesterday we were moved down by a river bed and set up in our ponchos and pup tents when another downpour came down and it really opened up on us. Inside of five minutes we had four inches of water running through our tent.

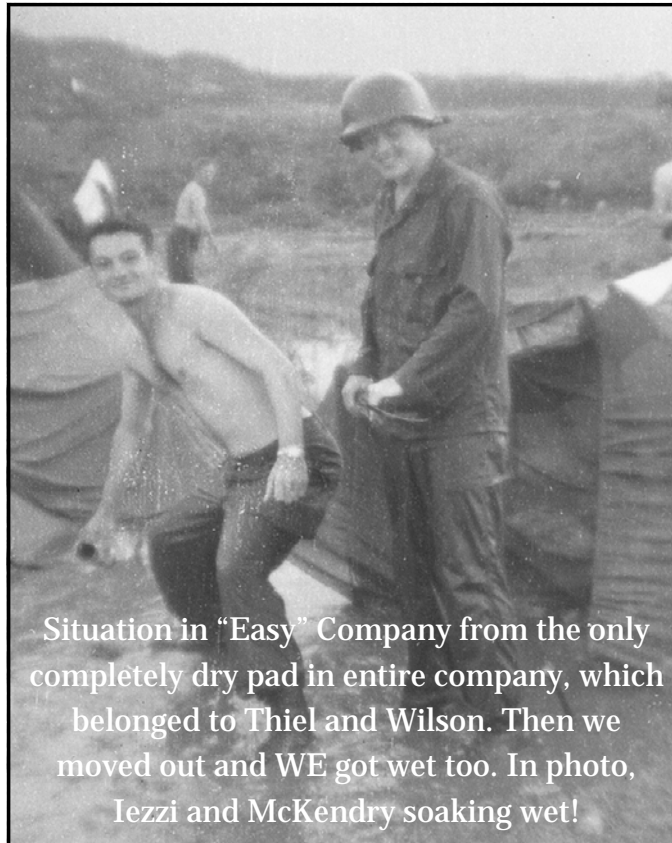
I decided that they wouldn't get the best of me so I just took all my

clothes off, grabbed a bar of soap and went out and took myself a shower in the rain. It was a little cool but after I was out there for awhile I never noticed it at all.

Meanwhile the river was rising more and more and was starting to come up on the banks. After a couple of hours, Easy got the order to pack up and move out so I figured that it wouldn't be long before we moved too so we started getting our equipment together. About an hour later we got the order also so we packed up and all moved about a thousand yards away from

the river to higher ground. This is where we are now and it's a much nicer area and we got us up a much nicer tent also. Today is Sunday and it will be the first chance to go to church for quite awhile now.

I guess you have heard about this new rotation plan that has come out and if I don't get out of here



Situation in "Easy" Company from the only completely dry pad in entire company, which belonged to Thiel and Wilson. Then we moved out and WE got wet too. In photo, Iezzi and McKendry soaking wet!

across and in two minutes and three sheets of rain I was soaked to the skin and freezing my head off.

We only had two blankets between the three of us so the man on guard took one and the two who were sleeping shared the other one. It was anything but comfortable but we kept fairly





before September 1st, I'm afraid I'll be spending some more time over here.

We still haven't found out if it pertains to ER's or not but if it does, it will be quite a blow to us all. I was talking to the first sergeant today though and he said that they called down for three names yesterday and I should be number three so hold your breath and cross your fingers that it comes down and I'm on it.

The sun is out for the first time in over a week and I'm just lying here sweating like squeezing a sponge out. I'd much rather see this sun that dries everything up but me, than have the rain that soaks everything including me.

I'm really counting on getting out of here Ann and this month, too, so just sweat it out with me and I'm sure that we will make it.

As far as what we do when I get home, I'll leave it all up to you. After all, it's you who has been sitting at home every night and it should be up to you to do anything you like.

Tell Chub (our cat) I hope he's feeling better.

### **August 13, 1951:**

Well, this makes two sunny days in a row and even though it's real



"Marking off days till rotation?"

"Naw, the days since we've eaten."

Bill Stokes

hot, it's still better than that rain we were having last week. I never did get to go to church services yesterday because after chow I had to make up the guard roster for the night and by the time I was through, it was too late.

After chow and the rosters were made up, they had a show by 24th Division Special Services and though the "mike" broke it was pretty good. They were supposed to have a movie after the show, but the projector broke down so they couldn't show the picture.

