Milford John Morse, World War I soldier

Section 1, Pages 1 - 30

Around 1919, the Kansas State Historical Society and the American Legion solicited biographical information from returning veterans (primarily members of the 35th and 89th infantry divisions) and the families of those who died in service, notably from the Gold Star Mothers. Each veteran or family member was asked to provide letters, photographs, a biography, and military records. This file contains letters and their transcriptions from Milford John Morse, Co. G, 110th Ammunition Train, 35th Division. Morse was born in Lyons, Kansas, and his family moved to Oklahoma when he was 10 years old. He enlisted in Independence, Kansas.

Creator: Morse, Milford John

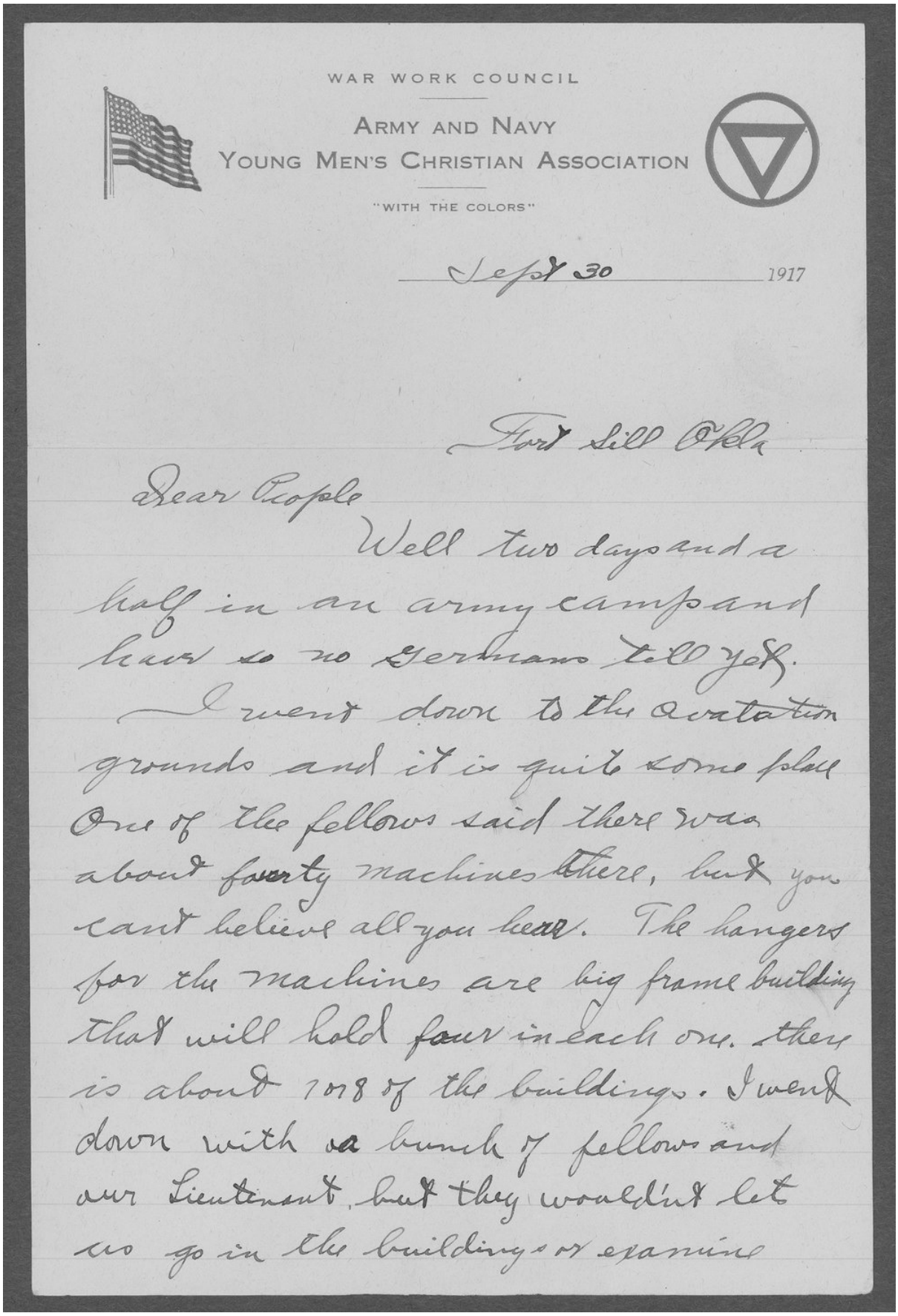
Date: 1917-1918

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WAR WORK COUNCIL

ARMY AND NAVY
YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION

"WITH THE COLORS"

Sept 30 1917

Fort Sill Okla

Dear People

Well two days and a half in an army camp and have so no Germans till yet.

I went down to the aviation grounds and it is quit some place One of the fellows said there was about fourty machines there, but you cant believe all you hear. The hangers for the machines are big frame building that will hold four in each one. there is about 1018 of the buildings. I went down with a bunch of fellows and our Lieutenant, but they wouldnt let us go in the buildings or examine

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_____ 1917

any of the machines, all we could see was thro the windows. they dont flyon sunday nor do we have drill on Sunday. The let us go in the hanger where they keep an observation ~~aeroplane~~ balloon and they explained all the different parts, but it dont amount so awful much. The aviation grounds are about two miles from our company Say this is sure some place believe me. I have not even seen a cloud since we have been here and the wind has not blown, but if it ever does, we couldnt find our camp from the dust. the days are hotter'n heck but it gets just as cold at night as it does hot in the

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_____ 1917

day time.

They issued me our uniforms the other day. but mine don't fit very good the pants are a little small and the coat a little large but I can get by all right with them. I did not get a hat, of course and don't expect I will for some time, but I should worry about how I look when there is nothing here but a bunch of stays.

So it from Independence got here this morning. They are camped about a mile and a half from us.

Well by the heck I can't think of much to write but I bet you are

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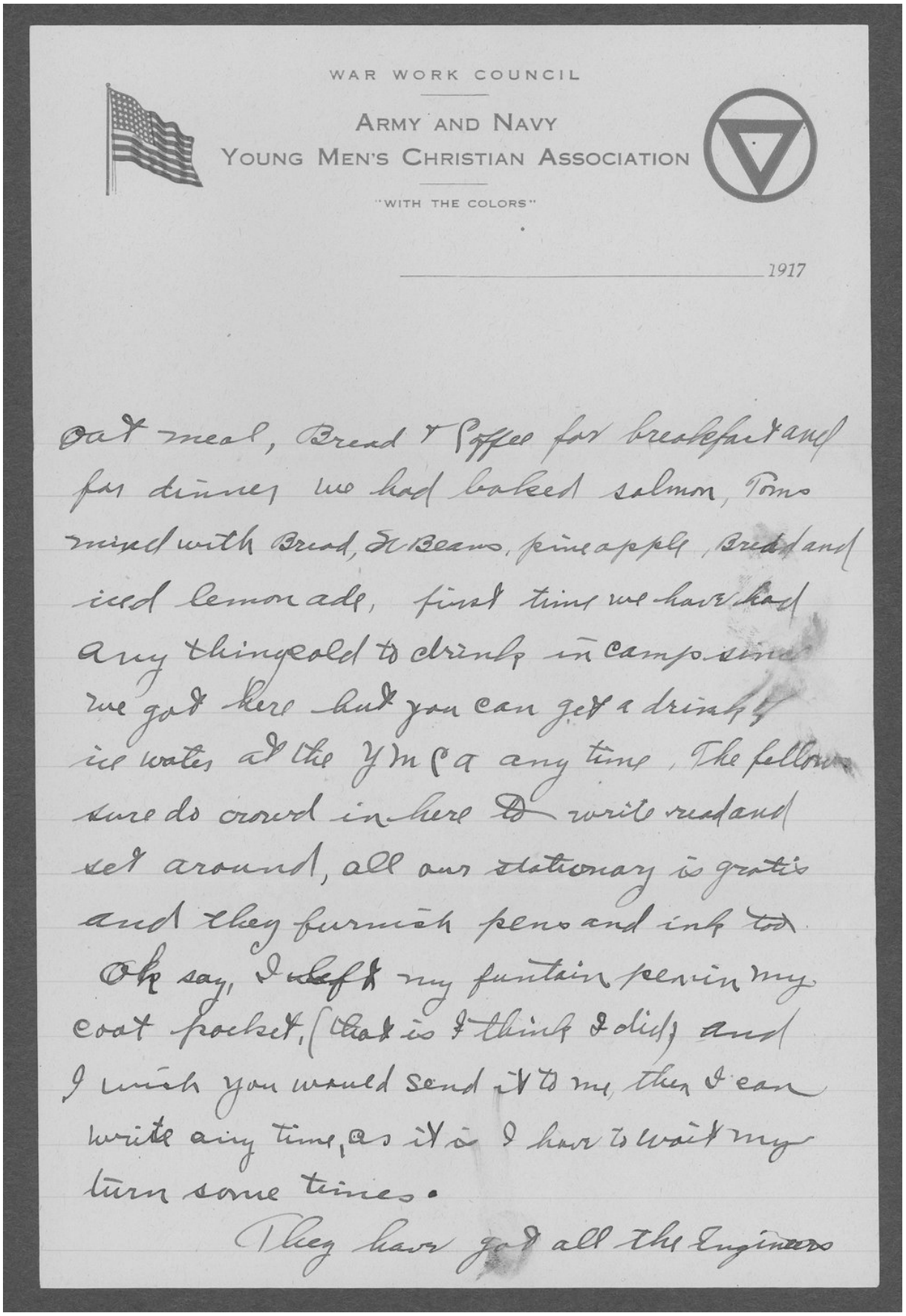
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_____ 1917

