

Clark Bruster to his family

Section 3, Pages 61 - 90

Letters written by Clark Bruster, Fort Riley, Kansas, to his family in Waverly, New York. The detailed letters were written while he was training at Fort Riley. Bruster enlisted in the U. S. Army, was initially a member of the 9th Recruit Company, and later he was part of Artillery Battery A. The collection contains two postcards, one showing a Cavalry cantonment and the second, an Artillery Battery marching at Fort Riley.

Creator: Bruster, Clark

Date: June 21, 1917-November 04, 1917

Callnumber: 2010-157.01

KSHS Identifier: DaRT ID: 219584

Item Identifier: 219584

www.kansasmemory.org/item/219584





Clark Bruster to his family



THE ARMY AND NAVY
YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION

HEADQUARTERS:
124 EAST 28th ST., NEW YORK

The Association Follows the Flag on Land and Sea

Public Correspondence Table at

Fort Riley Kansas
July 24 1917

Dear Folks,

You can tell by this paper that I am writing up in the Y. M. C. A.

I was excused from Retreat tonight by the Top Sargent so that I could go down to the Post Office and get mail. Rec'd two letters from Dad, one from mother, and Mildred & Roy's letter. Gee it was some hot walking but I would walk twice as far to get just one letter from home. It is a funny thing but most of the fellows here would rather go without their mail than to go down to the Post Office after it. I am glad I am not that way. You will notice that I am writing-

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better in this letter, but this is the first time I have written at a table.

There is a bunch of fellows in the Y. M. C. A. tonight. Some are writing, some reading and others playing checkers. They are also playing a photograph and a fellow is playing the piano. Some place.

Well yesterday was the same drills but they did not push us so hard. Last night two other fellows from my tent and myself came up here to the moving pictures. They were not very good but they are going to have better ones later. Yesterday was the hottest day I ever felt I think; after we got thru drilling in the morning I was wet with sweat. Oh it was awful.

Today has been cooler, and for a wonder they had water on the drill for us. About 10 O'clock we all had a cup of water and say we drilled twice

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as good. It was warm but it sure tasted
great.

Quite a few fellows fall off of
the horses but no one has been seriously
hurt. I am getting along good I think.
Today I rode without a saddle as usual
and we done quite a lot of running.
I thought several times I would fall
off. But I stuck to it all right. After
dinner this afternoon I was in the
bunch that went down and watered
the horses. They are getting in a lot
of new horses every day, so I think
before long, we will all have our
own horse.

One of the corporals in my Troop
struck a Russian Pollock over the

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head with the butt of his gun yesterday
because he would not do as he told
him down at the stables. Believe me
it knocked the darn Pollock stiff
for a while but he is around today
with a bandage over the cut. The
corporal broke his gun when he hit
him. What do you think of that
kind of an officer, I don't blame
Corporal Hardy for the Pollock would
never do any work but I don't think
an officer should be allowed to hit
a man with his gun. They tried Hardy
at Summary Court last night but
I heard they didn't do any thing to him.

Now I don't think you or any one
else had better send any clothes until
I know where we are going to winter.
You see we have to carry our stuff
to the station when we move and I
have got about all I can lug now.

Well I have only used the gun
a couple of times since I have been

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here, but am getting all of your
letters in good season.

Am glad Grandma has gone up
to Uncle Toms, for I know it will
do her a lot of good.

Today while B. Troop was in line
our 2nd Lieutenant came along
and asked me how many pairs of
drawers I had. I told him 3 pairs
and he said well I have 3 pairs
left in the orderly room and you
had better go in and get them.

Believe me I did. He said they won't
cost you anything, so that shows
we don't get any clothing allowance.
I guess we get just what they can give

Clark Bruster to his family

us and if we do not use as many as the next one, we don't get any money instead of clothes.

Say mother I wish you would send me some of my good socks, my leather & pint flask and you can send some more jam. Gee I am good when you don't have butter.

Well as it is nearly 9 o'clock by our time here, I will close for this time.

Your loving son,
Clark

P.S. Remember me to every-one.

It certainly was quite a shock to me to hear of Mrs. Austins' death. I bet Tom and the rest of them feel pretty bad because they were such a happy family. It seems as though a lot of things have happened since I have been away.

Say my watch is great. If I wake up any time in the night I can tell the time.



Clark Bruster to his family

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*Fort Riley, Kan.,
July 24 1917*

Dear Brother & sister,
Went down to the Post Office tonight after drill and rec'd your letter. Was sure glad to get it. I didn't get down to the office until nearly a clock and so I had supper at the restaurant in the canteen. Ate 2 Ham sandwiches, piece of pineapple pie, piece of cake and a good cup of coffee with real sugar in it. Believe me folks when I say it tasted different from the army chow.

