Private Manchester Makes Perfect Score With Tank Destroyer Weapon

Pvt. Hugh Manchester, son of Mrs. Louise Taylor Manchester, of Bellefonte, who recently got into the army after many rebuffs because of "poor eyesight," is in a tank destroyer outfit at Camp Hood, Texas.

In a 14-page letter to the editors of this newspaper, Hugh writes most interestingly of his rigorous training (he's walked more in 8 weeks than he walked in 18 years); tells of the type of weapons he's being trained to operate, and with pardonable pride reports that out of three difficult shots from a tank destroyer he scored a bull's eye on every one. He also relates a conversation he had with a German prisoner of war.

Pvt. Manchester had quite a time getting into the service. He was repeatedly turned down, and finally, in desperation, got $150 together to buy his way into a Canadian ambulance corps, or something of the sort. But it seems that Christmas or some other holiday came along about that time, and Hugh and his $150 were soon parted.

Then one day Local Draft Board No. 2, of Bellefonte, which had done all it could to help Hugh get into the service, had a shortage of one man to meet a quota, so early the morning the group was to go to Altoona for examination, the board called Hughie and asked him if he'd like to take another try at passing.

He did, was accepted—and in his letter below you can judge for yourself whether he's having the time of his life!

Saturday Afternoon.

The Centre Democrat

How Are You:

Seeing that I'm writing this from Texas, I'll greet all of you with "Howdy Pardners."

Believe me when I say "there is no place like Texas." It's a good place to be from. What Sam Houston ever saw in Texas is beyond me.

Since being in the Army (Feb. 5) I have gained 30 pounds. The food is good. So tell any man in civilian life, if he doesn't have enough ration points and wants to build himself up, to join the Army.

Most of the men in our company are married and from the South. Naturally the Civil War has had occasion to come into the limelight. All the married men are having their wives come down. Me being not married sort of puts me at loss when discussions on "matrimonial affairs" are on.

However I suppose I could get out and marry me up with one of these Texas cowgirls, but I'd make a hell of a rancher and home on the range and all that stuff, so for the time being I'll stay single.

We tank destroyers are some group. The T. D.'s are a tough outfit and all kidding aside it takes a lot of endurance to stay up to it. To prove it I'll give you this last week's schedule: We had the 76 mm gun to work with. It is mounted on a T-70 tank destroyer. The T-70 resembles a tank somewhat. However its turret is open on top and is much lighter than a tank (18 tons). It will do about 70 miles per hour, mounts a 76 mm cannon and a 50-calibre machine gun. The 76 mm will shoot a shell that will pierce any armored tank the Germans or Japs have. There are many secrets about the T-70 and 76 mm I cannot disclose here, but if you knew them you would marvel at this fine weapon and realize why the German armored forces fear us (tank destroyers) in particular. I tell you, there is nothing like it!

Now for the schedule:

Monday: Up at 4 a. m., out in the field all day till 6 p. m. on instruction of firing the 76 mm. Fall out at 7:30 p. m. for night problem; back at 12 p. m.; to bed at 12:30 a. m.

Tuesday: Up at 3:30 to go out on the range to dry fire guns; march 5 miles to range. From 5:30 until 4:30 p. m. on range; march back. 6:30 p. m., fall out for general duty. On guard till 2 a. m.; to bed at 2:30.

Wednesday: Up at 4 a. m. to go out on range again, practice firing the 30-cal. machine gun from the T-70 at a General Grant tank to get idea of how the 76 mm gun sight works. Quit at 5 p. m.; to bed at 10 p. m.

Thursday: Up at 4; further instruction on the 76 mm; quit at 5. On detail getting guns ready from 7 until 12 p. m.; to bed at 12:30 a. m.

Friday: Up at 2:30 a. m.; go to 76 mm firing range 11 miles out; march half way. Fire from 8 a. m. till 5 p. m. Detail cleaning guns, etc. till 10:30; to bed at 11 p. m.

Saturday finally got here and I sure am enjoying the bed. You see, when you're in the army, when you go out on the firing range you can see you get up early.

