April 5

Same Old Place-

Dear Father & Mother:

I am grabbing up a few minutes now to start a letter-don't know how much I am going to get done this. They are sure running us green in the face. I rec. your letter and certainly did appreciate it to the fullest and was also glad to get the receipt-altho my luck has been against me and I don't know how soon I will be able to complete the remaining degrees. Sure know the first degree by heart and can go thru it without hardly a mistake.

Well the place where the colored reg. was is now filled up with drafted men. They just came in this morning. A nice looking lot of fellows—much better than what was sent down here before.

And I'll tell you what we have been doing and are going to do—last week ago Thursday morning we marched out to
the rifle range. We sent our cots out the day before and slept on the floor that night and marched out in morning with rifles and equipment, was rather cool and walk was fine. That afternoon we began shooting and finished up Sunday night—and that means we were shooting all day Easter Sunday. Something I never did before. Well we shot slow fire—rapid fire—and all kinds of targets on 100-200-300-500 and 600 yd. ranges. Half were shooting and the other half were operating targets. Now, morning. The other half started shooting are not quite done yet.

The first mile out there it rained something a fright and until 9 oc. in the morning water was 2+3 inches deep in our tents and all over. I stayed in bed—got everything up on my cot with me and slept right along—wind blew and so hard sometime I was afraid that the ground getting soft would let the stakes pull out and our
tent would go off and leave us. But
I soon saw it was no bad thing that the
ground was that soft. The storm was
over and forgotten about. We have been
catching horned toads. We just one in
one of our corporals miss kits the other
evening. So at mess time we all fell in for
mess and marched up to the serving place
halted and one gave the order "open
kits" and we all took off the kit lid and
this corporal looked in his kit and saw that
ugly horned toad, he actually turned
pale, threw up his hands, let out a
whoop and was out of the crowd in 2
seconds. His mess out fit all over the ground
and the toad too. You would nearly
have died laughing at the expression on
his face and the way he went away from
that kit. He came back and got his stuff
when he seen the joke, but he said he
didn't believe he wanted any suffer. He
is always playing jokes on every body
is the reason we picked on him. He sent the load home to his father.

And yesterday for noon I went out to the Artillery Range which is 3 miles further out than the rifle range and on the same road. I saw the 3 inch field pieces firing the huge explosive shells. You just those babies have some recoil to them. But they were sure doing some fine work.

And their Barrage fire is almost deafening. They were firing at a range of about 3 miles. The piece would fire one big yellow flash of fire and smoke and you could hear the shell ring thru the air and in 3 seconds you would see a big cloud of smoke and dirt 3 miles away where the shell hit and in 7 or 8 seconds more you would hear the report of the explosion of the shell. At the same place they were using Lewis and Colt's machine guns. Those noisy, deadly things sure can deliver the goods and do it fast. They are also
using the Browning Automatic rifle. I got to see them operate too. Then we went to see the Stokes mortar work. It looks like a gas pipe about 4 inches in diameter set at an angle of 45° or 50° deg up in the air. You drop a shell into the end of the gun and the shell slides down in and when it strikes the bottom the dia-charging face is sent off, throwing out of the gun. All that was dropped in sending it about 1500 feet in the air - you can see it travel - goes end over end in the air and is up so high it looks like a comet. As soon as it lights it explodes and tears a terrible hole in the earth.
Well, I saw all this in one for moon and did not get a permit to see it either - just took a chance - didn't get caught and learned a whole lot that I have wondered about and always wanted to see and know.
Well, that was Thursday morning. Then afternoon we packed our packs and
marched the 60 or 7 miles in from the range with out but one stop. I was about all in. I bathed as soon as I could and got into clean clothes. And that side about 17 or 18 oc. We were issued full equipment slept on the floor 3 or 4 hours and got up at 5. ate breakfast and at 6 marched a couple miles out to our big parade ground and the whole division was reviewed by Gen. Bell and that was completed about 11 oclock. We came in took another bath for I was very hot and sweaty dust blowing and those packs are heavy.

It is now 1:30 and dinner is ready. The review sure was a big thing. Many people drove out from town in their cars to see it. Just think of it - the whole division on the ground at once. The aeroplane circled around over us a couple of time looking at the maneuvers. Sure was great.

Must eat dinner now...
Sat afternoon — yesterday after dinner we were once more given orders to get ready to march back out to the range again. We got here but were sure tired. A few blisters on the bottom of my feet were all that was the matter with me. I stiched them and obtained them and today my feet felt fine as I did not go out on a detail this morning and it started raining hard as I went to bed and now at 3 o'clock. I am up and writing. We rather settle on my cot feet made my blankets. We ditched around our tent so the water did not run in this time. Fine but it did rain hard and for a long time too. No shooting today now. When we are all finished shooting we will go back to camp. That will be about 3 o'clock. We will rest up a couple of days and make ready for a 10 day hike which will mean close to 70 or 70 miles hiking before we will finally get back to camp again. I suppose one will go to get water and if so it will be about 120 miles all told.
I guess they are going to make tough nuts out of me or kill me trying to.

As for going across - there are many opinions as to that, so I have no idea where we will go - or for what we will go. Everybody is itching to go soon and we have nearly full equipment and I have with the exception of a 45 cal. colt's automatic - all non-coms have to carry a pistol.

And when we return from the line I guess there will be some more trench warfare for us. We have an extra bus each day to wash-go by new time and school 4 sets a week.

It sure isn't so fun now to be a soldier. Well if we have to do all this I'd just as well go across and get a shot at some of the guys that are causing us all this trouble and I do sure believe the U.S. boys will make a good record for themselves.
Today I see your letter of April 5th. In talking over about the sitting here in the back days close to Walnut corner and the local grove and how I used to play the game. Now I am not playing very often it was in June now and the fall. So you are not going to raise many chickens this year.

