

Gerald's WW II



By **GERALD C. WEBER**



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Gerald's WW II

This is the story of one individual's personal experiences during these
times of a great world conflict

*A PHILOSOPHER ONCE SAID
"AS WE GO THROUGH LIFE
WE MEET MANY PEOPLE.
WE BECOME PART OF THEM
AND THEY BECOME
A PART OF US."*

DEDICATED TO ALL WHO
HAVE TOUCHED MY LIFE

Gerald C. Weber

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4824 BROWNSBORO CENTER
LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY 40207
502-899-1919

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Printed in the U.S.A.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

ISBN: 978-1-58374-180-1

References in text:

(D) Diary I kept in the U.S.

(F) Letters to family

(L) Letters to Gladys

(DOC) Army publications

(H pg#) *The Story of a Century*, 100th Infantry Association history book

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Gerald's WW II

My family, over the years, has urged me to put down my experiences during my time in the service in World War II. I want to thank Gladys, my wife of many years for our life together. We met before I was drafted but we did not get married until I returned from Europe and was discharged from the Army. I have teased her that I got out of one war and into another. Since we married on Memorial Day I also tell her I go into mourning every anniversary.

All my children, Anyce Day, Charlene Grant, Jennifer Hancock, Douglas Weber, Brenda Russo and Lelia Herp have helped in the endeavor of this writing. Some corrected spelling, grammar, helped in teaching me to use the digital camera or the computer, especially the computer and grammar.

If it had not been for my parents Herman and Sallie Weber and my sisters Watseka, Wenonah and Yvonne, my then girl friend Gladys, (now my wife) saving the letters, documents and other keepsakes I sent home, this would not be so complete.

Others, too many to name, have given encouragement and advice to help this undertaking to be what it is .

I have resisted some of the advice as to grammar because I want this to be my own way of relating my story and history in the same manner I would tell it in person. Some papers and pictures have been included to add to the historical value for those reading this in the future.

I have tried to put down my memories as I can remember them. After all these years a lot of things escape me, especially names of places and dates as well as the sequences of their happenings. I intended to write from memory and then go to my diary, letters to my family and letters to and from Gladys, then to the history book of the 100th Infantry Division Association, *The Story Of The Century*, to pick up specific dates, places and names of people.

Any pictures or copies of documents from other sources are noted and credit given. I have endeavored to contact all photographers named but have been unable to find any after more than 60 years. I have been informed that some have died. Otherwise the pictures are those I have taken over time.

I have wondered, as have others that were in combat, "Why did I live while some around me did not?" Maybe God had a plan for me to accomplish more things before I die. I hope that I will have fulfilled that plan, to His satisfaction, by the end of my life.

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PART I **DRAFT**

When I turned 18, my Dad went with me to register at the draft board. These boards were placed in convenient locations around the city, and the head of this one, Mr. H. M. Denton, (from my induction notice) was an attorney and also a member of our church.

My "Greetings from your friends and neighbors", draft notice, came by mail, classification I-A. I was drafted into the U.S. Army from the city of Louisville, Kentucky. I was inducted on Saturday, June 19, 1943 (D) and given two weeks leave to wrap up any business that I might have before going on active duty. At that time I was a student at Speed Scientific School of Engineering at the University of Louisville. There was a possibility of deferment because of the type of school, but I preferred not to try for it. I felt it better to do whatever I could in the war effort.

I used the first week to make a trip to visit extended family in and around Frankfort, Kentucky. I took a train to Frankfort, and as it would be, my Dad was the fireman on the steam locomotive, these were the days before diesels, so I went up to the engine to talk to him before we pulled out. He introduced me to the engineer who asked if I were planning to be a railroader. My Dad knew it was hard work and said "If I thought that he would, I would throw him in the Ohio River here and now". We all had a good laugh. That was the only time I ever got the opportunity to ride with him as fireman. The next week I attended a Christian Youth Camp in Whitewater, Indiana. Having never been to one of these I really enjoyed it.

Before I left home Mother and Dad gave me a small Bible, complete with small print, very thin pages and bound in leather with a zipper to enclose it. Dad also gave me a wristwatch. Gladys gave me a good



small studio picture of herself. I treasured all and carried the picture in the Bible all through my time in the service.

On Thursday, July 1, 1943, (D) my family gave me a farewell party in the lodge atop the hill in Iroquois Park with family and friends from church. Of course Gladys was there also.



Gladys Weedman

On Saturday, July 3, 1943 (D) I reported for active duty. I believe it was to the Old Armory downtown, and with a group of others, boarded a train to Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana. Don Brown, a friend from church was assigned to lead the group to the station. (F) When we arrived at Ft. Ben. at 4:45 a.m. on Sunday, the usual Army exams, shots, tests, clothing issues, K.P. and all the other good things the Army can think of, were begun. There were thousands of others in the same predicament. We woke up at 4:30, made our beds and went off to K.P. (F) I soon learned, if I delayed long enough and got at the end of the chow line I missed having to serve K.P. The chow lines were long and the cooks started counting as many as needed, from the front for duty and those at the end of the line were not used. Lots of lectures and homesickness soon set in. It was real that I was a soldier in the U. S. Army. Everything seemed to be surreal.

Before long, Monday, July 12, (D) we were shuttled onto a train for parts unknown. Wherever the train stopped we would call to the people outside and ask where we were. The best we could deduct, we rode from Indiana through Ohio, Kentucky, and Virginia, at least it looked like what I had heard about the Blue Ridge Mountains, down into Atlanta, Georgia, then South Carolina, but we were never sure. We were never told our destination, route or anything because of security. The routes were varied and detoured many times to foil the "Enemy" about troop movements.

BASIC TRAINING

We finally arrived at Camp Croft, South Carolina, Tuesday, July 13, (D) for 13 weeks "Basic Training".

The first six weeks we were not allowed to leave the Camp. **NO PASSES!** We could write and receive mail but not leave. When we were finally allowed out of camp, the nearest town was Spartanburg, S.C. but most of the soldiers preferred to go to Greenville, S. C., a larger town. This camp has since been made into a park and few of the present citizens know it ever existed.

Wake up was at 5:20. Fall out for roll call, outside, regardless of the weather, was at 5:40 am. You might not be fully dressed but that did not matter. Bunks had to be made up every morning before chow and the blanket so taut a quarter would bounce off of it. If not, the inspector tore it up and it had to be remade until it passed. Walking and classes were until lunch at 11:30. Mail call was after chow and then it was return to drill and classes. Dinner was at 4:30 and lights were out at 10:00 p.m.. Later marches and night problems were until early a.m., including some all night marches. (F)

Shots were given many times. The usual procedure was to line up, that was standard operating procedure (SOP) for everything in the army, and walk through a swinging door. On the other side a medic stood on the right and left, and put a shot into both arms at the same time and then yelled "Next". It was on an assembly line basis. Some shots really hurt and many times men, usually the biggest and toughest, would faint. I was fortunate and never did but sometimes my arms were sore for days, making it difficult to use them. Some shots were administrated at intervals

all the time I was in the service.

