

10-27-1918

1918-10-27, Elmo to Emeline

Elmo S. Culbert

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Keywords

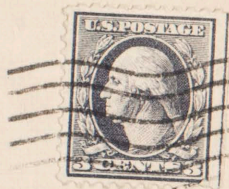
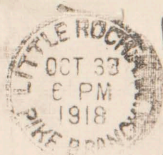
U.S.A., U.S. Postal Service, Stamp, Washington, George, President Washington, Salt Lake City, Soldiers, Homesickness, Health and Sickness, Loneliness, Military Equipment, Marching and Drill, Morale, Training, Prayer, Romance, Art, Hot Weather, Cold Weather, Morse Code, Promotion (Corporal), Funds, Wife, Signaling, Self-Determination, Rules and Regulations, Bayonet, Quartermasters, Taps, post-war hopes, Inspection, Women at Home

Identifier

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Mrs. Elmo J. Culbert,
Salt Lake City,
Utah.

C/o ~~Shields~~ Shields Staty. Co.

From ~~John~~
Elmo J. Culbert, Pot.,
7th Co., 4th Bn., I.C.O.T.S.
Camp Pike, Ark.

Sunday Afternoon.

My own little sweetheart: -

Baby, I haven't heard a word from you as yet - I know there is mail here somewhere for me, but up to now - not a letter. And it does make me feel so blue, too - every time mail is called, I stand around and wait. And wait - but I always go away dissatisfied. I have been down to the main Post Office here and enquired, but they have nothing either. But I absolutely know you have written me, dear, and it will soon be showing up.

Sweetheart, my work is hard, and oh, so much studying. I arrived here a week late, and have had to make up this

lost time. Everything we have
has to be learned verbatim, ^{and}
it certainly has had me going
for instance, I have been
issued 5 different volumes,
relating to drill, guard ^{and}
sentinel's general manual,
court martial manual, field
regulations ^{and} the nomenclature
of a rifle. We have different
passages from these to learn
every day, are called on to
give oral recitations from them
at our conferences, and Saturday
mornings we have a written
review of the whole week's work.
I think I did pretty good
yesterday, as I have studied
hard - Will know tomorrow
just what my mark is.

If we flunk we get so many
"skins" and a certain amount
of these skins means "Busted".
This means go back home. And
another thing - Every day at
retreat we have an inspection
of face (shave) and shoes - also
gun. Have to go to school - will
finish later. —

Have just had two hours study
period, with a 15 minute recess, and
now we are off until taps. $\frac{1}{2}$ hour

Our camp is under quarantine,
dear, but as far as I'm concerned,
it can't make any difference, for
I can't hardly find time to write.
The letters I have written to you, dear,
are absolutely the only moments I
have taken off. We are supposed to be
off all Saturday afternoons and after
mess Saturdays until ten. Well,

I had to go down to the Q. M. Dept.
yesterday ^{and} try ^{and} get the rest of
my clothes - undersclothes, Sox ^{and}
overcoat, I don't think I mentioned
it yet, but I've needed an overcoat
today ^{and} yesterday. When I arrived
here it was extremely warm, but
it has rained every day since
^{and} last night stormed hard. And
today it has been bitterly cold.
I waited down at the Q. M.'s for about
3 hours ^{and} then was put off until
Monday - all equipment on hand
my size gone. Then last night
we got word that Monday we
would start on Bayonet Exercises,
and - I'm a corporal here - I'll
have to instruct my squad in it.
Well, I've never had it, so it
meant study ^{and} study hard. All
last evening I dug into it ^{and}

have been at it all this P.M.

We got up at 6:45 this A.M., went to mess at seven, and after mess I worked on my gun until 10 o'clock. Then I dug into my laundry and washed until twelve. Mess again - You ought to see me washing, Sweetheart. We haven't a wash board, but use a drain board and a scrub brush. I washed all my handkerchiefs, socks, a pair of pants, suit of underwear, a shirt and towels. And then hung them out in the wind. Had to bring them in by the stove this P.M. when it started to rain again.

After mess, I took a shower bath, shaved, cleaned my shoes and fixed up my bag. I have to buy a trunk this week - part of my

new equipment - and when I
get that, it is also inspected
regularly & has to be kept just
so. We get these trunks at Govt.
cost from the Q.M. - \$6.85 - but
I've still got about \$8.00^(just counted it) that I've
been nursing, so I'm all right.

Baby, its about time for
taps, so I'll cut it off until
tomorrow.

Monday Night

They cut the lights off on me,
last night, sweetheart, so I couldn't
finish up. I have 1/2 hour now until
taps, and I'll just consecrate every
atom of thought to you, dear little wife.