Last week my hours ranged anywhere from 2:30 a. m. till 2 a. m. next morning, with guard, etc., and all. That's what I mean when I say you must have endurance. Now we are on summer schedule. We can sleep till 5 and go to bed at 10 and quit every afternoon at 5, unless we have a night problem scheduled.

It is very hot down here now. Soon it will reach 120 degrees. The other day I walked 12 miles in this heat with a full field pack, including some double timing. When that was through I was all in. But it toughens you up and when you do all this you feel rather proud of yourself, knowing you can do all this. Yes sir, they really make a man out of you.

But from now on we'll get to do a lot more riding as we are getting classified this week and they will break us into groups of T-70 drivers, truck drivers, security section, T. D. gunners, machine gunners, etc. So at last we have reached "mechanized warfare." I've done more walking in eight weeks than I've done in 18 years.

They had some Marines here for tank destroyer instruction and they said it was as tough if not tougher than Marine basic. So you can see what our training is like here.

Those old cars I had in civilian life (Waltzing Matilda) came in handy down here. You see I learned something about mechanics from them and it all fitted in pretty well here at Camp Hood with all this mechanized warfare to learn. Yes, for that old Model A roadster I had, it was the best $37.50 I ever spent for anything, for now it's paying dividends.

Now for one on the Altoona examining center. As all of you know I was turned down on account of eyesight. Well, I won a medal for marksmanship with the 30-cal. machine gun the other day. So when we are classified that might enable me to be a T. D. machine gunner (I hope).

And here's a better one. Yesterday when we fired the 76 mm I really puled one off for having been rejected once for eyesight. Each man in the company was allotted 3 shells to fire from the 76 mm on the T-70. This was the day to see if all the weeks' instruction on them had proved any good. Believe me, when those guns go off they make a hell of a bang and really jar the T-70. I was sitting on the turret when the first man in our group fired. I didn't know he was going to fire. I was sitting there watching the others fire when bang! and wham! Off the turret I went for a spill. You really have to brace yourself. To show my point, the man who loads the gun, after he hollers "clear" to the gunner to show that he is out of the way of the recoil of the gun, grabs with both hands a rail running around the top of the turret and holds on for dear life.

The gunner's job is this: To aim the gun at the target and at the same time by means of a crank, to turn the turret (when you are shooting at a moving target). Also, if necessary, he elevates the gun by means of another wheel. (The turret can be operated if necessary by electricity). So you see besides firing the weapon, the gunner has quite a job.

For the first shot you get a stationary target 900 yards away. All the targets were white cloth on poles. The cloth was 4 feet by 8, so even at 900 yards that was pretty small to hit. The next shot was at a moving target 1000 yards away.

The moving targets were mounted on a track and traveled from 15 to 20 miles an hour when it passed in front of you. So you had to be "on the ball" when you shot at the two moving targets. You really had to track those targets if you expected a hit. You had to traverse the gun, elevate it for proper range, take the right lead and fire it all in one complete movement.

The third target was a moving one, but at 1200 yards (approximately one mile). Well, with my "bad eyesight" I hit all three targets and I felt pretty good about that. That last target is just like you'd set it up on the diamond and take a T-70 up by Jack Wilkinson's on Curtin street (which is about a mile, I think) and move it across the diamond at 15 or 20 miles an hour and put a hole in it from firing that far away. Well, I did it. So now I can thumb my old nose at those guys in Altoona. "Bad eyesight"—fooey! Not with shooting like that.

Sitting there in the gunner's compartment doing the firing and all that maneuvering that is required, plus the big "bang" you get when the gun goes off, is a thrill which can not be written into words. Believe me, I lived the time of my life out there doing all that yesterday. Each shot out there cost $18.75 and each man getting 3 shots (250 men in our company) it ran into a lot of money. So if it wasn't so expensive I'd have liked to have done it all day long. So you see now where your War Bonds go.

