My own dear Mother & father -

Well I guess you think I never think of you all as I never write, but not so. for I do think about you when ever I get a chance to think of anything but just work. Our schedule calls for work from morning early until night. I go to school from 9:30 till 11:30 each day and of nights I have to study on what I get at school during day. I work with Serg. Henderson in afternoons, making electrical experiments, drawing maps of lines and numerous other things we have to test out. I get about two hours a day drill, one hour calistehnics (exercises) and one hour drilling or giving commands to a squad of men and seeing that they are properly executed. All the work is more or less interesting. Our school takes up elementary electricity, what it is as near as can be defined. Our instructor is a man from one of the biggest electrical laboratories in New York and has helped in getting together the contents of one of the best electrical text books that is now on the market. I am going to get one. He recommended it, because he said, "I worked right with the man, that got the things together and have worked out all the experiments, and I know by actual experience that all that is in the text book is all reliable stuff, that is why I recommend it." That is all I ever heard him say about himself. The rest of the time he doesn't say what he can do - but goes to work explaining the facts of electricity and showing us by tests and explaining in such a simple way we can hardly help but see. Things that were always a mystery to me and ment nothing more than electrical phrases begin to look clear and reasonable and I see "why" it is used and the things its self look more simple and easy to understand. I couldent buy the education Im now getting for many dollars and never would get a chance to study under a man of this fellows calibre.

I never knew until now the exact difference between an alternating current and direct current, static electricity; all about magnets and magnetic flux; induction coils, condensers and how they are made and their exact use; transmission of the voice waves and the receiving of them and why it is and how it is accomplished. And I have a much better knowlidge of such things as, Voltage, amperage, induction, watts, Ohms - a resistance, internal resistance, Electro magnetic force. and all manner and ways of connecting batteries, how it changes their use and in what way it does and also the inside of a dry cell, its chemical properties was explained and I believe if I were in my laboratory a while with what chemicals I already have I could make a dry cell with out much trouble at all.

This after noon the Lieutenant had me take a receiver and take what was going over a telegraph wire along the railroad. The way I did it was to connect one side of receiver to a short rod and push it in the ground. the other side I connected to a barbed wire that was on the fence under the telegraph line and when I put the receive to my ear I could hear the telegraph instruments clicking just as plain as if I were in the office where the message was being received. We take our telephone sets they are in a leather case 3 x 6 x 8 inches and ground one side and connect one side to a wire on fence and talk to the other fellow with a phone a quarter or half mile away. Of course he has to be hooked up to the same wire. Altho we tried it once where the wire was laying on the ground and in between the phones the wire was broken and was a gap of about 2 feet and it did not effect our talking a bit.
Our big bird men are getting awfully tame here lately. Those aeroplanes just look like big birds roaring around over camp and never a day passes but what two or three are seen flying close. They fly right over our drill grounds and one day came down lower than the tree tops. you could see the details of the workmanship of the plane. They sure are gracefull things in the air.

It is pretty cold here now. It warms up in day time but nights are awfully cold it seems. I have three red cross or knit sweaters - helmet, scarf, wrisletts, socks, and with my sheep skin wool lined bed shoes I guess you need not think of me suffering much from the cold tho. The only thing, I havent any knit goods to wear over the place my pants go when I go to bed, so I have to throw my overcoat over my legs to keep them warm at night. I wear all the rest of the knit goods at night but the one sweater. You know three thin blankets are not much warmth when it gets to blowing and is real cold. Serg Henderson just came home from seeing his mother that was sick - she lives in Ill. and he said the cold down here hurts him worse than it did when he was up in Illinois.

Well I have been to see Uncle, Aunt, and cousins every Sunday here lately. Leave about noon and I found that there was a night train that left about 11:30 so I come back on that train now. gives me all afternoon and until almost midnight - so as I can get off every Sun. after noon (or think I can) it makes a very nice visit once a week. I can't express just how much I appreciate such a priveledge. Aunt sure looks well and says she hasn't felt so good for many a month - she seems to be as happy as can be. I sure cheers a fellow up to go see her. She sure is my mother here. Mam I am going to keep those pictures of you and Uncle and Aunt you sent me. It almost makes me home sick to look at them but am going to keep them just the same. The reason I never ask for any of you I did not think you had any to send and I didn't want you to feel like going to the trouble of getting some on just my account. But since you sent some I sure am going to glom on to them.

I got a long letter from Rays and the 7th Volume - I certainly would like to read it, but when a fellow is so busy studying he can't even write home, not much chance to read. And I am trying to get some time in on my mathimatics & chemistry. I have a book on physics and elementary chemistry I got from Hoyts library and a book on French. And some times we have school of nights for an hour or two, besides my other studies. So that is the reason I said I thot of you when I had time to think of any one for I go around here half the time not seeing anyone I am so busy thinking.

My captain & Lieutenant made my sergeant give me time off during the day to complete my map of about 16 or 18 sq miles of country. I haven't as yet turned it over to the officers for when I do it is good bye map for I never will see it again. Funny thing - with all my work and study that my eyes don't bother me as they did when I was at home. I don't wear my glasses any more at all. I don't know if getting stronger physically and mentaly has any thing to do with eyes or not.

I sure hope I continue on as good as I am now going. I was almost free from my nose trouble until it got cold down here and it started again. I guess cold weather is no good for it. If I am ever mustered out of the service I am going some place where there are no winters and cold weather and maybe I can get over my catarrah. I sure would hate to be up north just now. I am glad we are in the South, only wish we
were farther south. In civil life tho the south has no attraction for me, for the ordinary run of things down here are about two decades behing times up north.

Mam, I owe about 5 or 6 letters now and can't find time to write. What am I going to do? Of Sundays - my only chance to write I am gone to Alvin and cant do it then. I never go near Houston during week. Just pass thru there twice on Sunday. That is all I have been away from camp for over a month it seems.

Well we have no idea how much longer we are going to be here any more than you have, I sure would like to know but there is no way what ever to find out.

I am sending you 8 pictures taken when going to gas school. In some of the pictures you will notice the mask turned inside out and one showing the can of chemicals. you can get an idea from what I wrote before and the pictures just about all there is to know about the mask. Two pictures are of the group of us.

Ive never gotten a picture of myself in my blue uniform of [ ] overalls & Jacket. I sure look like old Prouty days with them on. I believe such days are prouty days are over for me, for I am too much of a bum now to stick to a job like that again. Tents may not be the best homes on earth but I'd stick here before I would come home and go to work at that place again.

The government has raised our walls one board and raised the tent 3 feet, put in a door and put up four rafters and taken out the center pole. makes a real nice house for us.

Well did you rec. the application and get it turned in all OK? I haven't heard from it yet as there has been not enough time for them to work on it. See if you can find out Harry Boords (clothes) and J. Marvels adresses for me. I may want to give their names as references for an examination I may have to take.

Well dear folks I guess I will close for now hoping to hear from you soon and that I will have an opportunity to answer. Your loving son.

Paul B.