Cussing me for not telling more about our camp and the camp here, but there is not much to tell for the darned thing is strung all over the dickens and I have not ~~saw~~ seen much of it, only the aeroplanes and you can always see plenty of them, they flyover the camp all the time.

We have got a good place to eat, better than we had at Camp Humphery by some. it is all screened in, got a good ~~roof~~ top and the tables are a lod better too, but cant say so much for the grub. but they have not got strung out yet I guess. We had bacon, gravey



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1917

oat meal, Bread & Coffee for breakfast and for dinner we had baked salmon, Toms mixed with Bread, & Beans, pineapple, Bread and iced lemonade, first time we have had any thing cold to drink in camp since we got here but you can get a drink of ice water at the y m c a any time. The fellows sure do crowd in here to write read and set around, all our stationary is gratis and they furnish pens and ink too.

Oh say, I left my funtain pen in my coat pocket, (that is I think I did) and I wish you would send it to me, then I can write any time, as it is I have to wait my turn some times.

They have got all the Engineers

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"WITH THE COLORS"

_____ 1917

from all over in one bunch, there is four or five Co. but we are the only train Co. and back of us that is north they have got it all fenced in but have only got a few mules in the pastures now, I don't care much whether they fill it up ~~with~~ with mules or not. It sure looks funny to see all the houses, tents and pastures with out a tree on the place

I kinda thought it would be hilly and just lots of trees but there sure as heck is not. We signed the pay roll today but they did not say when we would get any money, but I guess we will get it in the course of time

but it don't bother me any cause I have just spent a dime since I got here and think at that rate what I have will last some time,

Some of the fellows went to Lawton last night but I stayed to home, it cost 75¢ round trip in the Fords and they said there was nothing there when you got there they had a doing at the ymca last night they call it stunt night. one of the fellows gave a reading another a cornets solo then they had two leaping bouts that did not amount to much then a fellow had a trained monkey that drank a bottle of pop ate tobacco and rolled over and then they had a tin cup fight that was pretty good. Four fellows where blindfolded and they put a leaping glove on the hand of every fellow and a tin cup in the other, then they had to get down on they hands and knees and keep the tin cup on the floor and hit with the other hand Sure was funny believe me

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_____ 1917

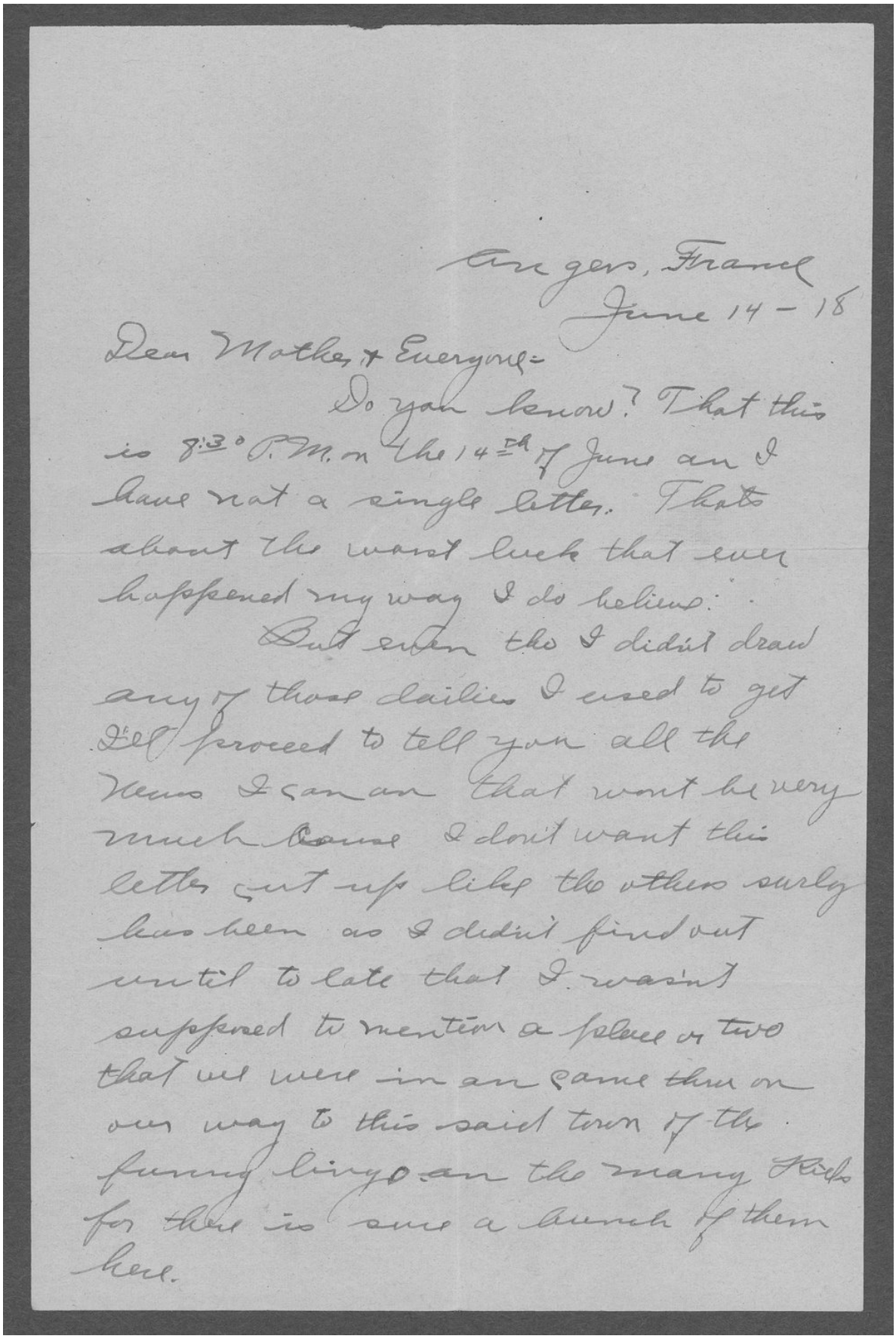
well I guess Ill have to quit cause cant think of anything to write. Say I got my adress a little wrong in that other letter Send it this way

Engineers Co 110 Engineers
Camp Doniphan
Fort Sill
Okla.

I guess that is right just a returner your letter and we will find out.

Well write and tell me all the happenings and tell everyone hello for me

John



Angers, France
June 14 - 18

Dear Mother & Everyone:-

Do you know? That this is 8:30 P.M. on the 14th of June an I have not a single letter. Thats about the worst luck that ever happened my way I do believe.

