

Were not gone and don't know when were going. Altho part of an division is leaving tonite.

Same Old Place - Apr 22 - 1918

My dear Cecil -

Well I rec. your letter today and it rather jogged my memory, to the extent that I discovered that it had been some thing more than a coons age since I wrote to you. It sure was not done intentionally by any means - for I have been first at the rifle range - was there shooting on Easter Sunday - can you imagine it? And no more than got back until we started in to school again at Divisional Hdq. This time I am assigned to Radio operator - wireless telegraphy and am very interested in it. And our study begins at the bottom of electricity and gradually works up until we can under stand radio operating which is a mighty good thing once you learn it, and I never got the chance before to learn such as this, under such a good instructor and have board and every thing furnished besides being paid while learning it too.

We - (4 in our platoon - 3 sgts & myself) are excused from all duty while attending school. Makes it nice this hot weather, for it is as hot as hadeas down here. and at nite it is very cold - some time, We have just an hours school in morning and we get in that hour all we can study and get all the rest of the day. Also we have an "American Library Association" Library here in camp and I go there and get all kinds of reference and text books right on my line of study. They sure have some fine books on Chemistry I am going to study if I ever get the chance. I am taking names of the best books I run across so I can get them for myself if I ever get home - which I suppose I will sometime.

And you ought to see the equipment we are having issued us. Telephones in small compact boxes, all kinds of line man tools, field glasses you can read in a book 40 or 50 feet away from you, Non com's are being issued \$18 Waltham, radio dial wrist watches. sure are dandy little watches. And clothing is being issued to us right along now until we get our full equipment. We had 3 or 4 big inspections last week. seemed like we had one nearly every day. But as I was going to school I only stood inspection on Saturday. And then a complete check was taken, we have lists of all we need for over sea service and we checked up our own equipment and made a list of all we lack and will get it all as soon as possible. we have a great deal of it today. We have safety razors issued us too. All kinds of toilet articles and every thing we may need. I sure have a trunk of stuff to send home. I also have a 3 inch shell fired at the Artillery Range I'm going to send home. I saw automatic rifles - machine guns - 3 inch field pieces, 4.7 inch field pieces and Stoak Mortar all firing besides our own guns. Sure were some sights to be remembered. There were a bunch of areoplanes went over here today in the form of these dots [7 dots in "V" formation] as that is battle formation - all had equal distances and sure looked pretty flying up there so even.

We sure had some time on the range, one nite it rained and blowed so hard we thot our tent was sure going to leave us - some of the boys got up and fixed the door shut, all I did was pick up my barrack bag off of the ground and put it on my cot - spread my poncho over me to keep water off of me as the tent leaked and then curled up and slept like a log - when I woke up there was between 2 and 3 in. of water over the whole tent, so I went back to sleep and never got up until 10 AM and by that time most of the water was drained away. we went out then on the range, laid flat down on the wet ground and fired till

noon. By afternoon the sun was out and so hot, the ground being wet that heat waves began raising and your target at 300 yds - looked like they would jump up a few inches and back again - sure was hard shooting. I sure love to shoot those rifles, for you have the satisfaction of feeling that when you pull the trigger you've discharged enough power to send that bullet 3 miles and 185 yds - if nothing came up in its way.

And my gun shoots accurate - just where you hold it. I can tell most every time I get a bull's-eye - for I watch those sights closest just when the gun goes off and with a little practice you can tell just what your gun is doing. And I made almost a record score on the 600 yd range. I made 45 out of a possible 50 - and the bull's eye is only 12 inches in diameter. Just imagine how big a black spot - 12 in. in dia. would look at 600 yards. We laid flat on the ground, gun resting on my left arm, a very hard position for me to shoot in.