It's a funny thing but all the letters I have been writing lately have been to my own dear folks. There

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is something about this life that makes you forget your old friends or something. Some of the fellows would not go down to the Post Office to get a letter from home. I have gone down alone several times after trying to get some one to go with me. I may forget the rest but I will never forget my own kin and blood.

Lead sent a clipping out of a Manhattan city paper saying that we were getting 6 months drill in 6 week and it is the truth, for I know.

Gee Ray it seems as though the fellows are having more good times this summer than they ever did before, and here I am a million miles from home and no old friends with me. It is a little hard but you know me and that I will stand it without a whimper.

Say Buddie Lead says that you and I were both drafted. I failed

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them I'll say, but they caught you.
Now old boy the drafted men are
all going to be put in the Infantry,
so for God's sake get out of it.
Take a tip from your little brother
who knows. If you could enlist
in something you liked it would
be different but you can't so get
out of it, or I will punch your
face when I see you again and I can
do it to. You have got too much
to stay at home for. To even think
of going away. It didn't make no
difference about me, so I will do
the fighting and you stay home
and look after the Brusters and

Clark Bruster to his family

dear ones.

I sure would have liked to have been home and gone to Corning with you. Too bad Pud has left and I'll bet you fellows miss him in the drug store.

I am in the Y. M. C. A. writing this letter, as you can see by the paper. Pretty handy I guess yes.

I can ride a horse pretty fair now and today our bunch had quite a lot of trotting and as much would have let I did not fall off. One fellow took a leader but it did not hurt him much. If they would let us gallop I could ride as fast as the horse would go, but running is a lot harder.

Well as it is after 9 o'clock 'Central time' I will close for this time and hit my cot. Remember me to Mother & your loving Brother and all the rest. Also to the old bunch.

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*Fort Riley Kan
July 26 1917*

Dear Folks,

Well you see I am up to the Y. M. C. A. again. I tried to join the other night, but there is no membership. It is just a temporary place and every thing is free. It is pretty fine for us all too.

Talk about hot. Say for the last two days it has been so hot that I don't see how any of us stand it. I took a good bath last night and it made me feel great, but am dirty again tonight. Will take another bath tomorrow night.

Tuesday I rode a horse that was stiff in every joint. When he trotted

Clark Bruster to his family

you wouldn't think he had any knee
points at all, for the old fool would
come down stiff legged. Yesterday I
was sore again but rode and drilled
just the same. At night I had one of
the fellows look at me, and he
said I had a nice saddle Boil.
Gee today it has hurt like the
devil. I didn't lay off today but
tomorrow I am going to get off,
for it is some torture to ride a
horse with a boil. It hurts me
some to walk too. These boils don't
amount to much and nearly all the
fellows have them, but they sure are
some painful. It made me mad
to get a sore sent now after
getting over the first sores so
soon.

Well folks I guess we will be
going out of here next week for
sure. They have us going to the
Border, to Panama, to Illinois.

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and also to New York. You can't believe anything you hear, but my own opinion is that we will go to the border. Gee I wish we would come East. It would be great. Most of the cavalry is going to be made into artillery and some Infantry, but I hope I stay in the cavalry as long as I have started.

I rec'd your letter this afternoon last. One of the fellows in our tent went to the office and brought it back with him. I feel kind of sorry of Percy Canoll but at that I think he is in the

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safest branch of service.

Some of the troops are turning in their old Barrack bags tonight and getting new ones, so it looks like our move. As long as I am so far from home I don't care where I go now.

Patrick Carmody sent his address up to me last night and wants me to come down tomorrow night but I guess we have to drill.

The ~~grasshopper~~ phonograph is going and a fellow is playing the piano and other the violin; it sounds great. I say have all kinds of magazines here for us to read. Last night the fellows in our tent had a little ball game all by ourselves. Had a regular bat but played with a soft ball about twice as big as a baseball. The fellow at bat stand there until some one caught

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a fly on him or he missed one ball.
We had a lot of fun. Got the
ball and bat back at the Y. M. C. A.

I am wearing wet with sweat
sitting here writing this letter.
What do you know about that?
I will be glad when we get out
of here, for it can't be any hotter
anywhere than it is here.

You will have to let this
bum writing go this time, as I
am writing too fast.

Havent written any one but you
and Roy this week. It dont seem
as if I can get started at it. I
guess I am falling into the army.

Clark Bruster to his family

out of just thinking about the army
and nothing else.

It is now 8:10 O'clock by your
time and 7:10 here.

Well as I have told you everything
I can think of, I will close for this
time.