The average for firing, like we did yesterday, is 1 hit in four shots. That's what is considered average. But we only got three shots. However, I was determined to show the "gentlemen of the Confederacy" that those of us who come from Pennsylvania are good shots, and I guess I did. That's what comes from having all of those B-B guns I had when I was small, and buying an old rifle and going out to the quarry on a Sunday and shooting.

The other day I was at South Camp Hood (which is 30 miles from North Camp Hood). I came back in an ambulance which had 4 German prisoners of war in it. (There are 3,000 here at Hood). I sat on one side, they on the other, and the M. P. up in the front seat. One could speak excellent English. He talked with the driver and the M P, so I struck up a conversation with the one in the back near me. With the aid of an American-German dictionary which the prisoner happened to have, we had some pow-wow.

Here is what I found out: He was 24 years old, had been in the German army 4 years, and was a veteran of fighting in Belgium, France, Yugoslavia, Crete, and North Africa. He was captured by the British at El Alemain. He said the British were damn good fighters, although he hates the British (he explained all Germans do), but they respect their fighting qualities. He said the Americans treat the Germans well. He pointed to me and said, "American good boy—German good boy," and went on to say that America being in this war was brought about through "Jewish propaganda." I asked him if he liked Hitler. His face lit up and he said "Yes!" So, I said "American soldier—Hitler," and then I ran my forefinger under my throat in an imitation of cutting one's throat. When I did that he muttered something in German and went on trying to explain the greatness of Hitler. I sat there and laughed.

At that the subject was changed to the Japs. He said Japs were no good. He repeated that the German soldier did not like the Jap soldier.

I asked him next about Russia. He got excited about that and talked very fast in German, at the same time making motions with his hands of machine guns mowing down men, and then in broken English said "the Germans no like Russia."

He did not think much of the American army in Italy. He told me that if I get sent to Italy I'll be a prisoner of war! What do you know about that? I said nuts to that. Then he said, "I did not expect to be an American prisoner of war either, you'll see!" So when I got off at my stop I bad him "Auf Weiderseehn" (goodbye in German) and told him I'd send him a postcard from Germany if I got to be a prisoner of war. He got a laugh out of that, so did the other three German prisoners.

However, there is one thing we all agreed on. They don't like Texas and neither did I!

Be careful if I ever get back to Bellefonte and shake hands with you. With all the "Ju Jutsu" I've learned I'm liable to throw you over my shoulder. Ha!

I'll sum it all up by saying the Army is some place. Come on in.

Hope to see you in about two months.

Regards to all.

HUGHIE.

P. S.: Off to town now for a Texas Saturday night. Will look for personalities like "Billy the Kid," "Wild Bill Hickok," etc. "Ki, Yi, Yip, Yippi Yi," or however they saw it here.

HONOR ROLL

In Anti-Aircraft Unit

Pfc. Harold L. Woomer

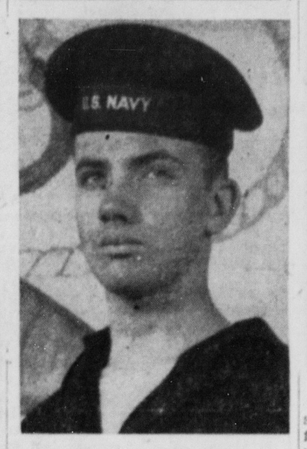
son of Mr. and Mrs. Amos L. Woomer, of Tyrone, R. D. 3, was inducted into the armed forces January 20, 1943. He was first stationed at Camp Tyson, Tenn., and then moved to Camp Edwards, Mass. From there he was transferred to an Army Air Base in New York where he is now stationed. He is attached to an Anti-Aircraft Unit. Private Woomer attended the public schools of Blair county and prior to his induction assisted his father on the latter's farm.

In Medical Corps

Pvt. John Balash

son of Andy Balash, of Clarence, was inducted into Army service November 4, 1943, and is now located in San Francisco, Cal., where he is attached to the Medical Corps. Before entering the service Pvt. Balash was manager of the Clover Farm store at Clarence, and during his absence his wife, the former Helen Griffin of Winburne, is conducting the business.

