

Dear Chad:

This is an overdue Thank you letter!

1. Thank you for book God and Heather gave me for Christmas, Tom Brokaw's "The Greatest Generation Speaks". It is good, I could not read it like I do novels. I would get choked with emotion after a chapter or so and have to put it away. It brought back memories of things worse than described in the book.

2. Thank you for the "Collins Corner" and picture of you and Heather in front of your house. It gets high marks on content and why it is put together. you have had a busy and productive life in 10 years since you graduated from High School, a tour of duty in the Air Force, a good money graduation from College, advancement in employment, enrolled in Law School, purchase of your first home.

3. Thank you for the letter about your entry into the Air Force! I'll be interested in your follow up.

I'm overdue in my account of experience in WWII. Picking up 31 Oct. 1942 when I was honorably discharged from U.S. Marine Corps Reserve. I returned to Whitesburg by train and spent almost a month visiting family and Tibby. My brother, Charles Herbert Adams came home on leave from Air Force (Picture enclosed.)

I volunteered and was inducted into U.S. Army 27 Nov 1942 at Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana. The thing I remember about that is the large no. of us that got sick from Thanksgiving Turkey. Several had to go to hospital! I toughed it out but it showed on my 1st Test. I did not care. The Marines had cured my ambition to be an officer.

I was assigned to 30th Infantry and sent by train to Camp Blodgett, Florida. The 30th was one of the first four National Guard Divisions to be called into Federal service in 1940. It had just been reorganized from an old-style square Division into a triangular unit composed of 117th, 119th, 120th Infantry Regiments. I was assigned to 2 Co. 120th

at that time it was only 40% of normal strength. It had been shipping men out as soon as basic training was over. The 30th had just received a new Commanding General Isabel Hobbs who had been a West Point football player and close mate of General Eisenhower & General Bradley. He got them to promise him he could train a group of men and take them into battle as a unit. He was brought up to strength by men shipped to us from all over the U.S.

Basic training was 13 weeks employing individual training followed by 13 weeks of small unit training. Some of the differences I noticed between Marines & army were in working with machine guns. The

the Marines spent more time on the firing Range actually firing at targets, the army spent more time in the field moving guns to a firing position and setting them up under simulated combat conditions.

Before basic training ended three of the new men were selected for promotion. I was made a Corporal and assigned a section of two light machine guns and crews.

at the end of basic training we were given 10 day furloughs. I used mine to get married. Tibby and I were married in the Whitesburg Presbyterian Church April 5<sup>th</sup> 1943. Tibby's mother wanted us to wait until the war was over. I was glad Tibby was willing to go ahead. My first cousin Archie Fields was a Navy officer who was home on leave after his ship was sunk off Guadalcanal by Jap Bombers. He served as my best man, transferred into Naval Air Corps and retired as a full Commander.

Next came Intra Division maneuvers. We set up a tent encampment near Camp Forrest, Tenn. My wife got a place to stay in Nashville and a job working in a store. Most of the time I got home on weekends.

While there I was promoted to Sgt. and moved to a rifle squad. The training was very tough but very realistic. The weather was bad and in Nov. we moved to Camp Atterbury, Ind. for preparation for overseas movement. I was

promoted to Staff Sgt, my wife moved to Columbus, Indiana and got a job working in a Drug Store. That was as far as she could go with me.

Feb, 1944 we took a train for the trip to Camp Mylon Starbuck, cross. one of the staging areas for the Boston part of infiltration.

12 Feb 44 we loaded on the "Argentin" a troop transport and left in a blinding snow storm. I was assigned to Guard Detail and had to become familiar with guard posts over the entire ship. This worked to my advantage. I got to stay with the marines and eat with them, hot coffee any time I wanted it. I was never sea sick.

we were part of a large convoy with ships spread out over the ocean as far as the eye could see, shepherded by battle ships and cruisers.

I think I will use this as a stopping point for this time with a comment that if it had been a year earlier we would not have had a good chance because German Submarines were in charge of the Atlantic ocean. The allies lost 17 ships in the first 20 days of March 1943 and 2 out of 3 ships were sunk in Convoy. May 1943 was when the tables turned and we sunk 43 under the first 21 days of May.

Until next time — John  
Mara sends her love,