Your loving son
Clark

O.S. Leid Harold get the book I
sent him.

Remember me to all the folks
and tell them I think of them all
every day and would like to be
home for a while.

Guess I will read awhile before
I go back to the tent. Gee it
is hotter in the tent during the
day than it is outside I think.

Too bad Roy was drafted but
he can sure get out if he tries and
if he don't try you kick him for
me, for one out of a family is enough.

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Fort Riley Kansas

If I am moved will let you know July 29 1917
It at once. They don't give much notice here. For
instance Friday they were notified at 4 o'clock and
left between 7 and 8.
Dear Folks.

This is 8 P.M. Sunday night
and the end of another hot day.
The wind has been blowing and
the dust is awful. Gee a fellow
could take 3 baths a day and then
couldn't keep clean. I am going to
take a shower tonight.

Friday I went out to drill with the
rest but did not ride, for my boiler
wouldn't let me. Friday afternoon
there was no drill, but 117 men
were called out and shipped to
Texas and Arizona. Harry Smith was
one of those to go. Most of those
that went thought we were going and



Clark Bruster to his family

fellows who could not learn the
drills. Friday night I took a bath so
as to be clean for inspection Sat.
morning but I got fooled on inspection.
Saturday morning after breakfast
all of the 20th Cavalry marched up
behind the barracks and the Major
gave us a nice little talk and
ended by saying he was going to
take us for a 4 mile hike. Well
we all started, 1500 of us, and we
went up hill and down, across creeks
and ditches, thru brush, weeds
and everything that grows out here.
Talk about tired, we were all near
dead when we got back to camp.
Of course we had no water to
drink and I thought I would choke.
On the way back we marched part
of the way in the road and honest
the dust was 8 or 10 inches deep, so
that you couldnt see the men in
front of you. The dust got in

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YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION**

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124 EAST 28th ST., NEW YORK

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It only need 2 suns
since I have been here. Arthur Hill sent me
one last week and I got it all right. I don't
know where you can be.
our throat and nose and made
matter that much worse. Every one
said the hike was 6 miles instead of
4 and I believe it. Of course we had
no inspection, for some of the fellows
fell in the mud and water nearly
running their clothes. When we
got back we found that all
but one of the small tents that
I had been in were all down. While
we were gone they had moved
us in the big tents 40 men in
one tent. Gee it was fierce, and
dust. It laid on our cots 4 or 5
inches deep. Couldn't keep anything
clean. As luck would have it

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they put all the fellows that were
in my tent close together so that
helped some. Last night 30 other
fellows and myself went to
Mankattan and had supper. Got
a good meal for 25. We took in
a movie and started back about
11 o'clock arriving home at 1 o'clock.
They are tearing up the tracks
between Riley and Manhattan so
we had to walk across the
fields for about 1/2 mile to make
connections, some traction line
this is. I don't think anything in
this whole darn state is right.
Nothing that I have seen anyway.

Well this morning after breakfast
they brought our small tents
back again and we had the
job of getting them up and moving
back into them. What do you
know about that for head-work.
Move out one day and back the

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next, Our bunch is still together
and we were some tickled to get
back in a little tent again.
Middaugh and I went down to
the Post Office this morning and
I rec'd the Cookies and Myrtles
Kit. Gee it is a peach. I have
eaten about a dozen cookies already
They sure taste great. I also got
Leah's letter and Mother's. Also a card
from Pete Lovell and a letter from
Bud. He is working in Elmira.
We had a swell dinner today.
Mashed Potatoes, good meat, canned
corn, gravy, dressing, coffee and some
jello. Some feed I'll say. This



Clark Bruster to his family

afternoon I took a nap and then washed
a lot of clothes. They are all dry now.
Say I put the Shaki pants on the
first thing after dinner and you
don't know how funny it feels
not to have those tight leggings
around my legs. This is the first
time I have worn civilian pants
since I joined and it seems great.
Of course mother, these are not the
Regulation kind of pants for the
others have up the leg, but I
can wear these when I get them
drilling in the afternoon. They are 3
times as cool as my darn old C.R.
My seat is pretty sore yet
with that rail. Yesterday I went
up to the dispensary after our ride
and found that the old stink had
broke. The fellow there said he
squeezed the core out, but it is
just as sore today so I think I
will go up tomorrow and have

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him look at it. Gee a fellow can't
enjoy life at all with one where
mine is, It has discharged quite
a lot today.

Say Dad, I think Rogers & Weed
are lying to you about the car
as I never had the least bit of
an accident with it. You know I
never drove it only a few times.
By Gee I wouldn't take it there
any more for I don't think they
know, when a car is right.

We signed up for pay today
so it looks as though something
was in the air, for they very seldom
sign on Sundays.