We just sat down by the river for awhile because it was quite nice out and it was so peaceful. The moon was shining, a nice breeze blowing and it really made me lonesome for you. I was telling Jim how we had decided on going down to the shore and staying all

night with a portable and now I'm afraid that it might be getting too cool – but if it isn't, we'll still do it.

I guess Dick (Bob's younger brother in the Navy) won't come home until November sometime and I sure hope that I'll be there when he does. Dom (a close friend in the Marines) ought to be home by then if he isn't home now.

Our platoon sergeant was talking to some of the boys from headquarters yesterday and they told him that the colonel said they were

going to call this place "Rotation Hollow" so maybe they will send quite a few men out while we are here.

I actually have no cause to worry yet because it's only been six days since the last ER's left and that isn't much time. I figure on at least a few more days before we hear anything on it but I sure hope that it's soon.

Today was our first day on training schedule but it wasn't too bad. This morning we had weapons training and a talk by the Chaplain and this afternoon we had squad problems, care and cleaning of equipment and then inspection.

If it isn't any worse than that it will be okay as far as I'm concerned. Every day while I'm wait-



ing will be like a year now, but I know what it is that I have to look forward to so I can stand it. Our prayers will be answered and we will have much to be thankful for.

#### **August 15, 1951:**

Well, today we got ourselves up at five in the morning and had early chow and proceeded to knock down our tents once again and go back to the "Kansas" line to repair positions.

We are supposed to be here for a day or so and then move back to the same area again. We tried to get them to let us leave our tents up instead of tearing them down for a day or two and then having to set up again, but they couldn't see it our way.

We left the area at seven forty-five and got here about eleven forty-five so it took us about four hours. We naturally moved out on trucks and a little while before we got here one of the trucks broke an axle and the rear dual wheels nearly came all the way out of the housing and then our truck came up with two flat tires – and both of them on the same side. We had picked up most of the men from the other truck and then we got the flats and we all had to unload while the driver changed tires.

We are located, right now, directly behind that hill where we had that patrol in June on Bill Stiner's birthday and it is also right near "1476", the highest hill in South Korea. (We've already climbed

that one!)

Still nothing but rumors on the next drop of ER's but it's still only been eight days since the last drop so it's really too soon to expect one, though I'm hoping that it comes down every day.

#### **August 16, 1951:**

I guess you really have your hands full now that Mary is on vacation but don't work yourself to death. That incident that happened with Ray Lockwood (a long time friend) was really funny and I guess we'll have something on him for a long time in case he gives us any trouble huh!

I told you that we went back to line "Kansas" to repair the positions and when we got there our squad positions were all messed up. We had a machine-gun position and two rifle positions there, without covers on them.

Well, it seems as though they put a cover on the one rifle position and that was fallen in on one side, they took the machine-gun position and made a rifle position with a top on it that sank in a "skosh" and the other rifle position (which was dug in practically solid rock) and strung barbed wire over it.

We just dug down on the old machine gun position and that was alright, but we had to tear down the other one completely and then rebuild it.

The position that was covered with the barbed wire was just forgotten about and we had to pick

our way through the rocks again and build another one. We got all that done by eleven thirty this morning and knocked off for chow and then went back to put brush around them to hide the sand-bags.

We moved out about two o'clock and boarded the trucks again, and got back here about six. Boy, there is nothing like riding in a six-by – my rear end feels like someone has been kicking for a week straight.

We are all set up again though, and now we have mosquito spray and candles (which I'm writing this letter by) so it's pretty homey.

We were supposed to have a night problem tonight but seeing we had that work to do, we will probably do that tomorrow. The rumor has it that a drop is coming down on the nineteenth so that is only three more days and then we'll see what happens. I'm pretty confident that I'll be on it when it does come down but I'm afraid to ever be sure.

#### **August 17, 1951:**

Today was a pretty easy day as we just had squad problems in the morning and a class on the machine gun and inspection in the afternoon. On the squad problems we just took off to a shady spot for a couple of hours and made like we were having a discussion about scouting and patrolling and then the rifle squads, with my men distributed among them, took off on



the problem. We figured it out so the last squad would finish about eleven thirty when we had a formation.

At the formation the first sergeant read off the company roster and gave each man his correct rank. It seems as if the last first sergeant fouled up quite a few people as far as correct ranks go.