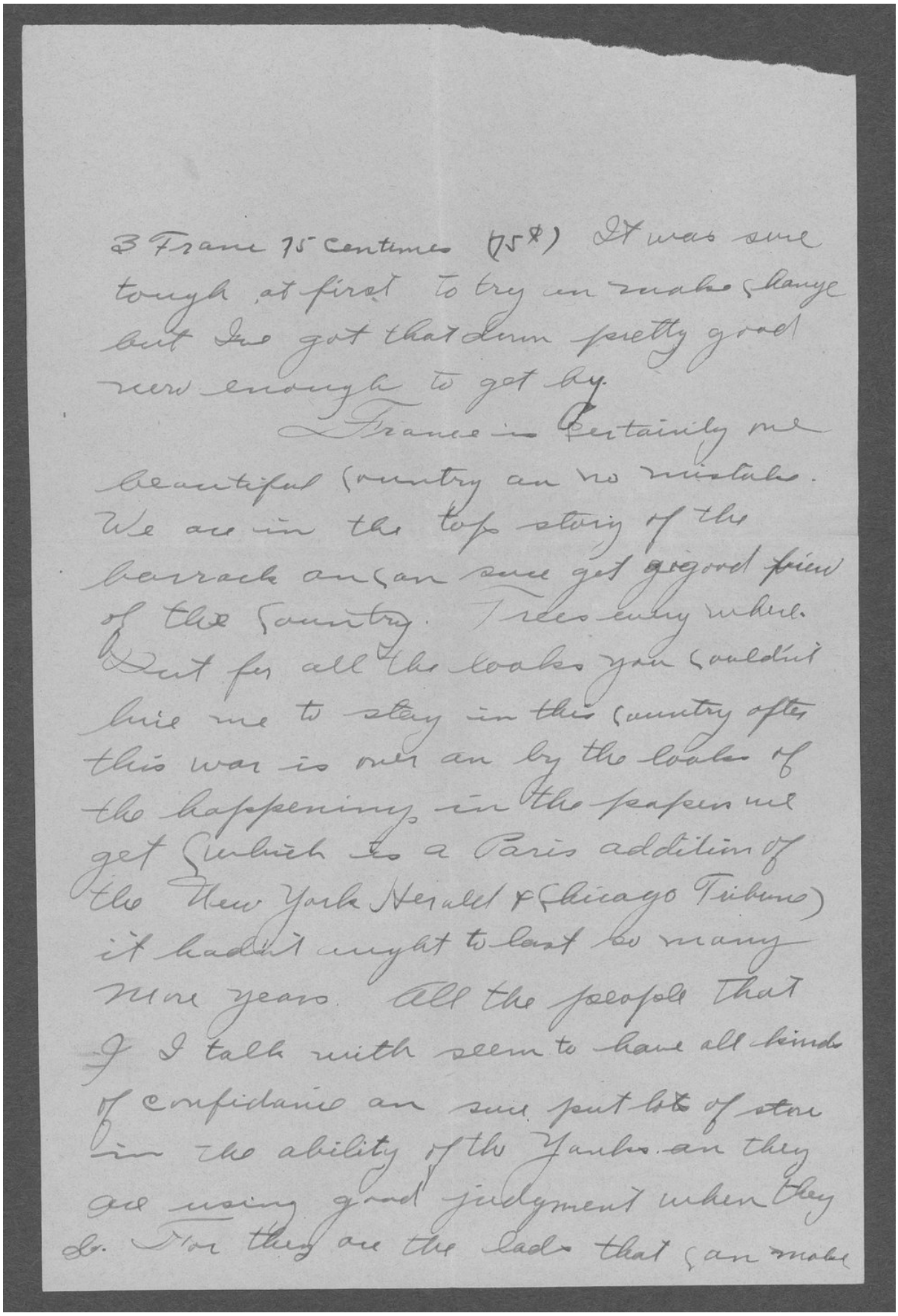
But even tho I didnt draw any of those dailies I used to get I'll proceed to tell you all the News I can an that wont be very much cause I dont want this letter cut up like the others surly has been as I didnt find out until to late that I wasnt supposed to mention a place or two that we were in an came thru on our way to this said town of the funny lingo an the many Kids for there is sure a bunch of them here.

We have the perivalage of leaving camp every evening from 6 until nine and I was ~~walking~~ down the street an about all the kids can say is. "Gotta Son" or Tobac an so I give a little kid a handful of pennies. I hadn't any more than started for them until there was about 50 all hollerin for a son Took me an hour an fifteen minutes of good fast walking to shake that bunch.

The towns or city, villages or what ever they call them here are sure. queer. Nothing like they are in the good old U.S.A. for the streets run just every which way an ~~just~~ about wide enough for two cars to pass. The same of it in this place, so they say. Do that in the ~~long~~ long ago's there was a wall running around the city an the

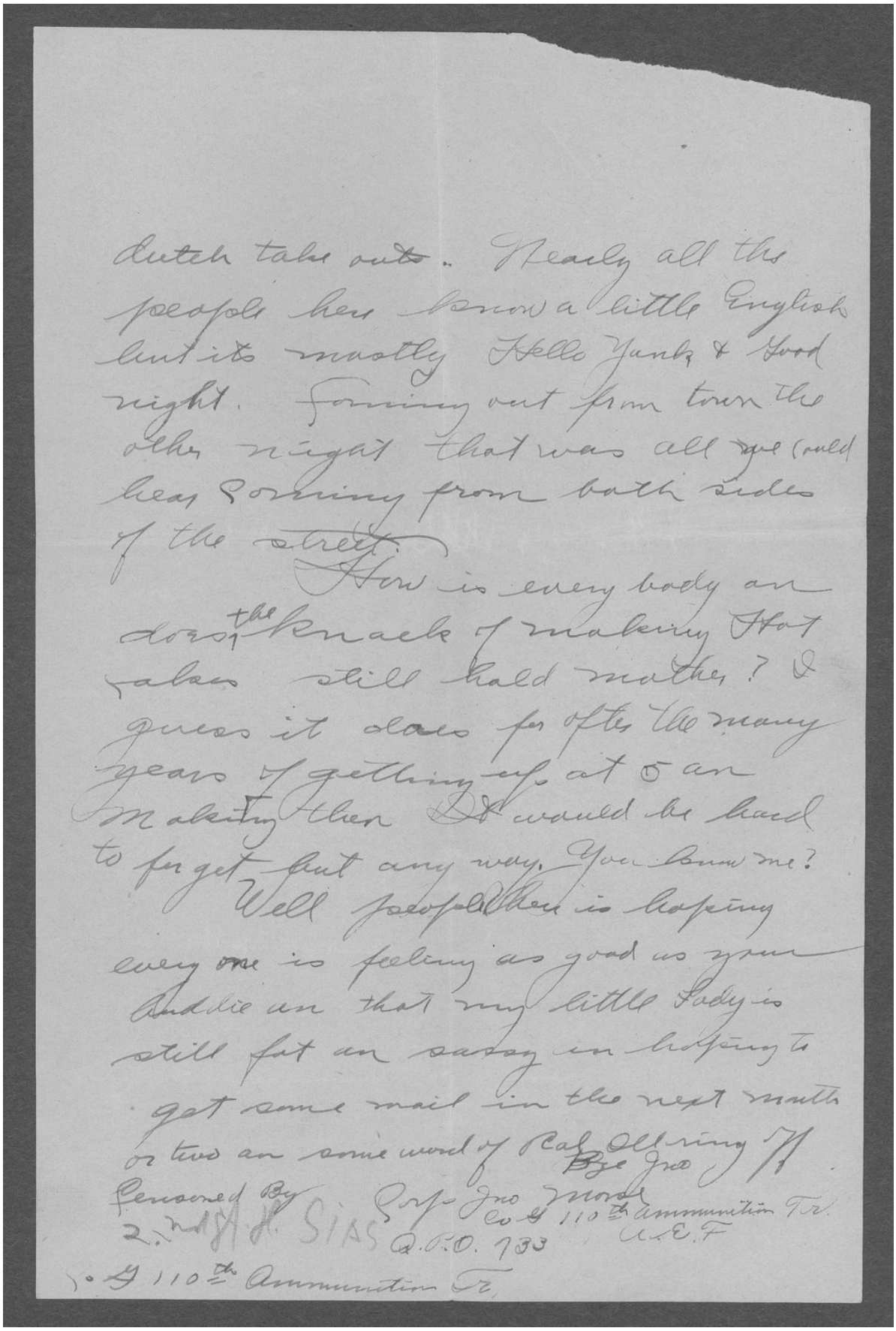
streets all start from the "Square" an run to the wall an it makes it look like a pie cut in about two dozen pieces an about the easiest thing to do is to get lost for it all looks alike until you kinda get into it. I've never got exactly lost but have been kinda mixed several times.