Well did you know I was taking the first 3 degrees in Masonry? I took the first degree and within 3 days I had it all learned - took the second degree on a week ago Sat. and next day on Sun. I studied all day and learned sec. degree. I know a couple fellows that have been a couple or three months on the 1st deg. and haven't got it yet. you have nothing to look at while learning it as it is all recited to you and you have to repeat it after your instructor and learn it all that way. It is really an easy way once you get started. I was to rec. my 3rd. deg. last Sat, but the lodge had other work to do and could not give me the work. The 3rd deg. is the big deg. of the 1st three. There is a Lieutenant in our company and a band man taking the work at the same time I am.

Well little girl - I sure am glad to hear of you feeling better. Mother has been telling me what a hard time you've been having at times. I sure hope you won't have to go thru any more like it. And so you have glasses like mine. They sure are an advantage over the other styles don't you think? And how have you come out on your report? If you like that line of work, I sure hope you get to keep it, it will help you up to a better position. Well Cecil, I've always been pretty candid in all I've ever said to you and told you pretty much just what I thought about any thing and am going to keep on doing so and beginning right now. I am going to say, (if the picture don't lie) you've made more improvement for your credit in one year or a little less than a year, than I've ever seen in any one girl. That picture is decidedly the best I've ever seen of you and you don't know how much I appreciate it. I knew a few months at Emerys and with the girls working there would make a change in you - but I've been wondering how much. And the picture answers my question far better than a detailed description could have. I'd give any thing to see you and talk to you now - just to see how much different you really are. You probably don't notice it as much as I would, as I've not seen you for over a year now.

And when I let myself think of it I want to see some of my old pals mighty bad some times. And say - don't things look a bit different to you now that you are out more and living during the day with girls at the store. I shouldn't wonder and the change in you is as much if not more than the army life has made in me. Only mine is going in one direction and yours in another. For you are keeping up to date and where you can get all the latest things out and I, when I get out of the army I am going to be a few years behind times - depending on how long I am in the service. and last Sat nite I was at Aunt Laura's and don't you know that was the first time I've slept in a real bed since I was home in July last year. So can

you wonder that I am loosing out. If they put me on the front line with all the fighting and I ever do get out alive, Ill be a regular barbarian, a regular cocoo right.

I'm glad you told me about Guy. It don't make me feel bad - I like this life and believe guy will too. Your writing by lantern reminds me of the letters I wrote in the dugout by a candle light. Also out at the rifle range I had to write by candle light. Did you hear of our march. We Marched 7 miles in from the range with a heavy pack and rifle one Thur. afternoon - stayed up that nite till 1 oc to get our stuff issued to us - got up at five Fri Morn and ate breakfast then - went to Divisional review which took us up until 11 oc AM and I dont know how much ground we covered then, and Fri afternoon we marched out to the range again. So from Thur afternoon till Fri evening at 6 oc we covered something like 25 miles with full packs. They claim the packs weigh 55 lbs. and a rifle 8 lbs. Bayonet 1 lb. So imagine marching on hard roads that far in that length of time. I had a few blisters on the bottom of my feet. I stuck them and drained water out and as that nite is the one I described as raining so hard and did not get out till 10 next morning - it gave my feet a chance to rest and they felt fine then. The march was good for us tho.

Well down at my Aunts radishes are 6 & 7 in. long - onions are big - straw berries ripe, grass & trees all green - flowers blooming all around out in the woods. Weather is sure nice - if you call hot nice. but hot weather down here does not seem so hard on you as you might imagine.

Well if I ever get back I have an idea Danville will seem rather small for Houston of 150000 seems rather small to me now. They sure have a swell Masonic Temple here tho.

Talk about being drafted, I'm surprised at Fred Peterson, the way he talked when we were working together you would have thot Fred was going to enlist most any time, and I did not say a thing, yet I enlisted; now Fred is drafted and I'm not sorry. I sure did not think he would wait this long. And I am glad for my years training for it has made a 100% better man out of me than I was.

You sending me the only picture you had you remarked, I being your first choice. I appreciate that, believe me - but it made me think, have you been at Emerys as long as you have and haven't fell for some nice looking young chap? Are you not keeping company with some young fellow? Or do they fail to interest you as they did when I knew you - Have you changed in that respect? Well write soon and all you want to - your old friend & Pal - Paul B.