Our training was rough and designed for us to survive tortures of combat in the future. One lieutenant was a veteran of North Africa and warned us that it was necessary to be ready. He told us he was just helping us, by making us tough, to be able to save our own lives. Training included judo, bayonet, hand to hand fighting, killing with any weapon, cutting off the enemy's head with a wire, breaking his neck by sneaking up to his back, putting an arm around his neck with a knee in his back and striking him hard. Any way to get the job done.

At full field inspection, backpacks, shelter halves, tent pegs, entrenching tool, canteen, first aid kit, gas mask, helmet and all other gear had to be clean and displayed in a given order. Clothes, coats, hats, etc. were hung on the proper racks in sequence. The buttons on all clothes were required to be fastened, including the buttons on the inside pockets of coats. Rifles were inspected from one end to the other, inside and out, and if not clean, punishment was quick and sometimes severe. Shoes had to be polished and placed in order under the bunk. The footlocker placed at the foot of the bunk, and everything in it, in a given position. Very few personal items were allowed.

During barracks inspection, usually every Saturday, everything had to be spit and polish clean. The windows were washed and shined by wiping dry with toilet paper. Many a roll of this paper was used every week and not all in the latrine. The latrine, another detested duty, was washed from top to bottom. At "White Gloves Inspection" the inspecting officer wore white gloves and ran his hand over everything, even under the inside rim of the toilet. Woe be if his glove got dirty. If so, the whole platoon would be restricted until it passed inspection, maybe the whole weekend. That went over like a storm cloud.

I remember an occasion on a Friday night. Most everyone had prepared for Saturday inspection and lights were out, one of the men dragged in drunk, made a lot of noise and flipped the lights on. Several complained. He said he had to see how to clean his rifle. This man was disliked by most of us because this was his normal behavior. I was angry, rolled out of bed and turned the lights off.

IMMUNIZATION REGISTER			
LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	STATE	ARMY NO.
SHALLPOX VACCINE			
JUL 17 1943			
TRIPLE TYPHOID VACCINE			
DATE OF ADMINISTRATION			
DATE	TIME	DOSE	REMARKS
JUL 17 1943	10:00	1.0	OK
TETANUS TOXOID			
DATE OF ADMINISTRATION			
DATE	TIME	DOSE	REMARKS
JUL 17 1943	10:00	1.0	OK
YELLOW FEVER VACCINE			
DATE			
DATE	TIME	DOSE	REMARKS
JUL 17 1943	10:00	1.0	OK
OTHER VACCINES			
DATE	TIME	DOSE	REMARKS
JUL 17 1943	10:00	1.0	OK

U. S. Army

He flipped them on again. That made me really mad and when he took a swing at me I hauled off and smacked him in the face. He left the lights off. Next day, one of the men on the lower floor, who did not see this but heard rumors, asked me what happened. I told him the whole story. He said this man had come down to the latrine last night to clean his rifle and had a black eye. When asked what happened, his story was "I ran into a post".

This same man had a habit of not showering and really did stink. We put up with him until it became too much to endure. Several of us hauled him naked into the shower and scrubbed him with a scrub brush. Didn't have that problem again.

Some of our classes were on venereal diseases with graphic pictures and lectures of how to avoid them. The first defense was to never have sex with anyone except your spouse. (F) "Short arm" inspection was held often. This was to find possible signs of venereal disease. The procedure was strip down to shoes and socks, put on a raincoat to cover until called by the medics. At times the wait was as long or longer, than an hour. This same man lay on his bunk and went to sleep with all his privates exposed. Several of us decided to end this. We procured a bottle of Mercurochrome and poured it on the exposed area. Didn't wake him, but that cured that problem also.

Each wood post, down the aisle and part of the frame of the building, on each floor, had a gallon tin can hung on a nail for cigarette butts. When on barracks duty, even if you did not smoke, they had to be removed each day, emptied and washed out. If one man failed inspection or a squad or platoon was gigged, that meant more hours of drill and/or scrubbing floors and latrines. The whole group suffered.

Canvas leggings were a leftover from WWI. They had to be laced up around the legs, over the bottom of the fatigue uniform and down to the tops of GI boots. Later in Europe we were issued combat boots with leather attached to the boot top that replaced the leggings. They were more comfortable, easier to put on, and offered a greater amount of protection.

While in high school I was in the Junior R.O.T.C. and had quite a bit of close order drill. This came in handy in basic training. Everyone had guard duty with an unloaded rifle and you



Gerald with leggings

walked around a given group of barracks for two hours. If someone approached, you challenged. After they were identified, all passed on. A tour was two hours on then two hours off, all night. There was a practice that before going on duty, guards were given a chance to compete in close order drill. The winner, declared colonels orderly, did not have to stand guard and received a weekend pass.

The runner-up stood duty at the movie theatre. That was going to

the movie, check in your rifle, watch the movie free, retrieve your rifle and return to your barracks. No more guard that night. The first time I stood for guard duty we were drilled down until only two of us were left. It seemed the sergeant couldn't get either of us to make a mistake. He then asked questions about the camp. I knew the camp commander was General Wilson but I didn't know the name of the assistant (General Logan) (F) and lost. The other man also had Jr. R.O.T.C. I got theatre duty but no pass. Later one of my buddies was scheduled for guard duty and I traded his turn so I could get colonels orderly and a weekend pass. This sergeant of the guard didn't have a drill down and I had to walk a tour of guard. I didn't volunteer for guard duty again.

Close order drill was an eternal maneuver that was practiced by the hour with manual of arms over and over.

At one time I did duty to keep the fires going to heat the water and the barracks, in cold weather. It consisted of shoveling one or two shovels of coal into the furnace about every hour. This was from 12 midnight, to 5 in the morning. For this I got an extra \$2. I always tried to earn more money. (F)

After each day of firing on the rifle range the brass, empty shells, had to be policed up. Everything carried in must be carried out. Of course rifles had to be cleaned after each firing on the

range. Between times they were cleaned before inspections. Other exercises were held to be sure the rifle could be dismantled, even in the dark. They were put under a blanket, so the parts could not be seen, disassembled and reassembled by touch again and again. Timed contests were held to complete this practice in the shortest time possible. By doing this you were so familiar with the rifle it could be cared for even at night during combat.