Its sure the limit to go into a place an cant make them understand what you want. Made me think of the times when the Mex's would come in the store an couldnt ~~them~~ speak ~~the~~ English only I had to represent the Mex. Went into a restraunt an had the - - - time an finly had to give it up an get French Fried + Eggs an it was a good thing that I couldnt get what I wanted. I guess. for what I got cost me 3.75 which is



3 Franc 75 centimes (75¢) It was sure tough at first to try an make change but I've got that down pretty good now enough to get by.

France is certainly a beautiful country an no mistake. We are in the top story of the barrack an can sure get a good view of the country. Trees every where. But for all the looks you couldn't hire me to stay in this country after this war is over an by the looks of the happening in the papers we get (which is a Paris addition of the New York Herald & Chicago Tribune) it hadn't ought to last be many more years. All the people that I talk with seem to have all kinds of confidance an sure put lots of store in the ability of the Yanks an they are using good judgment when they do. For they are the lads that can make



dutch take outs. Nearly all the people here know a little English but its mostly Hello Yanks & Good night. Coming out from town the other night that was all we could hear coming from both sides of the street.

How is every body and does the knack of making that gravy still hold mother? I guess it does for after the many years of getting up at 5 am making it. It would be hard to forget but any way. You know me?

Well Jacob Oberholtzer is hoping every one is feeling as good as your Buddie am that my little lady is still fat an sassy am hoping to get some mail in the next month or two an some word of Ralph Olwine

Bye Jno

Censored By 2nd Lt. H. L. SIAS

Cpl. Jno Morse
Co G 110th Ammunition Tr.
A.E.F.
A.P.O. 733

Co G 110th Ammunition Tr.

July 28
In France

Hello People.

Do you know? That its almost the first of Aug. an dammed near a year since I commenced drawing a salary of 36 ducketts per month but what I started to say that I haint gotten a word from 1101 for a whole week an there has been two or three batches come in but nothing doing for me an will say that one letter dated July 2 is the latest on. I think some one must have began to weaken on June for I got about two dozen dated the last of may an only a few in June. Will just put the blame on the mail service, tho, and let it go at that.

You know the reason I'm taking up so much room telling about the shortage of letters for the rookie is that their is not a blooming

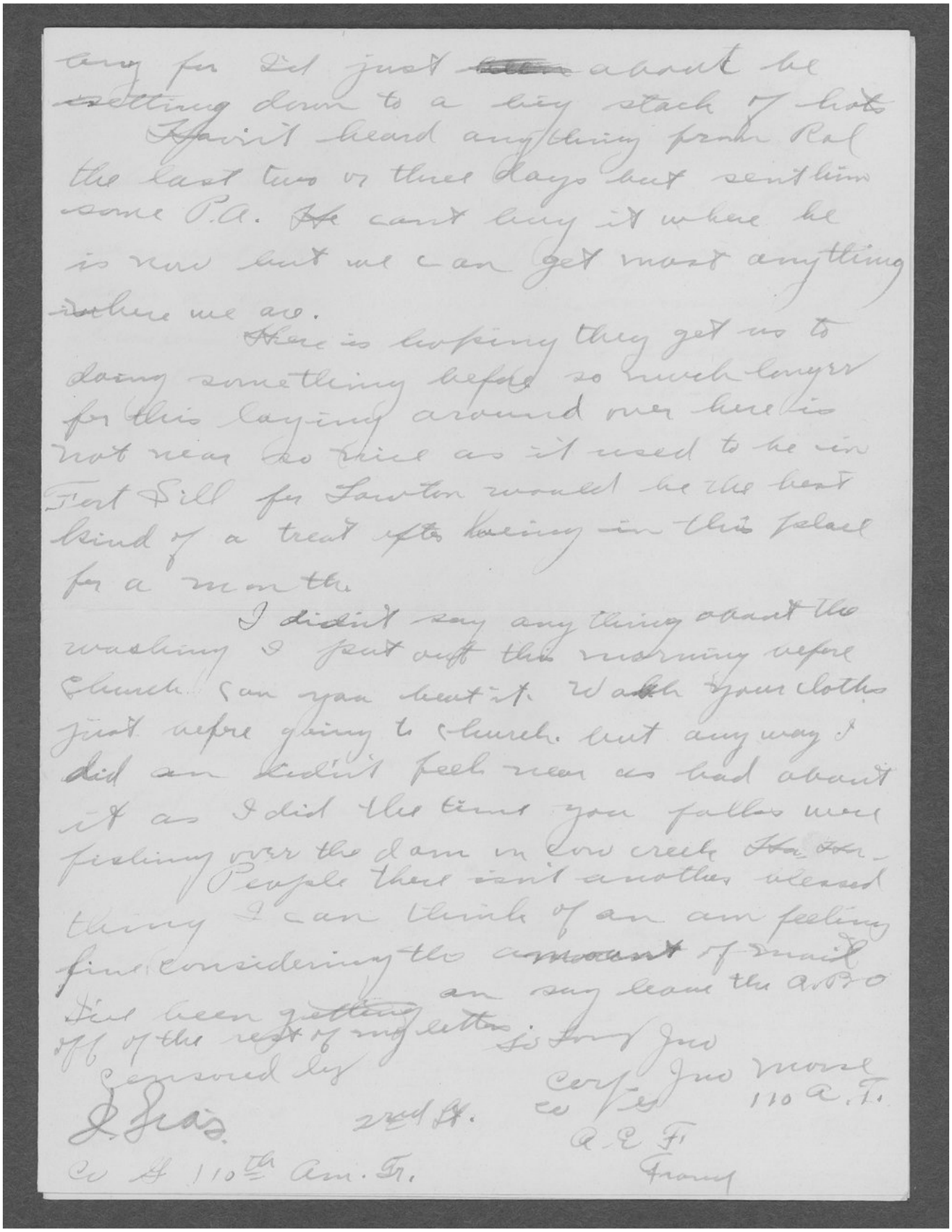
think of interest to write about (only about the boat we came over on and I'll take that up later) and I know if I only covered a couple of pages. I'd get a cussin. So hence all the unnecessary

But about that said boat we came over on. You noticed, of course, about the Justicia being torpedoed off the Irish coast. It being the 3rd largest boat in the World. Well it were some canal on no kiddin. Was 76' deep 90 some wide drew 35' of water an 70' from the water to the first deck. I can't figure how the dum they ever got a shot at it like they did. But they did an take it from us they got a hundred 33,000 tons an as pretty a set of Engines as you can imagine. I felt all puffed up that we got to come across on such a large boat an it was lots better than on some of the smaller ones for you could see them doing the tango lots of times an the old Justicia would be as steady as

they make them. Would me like to take a trip on a boat like that in peace times an go not lower than 3rd class. They said they took enough furniture out of it, when it was put in the service to equipt any ordanary sized ships an it had lots of fancy stuff ~~cpted~~ left at that so it must have been pretty keen.