What Art Cunningham died of bronchitis in our company in 309 Infantry. The patient was taken to Base Hospital and no more cases were heard of.

And Pug trouble. I know how hate to have him asleep in some of the places he slept in. In the last few months, but outside of not getting to see my father and mother occasionally I have no regrets. very glad I went and what I have and of all I’ve learned real lessons not only in army life but in discipline that will be long remembered and very helpful in any walk of life.
and have had to do so many things
that impossible for my endurance
that it puts confidence in a fellow and
there is any little you really fear.
13th April last year I never dreamed so
much could happen to me by this time.
And it is now hard to recall all that has
taken place in the last year - seems like
trying to recall all that happened in my
life before this last year. I am now at Ymca
and have succeeded in getting a no count
pen and some ink. But I don't like to use
a pen and I did not bring my fountain
pen out with me.

And you were speaking of your experience
in the past year and I guess I am not
the only one that has been having experience
and between the two of us - I think I am
getting off the easier of the two.

The fellow you saw with the cross on his
arm must have been in the Aviation
Service as that is the emblem of a profitter
in a circle - or at least I've seen some
fellows from Ellington Fields, with the same emblem on his arm.

I noticed the clipping you sent me in the paper of the date it came out. There may be some truth in it, but I hardly think the loyalty to the government will ever be shaken in Germany. The power that drives them is more to be feared than the opposing power.

Yes your envelopes are real patriotic and are very good envelopes and not only help save but can make use of something that is too good to throw away and yet no one was going to use them in any other way. They are a much better grade of envelope than I have at my disposal.

Aunt Laura is very busy I think. And I imagine writing is hard to get at. I am not getting to see them much now. I sure would have enjoyed Easter with them but no chance. And even now a new ruling

HELP YOUR COUNTRY BY SAVING, WRITE ON BOTH SIDES OF THIS PAPER
has gone into effect that on Sun. night, you all have to be in camp by 10 oc. and that some "stuff" fixes any coming in on the 11 oc. train - would give me just from 1:30 PM to 8:30 PM - not much time. But perhaps we will not be in this camp much longer and while we are here yet we will likely be just as busy Sundays as any other days so I need not worry about going to Alvin. At this stage of the game it seems to be all work and no play for us, which is right if they really intend to send us across. I am going to take my trunk to Aunts with all the things I can't take across so don't really have to have. For the less you have the less there is to carry and care for. My knitted goods will most all have to be sent home and what I keep will just be redcross things so if we have to leave them I won't need to feel bad because of it being knitted by some one I know.

If we do go across I am going to leave the trunk with Aunts and they can send it to you and I will pay all expenses but if it so happens we go to some other camp I will have them send it to me there, that way I can be prepared for any kind of a move we may make.
There sure will be a number of things I am using now that I will get along with out and will be glad to get along with out them if by doing so I will not have to carry them. For you sure are going to lose every thing that makes your pack heavier that you just don't have to have. When you carry an 8.46 gun and equipment between 16 and 25 lbs besides for 7 to 8 miles in a couple hours - this is no wonder there are blisters on the bottoms of my feet when you consider we hiked a little over 21 miles (going in from range at the big inspection and coming back out again) all in 48hrs. It was pretty hard on those of us that has been doing very little drilling the last month or 20.

Your little Service Emblem is on the same order of the flag Aunt has. A red felt flag with the white square in the center and the blue star in center of white. I am very
near sending one home to you but wondered if you did not already have one. Then were a number of small things I intended to do before I put in my application for Masonry: now the smaller things will have to await a go undone. I have not been able yet to get any other degree although I have my first one (my instructor tells me the best he ever saw one get it in the length of time I've been working on it). But they are making it so hard to get down town now that it is very provoking.

Say don't you know this war is a fine thing in a way. A person had no idea of how to appreciate peace times when I first left home - but believe me I know now how I could appreciate the privilege I had when I left a year ago. I'm glad now I did not know then of the things I would have to go thru', for if I had I sure would never have the necessary amount of nerve to enlist. But as it is I have had a whole year to get used and toughened to it, which I am thankful for. And if you would just only worry about me as little as I worry about myself and my safety your worries sure would cause you the loss of no sleep what ever.
"WITH THE COLORS"

I have been writing along but paying no attention and now find myself on my 8th sheet of paper, but that doesn't worry me either - I really don't know what I have been worrying about that would cause the two gray hairs I have on my head.

So you say there are a great number of troops being moved thru Danville.

All of us here are in hopes of being moved soon. We hate to think of men being drafted in for 3 or 4 months and sent across and here we are a whole year now and no real prospect of going yet. What you wrote about us being fitted for border duty appeals to me as being very reasonable tho I have no idea if that is what we will do or not.

I rec'd a letter from Maude today & and she wanted to know if there would be
Any possible chance of seeing me before I left this country — and I rather think not — as your chances of seeing me here would be very small and I could not get home hardly under any circumstances. Most any of the drafted fellows at Camp Grant and other camps get leave of absence most any time but here it never is impossible.

Well I have my hair cut Army regular. Captain made us all do it. My longest hair is only about an inch long. It is a far better looking head of hair than the first time it was cut that way when I was a kid. You see my hair was trained that way for the last 4 years and it is very thick and stands well and all of them in Alvin never noticed the change until I mentioned it to them the last Sunday I was there. And they said it looked as well if not better than so long and were in cleaner and cooler.

Well I am sorry Dr. Loff did not get to see you that side for I sure would like to hear from her and many. I have so little time to write that I can not always keep up a correspondence with my brothers and sisters and if there is any news about them please write it for it is the only way I will ever hear of them. I suppose they are still alive and I would be not only other wise. And when you