Some of the classes were for airplane identification, both ours and those of the enemy. Pictures and charts were used. We also studied and practiced defense against air attacks. (F)

Many were the long marches with full field pack, rifle, helmet liner, gas mask and all the other gear needed to live with. As training progressed, we added steel helmets over the helmet liners. They were so heavy it felt that our heads were forcing our necks into our shoulders. After a while we became acclimated to this extra weight.

All night marches, about twenty-five miles, were very tiring. The cadre of officers and non-coms walked with us but didn't carry all the equipment that we did. Marching was generally not in step, as was close order drill, but we walked 50 minutes and had a "break" for ten minutes. The command "Take ten" was always welcome. Before the night was over almost all of us were sleepwalking. We'd place a hand on the man's pack in front and sleepwalk in a half-conscious daze. The "meat wagon" (ambulance) followed to pick up dropouts. Someone always failed to go the whole distance. Some day marches were 12 miles and had to be made in 4 hours and the next day 25 miles in 8 hours. They were tough and many men dropped out.

We also had drills for gas attacks. In the beginning you wore the gas mask into a building filled with tear gas. It burned exposed skin but you could breathe. Then the mask had to be removed and you stood for a while to get the real effects. Boy did the gas burn eyes and nose. When given permission, you raced for the door and fresh air. What a relief. After the tear gas, everyone had to take a sniff of something reported not to be harmful, but it had the odor of mustard gas. It smelled like garlic or wild onions. This was to prepare us to know if we encountered mustard gas during combat.

Some of these exercises were at night under blackout conditions and we dressed as though we were in malaria carrying mosquito country. About twelve men were hauled into a training area in the back of a 6X6 truck, the tarp cover pulled completely over the closed tail gate with gas mask on and mosquito net on top of steel helmet and everything else. Sleeves had to be rolled all the way down to the wrist. This was in July and August in South Carolina and hot as blazes. Temperature 100 degrees, humidity about 90%, under blackout conditions, black as pitch. That was a long few hours exercise. It seemed days.

We hiked to the rifle range with a 30-pound pack and a 9-pound rifle. On the rifle range salt tablets were forced on us by being stopped at the end of the chow line. We had to hold our mouth open and a sergeant threw a tablet into it and then forced us to swallow. Water had to be conserved so we would get used to being without.

After all trips to the rifle range we had to check all rifles to be sure they were unloaded. After the long march back to barracks, and before dismissing to clean them, we had another "inspection of arms". This was done by holding the rifle at port position, open the bolt, look into the breech, close the bolt and pull the trigger. On one occasion, one man had failed to clear the chamber properly and a round was left in it. When the trigger was pulled the round fired. We thought all hell was going to break loose. The bullet passed just in front of the next man but missed everyone. The sergeant tore him a new backside. What else was done, was never told. It was fortunate no one was injured or killed.

Marksmanship was with the M1 Garand rifle, M1 carbine rifle, M3 automatic rifle, (nicknamed *grease gun* because of its shape), which jammed often while firing, 45 cal. semi automatic pistol, 30 cal. light machine gun, anti-tank bazooka, hand and rifle grenades. Later training included the 37mm anti-tank gun, which weighed about a half ton, and the 57mm antitank gun, which weighed about three times as much. (F) At the beginning 22 caliber adapters were used in the 37mm. When we were more experienced, the actual size ammunition was used. (D)

We were infantry, primarily trained in anti-tank. The North African campaign was in progress at this time. The main weapon was the 37mm

anti-tank gun, a relic left over from WWI, but it was not powerful enough for the new big Tiger tanks of the German army. Our new big gun was the 57mm. We trained on the smaller gun towing it behind a half-track, firing target practice on the range and even pulling it through the woods at night by manpower. The trails (with a type of spades at the end of long arms that were spread apart and tended to dig in the ground when the gun was fired) were lifted and carried by two men. Others pulled by ropes attached to the trails and by swivels fastened on the axles. Six men all together. Quite a tough job at its best.

Accidents in training did happen. These big guns were heavy and dangerous. One man was a victim by the spades of a 37mm gun falling on his hand and was so badly injured, several of his fingers had to be amputated. (L)

I believe the yellow-orange, almost red, soil there was the hardest on earth. On bivouac we were forced to dig a "fox hole" deep enough to stand in with our head below the surface. It required a step on the bottom to stand on and look over the top. I used a pick to loosen the soil and an entrenching tool (shovel) to throw it out of the hole. During the whole week I was unable to get my hole deep enough as required. Hardly anyone did. We also had to dig a slit trench (a hole about 12 inches wide and 18 inches deep and 6 feet long, capable of allowing several men to straddle at the same time) to be used as toilets before digging our "foxhole". Of course before leaving, all holes had to be refilled. When it rained, and it did often, the dirt became thick mud and sticky as tar. The tent leaked everywhere it was touched. And touched they were. Tents, called a pup tent, were two shelter-halves buttoned together. Two men to a pup tent did not leave enough room to turn over without scraping the sides. Misery was a constant companion and we were always tired. When we were in the field, mosquitoes and chiggers were to be contended with, adding to our misery. (F)

Another boring drill was with bayonet training. It seemed it was by the hour. Stick a bayonet into a straw stuffed dummy time and again. Mock attack at an enemy by thrusting at him, slashing upward with rifle butt, slice down at an angle with bayonet and then stab as if the person was on the ground. Then we put the scabbard on the bayonet and thrust toward a fellow soldier.

He would try to knock the bayonet away and then you reversed roles. This was tiring and really boring.

We threw practice hand grenades. These had a hole in the bottom so they did not disintegrate and could be reused. We would insert a new detonating cap with a trigger and stuff black powder packs into the hole and reuse them over and over. Later we used live grenades and this really changed our attitude. These could kill. Rifle grenades were fired by fixing an adapter to the barrel end of an M1 rifle, then placing a hand grenade into the adapter, pulling the safety pin, placing the rifle butt on the ground and firing with a blank cartridge. That method propelled the grenade further than throwing by hand. If the rifle was placed on a knee, there was a good possibility of a broken knee

I heard of one man killed during the training of a mock-up of village fighting. (L) A mock-up village was buildings set up like a small town that we were to run through and practice firing at targets representing enemies. Before going into the village barbed wire was blown up and machine guns fired over our heads, about 10 to 15 feet high, and booby traps were set off for realism. (F)

One night problem was to go out at night under real blackout conditions and find the way to a destination only by sky light, map and compass. To read the map and compass it was necessary to hide under a raincoat and use a flashlight. We succeeded but suffered the heat and humidity and waded through swamps. Good thing we didn't think about snakes. "Fox fire" glowed on branches and made the scene weird.