Wonder how every one is this hot Sunday afternoon, sure its bound to be hot there for it about as hot here as I've saw it since we landed. We are ~~stillgust~~ killing time as usual an nothing much to go to only the Y. an did see a real good show this last night. Ben Mackey an I went down but it was packed about as tight as the ~~Okla~~ Okla used to be when Ruby Darby & me to town

Sure is good to go see a real show once in a while even if you do take turns about getting in each others tabs. Then this morning I took a good turn an went to church. heard a good talk but not just exactly like one I would have heard had I been in Buffalo but Chances are I wouldn't have heard



any for Del just [redacted] about be
~~setting~~ down to a big stack of hots
I haint heard anything from Ral
the last two or three days but sent him
some P.A. ~~He~~ cant buy it where he
is now but we can get most anything
where we are.
Here is hoping they get us to
doing something before so much longer
for this laying around over here is
not near so nice as it used to be in
Fort Sill for Lawton would be the best
kind of a treat after having in this place
for a month.
I didint say anything about the
washing I just cut this morning before
church can you beat it. Wash your clothes
just before going to church but anyway I
did an didint feel near as bad about
it as I did the time you fellas were
fishing over the dam in Cow creek Ha Ha -
Couple there isint another decent
thing I can think of an am feeling
fine considering the amount of mail
I've been getting an say beau the rest
off of the rest of my letter is from Jno
Censored by
L. Geis. 2nd Lt. Co "E" Jno Morse 110 A.T.
Co A 110th Am. Tr. A.E.F.
France

Over Here.
Oct 7 - 18

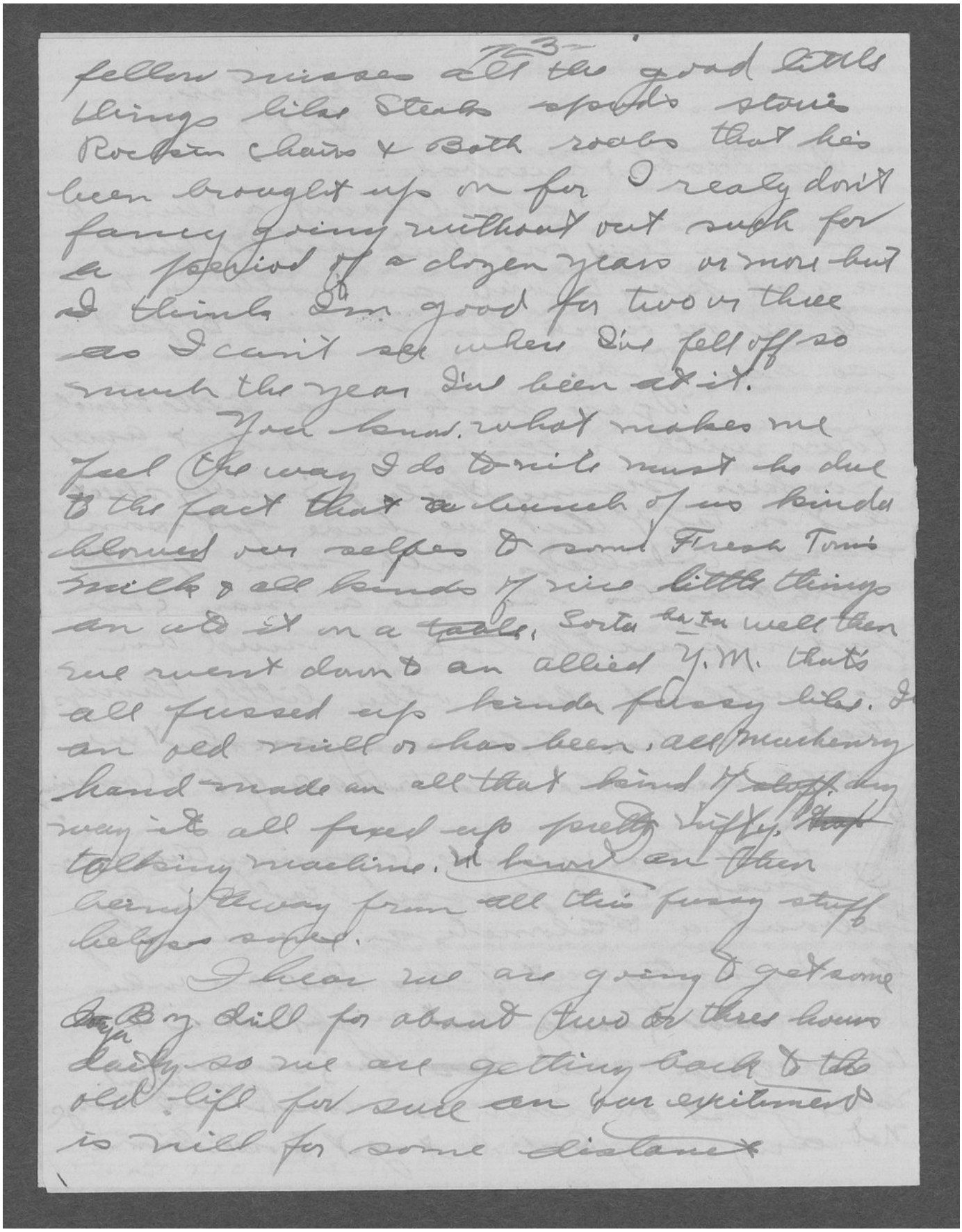
Dear Mother & Everbody:-

I really haint a thing to say in this one but had the time & a good place to write, am nothing to do till one oclock then it time to feed so here I be.

We are back in a little French town with nothing in it but Amex roosters manure piles & muddy street but on top of that we have got some dandy billets with some pretty nifty dumbs so see a man can put up with lot of mud an do without them & the little things that makes life easy but we still have the old trouble of 6:30 Somnin to early.

When we were somning this way I just no I passed Rad up by about a Kilometer as we went by the Infantry out of his div. an when we made camp that night some of the fellows said the Sargeant Major from the 2nd. were just on down the road but not any way I didnt get to see him

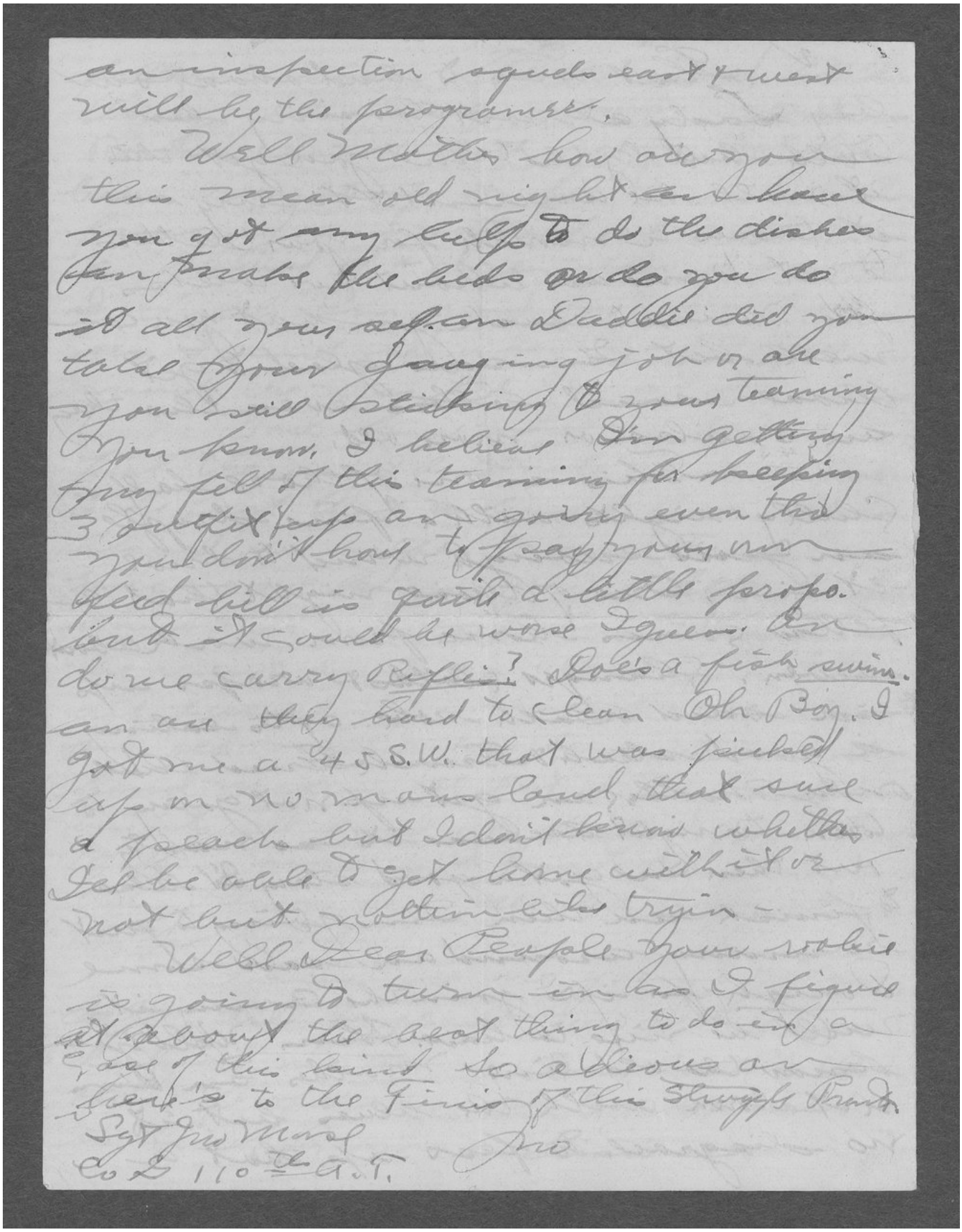
That was to hear about your
boy Sady almost loosing her
watch but by the time you get this
it will be ancient history as
it takes a month for your letters
to get to me an about two weeks
for mine to reach you but you can
well bet I'm sure glad to get
those said letters even tho they
are 6 weeks or more old.
6/4/5 This is one of those half
cloudy nights with a fine drizzle
an just enough wind to drive
it in, One of those nights that a
fellow comes home from work about
seven, changes clothes & wraps up
in said Bath robe after eating
a good steak & French Fries that
only Mother can get up not going to
town tonight because it so nasty
out then I've got a good story I'd like
to finish and then I'm going to quit
running around an save some
Dough for if I join the army it
will be nice to have. Ahem Well you
know the old line "Mother don't
not down with the blues but it's
no disgrace to fess up that a