With U. S. Navy



Robert J. Hale, S 2/c

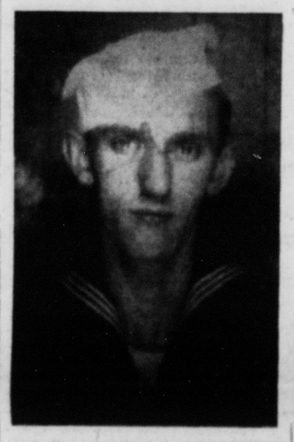
son of Mr. and Mrs. William Hale, of Julian, is now serving at the Naval Receiving Barracks, at Shumaker, California. Seaman Hale joined the Navy in January and spent a leave at home after completing boot training at Great Lakes, Ill. He is now stationed at Shumaker, Cal., preparatory to embarking on sea duty.

Serving in England

Pvt. Ray E. Burd

son of Mrs. Edith Burd, of Bellefonte, R. D. 3, was inducted into service November 1, 1942. First sent to New Cumberland he was assigned to Keesler Field, Miss. He was transferred from there to Jefferson Barracks, Mo., then to Camp Kilmer, N. J., and from there was sent to England in time to celebrate his 21st birthday on June 9. Mrs. Edith Burd has another son, Clair E. Burd, in service stationed at Fort Knox, Ky., but who has been in the hospital for the past month suffering with rheumatic fever. Mrs. Burd's third and youngest son, Leonard M. Burd, was among the group who took physical examinations at Altoona last Friday, and may soon be called into service. The three brothers were all employed at the Piper Aircraft Corp. in Lock Haven. Pvt. Ray E. Burd attended the Central City school at Milesburg.

THREE LOSE BROTHERS SERVING IN ARMED FORCES



Three sons of Mr. and Mrs. Clair Lose, of Valley View, are serving in the U. S. armed forces, two of them being in the Army and one in the Navy.

Sgt. Max Lose, 22, former employe of the Brockerhoff Hotel, left Bellefonte when the local National Guard unit was called into service, and was with that group at Camp Shelby, Miss., and later at Camp Sutton, N. C. In May 1943 he was sent to England where he has been serving with the field artillery. Sgt. Lose attended the Benner township schools.

Pvt. Edmund Lose, 21, entered the service in January, 1942, and received his preliminary training at Camp Hale, Colo., being sent from there to Ft. Bliss, Texas. In June 1943 he was sent to Australia as a member of a light field artillery unit. Subsequently he was assigned to service in New Guinea where he is now located. Pvt. Lose also attended the Benner township schools and was employed by the National Gypsum Company prior to entering the service.

Seaman Second Class Nevin Lose

enlisted in the Navy on January 6, 1944, and received his boot training at Sampson, N. Y. From there he was sent to New York City, where he was assigned to a battleship for a training cruise to Norfolk. Later he was sent to Newport, R. I., where he is now stationed.

Seaman Lose was employed by the National Gypsum Company until the time of his enlistment.

None of the three brothers is married. Their parents have four daughters and the father is employed by the National Gypsum Company.

Seven from Bellefonte Begin Boot Training

Seven Bellefonte men are receiving their initial naval indoctrination at the U. S. Naval Training Station, Great Lakes, Ill.

Their "boot" training consists of instruction in seamanship, military drill and general naval procedure. During this period a series of aptitude tests will be taken by the recruits to determine whether they will be assigned to a Naval Service School or to immediate active duty at sea.

Their recruit training completed, these men will spend a period of leave at home. They are: John Parnay, 36, husband of Mrs. Martha M. Parnay, 148 N. Thomas street; William C. Curtin, 32, husband of Mrs. Louise H. Curtin, 122 W. Linn street; Owen G. Coakley, 29, husband of Mrs. Bernice S. Coakley, R. D. 1; Jack E. Witmer, 25, husband of Mrs. Jean I. Witmer, R. D. 2; Paul M. Shawley, 29, husband of Mrs. Lillian L. Shawley, Allegheny street; William T. Martin, 36, husband of Mrs. Evelyn E. Martin, 218 S. Allegheny street; Anthony S. DeLallo, 27, husband of Mrs. Helen M. DeLallo, R. D. 2, and Harold A. Gordon, 34, husband of Mrs. Kathryn E. Gordon, Howard street.