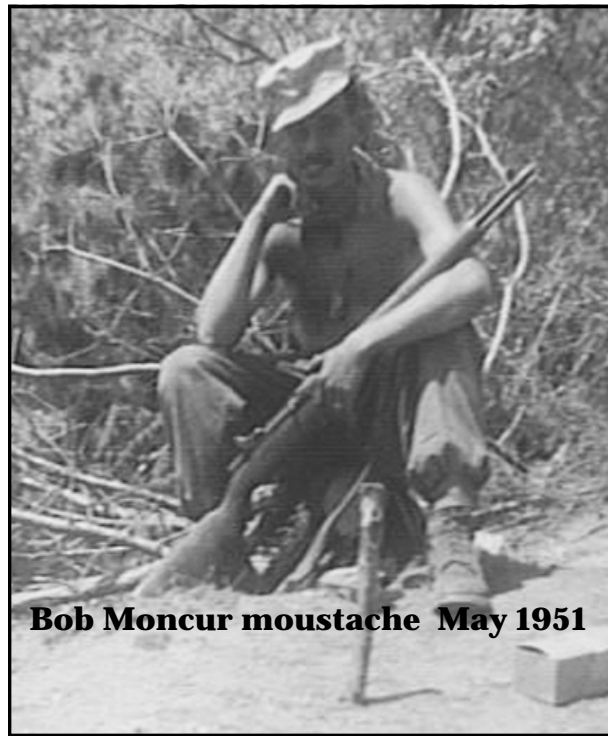
One man in the company has been corporal for over a month now and on his service record he's still a private. My rank was correct so I was glad to see that I wouldn't run into any trouble later on in case anything came up.

After inspection we had a stage show from 8th Army and it was really pretty good, but they had to cut it short because it started to cloud up and they had a lot of equipment that would ruin in the rain.

They just about got thing put away when the downpour came. It was timed perfectly. One of the guys had a pretty good voice an he sang "One Alone", "Summertime," and I forget the other one but they were all real good. They also had an imitator, ventriloquist, and also the band put on a few good numbers.

Well, the rain only lasted long enough to get everything wet and then blew over.

There was a movie afterward and the name of it was "Ma and Pa Kettle, Back on the Farm" and it



**Bob Moncur moustache May 1951**

was just about as nutty as the other Kettle pictures, so naturally I enjoyed it no end.

There still hasn't been anything definite on an ER drop but I still expect it to come down somewhere around the twentieth, so we'll wait out a few more days.

#### **August 18, 1951:**

This morning we got up, ate chow and then had our morning exercise and drill until eight o'clock. From eight to ten thirty we got busy cleaning our weapons and cleaning up the platoon area and putting on clean clothes.

The reason they gave us so much time was because the colonel was coming at eleven to inspect the company. We got everything all set and at ten forty-five they called us out for the inspection.

The company commander told the platoon sergeants to inspect their

platoons and he inspected ours. After that was over, he told us that the colonel would be up in about fifteen minutes so we should take it easy until he got there.

He finally came up and started his inspection with headquarters platoon and went through the rest of the company. He didn't inspect too many weapons but just walked past most of the men and said they needed haircuts mostly, and then a few of them needed sideburns cut, shaves, dirty belts or fatigues and some of the weapons had rust on them.

It only lasted about twenty minutes and then he left. The company commander didn't have anything to say so I guess it wasn't too bad after all.

We had nothing to do til chow so we just sat around for awhile and then went to chow. The only thing we had to do after chow was go down to headquarters and have stripes painted on our helmets.

We already have 24th Division shoulder patches sewed on are sleeves and we are supposed to get stripes to sew on also.

It was really hot when we went down there so after we got our painted, a few of us went in the river for a swim. They said that we were allowed to wade around and wash up but no swimming because a fellow broke his neck a couple of days ago and they don't





want anymore accidents.

Of course we weren't going to get that close to the water and not go swimming, so in we went. The river flows quite fast and yesterday was the first day that we could swim against the current for awhile, but after we got out a ways the current was much stronger. We stayed there about an hour and then went back to the company.

A little later they came around asking for some boxers to make up a little team to compete with other companies. I wasn't interested but a few of the boys went over to practice up.

After awhile we took a walk over to watch them. They were just about through and a few guys just went a round or two just for the heck of it.

They asked me to go in, but I said that I never boxed a day in my life except for two times just fooling around. They asked one of the other squad leaders and he said the same things.

Well, they got a few other guys to go in for awhile and then they were about to call it quits for chow.

I thought to myself, if Hazelwood never did much and I never did much, why not the both of us go in together. We put it up to him but no matter how hard we tried to talk him into it, he just wouldn't go in.