fellow misses all the good little things like steak, apple strudel, Rocker chairs & Bath rooms that he's been brought up on for. I really don't fancy doing without such for a period of a dozen years or more but I think I'm good for two or three as I can't see where I've fell off so much the year I've been at it.

You know, what makes me feel the way I do to-night must be due to the fact that so much of our kinds allowed over-seas to send Fresh Tonic milk & all kinds of nice little things an' eats it on a table. Sorta as I'm well then we went down to an allied Y.M. that's all fussed up kinda fancy like. It an old mill or has been, all machinery hand-made an all that kind & laid out the way it's all fixed up pretty swift, that talking machine. We heard an Opera singer there from all this fancy stuff I've seen.

I hear we are going to get some Bay Bill for about two or three hours daily so we are getting back to the old life for sure an' our appetites is mild for some distance



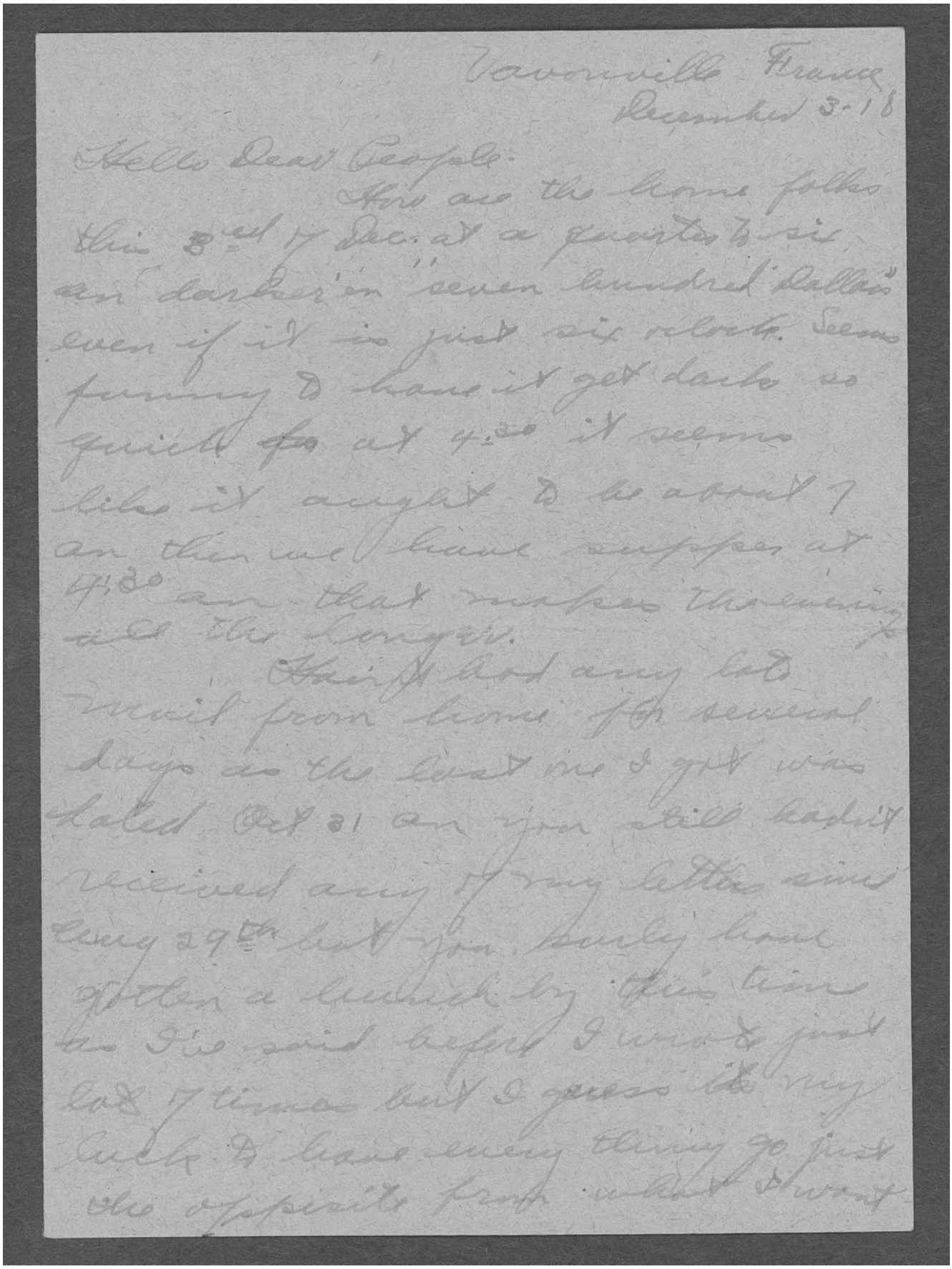
an inspection squads east & west will be the programme.

Well Mother how are you this mean old night and have you got any help to do the dishes can you make the beds or do you do it all your self. an Daddie did you take your Jaunting job or are you still Skidding & your teaming you know. I believe I'm getting my fill of this training for keeping 3 Jackrabbits an going even tho you don't have to say your own feed bill is quite a little propo. but it could be worse I guess. Can do we carry Rifles? Does a fish swim. an as they had to clean Oh Boy. I got me a 45 S.W. that was pinched up in no mans land that sure a peach but I don't know whether I'll be able to get home with it or not but I'll do my doddin ests tryin.

Well Dear People your robin is going to turn in as I figure it about the best thing to do in a case of this kind so adieus an Luck's to the Finis of this Struggle Ruth.

Sgt Jno Morse
Co E 110th A.T.