SGTS. ROY MILLER AND PHIL WOOD STILL TOGETHER

Sgt. Roy Miller and Sgt. Phil Wood, of Philipsburg, who left the States early in January this year and landed in New Caledonia, have now been moved to their regular post in the South Pacific. Sgt. Wood before entering the service in August 1943, was employed by the Miller Cleaning establishment on East Presqueisle street, and Sgt. Miller is a partner with his uncle, C. O. Miller, of the Miller Restaurant, Front street. He was inducted into the service July 1943. Both men write they are enjoying good health, but after traveling half way around the world they find no place looks as good to them as Philipsburg.

They are very glad to be with many Pennsylvania boys, whom they met while at Camp Ellis, Ill. Some are well known and have many friends in this vicinity, namely: Cpl. Roy Williams, Wallaceton; Pvt. Gene Echard, Houtzdale; Sgt. Harry Hayner, Pittsburgh; Sgt. George Lose and Cpl. John Flinchbar, Lebanon, and Sgt. Edward Love, Philadelphia. These men were all stationed together at Camp Ellis, Ill., in the Quartermaster Corps, and have been fortunate in keeping together. Both Wood and Miller state they are with a fine bunch of officers and boys from all parts of the good old U. S. A.

Awarded Good Conduct Medal

T/4 Guy H. Poorman, who is stationed at the Oliver General Hospital in Augusta, Georgia, was awarded the Good Conduct Medal April 12th at appropriate ceremonies held in the Red Cross auditorium on the Oliver General Post. The medal, which is awarded "for exemplary behavior, efficiency, and fidelity" was presented by Major James L. Rogers, Adjutant. Sgt. Poorman, whose parents reside at 301 East Howard street, Bellefonte, is an X-ray technician at the Oliver General Hospital.

Training at Great Lakes

Robert Hayes Gunsallus, 18, son of Mrs. Tillie Mae Gunsallus, Blanchard, is receiving his initial naval indoctrination at the U. S. Naval Training Station, Great Lakes, Ill. His boot training consists of instruction in seamanship, military drill, and general naval procedure.

9 Philipsburgers at Great Lakes Station

Nine Philipsburg men are receiving their initial naval indoctrination at the U. S. Naval Training Station, Great Lakes, Ill. They are:

Alfred G. MacDonald, 23, husband of Mrs. Rosalie McDonald, 1419 S. 4th street; Roy E. Myers, 25, husband of Mrs. Anna M. Myers, 320½ Laurel street; David S. Ferguson, 35, husband of Mrs. Ellen E. Ferguson, 1410 Presqueisle street; Herman Ziff, son of Mr. and Mrs. Simon Ziff, 524 Spruce street; Edmund J. Parks, 26, husband of Mrs. Mae L. Parks, Pleasant Hall; Norman J. Bell, 25, husband of Mrs. Mary Bell, R. D. 1; William H. Thompson, 33, husband of Mrs. Elsie L. Thompson, 414 S. 2nd street; John I. Sutton, 29, husband of Mrs. Grace E. Sutton, 423 S. Centre street; and Martin J. Koiosky, 30, husband of Mrs. Mary L. Kolosky.

Receives Promotion

Edward N. Kern, of Thomas street, Bellefonte, has been promoted from private first class to technician fifth grade in Camp Lee's Army Service Forces Training Center. Corporal Kern is assistant laundry foreman of the 198th Laundry Platoon and is assigned to the 6th Army Service Forces Training Regiment. He was formerly employed by the Undine Fire Company in Bellefonte. Cpl. Kern, son of Mrs. Elizabeth Kern, 19 Francis Place, Caldwell, N. J., was inducted into the Army December 19, 1943, at New Cumberland, and arrived at Camp Lee on Dec. 29.