The platoon sergeant said he'd go a couple of more so we put on the gloves, we each got bounced around a bit, worked up a sweat and then went to chow.

Then we went to an N.C.O. class on map reading and came back and went to the movies.

While we were down at headquarters one of our buddies told us that there is supposed to be a fifty-five man drop of ER's from the battalion and there are only sixty-three left so it should get most of us out of here.

#### **August 19, 1951:**

Today is Sunday and I finally did get a chance to get to church services this time. We had the day off from training and spent most of the playing canasta and shooting the bull.

Everyone tells me I'm going home on this next drop but I haven't been notified officially as yet, so I'm still not going to say that it's for sure.

We had an NCO meeting by the first sergeant and they cautioned us about being too easy with the men all the time and also, they found a guard slightly under the weather so we have to control the drinking or have it stopped.

We also have a company formation at six o'clock every morning from now on to make sure that everyone gets up when he is supposed to.

I got myself a haircut by a Korean

this afternoon and though I've seen a lot better, it will be long enough for another trim when I hit the states, which should be anytime now.

It was a funny day today because it couldn't make up its mind whether to sunshine or rain, but I think we had more rain than sunshine. It was, and still is, hot as a boiler but there usually is at least a slight breeze blowing.

Yesterday when I wrote I had to use a towel under my arm to keep the paper dry, because I was sweating so much.

#### **Aug. 22, 1951:**

STOP WRITING. LEAVE THE COMPANY IN THE MORNING !

#### **Aug. 23, 1951**

Dearest Ann,

Well I'm back in Division rear right now and will be here until the morning of the twenty-fifth, and then we go to Inchon for a few days and then on to Japan.

After we get to Japan it will depend on how soon a ship leaves just when we will get on our way. It may be anywhere from one day to three weeks so I won't be able to let you know anything until I find out for sure.

We had our processing yesterday which consisted of a check for venereal disease, finance and personnel check and then today they took us to get showers.

I won't know if I get discharged or



not until I get to the States. I guess that will have to wait also.

It sure feels good to run around in a soft cap instead of that steel helmet and not having to worry about having a weapon with me all the time. There are about six-hundred of us all together and RA's and ER's both were on this drop.

We haven't got things too bad here and all they demand is that we stay in our building and if we go anywhere we have to sign out and not to fool around with any of the civilians outside, because if we do, they send up back for another thirty days. Naturally I'm just a model little soldier boy like always.

In our interviews they ask which army area we desire so I said 1st Army and if I have to stay in, maybe I'll be lucky enough to get

it.

It has been raining all day today and doesn't show any signs of stopping but I have no place to go except to chow and the movie so let it rain. It might even get the boys back at the company out of training for today.

I was hoping that our new platoon sergeant would get to go on the same drop as I was, but he still might catch up to me later. He comes from Virginia but his wife is now living in Stroudsburg, PA which isn't too far from us and we could have gone all the way together and maybe we still will.

Whenever we are on the line he always makes coffee and I'm always burning it and he said that when he gets home I'm going to have to supply him with a few cups of coffee anytime he comes to see us. He also said that it

might be two o'clock in the morning so don't be surprised if he drops in on us early some morning. He is a swell guy and we've had quite a few good times and also rough times together over here.

Speaking of rough times, I'm sorry that my telling you of "Razorback Hill" upset you as much as it did but I figured that it was all over and wouldn't make any difference as long as I was okay.

And about my promise, I said that I wouldn't take any unnecessary chances but what I was doing on Razorback was my duty Ann, and others were doing the same and more. After all that's the reason we're over here, to fight, and that's what we have to do.

END of LETTERS



# Ann's Emails

Dear Tom

We are soooooo thrilled with the wonderful "Slice of Life" in the making. I have spent hours and hours typing all of Bob's letters. It was a wonderful trip down memory lane, but it brought back many difficult times and memories.

Bob had read them once, but I never did because they make me feel so unhappy. At 75, I can feel the regret for youth that was lost to the Korean War.

I decided to type them so our children and grandchild will have a history of the Korean War - which was such a significant part of our lives.

Bob and I married against my parents wishes. I am an Italian Roman Catholic, his mother was a Hungarian Jew and his father was a Protestant who converted to Judaism. My father did not talk to me for months, and since my mother was unhappy with me, my family didn't dare have anything to do with me. So, I was very much alone and time passed very slowly.

