

March 17 8:30 PM

Dear Sis,

This is a letter that might not get finished tonight. I haven't had much time the last few days. They have been running us around like a bunch of sheep and I guess we are. I don't know if I'll stay here, it all depends on my ability to take all the BS that's handed out. We've had about two days of drill and I've got by so far. I got on carpenter detail yesterday and this afternoon; that's going to be a great help in keeping me out of getting bawled out for some little slip.

This is the Fifth Division or Victory Division. They had everything in the line of rolling stock. Jeeps, jeeps, trucks, half tracks, tanks, motorcycles, and what have you. They're going to need a lot of drivers so we got a drivers test. I almost lost out on the reaction test, but passed O.K. I guess. Haven't got any line on what I'll be put into yet, might be left in the Engrs. Div. – build bridges and all the other dirty work. We are all in the same boat tho, so I guess it don't make much difference.

This camp is all new; the paint isn't dry on the barracks before they put in new men. The barracks are built by civilian labor and all shelves or clouths racks are built by the Army – hence the carpentry job.

Well lights out –

March 18 4:15 PM

Well I've got a little time so I'll try to get a little more of this. We went down to be tested for radio operators today. Don't know how I came out. This afternoon we laid around waiting for a checkup from the MD, that I went on carpenter detail for about half an hour – "Back to your barracks for clouths issue" --no cloths so sit on your rear and wait for more orders. Most of the non-coms – sergeants and corporals – our new men to this camp. And boy! oh boy! they need a lot of help to get things running.

All the buildings in our company are new. Some aren't finished yet so there is a lot of bunching up. We have our own mess Hall. Chow is served family style – the food is put on the table: when a dish is empty it's passed to the isle and a KP fills it up again. Our orderly room supply room and carpentry shop and day room all are in the same building. From there on I don't know what 's finished and what isn't. This camp is laid out in a half circle – or so I'm told. All the ground is torn up – no grass. And when the wind blows it's just one big sandstorm.

We're only about 3 miles from the water. We came up right through Santa Barbara

place were the jap sub shelled the oil derricks. Some of the boys from the East – Pennsylvania Ohio – just got in that day. They were shoved out to guard 7 miles of coast that night – 12 hours without relief. Hope the jabs let me sleep for about three weeks, maybe I'll know how to use a rifle by that time. It's hard to believe that this is war. We fool around just like we were on on a big party. Gripe about everything under the sun and spend more time changing clothes than doing any work. ODs – dress uniforms – for all meals, morning drill, and any free time after retreat. We have the best in barracks. Two-story buildings that hold about 80 or more men--

After chow – good supper –

As I was saying these barracks are swell. We have six showers and about twelve wash basins. The showers sure are great. They're tightening down on the bed making. Beds have to be right up to the mark. If they aren't they're ripped up and have to be made over. We're in quarantine for about four or five days. That means we can't leave the Co. area. It don't bother me at all I haven't had any desire to drink any of the weak beer they sell down at the PX (post exchange). And as far as the passes go, they're just too damn short – six hours. Will get a chance to see K. Kaiser next week down at the theater. We saw one of Uncle Sam's pictures on the "terribles" at Leavenworth before we left. Darned if they didn't drag us down to see the darn thing again. I guess they want us to leave women alone while were here. From all I have heard that's a good idea.

Well what's the news from Corona? Have all the cars been licensed yet? Saw a few cars up on blocks on the way down here. Has June got her store yet? and how is Beans? Beans ought to be down here, half the dogs in the country hang around the camp. Say has Slim got in any Sunkist oranges? We went past the biggest plant, Los Ang. I think it was. Orange groves all the way along the coast. I don't see how they're going to harvest they're crop. Most of them look ripe to me. And an awful heavy crop. We went past some English walnut farms. The trees shore are great. We also saw some wheatfields they shore go through a lot of bother to raise grain in among the hills. Some of the fields make a snake look strait. We passed the Lockheed Airplane plant where they are making the lightning combat planes. They look something like this [sketch of dual-fuselage plane] twin motored, and boy are they fast. They had some of them flying over the plant to guard it. The Army is stationed all around the state on guard duty. Hope I don't get that. Stand around all day with a rifle; not talkee; no smokee,

Mrs. L.F. Keller, Corona, SD

Pvt. A.L. Hedman, Co. B 22nd Armored Engr. Bn, Camp Cooke, CA

and what else I don't know.

Well I guess I'll have to get done with this. Tell Martha to write, let her read it if you think it isn't too bad. Tell all folks hello. I write to all I can get time for.

So long for now Lyle

P.S. They just been cleaning us out, only about 20 of the rookies I came down with left. I'm still in company B and I hope I stay