After several weeks of training we received a first shipment of 57mm anti-tank guns. They had been in short supply and were sent to Africa first until they caught up. It so happened the day they came in I was on duty at the supply room and became the first person at camp to assemble this new model. The instruction manual had not caught up with the gun mount but by using my experience on the 37mm I finally got it done.

In most of the training these big guns were pulled up on their "feet" and dug into position before firing, to assimilate actual combat conditions. On one exercise, we had to pull the 57mm with a half-track, back into position, uncouple, and set up on the tires without being "dug in". It was my

fortune again to be the first gunner this time. When I fired, I placed myself so I could "ride" back on the carriage when it recoiled. It really bounced high and backward. By "riding" the trails I didn't get hurt. The next gunner in turn didn't "ride" back and the gun sight gave him a black eye. A hard lesson, not easily forgotten. The 37mm projectile was slow enough to see the tracer going toward the target. The 57mm projectile was so fast it could not be seen easily. It also could travel for about 7 miles so we fired it at a target in front of an embankment. Once we overshot and shells landed in a maneuver area and the men had to dig in for safety. When we were alerted to that we stopped until they moved out. (F)

Only practice rounds of anti-tank ammo were used. No high explosives. One Sunday a fellow trainee and I walked out to the firing range to pick up some fired projectiles. The firing had been directed into a bank so where a projectile had landed close to the surface, a ridge like that of a mole, was formed. We followed the ridge to the end and dug up our trophy. If high explosives had been fired this would have been too dangerous and we would not have attempted such an adventure.

One of the most dreaded courses was the infiltration course. We marched out into a field into a ditch and waited. At a signal, we had to crawl under a barbed wire entanglement with a machinegun firing live ammunition, with tracers, overhead. The bullets were only 30 inches above the ground. Meanwhile explosive charges were exploding in holes to simulate artillery or mortar shells. We wore steel helmets, a backpack and drug our rifles through all this. It was scary.

During chow, if a person asked for food or drink to be passed and the person passing it, stopped and used it before passing, this was called short stop. This would sometimes cause a fight, especially if the item was in short supply and nothing was left by the time the container was received by the first man who asked for it. This happened most often with cold drinks.

GIs claimed that if food could be ruined, army cooks would do it. The worst was having lamb. When this was being cooked the whole area had such a bad odor it ruined even a hearty appetite. No one believed the meat was lamb. It had to be goat and little was actually eaten. While the food was not always good there usually was

enough to go around. Very seldom were we treated to something like fried eggs, bacon and pancakes. When we did, it was a real treat! Bacon and pancakes were served with syrup and was very good. I had never used syrup with fried bacon before. The Army served the dried beef chips in cream gravy on toast called S. O. S. (s--- on a shingle). Most of the men disliked S. O. S. but I thought it was good. Now I think it is much better if served on fried potatoes..

Generally I like fried chicken but one time my weekend K.P. was to clean partly thawed frozen chickens as they had not been carefully cleaned before freezing. I cleaned so many this Saturday for Sunday dinner it almost made me sick. I was used to killing and cleaning chickens but these stunk so bad it ruined my appetite. Next day Bob Snyder, a soldier in another company that had become a friend, and I left base, went to town and bought lunch. In the evening we returned to base and tried the P.X. for supper. They had chicken also and we had trouble finding something different.

I was on K.P. quite a lot for I did not jell with the corporal on a lot of things. I didn't drink and he was rough and tumble, cursed a lot and was always trying to get someone to meet him behind the mess hall after hours to have a go at it. This was against the rules but this corporal made his own rules. I never did like or respect him. I have had tough officers and noncoms but respected them if they were right and fair.

One of the biggest drudgeries on K.P. was peeling potatoes. It seemed they came by the barrel. Some disliked the job so much they peeled away most of the potato, thus wasting a lot. I had been used to saving as much as I could and it was hard to understand why good food was wasted. Washing big pots and pans, it seemed by the hundreds, was a close second.

Every one was supposed to learn to drive a vehicle. I had never had the chance to drive and really looked forward to this. Four piled into a jeep, one man was the driver, the instructor in the passenger seat, and two more students in the rear seat waiting their turn. We were shown the arrangement of the gears, relation of the clutch, accelerator and brake. Usually after killing the engine several times while trying to start moving, we managed to succeed. Down and around a course

several times, then the next student. (D) That one time was all the experience I had until I was transferred to Camp Campbell, Kentucky, 20th Armored Division.

The first time I went to chapel on Sunday the chaplain was from a different type of church. When the communion was passed I turned up the glass and downed the liquid at one gulp. At our church grape juice was used but this wasn't grape juice. What a shock. It was real wine and I choked. The organist was a very attractive girl named "Wanda", from Oneida, Tennessee. Later we became acquainted and went to a County Fair together and had a great time.

Laundry cost \$1.50 per month, whether or

not it was used. I used it but also had to do some washing by hand to have enough clean clothes. We did not have enough issued to last from one time until the next, especially underwear and socks. (F)

I don't remember what prompted it but I had a chance to take some written I.Q. tests for both A.S.T.P. (Army Specialist Training Corps), O.C.S. (Officers Candidate School) and the Army Air Corps. (F) I didn't pass up the chance for something better. By passing all with a very good score I was able to choose and chose transfer to the Army Air Corps to try for one of the flying officers' positions (pilot, navigator, bombardier).

RESERVE OFFICERS' TRAINING CORPS

LOUISVILLE MALE HIGH SCHOOL

LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

Department of Military Science

OFFICE OF THE PROFESSOR
OF
MILITARY SCIENCE AND TACTICS

HONOR UNIT

1924	1930
1925	1932
1926	1934
1927	1935
1928	1936
1929	to

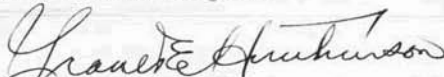
include
1942.

May 13, 1943.

TO WHOM CONCERNED:

I certify that Mr. Gerald C. Weber has successfully completed the three years course of training prescribed by the War Department for the Reserve Officers' Training Corps, Junior Unit, graduating in January 1943. The last semester of the six semester course, he served as a 2nd Lieutenant in this ROTC Corps of approximately 1000 young men. The fact that he held a Cadet Commission speaks well for his relative standing in the Corps as there are but 57 vacancies for cadet officers in the entire corps.

While a member of the ROTC, Mr. Weber exhibited excellent qualities of leadership, as required in the military service, for a young man of his age. He is an intelligent and earnest person and I consider him to possess the requisite physical and moral stamina required of leaders of small units of our combatant arms in this present world conflict. Therefore, I recommend him for thorough consideration for any position of trust and responsibility he may request. I believe he will acquit himself with credit to the service in which engaged regardless of what his assignment may be.


