

29 February 1944

Dear Mom:

Just came back from a chicken Hekka lunch at the Service Co. It tasted real fine. It was sort of a black market lunch inasmuch as hekka is not called for on the menu but a couple of fellers in the company got together and cooked some ~~over~~ the stove. Dropped in the PO before coming back and found a letter from dated on the 19th. First letter in a week so it made me feel right swell. Thanks.

The day started out ostentiously, being rather cool for the first time since coming back from maneuvers. Not too cold to make it miserable and not too hot to make one wish to be anywhere else. It was planning to go into town for a couple of errands this afternoon and maybe drop in to the USO for a few minutes. Then I plan to come back early enough for supper.

I believe I wrote to you yesterday - about spending the evening at Abe's. After coming back we went out at 10 to see an air ground demonstration and had to march some four miles to the area. Four miles to me now is just a jaunt - and someday will be able to run it. I still remember the first march I had at the Chaplain's school. The first mile felt like a hundred and nearly died from exhaustion but now tear off ten and twenty miles at a stretch. Feel rather healthy and rugged. The boys here in the regiment call me behind my back the most rugged chaplain in the army, not so much for my physical stamina - but due to my general demeanor or misdemeanor. I kind of think they got the vowel mixed up and mean "ragged".

The Air Ground Show was spectacular and thrilling - they dropped live bombs from the air and did some ground strafing. Had some artillery shooting from a point some 4 miles away and made to hit right near the area. The accuracy was amazing and for the first time since Pearl Harbor have I seen so much explosion and fireworks. Throughout the whole show I kept wishing Peter was here to see it because he would have really enjoyed it. It was real something for men who had never seen action as yet. We came back impressed with the need of through training and the effectiveness of firepower. Believe me when I go to the front I am going to dig my foxholes deep enough so that they probably will have to have a direct hit on me to give anyone a purple heart on my acct.

We marched back and on the way saw the first snake since coming here. It was just a garter snake and was laying on the road dead but nevertheless it was a snake. Wow - it gave me the creeps.

Your report on Peter's progress amuses me no end and feels me with a lot of pride. Might I suggest to you that he is a chip of the old block - or is he? I hate to think of him going to August ^{Meun} Ahrens after spending so much money on him. This is the most important part of the school years for him. Might be a good idea for you to give Mrs. Richards a resume of Peter's progress too - think she will appreciate it and after all she really should know of his progress.

Chaplain West is on his furlough now and we are stuck for an organ player so I have to pinch hit only playing the right hand. It does the trick alright but only wish I had practiced more at home on hymns - as it is I can play about three hymns enough to sing it in church but we can't be singing the same three hymns every Sunday. Consequently I try to practice a new hymn every day and perhaps learn enough hymns by heart to play it in church.

Sorry to hear about obachan - tell her to take it easy. If she was in the army I can make that an order but not being so, tell her to take care of herself and not overdo. Bet she loves Jane a lot - your description of the babe certainly feels me with a yearning to see her. Someday I will.

Yesterday after coming back from the hike - it was real hot. Some thing like Hawaii is in mid summer. If it is like this in spring - in summer it must be a veritable hell. They tell me that one can't breathe in the summer time. Whatsoever, it was very hot. I had a nice shower and then went to my rooms and had a nice snooze and wore my trunks and aloha shirt. It made a hit with my roommates - they certainly make a great hit wherever I go - the tapa cloth shirt and trunks. It does look very tropical. After a rest - I had supper and then came to the office. Worked till late at night and thence to bed.

It became suddenly cool this morning but rather nice from the heat of yesterday. I can see why the south is called the sunny south - they don't mean sunny - they mean hot sough for it rains quite a little here.

I have finished my own personal album and since it is too big to mail home, I am going to leave it with Hank. It would be fun years from now to see the different people I used to know in my years in service. Photography is certainly an interesting hobby and hope when the war is over to be good enough to make some colored films like Mr. Lodges - as it is now, films are too hard to get.

Take care of yourself mom and dad will come back soon - as I don't think the war will last forever. A hug and a kiss for Peter and Jane and regards to obachan. My leave may start here on the 21st of March but still have not received official endorsement on it.

love

Dad

P.S. Forgot to add a hug + a kiss for you too!!