Morrisdale Soldier Killed

Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Pelton, who moved to Clearfield from Morrisdale about a month ago, received a telegram from the War Department on Sunday, April 16, stating that their son, Pvt. Robert Pelton, was killed in action March 22 at the Anzio beachhead in Italy. He was born January 14, 1924, at Morrisdale R. D. Before entering the service he worked with his father at cutting timber.

Advanced in Rank

Word was received last week that Donald C. Crock, son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Crock, of Howard, R. D. 2, had been promoted to private first class.

BURSTS AND DUDS

A scream I'll never forget.
On my right a tank was hit,
A flash and then a fire;
The stench of burning flesh
Still rises from the pyre.
What did you do today, my friend,
To help us with the task?
Did you work harder and longer for less,
Or is that too much to ask?
What right have I to ask you this,
You probably will say;
Maybe now you'll understand,
You see . . . I died today.

* * *

Nearness of the Allied invasion of Europe is reflected in the announcement that Episcopal churches thruout the country will be thrown open for prayer for people of all faiths the moment the troops start swarming ashore. The head of the Episcopal church, Presiding Bishop Henry St. George Tucker, made the suggestion in a telegram to all bishops of the church.

* * *

Corp. Donald Waldron, of Camp Howze, Texas, talks in his sleep. "Wish I'd get a letter from a girl," he muttered one night. A few days later he got 18 letters from 18 girls. An eavesdropping buddy arranged it all through a girl friend and her 17 schoolmates, Waldron wrote his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Waldron.

* * *

Mr. and Mrs. S. A. Boatman, of Nowata, Ohio, have four sons and a son-in-law in the armed services. One day recently the postman brought five letters to the Boatmans. Yes—they were from each of the five servicemen. The letters had been mailed from points scattered from England to "somewhere in the South Seas."

* * *

Sampson, N. Y., naval training station observed Adolph Hitler's 55th birthday by transferring these bluejackets to advanced training centers: William Hitler, English-born nephew of the Nazi chief; Charles W. Fuhrer and W. W. Messerschmidt.

* * *

Officials of the Bronx OPA ration board had Moe Dam Fun in their office Friday. Moe Dam Fun, a Chinese, applied for a duplicate of a ration book he lost recently.

One of these days, we suspect, the people of the nation will begin to pay more attention to the physical well-being of their children.

USED IT FOR YEARS

The famous World's Tonic has been used for years. A satisfied user of World's Tonic says: "We buy World's Tonic now just as regularly as we buy groceries. The family learned long ago that you could get good results with just a small dose after using it a while." Making new friends, holding old friends, World's Tonic has stood the test of competition through many years. No extra pills or tablets are needed to get results. World's Tonic (Trade Name) not sold as a General Tonic but as a splendid laxative and stomachic. Caution: Use only as directed. Get World's Tonic at all first-class Drug Stores. (J 54).

"We Travel the Country Army Style"

Each day Marjory would make the long trek to camp by a bus resembling in no small manner a cattle car. Marjory would extricate herself from the thundering herd and wend her way to building T33 that housed the Radio School and wait until I was released, then we would go to supper, after which I would rush back to her. There was little time for pleasure but we grasped each moment firmly and utilized it to the fullest. The fellows were as happy to see her waiting each day as I and many threatened playfully to beat me to her for my evening's kiss. She kept the morale of the whole school up by that brief visit each day. (The fellows like to get glimpses of civilians, especially good looking girls). Soon the happy days came to a close and school was over.

