
Jack P. Bell Second World War correspondence

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3-15-1943

1943-03-15, Jack to Evabel

Jack P. Bell

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Subject Terms

Jack P. Bell; Evabel Bell; March 15, 1943; World War, 1939 - 1945; World War II; World War Two; United States; War and Civilization – History – 20th Century; United States. Army; United States. Army. 78th Infantry Division; United States. Regimental histories 78th Signal Company; United States. Regimental histories 78th Infantry Division; Elyria (Ohio) – History – 20th Century; Women - History - 20th Century; Nineteen Forties; World War, 1939 – 1945 – Soldiers; World War, 1939 – 1945 – Women; Camp Butner (N.C.) - History - 20th Century; World War, 1939 – 1945 – Equipment and Supplies; World War, 1939 – 1945 – Transportation

Keywords

March, 1943; 1943; United States; Camp Butner, N.C.; Elyria, Ohio; army; soldiers; troops; signal corps; infantry; correspondence; postal service; wife; husband; women at home; women; love; romance; examination; food; uniforms; military kit; clothing; transportation; trains; Virginia; Roanoke, Va.; training; rules and regulations; travel; landscapes; friendship; camaraderie; musical instruments; music; weather; snowy weather; dusty weather; recreation and entertainment; leisure; marching and drill; money; supplies; Japanese; thoughts on the enemy; internment; quarantine; health and sickness; medicine; illness; assignment; military unit; post card; military equipment; birthday; communications; gifts; supplies; military leaders; rank; homesickness

Identifier

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Private J. P. Bell
78th. Signal Co, 78th Div
Camp Butner, N. C.
A. P. O. 78



Free

Mrs. Jack Bell
345 W. River St.
Elyria, Ohio

Camp Perry
Mar. 15, 1943

Dear Fink,

I'll kind of get this started now, and maybe I'll have more to add to it later.

We've had a sort of a half-baked physical exam so far. Short arm and rupture check.

We've just had chow. Not bad. Pork, bread dressing, potatoes, bread and butter, and jello.

I didn't mark any address on this 'cause I don't know just what it is, but I probably won't be here very long anyway. I'm in barracks 13.

We're going to take our test pretty soon. We're just waiting for the order now. They say we'll get our uniforms this afternoon.

First day of Spring
snowing in all
Virginia.

Started - On troop train
South east of Roanoke, Va.

Dearest Fink,

I'll write a few lines now, as
much as this swaying coach will permit.
Too bad I couldn't have stuck around a
few more days, and gotten a week-end pass,
but this is the army. I've seen a lot of
practically the same country we saw to-
gether on our vacation. We left Roanoke
a few minutes ago. Had about a half hour
stopover there. From what I could see out
the train window we didn't miss much
by not seeing their downtown section last
fall. Remember, we just hit the edge of
town?

Three of us are sharing two seats in
this day coach. My buddies are Jim Bauer
from Amherst. A former trumpet player in
a dance band, and Henry Burroughs from

Exeter N.H. Former Oberlin College student,
and drafted through the Oberlin board.
Both seem like swell fellows, and are
good traveling companions, Right now they're
mapping, It's pretty hard to register a
full night's sleep on these coaches, I
don't care myself. You know me when I
travel, I hate to miss anything.

We left Perry at four o'clock yesterday
afternoon. (Sat.) We had supper on
the train last nite, and breakfast this
morning. This army is alright. They
really take care of the men. They have
a stove in a baggage car built with
bricks. For supper we had salmon,
boiled potatoes, string beans, pickle,
cookies and ice cream and coffee.

For breakfast we had bacon, scrambled
eggs, bread, jam, coffee and an orange.
It's quite alright.

I think old Dixie is down' us dirt
today. Here it is first day of spring and
it started to snow just as we left Roanoke.
It's hard telling where we're going. The
only thing that's definite is that it will be
South. I just asked the train man
what our next stop would be. That's
about all you can ask without seeming
too curious. He said it was Lynchburg
Va. We don't know where we're going,
and we don't know what branch of the
service we're in, but in the meantime
I'm enjoying my free trip anyway.

There's a little difference between
traveling through these hills in a car and

it, and if I can't I'll see if I can find a sucker. The first nite we got here we didn't stay at the camp proper. They have a concentration camp about four miles from here. Sometime in the future they'll move all the Japs they have at Fort Bragg over there. That's where we stayed Sunday nite. It's known here as Messy Center. Named right too. It's a regular mud hole.