Jno

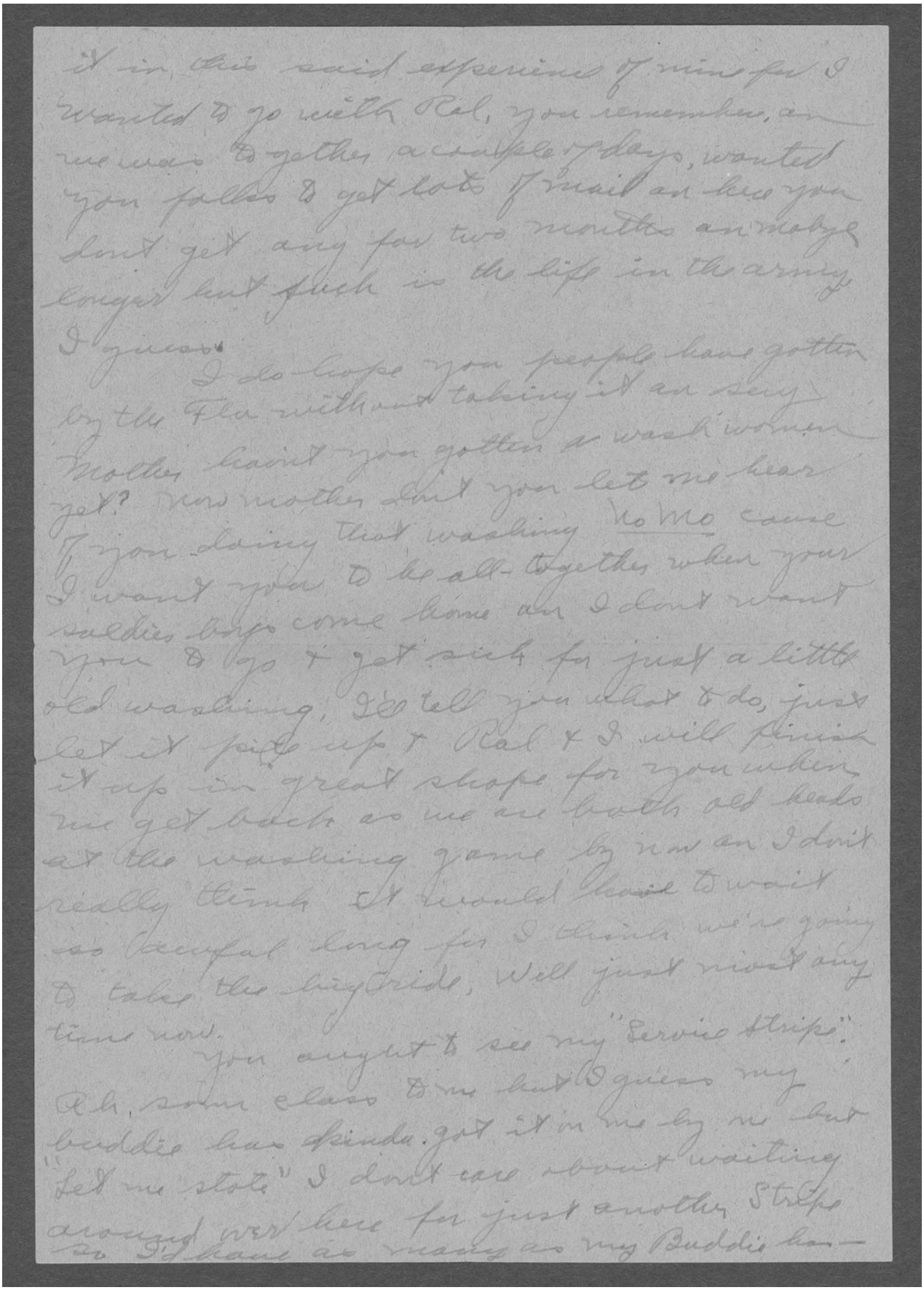


Vavonville France
Dec 3-18

Hello Dear People.

How are the home folks this 8th day of Dec. at a quarter to six an darker'n "seven hundred dollars" even if it is just six o'clock. Seems funny to have it get dark so quick at 4:30 it seems like it ought to be about 7 an then we have supper at 4:30 an that makes the evening all the longer.

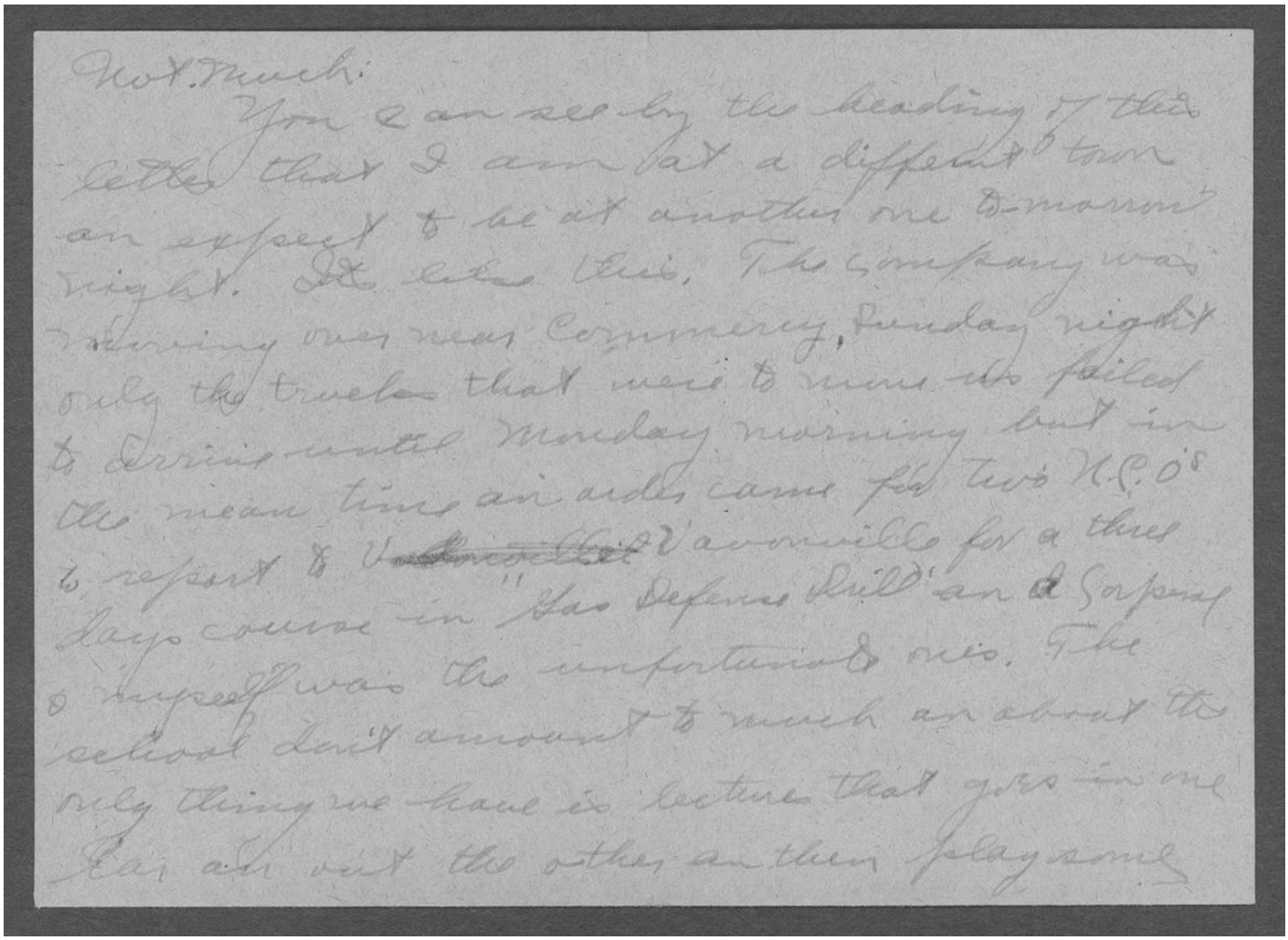
Haven't had any let mail from home for several days as the last one I got was dated Oct 31 an you still hadn't received any of my letters since Nov 29th but you surely have gotten a bunch by this time as I've said before I write just 1 or 2 times but I guess it's my luck to have every thing go just the opposite from what I want



it in this said experience of mine for I wanted to go with Ral, you remember, and we was together a couple of days, wanted you folks to get lots of mail as like you don't get any for two months or maybe longer but such is the life in the army I guess.