Patti was my best friend in high school before we even had met our future husbands. God blessed us by letting us become sisters-in-law/friends for all of our lives. She was the one who spent the most time with me while Bob was away. She helped me wallpaper the converted one-car garage that was my home while Bob was in Korea and then our home for awhile after he got back. Without her, I can't imagine how much more difficult time alone would have been.

It was so nice of you to send that to Bill (Stiner). Helen was a very dear and special friend, I am very sad to know she is gone. Bill and Bob came back safe and sound and we all went on to see our 58th anniversaries. I guess no one has the right to ask for more than that.

This has been an exciting project for us. Thank you

again for all that you've done! Just when I thought life MIGHT get a little boring, you came along! Our reward for Korea.

We always wish you the very, very best.

Bob and Ann

November 30a, 2008

Dear Tom

First and most important, let us say thank you again. You have made a wonderful remembrance out of a terrible time in our lives. And we would be SO HONORED to be on the cover of the *Taro Leaf*.

Under YOUR stewardship, the *Taro Leaf* has become what has to be the very, very best of it's kind. You have done so much more than ever would have been asked of you, not only with our memories, but with those of so many others.

It is hard to believe that people who have experienced wars and sacrifices like those of the 24th Division have experienced, could waste any valuable (remaining) time trying to find fault - and maybe having ego problems that are too large. The 24th is so fortunate to be commemorated in such a first class, professional (while being compassionate) publication.

A further reality is that time for "TAPS" is coming closer every day - first to our WWII veterans and next to our Korean veterans. They have earned the honor this publication brings to all.

Your research of our story might even have helped to lead to the remains of a soldier who was lost in action FIFTY-SEVEN YEARS AGO !!!!!!! We don't know the conclusion of that effort yet, but we do know that we had a chance to tell HIS story once again - and maybe bring a little closure to his family.

This world really gets a little strange sometimes, but





there is comfort in knowing that there will always be a special place in Heaven for people like you.

We would love to meet you in person some day. You have become a special friend to us and to many of our family and friends who have been so impressed with all your work. We have had to pass around copies of OUR personal *Taro Leafs* because so many who have seen excerpts of our story have wanted to see where they came from and what else is there.

We read the *Taro Leaf* cover to cover and take a few special moments to read every name of those who have heard their final "Taps." It helps us to remember them (even if we didn't happen to individually know each one) because we know where they were, what they saw, and what they went thru to serve their country. Only another veteran - and the family who stayed at home and prayed and worried - can know HOW MUCH is in the pages of OUR publication.

November 30b, 2008

Dear Tom,

Today, I turned off the phones and sat alone to read thru the "Final Episode" attachment, word byword, picture by picture.

It has been a long time since I have cried while remembering - but you captured so perfectly what you set out to do.

You knew each of the most important, most difficult

and most emotional times. I was 19 and Bob was 21 - we were so young, as were so many others.

We feared that we would lose a chance at life before life really began.

You captured the people who were so important to both of us - Patti, Helen and Bill Stiner, Bob Marks and GroverDeWolfe (KIA) that Bob was in Japan with.

The story tells the story of so many others in Korea, and I think the fact that it also told your story made it possible to tell it the way you did.

I did end up laughing at the cartoons - they are great! Thanks to Bill Stokes.

I never dreamed we would have anything like this to leave our family - and so many of our friends who are waiting anxiously for this episode.

"Thanks" hardly says anything, but I have no doubt you know how far down into our hearts it goes.

Best wishes always.

Ann

That's all I need, Ann! My very best to you and Bob!

With great admiration, and appreciation for sharing your story!

Tom

Editor, The *Taro Leaf*



The *Taro Leaf* carried the first "Letters to Ann" in Vol 62(2) starting on page 18, and the second in Vol 62(3) beginning on page 37. This took us to early April 1951.

Ann since finished typing all of the letters through when Bob left the hill for the last time on August 23, 1951; it is about 50 pages total!

In the final episode of Letters to Ann, Vol 63(1) pages 32-38, I tried capture the essence of Bob's personal combat experience with "F" 19th, as well as the day to day boredom of rain, heat, cold, loving, and waiting for his name to appear on the rotation list.

And, with Ann's permission, we also include a few of Ann's remarks as they showed the almost equal agony of waiting, and waiting, and loving.

I started this with the idea of a cataloging of events in Korea that were very parallel to some I experienced in "E" 19th.

I now realize it is a love story beyond any even the most talented of novelists could imagine.

Tom J. Thiel, December 1, 2008.