Another day of disappointment, sweet,
for my mail hasn't showed up yet.
And it is hard, too, to see all the
fellows get theirs, and I go without.
Oh, well, I won't harp on that any
more - Today has been another

continual grind, baby, They
changed our schedule and we got
up at 5:15 this A.M. and lights will
go out from now on at 9:30 P.M.
Just moved our day up 1/2 hour.
I've tried twice to get to this
letter, but haven't had a minute.
Honest, sweetheart, if I get one
half of what they are giving me
here, I'll be a wonder. They started
us today on Wig-Wag signaling,
using the Continental Code (same
as Radio and wireless) and we have
to be proficient in this. Receive
and take all messages and know all
the private U.S. Code - this in
addition to our regular work.

Baby, my letters are probably
full of just my doings, as I
have wanted to chronicle my
every action and experience. They
appear hard, I know, but I'm in

earnest about this ^{and} shall
make good if it is the last act
of my life. And this is the
beginning of a new era, dear
sweet girl. I know I get
enthusiastic ^{and} then blow up
on lots of things, but I'm in
earnest now 'as' I never have
been, and I have only one
purpose in view - just to make
good for you, my own dear girl.

How I do hope that you
are well, dear. So much has
happened to make you unhappy,
that it is a marvel how you
hold up. But try ^{and} be brave,
dear sweet girl, and some day
your boy will come back to
you a new man, helping

you in the things he has
made a horrible mess of in
the past. And somehow - I
don't know how - but by some means,
I know you will pull out all right
in your present problems.

Now good night, dear sweet
girl of my dreams. I love you,
baby girl, with every bit of my
strength and shall work with your
image always as an inspiration.
Again, good night, dear.
Your own
Elmo.

Remember the address is

7th Co., 4th Bn.,

I. C. O. T. S.

Camp Pike,
Ark.

Tuesday Night

Oct. I don't know,

29th, just heard.

Sweetheart: -

Better news tonight, dear girl. Two letters came today - your first two, & they made me both happy & sad. Underneath your every word of love was an inddible sigh & cry for the things you have missed in life, the sweeter things due you a thousand times, & the retribution of love that you have missed. But, God helping me to return, they shall some day be yours if you can still care for me ~~when~~ after this engagement is through with. Let us hope & pray so.

Dear, your tablet pack has come in so handy. The only time I have to write is a few minutes in the evening & I always do it sitting on my bench with this setting in my lap. Protruding from

one of the pockets is the painted picture you gave me of my little girl. She is always with me, too, if not in person, in spirit.

Dear, it's hard to write at this time ~~and~~ concentrate. Fellows are all around me and it's "What time is breakfast?" "Culbert, give me an envelope," "What's the date" ~~and~~ a thousand other questions. Working as we do means that practically every one spends every spare moment right here in the barracks, either writing, cleaning their guns, or a dozen other little things that we have to do.

A word about conditions here, dear girl. The sanitary conditions are as perfect as it's possible to have, our latrines being away from the barracks in separate buildings, ~~and~~ the showers in the same building. Our quarters here are kept immaculate, we having

to police them continuously, and
in our absence "Charge of Quarters"
has to sweep up ^{and} pick everything up.
Regarding mess, its real good, and
will still improve when we are
definitely settled - grub good ^{and}
plenty of it. We don't have to
act as R.P.'s as there is a school
on that here, and they work for
res.

They're forming an impromptu
Formal Guard Mount & something we have
tomorrow - around me, ^{and} its sure hard
to write. And right behind me two
fellows are dot-dot-dash-dashing to
each other, trying to learn the wireless
code. Oh - its sure some place about
this time of evening, everything in an
uproar. But in about 5 minutes
our study hour starts - for 2 hours - ^{and}
then you can hear a pin drop. Our
officers are here at that time ^{and}

they keep strict order - Strict, did I remark? I'll say it is, We sure toe the mark. At the end of three monthss of this kind of discipline I'll sure be a bear on the small things pretaining to soldiering. There is an uproar here right now. In this drill practice that is going on, one officer reports to another, "Sir, the guard is all formed." Well, this bird has just pulled this, "Sir, the guard is all fucked up." And it sure is.

Our officers are a mighty fine bunch of men - on the square and always trying to help us. Their idea is ~~not~~ to bust us, but to make officers' out of every man they can.

Class now, dear. More later.

Well, here I go, sweet, ^{and} about 20
minutes until lights out.

I'm sure tired, baby girl, but
it's a healthy tired, and I don't care
about that. It's strange how we
gradually acquire the habit of study
^{and} absorbing knowledge. The speed
seemed excessive when I first
arrived, but I've gradually acquired
the pace, until I think, ^{and} ^{and}
study all in the same cadence.

Enough for tonight, little
girl pal of mine. Your boy is loving
you every minute ^{and} prays for
your happiness ^{and} good health.