GROVER E. HUTCHINSON,
Lieut. Col., Infantry,
P. M. S. & T.

ARMY SERVICE FORCES
FOURTH SERVICE COMMAND
Camp Croft
Spartanburg, South Carolina

27 October 1943

SPECIAL ORDERS)

NUMBER 257)

E-X-T-R-A-C-T

3. The following named EM (Air Corps Unasgd), atchd to orgn indicated, having been found qualified for pre-aviation cadet (Air Crew) basic training, are trfd to AAFETTC, Basic Training Center No. 2, Keesler Field, Miss, in their present grades, and WP thereto at such time as will enable them to report to the CO thereof on 5 November 1943. WD Circular #85, 26 March 1943, as amended, does not apply to these EM.

1. *Pvt Joseph G. Bailey, 33651498, Co A, 26th ITB
2. Pvt Sheldon Beigel, 32975233, Co D, 38th ITB
3. Pvt Harry M. Carter, 17111633, Co C, 35th ITB
4. Pvt Frank Cusano, 31330628, Co C, 29th ITB
5. Pvt William G. Dipeppi, 33726425, Co C, 33rd ITB
6. Pvt John L. Ewertsen, 32778132, Co C, 33rd ITB
7. Pvt David A. Falk, 12208587, Co A, 26th ITB
8. Pvt Floyd T. Hohn, 33607360, Co A, 28th ITB
9. Pvt Gilbert J. Karcher, 36647519, Co C, 35th ITB
10. Pvt John L. Kosmosky, 33786866, Co A, 28th ITB
11. Pvt Hubert A. Legodais, 32966933, Co C, 29th ITB
12. Pvt Earl G. Long, 35203047, Co A, 30th ITB
13. Pvt Allen B. Mallett, 34826047, Co C, 39th ITB
14. Pvt John Merlino, 33690081, Co A, 38th ITB
15. Pvt Mogens M. Moller, 32883886, Co B, 38th ITB
16. Pvt Julian H. Otten, 33639691, Co D, 33rd ITB
17. Pvt Svend B. Rondum, 33576795, Co D, 27th ITB
18. Pvt Jerry Ruelf, 32970764, Co B, 31st ITB
19. Pvt Carl E. Schneider, 12130537, Co A, 31st ITB
20. Pvt Robert C. Schneider, 35726374, Co C, 35th ITB
21. Pvt Lawrence J. Selegue, 35222923, Co D, 29th ITB
22. Pvt Robert W. Sullivan, 32951594, Co D, 29th ITB
23. Pvt Edward S. Warner, 32928309, Co A, 28th ITB
24. Pvt Gerald C. Weber, 35705011, Co A, 26th ITB
25. Pvt Roland H. Winterten, 31373088, Co A, 33rd ITB
26. Pvt Jack Wisnefsky, 32964431, Co C, 31st ITB
27. Pvt Edward R. Wooten, 14154514, Co C, 40th ITB
28. Pvt Neal Zuckerman, 32927538, Co C, 29th ITB

(*) In charge of shipment.

T Fr will furn T. Party meal tickets for twenty-eight (28) EM for two-thirds (2/3) of one (1) day will be furn UP par 2, AR 30-2215, TDN, 1-5040-F-431-02-A 212/40425. Auth: Ltr Hq Fourth Serv C, file AG 342.1 - Camp Croft, subj: "Shipment of Candidates for Pre-Aviation Cadet (Air Crew) Training", dated 20 October 1943.

By order of Colonel FOX:

MOLLY E. CHRISTIAN,
Captain, WAC,
Assistant Adjutant.

OFFICIAL:

Molly E. Christian
MOLLY E. CHRISTIAN,
Captain, WAC,
Assistant Adjutant

ARMY AIR CORPS

Thursday, November 4, 1943 (D)(L) I was en route to the Army Air Corps on another train trip. This time we went in style. We slept in a Pullman car and ate in the dining car. What a difference it must be to be an officer! We were not there yet. Just a potential one. Finally we arrived at Kessler Field in Biloxi, Mississippi, on Friday, November 5, 1943. (D) We pulled into our area of large tents with several men billeted on fold-up cots and sand floor. The weather was **HOT** and one of those downpours started. All of our gear had to be piled on the cots to keep them dry. What a beginning!

We were subjected to rounds and rounds of tests. Each one caused some of the men to be washed out. One test caused 63 out of 200 to be washed out. (D) They were transferred to other jobs in the Air Force. Those of us remaining were given more tests and physicals. Each test or exam had similar results. I dreaded looking at the test results, fearing the worst. We marched in a formal parade ground on weekends. Many of the men grumbled about parades but I rather enjoyed them, probably because of my Jr. R.O.T.C. Segregation was in force and there were a lot of Negro troops. When they marched they sang and chanted. It was great to hear them.

We also had an air show that was great. P-40's and P-47's came in at one end of the field and P-38's from the opposite direction. As they passed, all would begin to climb. The P-38's, a twin tailed, twin engine fighter, stood on their tails and continued to climb. The others, less powerful, could only climb at an angle for a short distance and then level off.

Near one of the hangers was a pile of wrecked airplanes. Some were strange, unlike any I had ever seen before. Later I learned they were an experimental type. The propellers were placed behind the wings and pushed instead of pulled. The principle was great but had to be scrapped

because if a crew ejected the prop caught and killed them.

After duty we could go on leave to downtown Gulfport, Mississippi, to the skating rink. It was in a large tent and the wood floor had been prefabricated, hauled in and set up. That made a very uneven floor. It was like going up and down hill. Great fun anyway. One time a couple of girls were fighting and pulling hair. I can only guess but I feel sure it was over some G.I. for they were the only boys around at that time. Several of us soldiers pulled them apart and made sure they went their separate ways. I had never seen girls fight and pull hair like that.

When I walked down to the shore of the Gulf of Mexico the sand was covered with dead Portuguese Man-of-War, or jellyfish. We were told the tentacles could still sting and not to touch them. They were strange to me and I did not get close to them. (F) I really wanted to go all the way to New Orleans but our pass would not let us go that far. I didn't want to take a chance of getting caught and washed out of the cadets.

Several people, myself, other GIs, a few WAC's and the chaplain, were decorating the chapel for Christmas when the chaplain, a newly inducted second lieutenant, generally called a shave tail, asked "What does T.S. mean?" I was embarrassed before the women and answered, "That means tough stuff". Everyone laughed and I think he caught the drift for he didn't ask again.

