

Hq. 2nd Bn. 331st Engrs  
Engr. Org. Cen.  
Camp Claiborne, La.  
June 8, 1942

Dear Mama---

I don't have your letter with me, but I will start you a letter anyway. I'll tell you a little about what I've been doing, and then get your letter and answer your questions later.

I've been writing a poem to Jewell--I've written 18 verses. You'll probably get this letter before she gets the poem so tell her not to get impatient.

We spent three days on the rifle range last week. I didn't quite qualify. I was short about 30 points. We get some anti-aircraft practice tomorrow--with the 30 calibre rifle. Necessary training is the only outside work I have. Excepting the range firing, I have been in the office at this headquarters for the past two weeks. I almost lied to you--I have to take exercise and get a little close order drill every morning. \

It has been raining down here nearly every day for the past four or five days. I has just now started raining again. It is late in the afternoon (about 7) but I have the leaward side of the tent up so I can still see. I can't go to the tent after your letter in the rain so I guess I'll just ramble on.

I hope you don't mind my typing this letter instead of writing it. It is so much faster this way.

I think we are due to leave here shortly--I've been saying that ever since I came. I'm just going by rumors. Of course it is more likely now.

A lot of the boys are getting ratings--but none of the clerks as yet.. I think they are coming out pretty soon. The platoon leaders and squad leaders have been promoted to corporals. I think the clerks are going to start on first class private. I don't think that is fair, do you?

I wouldn't be in the office this time of day except that the sergeant-major asked me to stick around and answer to the telephone. A lot of long distance calls come in from all over the country. And then I have to run all over the camp to get private so-and-so on the phone. I have to stay until 10--maybe I can keep up with my correspondence.

I made a long distance call last night myself. I called that gal in Maryville. It only cost me \$1.20. I thought it would be more and had \$3 ready--in quarters. I guess you think that was kinda foolish, but I got a big kick out of it. I placed the call about 9 and it didn't get through until about 11. She was about asleep when I talked to her. Maybe she will remember it.

It has stopped raining--I will get your letter. I notice your letter is dated the 29th of May. I don't usually wait that long to answer, but I've been kinda rushed lately.

I have my hopes for Rex too--I refuse to believe he is dead until I get official word. The Japs are certainly going to pay for a lot of things before this is over. I notice in the paper today we won a sea victory. I think things are looking up for us all the way around now. Now if Russia can just hold Germany.

I haven't been to any religious services yet. I was planning on going last Sunday, but had to go on the rifle range instead because they were behind schedule with the firing. And I had promised Violet I would call her Sunday afternoon. I rushed into town to do that as soon as I got off the rifle range. She had given me up.

I wasn't fooling when I told you once before that she was a nice girl. She is ok from all angles. I am anxious for you all to meet her for sure. No joking.

I got a letter from Kenneth the same day I got yours. He likes his outfit fine and has hopes for a rating in the near future. I am keeping up with my correspondence pretty well, but sometimes I don't say everything I intend to. I can't seem to stay on one job long enough to do it well.

I suppose I could tell you lots of things about the Army, but Dad can tell you anything you want to know. My biggest trouble seems to be keeping my rifle clean and knowing when and when not to salute an officer. So far, however, I haven't been gigged, so I guess I'll pass. I usually salute everytime—I'm less apt to get gigged for that than not saluting. I've read the section on military courtesy in my handbook several times—even typed it all out once at regimental headquarters when the work was slack, but I still get kinda mixed up sometimes. I'm getting plenty of practice reporting to officers now. The sergeant is always sending me to the three companies of this battalion with messages which are phoned here from regimental headquarters.

I am in a different tent now since I was transferred from Company E to battalion Hq. One of my tentmates is from one of the New England States. He just walked in here with a big orange soda. Pretty nice of him, eh? He just got a portable radio from home. I suppose he's happy. We'll have music in our tent now. The boys' name is Vincent Uberti. What nationality is that?

I guess I'll close and work some more on the poem to Jewell. Think we'll ever win the war sitting around writing poems? We'll give it a try anyway. Americans are funny people, but they've always come up on top. I'm sure we can do it once more, too.

Love,

*Bice*

P.S. You didn't ask many questions.