Kiss me goodnight now, baby,
^{and} kiss our ring, too.

Your own
Elmo.

Hope Mrs. Short is better. Don't
take any unnecessary chances, though,
honey. Give my love to Auntie ^{and}
the children ^{and} all. Again your Boy.

[[Culbert Correspondence #7]]

[[Page 1-Envelope-Front]]

[[image – gray U.S. postage 3 cents stamp of
President Washington facing left]]

[[image – black stamp LITTLE ROCK PIKE
BRANCH; center: OCT 30 8pm 1918]]

Mrs. Elmo S. Culbert,
Salt Lake City,
Utah.

C/O ~~[[/strikethrough]]~~ Shields Staty. Co.

[[Page 2-Envelope-Back]]

From Elmo S. Culbert, Pvt.,
7th Co., 4th Bn., I.C.O.T.S.
Camp Pike, Ark.

[[Page 3- Letter 1]]

Sunday Afternoon

My own little sweetheart: --

Baby, I haven't heard a
word from you as yet – I know
there is mail here somewhere
for me, but up to now – not a letter.
And it does make me feel so blue,
too – every time mail is called,
I stand around and wait and wait –
but I always go away dissatisfied.
I have been down to the main
Post Office here and enquired, but
they have nothing either. But
I absolutely know you have written
me, dear, and it will soon be
showing up.

Sweetheart, my work is hard,
and oh, so much studying. I
arrived here a week late, and
have had to make up this

[[Page 4- Letter 1]]

lost time. Everything we have has to be learned verbatim, and it certainly has had me going. For instance, I have been issued 5 different volumes, relating to drill, guard and sentinel's general manual, court martial manual, field regulations and the nomenclature of a rifle. We have different passages from these to learn every day, are called on to give oral recitations from them at our conferences, and Saturday morning's we have a written review of the whole weeks work. I think I did pretty good yesterday, as I have studied hard – will know tomorrow just what my mark is.

[[Page 5- Letter 1]]

If we flunk we get so many
“skins” and a certain amount
of these skins means “Busted”.
This means go back home. And
another thing – Every day at
retreat we have an inspection
of face (shave) and shoes – also
gun. Have to go to school – will
finish later. ---

[[short dividing line]]

Have just had two hours study
Period, with a 15 minute recess and
Now we are off until taps. ½ hour

Our camp is under quarantine,
dear, but as for as I’m concerned,
It can’t make any difference, for
I can’t hardly find time to write.
The letters I have written to you, dear,
are absolutely the only moments I
have taken off. We are supposed to be
off all Saturday afternoons and after
mess Saturdays until ten. Well,

[[Page 6- Letter 1]]

I had to go down to the Q.M. Dept. yesterday and try and get the rest of my clothes – underclothes, sox and overcoat. I don't think I mentioned it yet, but I've needed an overcoat today and yesterday. When I arrived here it was extremely warm, but it has rained every day since and last night stormed hard. And today it has been bitterly cold. I waited down at the Q.M.'s for about 3 hours and then was put off until Monday – all equipment on hand my size gone. Then last night we got word that Monday we would start on Bayonet Exercises, and – I'm a corporal here – I'll have to instruct my squad in it. Well, I've never had it, so it meant study and study hard. All last evening I dug into it and

[[Page 7- Letter 1]]

have been at it all this P.M.

We got up at 6:45 this AM, went to mess at seven, and after mess I worked on my gun until twelve. Mess again – you ought to see me washing, sweetheart. We haven't a wash board, but use a drain board and a scrub brush. I washed all my handkerchiefs, sox, a pair of pants, suit of underwear, a shirt and towels. And then hung them out in the wind. Had to bring them in by the stove this P.M. when it started to rain again.

After mess, I took a shower bath, shaved, cleaned my shoes, and fixed up my bag. I have to buy a trunk this week – part of my

[[Page 8- Letter 1]]

new equipment – and when I
get that, it is also inspected
regularly and has to be kept just
so. We get these trunks at Gov't
cost from the Q. M. -- \$6.85 – but
I've still got about \$8.00 that I've
been nursing, so I'm all right.

Baby, its about time for
taps, so I'll cut it off until
tomorrow.

[[three short horizontal lines]] Monday Night

They cut the lights off on me
last night, sweetheart, so I couldn't
finish up. I have ½ hour now until
taps, and I'll just consecrate every
atom and thought to you, dear little wife.