After weeks of tests and sweating to the passed lists, we were loaded for another train trip to school. Friday, December 24, 1943, at 12:05 PM, we left for parts unknown. (D)(L)

On this trip, we were en route Christmas day, which didn't bother the Army but we did have Christmas dinner on the train. We stopped at Chattanooga, Tennessee, and went to a party at the U.S.O. during a layover.

KEESLER FIELD
BILOXI, MISS.

Nov. 30, 1943

Dear Folke;

How did you fare on your bacheloring? We really enjoyed it. That night I went into town. I went to one of the U.S.O. Clubs and saw some pictures.

I also went to a carnival or whatnot and rode the octopus. I wanted to ride the ferris wheel but I didn't have time. Who did I have with me? Only a couple of fellow soldiers. We had to rush for we had to get back before 11:00 and didn't get started until about 7:00. While I was at the carnival I saw water a little way off. I asked a fellow if it was a swimming pool. He said it was the gulf. I looked around and saw boats tied up. I didn't know ~~what~~ we were so close to the water for we walked into town. We stopped at a restaurant and it was built out over the water. There was also a large lighthouse close. I couldn't see the water well it was so dark that night but I'm going

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to try to go see it in the daytime.

No, I haven't been moved yet. I may be here until Christmas and yet I may be moved right away. Some of the boys began their final exams today. I guess I'll begin mine tomorrow. There have been 6 six boys washed out out of about 100. The physical and psychiatrist did that. There will be quite a few washed out on these next tests if things go with us like they have with other classes. They have also raised the standards for us. That means it will be harder.

Mother, how is your class coming along?

The chaplain has had a class for all who would come to discuss and try to answer any questions we have. It's really swell. We have it on Monday and Thursday night. Last night there was five of us boys. The time before last night there was only 3 of us. We look up references in the bible that pertain to our question and then discuss them and try to find the correct answer. The two questions we had last night were "What is the unpardonable sin?" and "Is there a hell?". We had before discussions on the earth's beginning and a few other questions. We will discuss

KEESLER FIELD
BILOXI, MISS.

Baptism, time measurement before Christ, and such others in the future.

I don't know what I'm going to do about Christmas. I can't get out of camp I'm afraid. There is nothing much at the P. X. to get. I hope in a way I'm not here for Christmas although the Chaplain wants to plan something special for Christmas. What would you suggest for Gladys and Geraldine? Let me know right away.

If the bike was shut up in the garage during the hot weather I can easily understand why the tires rotted. They won't wear out as fast as they will dry rot and they will rot fast if they are not used. Let the kids ride the wheel all they want to for it's best if it is kept in good condition and care is taken.

Have you had any snow? It seems so peculiar here. Day before yesterday it was hot here. Today it's awful cold. I'd like to see some snow again but I doubt if I will if I stay here. I don't think it

ever snows here.

Dec. 1, 1943.

Today has been a day. I took my last mental today. It was really a peach. (with plenty fudge)

It was the hardest yet. We started filling out forms about 8:00 & started the tests 8:45. We stopped about an hour for lunch and began again at 1:15.

It ended about 3:45. It covered math, physics, general knowledge of mechanics, automobile driving, automobile mechanics, airplanes, airplane mechanics, and to top it all about my biography. The last covered my, mother, and daddy's education, sports I like & excelled in, work I've done, why I wanted to get in air corp, etc.

Tomorrow I'm scheduled to take the psychomotor. That is test to measure my coordination. I've heard it's a fun but tough.

I got a present from the church yesterday. It was an "Arvon" toilet article set. I guess Mrs. Hames sold them.

Dec. 2, 1943

The test today weren't so bad. That is it was tough but it ^{is} fun. There was six parts to it. First we turned square pegs in square holes 180°. That wasn't easy either. We then held a rod in our hand and kept (or tried to) the

KEESLER FIELD
BILOXI, MISS.

end on a small metal ~~disk~~ disc that was off center on another large one as it rotated.

Next we had to keep a button on a disk in almost the same manner except we had two wheels which controlled the button in 2 directions. That was to test the co-ordination between the hands. Next we had 5 lights, 2 red, 2 green, 1 white. We had 4 switches. If the red light on the right of the green we'd push the right switch to the right the white light went out. If the red light was above, below, or to the left of the green light we pushed the proper switch the proper way. If done in time the white light went out before the others & began again. That was to test our ^{speed of} reaction to signals. The 5th was a lot of fun. We had a stick & foot pedale to operate like those in an airplane. We were to move the stick & pedale to line up green lights with red ones. When they were lined up they would go off & go on in a different position. We had a set time to work & were to match as many as we could in that time. The last was the most strenuous. We had

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a contraption that was unbalanced to the right or left according to the way you turned it. We had to set in it & work foot pedals to turn it and line up a line on the top with a line on the wall. That was really hard to do & keep it there. That was the same as a plane on the ground. The direction was changed by the rudder & the pedals were to change the rudder.

We won't know whether we pass or not for a week or more. Well, I've done what I can so now I'll just wait and hope and pray.

I'm waiting now to get paid. I guess I'll try to get my presents or rather cards now. It's going to be a problem this month.

Did you get my letters before last Nov. about your anniversary. I'm sorry I couldn't get anything.

I'm ~~going~~ sending 2 papers I'd like for you to put away for me.

Wenonah I'm also sending back your clipping. I'm sorry but not surprised to see it. Things like that are not uncommon. I went through a course something like that at Croft. We had a Lt. killed from a bullet at that course.

Write soon.

Love,
Gerald.

TENNESSEE TECH

Finally we arrived Sunday, December 26, 1943 at Tennessee Tech in Cookeville, Tennessee, on a beautiful large campus. (D) The school was



Tennessee Tech Campus

small with about 400 civilian students, 100 boys and about 300 girls. (F) My group was billeted in a big barracks type building that housed the machine shop. Regular Army officers, which consisted of one captain, (the first one was Captain Lynch the second was Captain Girard) four lieutenants, (one was First. Lt. Bryan Myers) and 10 noncoms, (F) were in charge, and discipline was rigid. We marched in groups to and from classrooms, chow hall and elsewhere. Meals were to be silent except to ask for something. We didn't have fresh milk. The school had their own dairy but the milk was not pasteurized so the cadets were not allowed to drink it. We used watered down canned milk. (F) Reveille every morning, taps at evening. Formation and marches quite frequent. No fraternizing with civilians during school hours was an order.

Soon after our arrival, the regular officers gave us tests, close order drill and personal interviews. They then chose cadets to be acting officers and noncoms for acting cadet leaders. One of the questions I was asked, "What is called an Army housewife?" Instead of answering "I don't know!" I said, "I suppose it is a woman married to a man in the Army." Wrong! I should have admitted I didn't know and it would have made a better score for me. I was told it is a sewing kit. My promotion was to acting sergeant in my squad, not a cadet officer.