Some time before school finished I had applied to Capt. Bunch for a three-day pass and he had said to remind him on my graduation and he would see that I got it. However between that time and graduation we were moved from school Battery to the Cadre Pool and here a tyrant First Sgt. ruled us as feudal slaves of old and informed us we would not come and tell him that Capt. Bunch had given us a pass or he would throw us on KP for the duration and six months. An idle threat no doubt, but one to keep in mind when intending to do anything rash, so I promptly proceeded to neglect mentioning to Capt. Bunch about his kind offer. Then came graduation day with diplomas and the usual words of encouragement from the instructors. After the speeches Capt. Bunch came to me and said, "Didn't you ask me for a three-day pass?" "Well, sir," I quavered trying desperately to figure a way out, "Yes sir, I did but I don't think that I want it any more, sir." "And why not?" he inquired a little put out. I was forced to tell him—"Sir (swallow) Sir, the 1st Sgt. in the Cadre Pool has threatened us with battery punishment of slow torture on KP if anyone dares to mention that you gave us a pass, sir, that is all!" I had said this all in one breath and stood gasping with my mouth hanging open awaiting the outcome. The Captain pulled himself up to his full 6'2" and crowed challengingly: "Oh, he did, eh!" "Well you come to my office right away and we'll see about this!" I thought I was between a battle of rank and of course would get the results of the feud from both sides, being the ranker of the three. I went like a martyr about to die for all that is good and stood at attention while Capt. B. told his lacky to make out a three-day pass for me. I shivered then spoke, "Sir, you just want me to show this to the 1st Sgt. and suppose he throws me on KP?" He replied, "Then come to me," he said, "and I'll see you get your pass."

"Yes, sir," I replied, then he said, "Just a minute, I'll call Sgt." I waited breathlessly while the Sgt. came to the phone at the other end. Capt. B. "Hello Sgt. X"—all honey and sugar. Apparently the answer was yes. More honey and sugar. "Well, Sgt., this is Capt. B. and I have a man here who has done fine work with a splendid attitude and as a reward I'm giving him a three-day pass. How I would like to, etc., etc." The room reeled. He was giving him politeness, thank goodness, and apparently it was working because he hung up and said. "Allright, you will get your pass and no trouble."

I left and went back to face the lion in his den. I went into the orderly room and announced my name and purpose for being there. Sgt. X fairly swept me off my feet as he came up and bellowed, "Well Kirkpatrick, I hear good reports from you—fine! fine! Oh, my boy, if I only had more like you. Capt. B. says you are a good man. Fine! fine! If I only had a battery of men like you." Here he was practically in tears at the happy thought and I was nearly embarrassed to the same extent because he was a hated man and all this fuss over me was not being taken in a kindly spirit by the rest of my fellow soldiers. He continued, "But you don't begin to realize the trials I have. Oh, I'm sure proud of you." He seemed to have stopped for breath, so I felt this was a good opening since he liked me so much to try for more. "Sgt., you couldn't give me a weekend pass to go with that, could you?" "Oh, no, my boy, regulations you know. I couldn't do that." Then he looked cautiously about to see that no one was looking or listening, and said, "Kirkpatrick, I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll give you a weekend pass but you needn't come back Sunday night and make all that big ride from Savannah and all, but just call me up and let me know you're allright and I'll forget you're gone."

I could hardly believe my ears. Five whole days with Marjory! Of course I had to spend two in Savannah but we would be together at least and five whole days.

My three-day pass was to St. Augustine, the oldest city in the South, and it was 7 o'clock in the morning that the happiest couple in the world left Savannah on the Champion for a three-day second honeymoon.

There is little to say about the trip that would interest our readers since this would change from a military perusal into a love epic were I to relate in full the two glorious days spent in the home of the oldest school, the oldest Fort (Fort Marion), the oldest church and the Fountain of Youth. We stayed in a little hotel that smacked of an Italian mansion straight from the city of Florence, and was our little Medicci palace for two nights at six romantic dollars a night.

I would gladly pay sixty to get it all back again today. It was the first good food either one of us had for months and the weather was superb. We did every oldest thing in town and got taken in by the oldest gyp in the form of a colored carriage driver who gave us forty minutes for $1.50 instead of the required hour in his rattly carriage, but we were so happy we didn't argue. The days flew and so did our feet from one historic place to another, and for three days we forgot the war and army except that every big hotel in town housed the Coast Guard, there was nothing to remind us of the army except the fort, but there the blue sky was absolutely free except for fighters and bombers constantly maneuvering. Well, anyway, we had a good time and found the first town in the South that gave a discount to the man in uniform at the movies. And so we went back to Stewart and Savannah and settled down once again to a life of training and waiting.