We'll be quarantined here for 21 days. That means that we're not even allowed to go to the PX unless we can get a non com to accompany us.

I feel sort of fortunate getting into the Signal Corp. When they started assigning us to companies yesterday there must have been about 300 men. Most of them went into regular infantry companies. Four of us got signal corp.

I guess after we get started in classes we'll have more time to write. Now usually part of our evening is occupied. Tonite we'll have to

6.

mark all our clothing.

You'll probably notice that your post card was written on and erased. Then written again. I wrote the card at Messy Center, but there was no place to mail it so when I got here I thought I might as well put the address on. I didn't know what my address would be when I was out there.

We have more equipment to take care of now. Belts, suspenders, a pup tent with poles and pegs, and mosquito netting.

Tomorrow is your birthday, honey, I sure wish we could celebrate it together. With the setup we have now I won't even be able to call you, but I'll be thinking of you as I always do. When I get a chance to get out I'll get a little gift for you.

I slept better last nite than I have any nite since I've been in the army.

-7-

Here we get 2 blankets and a comforter. At Camp Perry and Messy center we only had 2 blankets. That extra cover makes a lot of difference in sleeping comfort.

Darling, will you please send me one of our big bath towels? The army only gives us one, and that's not quite enough.

It's 6:05 evening now. I just have to write a line here and there when I get a chance. This evening I have to take a code aptitude test. That will be the next interruption.

I've just come back from the test room so I think I'll wind this up now dear, and maybe I can get a sergeant or corporal to mail this.

I'll try and write more next time.

Happy Birthday, Sweetheart,
All my love,
Your husband,
Jack

[JACK P. BELL CORRESPONDENCE MARCH 1943 – APRIL 1943 #2]

[Page 1 – Envelope]

Private J.P. Bell

Free

78th. Signal Co. 78 th. Div.

[[Image: Post-mark

Camp Butner, N.C.

stamp, with print text

A.P.O 78

“CAMP BUTNER / N.C”

encircling date:

“MAR 24 / 1 PM / 1943”]]

Mrs. Jack Bell

345 W. River St.

Elyria, Ohio

[Page 2 – First of 2 Letters Enclosed (incomplete)]

Camp Perry

Mar. 15, 1943

Dear Fink,

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[Page 4 – Letter 2 of 2 Continued]

- 2 -

Exeter N.H. Former Oberlin College student, and drafted through the Oberlin board. Both seem like swell fellows, and are good traveling companions. Right now they're napping, It's pretty hard to register a full nights sleep on these coaches. I don't care myself. You know me when I travel, I hate to miss anything.

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- 3 -

For breakfast we had bacon, scrambled eggs, bread, jam, coffee and an orange. It's quite allright [sic].

I think old Dixie is doin' us dirt today. Here it is first day of spring and it started to snow just as we left Roanoke. It's hard telling where we're going. The only thing that's definite is that it will be South. I just asked the train man what our next stop would be. That's about all you can ask without seeming too curious. He said it was Lynchburg Va. We don't know where were going, and we don't know what branch of the service we're in, but in the meantime I'm enjoying my free trip anyway.

There's a little difference between traveling through these hills in a car and

[Page 5 – Letter 2 of 2 Continued]

- 4 -

a train. In a car you usually climb one. The train's roadbed follows a river through the mountains, and then if there is a high one, and there's no way for the train to skirt it they cut a tunnel thru'. There's very little sensation of climbing on this train. Of course now we're out of the hills for awhile.

Tues. morning. 10:15

This army is O.K., but you don't have much time to play around. I'm just waiting for a clothing check. They do this to see if we have everything that was given us at Camp Perry. We had some drill this morning.

In my card I told you I bought a wrist watch for \$3.00. I'm afraid I got stung. The darn thing was an hour fast this morning. I'll see if I can regulate

[Page 6 – Letter 2 of 2 Continued]

- 5 -

it, and if I can't I'll see if I can find a sucker. The first nite we got here we didn't stay at the camp proper. They have a concentration camp about four miles from here. Sometime in the future they'll move all the Japs they have at Fort Bragg over there. That's where we stayed Sunday nite. It's known here as Messy Center. Named right too. It's a regular mud hole.

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[Page 7 – Letter 2 of 2 Continued]

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All my love,

Your husband,

[[underscore]] Jack [[/underscore]]