One morning, at roll call, I spit in ranks. My sinuses were a real problem, and even though it was before daylight, I was seen and gigged. We

were not even fully dressed by then. What a bummer. I'd have to walk a tour before being allowed to go off campus next weekend. A tour was to walk in a circle for 50 minutes and then take a 10-minute break between tours if there were more than one. Cadets had to have a haircut once a week, and a shave every morning whether it was needed or not. Another morning, I got up late and skipped shaving, my face was so smooth and hairless, and I felt this didn't matter. The Army officers held inspection every day. This time when the inspector got to me he stopped, bent down so the light shown behind my face, and asked "Weber, did you shave this morning?" I answered "No sir". Then he gigged me again.

First class uniforms were worn all the time, even guard duty, except during exercises and running. Fatigues were allowed on K.P. Radios, reading newspapers or magazines or writing letters, were not allowed after 7:30 PM. Study was from 7:30 until 10:00 PM. Then lights were out and bed check was before midnight. (F)

Calisthenics was an everyday occurrence, or at least five days a week. Weather permitting, and sometimes in a light snow or drizzle, it was still an order of the day. A three-mile run then completed this. When your body became acclimated to it, it wasn't bad. In fact one day several of us "eager beavers" continued our run beyond the normal roads. We didn't know the area and ended running further than expected. We figured it must have been eight to nine miles, for we finished just in time for class. (L) We showered and changed to uniforms and I was so winded it was difficult to concentrate on studies. We enjoyed this so we tried it again several times, once finishing in 37 minutes. Six of us, another time, ran 16 miles and only two did not make it all the way without stopping and walking for a while. (F)

Our instructors were civilian college professors and we earned college credits in a normal college course, with emphasis on science, physics, math, trigonometry, English, history, geography, meteorology, drill and gym. I enjoyed it very much, for after all, it sure was a lot better than digging a foxhole. Really a gentleman's life. Classes were 8 hours, including several studies in one-hour segments, one-hour gym, one-hour drill and

studies at night were one and half-hours. (F)

After hours we were allowed to visit with civilians and even, sometimes, go off campus. Passes for leave were on Saturdays from 12 noon to 12 midnight, Sunday morning until 4 PM. There were no overnight or three-day passes. As much as I wanted and tried, I could never get enough time to go home to Louisville. (F) I was always homesick and wanted to see my family and Gladys. Cookeville was not a large town. Business district was one block long on one street, (D), but it was a welcome change to the confines of the school. There were only 2 theaters and they were only open part time, and another one that showed only old pictures, a few stores, several barbershops and a grocery. That's all! (F) Somewhere about this time I met a student named "Dorothy" whose major was aviation. We dated several times. She even invited me to attend her church one Sunday. I think it was a Methodist Church, even insisting I sing with her in the choir. Was that ever a mistake! I could not and still can not carry a tune in the least. I survived but was really embarrassed. "Dot" and her sister, "Pat", also a student at Tennessee Tech, lived with a family named Sloan in Cookeville, near the campus. (D) Mr. Sloan worked at a grocery store in town. (F)

One time while marching back to the barracks in formation, I saw "Dorothy" standing on the steps of one of the buildings. As soon as I got into my area I picked up a camera, ran out to the quadrangle, hollered for her to stand still and took a picture. As I turned to go back to the barracks, one of the regular officers, way across campus, saw me and ordered me over. He asked me if I knew "No talking to civilians during school hours was in force?" I assured him I did but only took a picture. That didn't help. He giggled me again.

One interesting program we had for entertainment was a Dr. Polagan who gave a demonstration on mental telepathy and hypnotism. I wanted to go on stage as a subject but when I raised out of my seat, my pants leg caught on a bolt on the seat in front of me and tore. I had to sit back and miss the experiment. He had students smoke a cigarette and told them it tasted bitter. They tossed the cigarette down and made a face. He told them it would taste bitter for several days. Sure enough those students couldn't enjoy a smoke for several days following that. Another

bashful girl was "put under" and told to make a political speech to the audience. She did and was embarrassed when she was awakened. He also passed a magazine out to the audience after he studied it for a while. When a student was asked to call a page number he told the article and the advertisements on that page. Quite entertaining but I was disappointed for I wanted to find out if I could be hypnotized.

We were fortunate to finish all the studies assigned except for actually getting our hands on the controls of an airplane. That was to happen the next Monday morning. Prior to that, on Friday morning all cadets were called into the school auditorium for a special meeting. When the regular officer said "Men sit back, relax and loosen your tie if you like", we knew something bad was afoot. Strictness was never broken before. He proceeded to read orders from Air Force Command. The cadet program was cancelled. All men that had transferred from another branch of service would be returned there. All persons originally from the Air Force were to be transferred back to their former jobs. Some had been mechanics, even air controllers. Many cried. We had endured a lot to get this far. What a blow! We were all being trained to be pilots, navigators or bombardiers and so far none of us had been washed out since starting school. The program was just cancelled. Europe was about to be invaded and more ground troops were needed and enough Air Force was already in place.

One man had been an air controller for the Air Force before transferring to the cadet program. I remember his story about such a great need for supplies that planes were greatly overloaded. He told us of a time when he was on the radio talking to the pilot who was trying so hard to take off with such an overload. He raced the motors, pulled back on the "stick" and rocked from side to side trying to lift off. The pilot was talking to the plane, "Come on just a little more" and begging the plane up. He finally ran out of runway so he pushed the throttles closed and pulled the wheels out from under the plane. It hit the ground and skidded into a railroad embankment. By this maneuver the crew could still survive and walk away.

None of us knew our primary classification until college was completed and then we were to specialize. Just before shipping home from

Germany, over a year and half later, I asked one of the men in personnel to look up my records, to try to determine my classification in the cadet program. He told me I had been classified primarily to train as navigator. (I can only guess it was because I had lot of math in Male High School and the U. of L.)

It was about another week before orders were issued for our departure and all discipline was relaxed. We went to town, drilled and made work to pass the time. "Dorothy" had already been taking flying lessons so she took me out to the airport and told her instructor what had happened to our program. He took us up for a flight and let me take over the controls. It was really a thrill.

We were led to believe, but not told officially, that we were to be sent directly overseas without furlough to go home. I called and told my parents about this. We had not seen each other for about eight months and feared it would be much longer if I would be sent overseas without a leave. They arranged to get railroad passes and came to Cookeville for a visit.