Another day of dissapointment, sweet,
for my mail hasn't showed up yet.
And it is hard, too, to see all the
fellows get theirs, and I go without.
Oh, well, I won't harp on that any
more – Today has been another

[[Page 9- Letter 1]]

continual grind, baby. They changed our schedule and we got up at 5:15 this A.M. and lights will go out from now on at 9:30P.M. Just moved our day up ½ hour. I've tried twice to get to this letter, but haven't had a minute. Honest, sweetheart, if I get one half of what they are giving me here, I'll be a wonder. They started us today on Wig – Wag signaling, using the Continental Code (same as Radio and wireless) and we have to be proficient in this. Receive and take all messages and know all the private U.S. Code – this in addition to our regular work.

Baby, my letters are probably full of just my doings, as I have wanted to chronicle my every action and experience. They appear hard, I know, but I'm in

[[Page 10- Letter 1]]

earnest about this and shall
make good if it is the last act
of my life. And this is the
beginning of a new era, dear
sweet girl. I know I get
enthusiastic and then blow up
on lots of things, but I'm in
earnest now as I never have
been, and I have only one
purpose in view – just to make
good for you, my own dear girl.

How I do hope that you
are well, dear. As much has
happened to make you unhappy
that is it a marvel how you
hold up. But try and be brave,
dear sweet girl, and some day
your boy will come back to
you a new man, helping

[[Page 11- Letter 1]]

you in the things he has
made a horrible mess of in
the past. And someway – I
don't know how – but by some means,
I know you will pull out all right
in your present problems.

Now good night, dear sweet
girl of my dreams. I love you,
baby girl, with every bit of my
strength and shall work with your
image always as an inspiration
again, good night, dear.

Your own
Elmo.

Remember the address is
7th Co., 4th Bn.,
I.C.O.T.S.
Camp Pike,
Ark.

[[Page 12- Letter 2]]

Tuesday Night

Oct. I don't know.

29th, I just

heard

Sweetheart: -

Better news tonight, dear girl.

Two letters came today – your first two, and they made me both happy and sad. Underneath your every word of love was an indelible sigh and cry for the things you have missed in life The sweeter Things due you a thousand times, and the retribution of love that you have missed. But, God helping me to return, they shall some day be yours if you can still care for me ~~when~~ after this engagement is through with. Let us hope and pray so.

Dear, your tablet pack has come in so handy. The only time I have to write is a few minutes in the evening and I always do it sitting on my bunk with this setting in my lap. Protruding from

[[Page 13- Letter 2]]

one of the pockets is the painted picture you gave me of my little girl. She is always with me, too, if not in person, in spirit.

Dear, its hard to write at this time and concentrate. Fellows are all around me and its "What Time is breakfast?" "Culbert, give me an envelope," "What's the date" and a thousand other questions. Working as we do means that practically every one spends every spare moment right here in the barracks, either writing, cleaning their guns, or a dozen other little things that we have to do.

A word about conditions here, dear girl. The sanitary conditions are as perfect as its possible to have, our lutrines being away from the barracks in separate buildings and the showers in the same building. Our quarters here are kept immaculate, we having

[[Page 14- Letter 2]]

to police them continuously, and in our absence “Charge of Quarters” has to sweep and pick everything up. Regarding mess, its real good, and will still improve when we are definitely settled – grub good and plenty of it. We don’t have to act as DK. P.’s as there is a school on that here, and they work for us.

They’re forming an impromptu Formal Guard Mount – something we have tomorrow – around me, and its sure hard to write. And right behind me two fellows are dot. dot. dash. dashing to each other, trying to learn the wireless code. Oh – its sure some place about this time of evening, everything in an uproar. But in about 5 minutes our study hour starts – for 2 hours – and then you can hear a pin drop. Our officers are here at that time and

[[Page 15- Letter 2]]

They keep strict order – Strict, did I remark? I’ll say it is. We sure toe the mark. At the end of three months of this kind of discipline I’ll sure be a bear on the small things pretaining to soldiering. There is an uproar here right now. in this drill practice that is going on, our officer reports to another, “Sir, the guard is all formed.” Well, this bird has just pulled this, “Sir, the guard is all fucked up.” And it sure is.

Our officers are a mighty, fine bunch of men – on the square and always trying to help us. Their idea is not to bust us, but to make officers’ out of every man they can.

Class now, dear. More later.

[[Page 16- Letter 2]]

Well, here I is, tweet, and about 20 minutes until lights out.

I'm sure tired, baby girl, but it's a healthy tired, and I don't care about that. Its strange how we gradually aquire the habit of study and absorbing knowledge. The speed seemed excessive when I first arrived, but I've gradually aquired the pace, until I think, act and study all in the same cadence.

Enough for tonight, little Girl pal of mine. Your boy is loving you every minute and prays for your happiness and good health.

Kiss me goodnight now, baby, and kiss our ring, too.

Your own

Elmo

Hope Mrs. Short is better. Don't take any unnecessary chances, though, honey. Give my love to Auntie and the children and Al. Again your Boy.