I returned to the Cadre Pool only to be shipped out to a new outfit, the 580th. It was a half-track battalion. It was now late October as I started in the new group. Day after day we waited for the rookies to arrive and day after day nothing came but old army men. We had 1st Sgts., Master Sgts., and Staffs galore. Myself and about eight other fellows constituted the privates of the group and everything else was stripes. There were more stripes in my new battalion than there are in a prison zoot-suit. My being a Pvt. made it just ducky. One day I would be latrine orderly and the next day KP, latrine orderly, KP, latrine orderly, and KP, and occasionally I would be lucky enough to draw battalion runner. This was a gold brick job that I was about ready to apply for though it meant being a Pvt. for the rest of the war, just so I could stay out of the latrine long enough to catch a breath of fresh air.

Then one night a beautiful thing happened. I went to the post movie and saw a stirring picture on Officers' Candidate School, and went back to my barracks fired with the ambition to be an officer. I would see my BC in the morning about applying. I dreamed all night of shiny gold bars floating in a field of khaki sky and of myself as a "shave tail." How proud Marjory would be. Next morning the bugle blew and there was a song in my heart. I loved the army. I loved everything, even the 1st Sgt. This man came up to me at this moment and said, "Kirkpatrick, I'm sorry but the man I had for latrine orderly today is sick, would you mind helping me out. I hate to do this. I know you just had it but there isn't anybody else—." I held up my hand to stay him and whispered my reply, "O. K. Sarg., I'll do it," and drug myself toward my old hangout, the latrine. As I scrubbed the first bowl from the left I paused and thought. Heck, I might as well try for battalion runner as O. C. S. I've as much chance with one as the other. So I scrubed so sorrowfully away feeling like the yard bird who once said, "Well, fellows, I applied for O. C. S., but they took one look at my service record and threw me in the guard house."

I took KP and latrine orderly and fifteen-mile hikes in my stride and smilingly, since I still saw Marjory every day and every weekend. Then one day it happened. Saturday inspection, the terror of every soldier, and we all struggled to get everything clean and ready but the fates were against me. It rained for two days straight and my laundry would not dry and I had no clean undershirt. I laid out everything else, however, all spick and span and hoped for the best, but when inspection was over and I went for a weekend pass I found the 1st Sgt. smiling gleefully. "Kirkpatrick, you did not have an undershirt displayed. You are gigged and will do 72 hours extra duty." At first I was staggered but then I said, "Sarg., I'm going to school (Small Arms School for two weeks). I can't do it." He was hurt and unstrung to be left so powerless in what had apparently been a sure thing, but I was victor only for a short time because almost immediately the B. C. came to his rescue and said, "Allright, if you are going to school we can't give you 72 hours extra duty, but we will make it one week's restriction to the Battery area. Is that satisfactory?" I reeled under the blow! For one week I would be unable to see Marjory. I screamed, "One week's restriction for no undershirt, sir?" "That's right!" he replied, "Unless you would rather have a Court Martial?"

I couldn't believe my ears. I had been in tough outfits for six months and never gigged, and now for no undershirt I was being offered a court martial. "I'll take the week's restriction, sir," I mumbled and saluted and stalked out of the office. I was furious and cursed everything about the outfit and the army. I took full advantage of an American soldier's privilege and griped to all the fellows. Marjory asked to see why I hadn't come out and I told her. She said she was mad and I said, "What do you think I am?" I told her to come out on Sunday and I would see her some way. I was not to be allowed in the day room, even, so apparently we would visit as if I were a prisoner standing in the prison yard. The next day was Sunday. I arose about 9 a. m. and dressed in full dress uniform for woe unto he who tries to rest on Sunday in the battery area in his fatigues. I went to church and felt some the better, then returned to my barracks (you can never be kept from attending church services).

The 1st Lt. came in who was in charge, and was acting B. C. for the weekend. He asked for three volunteers. Everyone lay still looking at the ceiling and avoiding his eye. I saw an opportunity to bargain and started to change into fatigues. The Lt. said "No, not you. You're all dressed up; I want these other boys."

(To be continued)

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