One friend and fellow student was Cecil Hubbard who had been a miner of gold, copper etc. in civilian life in Oklahoma. His brother Lloyd was in pre-flight elsewhere but we were able to meet him in Clarksville, Tennessee. When my family was



Cecil, Gerald, Lloyd

scheduled to visit me I ached in my back and shoulders and was afraid I would not be able to visit them. Cecil had also been an athlete so he had me lay on a bunk and massaged my back with rubbing alcohol. With this treatment over a couple of days I was able to go to town and visit with my family. I was grateful to him.

When they arrived I couldn't get off campus to meet them for I still had two tours of duty to make. So, even though it was raining, I completed them. Their trip had been unusually slow on this local train. The local word around here, at least from one of our professors, was that the Tennessee Central was the oldest thing on earth. "God created heaven and earth and then He created all creeping things". This railroad was so slow, it only crept. Thus it had to be the "Oldest thing on earth". Our visit was short but great.

Another student and friend, Alan Klein, was fortunate that his fiancée was able to visit before we were shipped out. Her maiden name was also Klein, which I thought was unusual. (F)

I shipped out, Thursday, April 20, 1944, about 3:15 AM. There were several of us leaving and a group of student friends went to the train station to send us off with a wonderful farewell. We took "The Old Slow Train" and had breakfast in Nashville Tn. (D)



Leaving Cookeville, TN.

Officers & N.C.O.'s of Squadron "B" 46th C.T.D. (Air Crew)
Cookeville, Tenn.

Standing L & R.

Charles H. Hering *Joseph Cantrel* "Hot" *Leakins* *Thomas C. Ylinka* *William A. Sigmon*
Alfred Wilson *Herbert J. Brown* *Gene P. Hoge* *Carlbenand* *Phiey B. Barron*
Carl J. Goldstein *Thomas M. Crenshaw* *Lincoln, N.H.* *Alan J. Main* *Harry L. Kidwell*
Myerworth *Ed. Billesta* *John F. Blumenschein* *Louis M. Eller* *Evan G. Lust*
Hugo, M. D. L. *George H. Newell* *Walter A. Bjornstad* *Dave C. Kellam* *Merwin (Dutch) Barker*
Harland R. Gunkel *John H. Goodwin* *Charles W. Gathman* *Peter J. Davis* *Stanley Engelking*
ARLH *Dick F. Norangie* *Warren D. Drost* *Robert H. March* *James E. Ferril* *James P. Champagne*
Raymond C. Lee *William R. Willoughby* *Missing from Picture* *Lawrence B. Beckman* *W. B. Smyth*

ANOTHER PHOTO
by
SMYTH
4501 So. Dix
ENGLEWOOD, COLO.

Charles L. Willey

HEADQUARTERS
43th College Training Detachment (Aircrew)
Tennessee Polytechnic Institute
Cookeville, Tennessee

353

3 April 1944

SUBJECT: Relief from Air Crew Training

TO : All Aviation Trainees from Army Service Forces
and Army Ground Forces.

The following message to this Headquarters is quoted to all concerned:

"YOU WILL RETURN TO THE GROUND AND SERVICE FORCES ALL ENLISTED MEN WHO VOLUNTEERED FROM THESE SOURCES AND HAVE BEEN FOUND FULLY QUALIFIED FOR TRAINING AS PILOTS, BOMBARDIERS AND NAVIGATORS, BUT WHO HAVE NOT YET ENTERED PRE-FLIGHT SCHOOL. THIS ACTION IS NECESSARY AS THE RESULT OF A CRITICAL AND IMMEDIATE NEED FOR YOUNG, VIGOROUS, AND WELL-TRAINED MEN WITH LEADERSHIP QUALIFICATIONS TO MEET THE URGENT NEED OF THE GROUND AND SERVICE FORCES. IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT EVERYONE OF THESE SOLDIERS BE MADE AVAILABLE FOR PENDING OPERATIONS IN VIEW OF ACCUMULATED SHORTAGES THAT HAVE DEVELOPED SINCE LAST JULY IN SELECTIVE SERVICE. IT IS WITH PROFOUND REGRET THAT I CONSENT TO DROP FROM THE ARMY AIR FORCES TEAM THESE SPIRITED YOUNG MEN WHO HAVE ASPIRED TO JOIN OUR COMBAT CREWS WHICH ARE GAINING FOR US SUPERIORITY IN THE AIR IN EVERY THEATER OF WARFARE. IT IS, HOWEVER, THE VERY SUCCESS OF THE ARMY AIR FORCES TEAMS NOW IN COMBAT WHICH MAKES THIS SHIFT OF FIGHTING POWER WISE AND PROPER. WE MUST PRESENT A BALANCED FRONT TO OUR ENEMIES. THE ARMY AIR FORCES TEAM HAS SUCCEEDED BETTER THAN WE DARED HOPE FOR WHEN OUR QUOTAS WERE SET AND IT NOW PERMITS A REDUCTION IN OUR TRAINING RATE. WE SHALL, OF COURSE, CONTINUE TO TRAIN COMBAT CREWS IN AS CLOSE A RATIO AS POSSIBLE TO OUR EXACT NEEDS. I AM SURE THAT THESE MEN WILL UNDERSTAND THAT IN A PROGRAM OF SUCH MAGNITUDE THERE WILL BE TIMES WHEN THE NUMBER OF MEN WHO QUALIFY IN ANY PARTICULAR PERIOD WILL EXCEED THE TRAINING QUOTA FOR THAT PERIOD. WHILE IT IS MY DUTY TO REGARD THIS MATTER IN A PRACTICAL LIGHT IT IS MY DESIRE THAT YOU HAND EACH OF THESE MEN AFFECTED, A COPY OF THIS MESSAGE EXPLAINING THE REASONS FOR HIS BEING OBLIGED TO FORGO THIS TRAINING. WILL YOU ALSO CONVEY TO EACH MAN MY PERSONAL APPRECIATION AND THANKS FOR HIS INTEREST IN THE ARMY AIR FORCES AND WISH HIM GOOD LUCK AND GOOD HUNTING IN THE BRANCH TO WHICH HE RETURNS. I AM CONFIDENT THAT THESE FINE AMERICAN SOLDIERS WHO WANT TO DO THE GREATEST POSSIBLE DAMAGE TO THE ENEMY WILL PRIZE THE OPPORTUNITY FOR AN EARLIER ENGAGEMENT TO THE ALTERNATIVE OF WAITING FOR TRAINING WITH THE ARMY AIR FORCES AT SOME LATER DATE.

HENRY H. ARNOLD
GENERAL, ACP
COMMANDING

Alfred L. Girard
ALFRED L. GIRARD
Captain, Air Corps
Commanding