Clark Bruster to his family

I guess I wrote and told you that the 20th Cavalry had been changed to the 20th Artillery. I think they are planning on shipping the 20th to another fort this week. I guess it will be in Oklahoma from the talk. I wish it would be east. If they keep on pushing us west we will get to France without ever getting nearer home than we are now. Some of the fellows are afraid they will put us in the infantry finally. If they change us into infantry believe me I will buck. I'll take my arch supports out and make my ankles swell up. It looks as though they were making fools out of us.

Well as I want to write Ruth & Myrtle I will close for this time.
Your loving son
Clark

P.S. Would sure like to see Harold in N.Y. He is certainly seeing everything and I am glad of it. I had a letter from him.

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Fort Riley Kan.

Tell Roy & Mildred I want a
little nephew, so I can make a
hunter out of him. Gee I bet all you folks are fixing
a lot of stuff for it. Wish I was there, but I can't
hear folks. ^{Worry} I'll send something when it
arrives

July 31 1917

Well head I got your letter
this morning, also one from Aunt
Jess & George and one from Susie.
One of the fellows from the tent
went to the Post-Office this morning
and he brought my letters back with
him. Pretty good of him I think. I will
go down to the express office
tomorrow night and see if my pkg.
is there.

Have not been to Junction in
several weeks - have not looked
up Carmody, but when I go down
this week for my weekly meal I
will be sure and look him up.

Clark Bruster to his family

Yesterday we started our new drills. It is just about the same as in any drill. We don't tote any guns so that is some relief. I did not ride yesterday nor today as my boil is sore yet. It is getting better, but they are darn stubborn and mine is in a bad place to doctor. The son of a gun is discharging yet and I wish it would quit as it gets my drawers nasty.

Last night I was up here to the pictures and they were very good. Also listened to a talk by a famous doctor from the Illinois University who was called to the colors. His subject was Exercise & Training. It was very good and I learned a lot.

The wind still blows and it is dusty as ever. Have to wash 5 or 6 times a day and I have taken a bath every day for the last several days. Lucie told me all about her trip and it must have been great. Am

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glad she could go, for a person don't
often get a chance like that. I hope
Frank shows Harold every thing on the
Island. I think it would be better
for Frank if he was transferred
somewhere else.

It just started to rain and is
coming down quite hard. Hope it
rains tomorrow so we can't drill.

The meals are running pretty good
now although generally one each day
is punk. This morning we had hot
cakes, bacon, Potatoes, Kawsyrup and
coffee. I went back the second time
after cakes so had 6 in all. Tasted
good you can bet. Of course mother

Clark Bruster to his family

They were nothing like yours but a fellow has to eat what they give him in the army. I pass by some of the stuff if it don't look good.

If they send me any farther west I guess I'll never get home for it will cost nearly 2 months pay for me to get home and back from here.

You would think a lot of fellows would get hurt here by the number of falls they have but no one hardly ever gets hurt bad. I saw a fellow get thrown this morning and I thought he was killed. He didn't move for about 5 minutes, but about all it done was knock his wind out.

Well as I can't think of any thing more now I will close and write again Thursday night if I am still here.
Your loving son,
Clark.

P.S. I don't know as you can read this or not as it has been a long time since I have written with a pen.

Clark Bruster to his family



FT. RILEY

COMMUNITY HOUSE FOR SOLDIERS AND CITIZENS



JUNCTION CITY

THIS building, erected by the citizens of Junction City, is dedicated to the use of the Soldiers and Citizens of Junction City and Ft. Riley with the hope that here may be formed many pleasant and lasting friendships.

Junction City, Kansas, August 2 1917

Dear Folks,

Well you see I am down to the big city again. This building is quite a place. It is only built out of rough lumber, but it has 6 or 8 writing tables in it and a lot of easy chairs. Mid daugh came down with me and we are going to see a vanderbilt show tonight. I think this ink is mostly water by the color of it.

Say that jam was the best I ever tasted, and I put some in my mess kit every meal and put it on my bread. It sure makes a difference.

The other day I saw a negro on horseback out in the fields with a pack of 16 dogs. Part of them were greyhounds and the rest looked like foxhounds. I guess they chase jackrabbits with them. I have only seen 1 jack but there are a lot of cottontails here and this morning I saw about a dozen squirrels. They had red tails but their body was grey like our grey squirrels and as large. I don't know what they were.

Had a post-card from Alec. How today and he says all my old customers ask about me. It makes me feel good to think they haven't forgotten me.

Had I rec'd your letter today. Aug 2. It was dated July 30. These day I asked in the Postoffice for papers and they gave me 6 packages so I guess I have