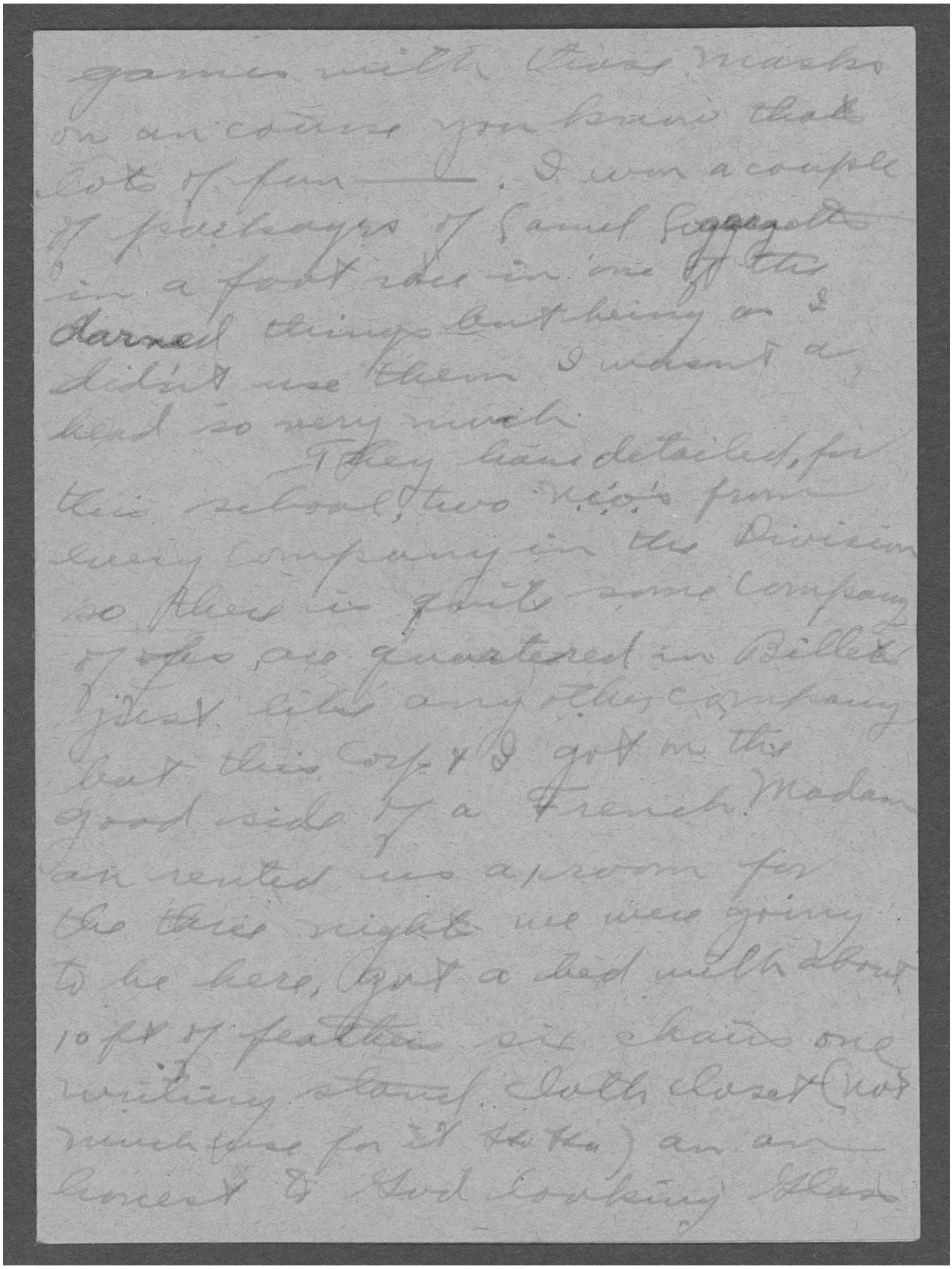
I do hope you people have gotten by the flu without taking it or any Mother hain't you gotten a washwoman yet? Now mother don't you let me hear you doing that washing No No come I want you to be all together when your soldier boys come home and I don't want you to go & get sick for just a little old washing. I'll tell you what to do, just let it pile up & Ral & I will finish it up in great shape for you when we get back as we are both old hands at the washing game by now and I don't really think it would have to wait so awful long for I think we're going to take the big ride, will just wear any time now.

You ought to see my "Service Stripe". Ah, some class to me but I guess my buddies has kinda got it on me by no "Let me state" I don't care about waiting around over here for just another Stripe so I have as many as my Buddie ha—

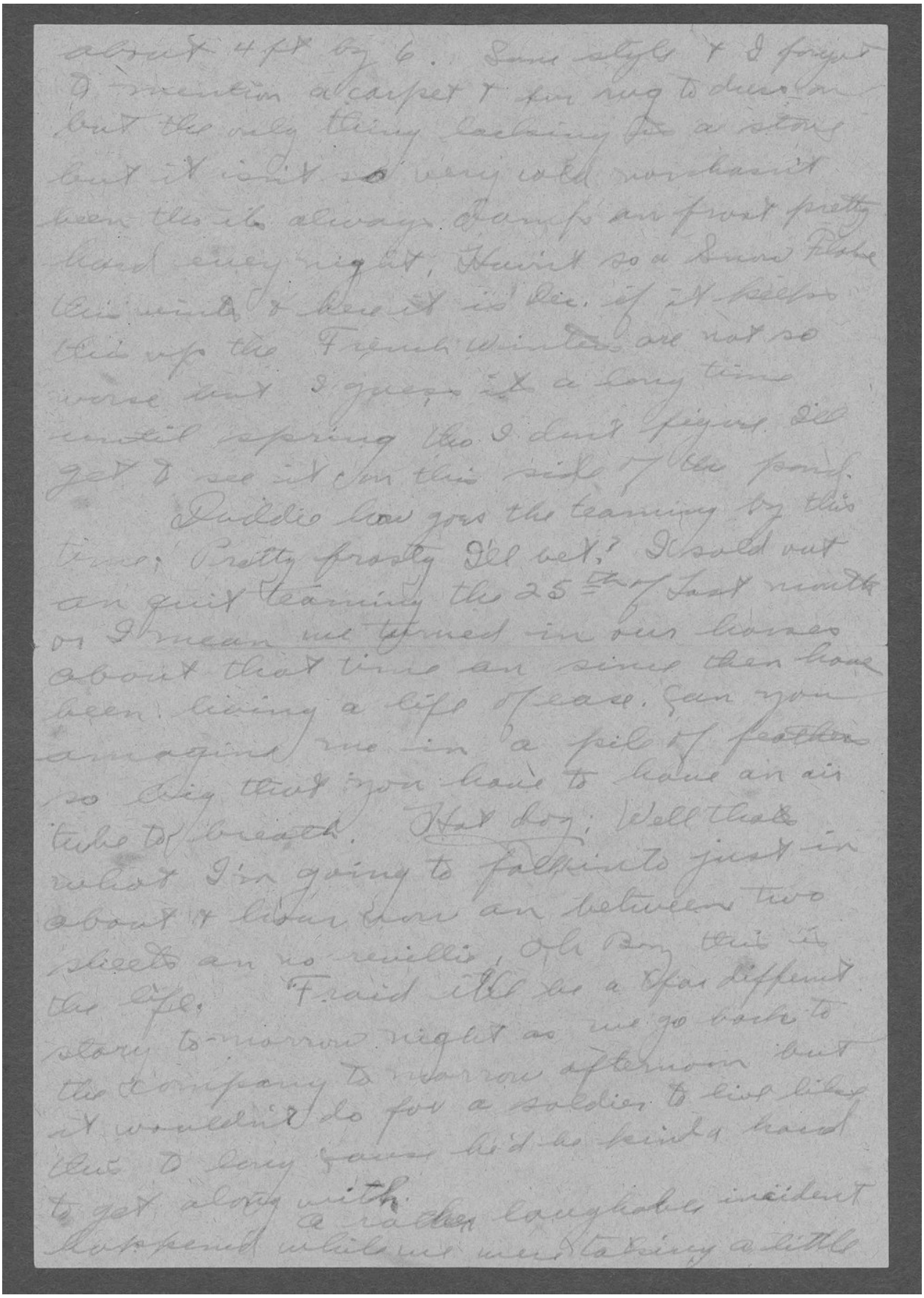


Not much.

You can see by the heading of this letter that I am at a different town an expect to be at another one 8-months right. It like this. The company was training over near Commerce, Sunday night only the trucks that were to move us failed to arrive until Monday morning but in the mean time an aides came for two N.C.O's to report at Vaucouleur "Camp Doniphan" Lafayette for a three days course in Gas Defense Drill and Sapping & Mining. That was the unfortunate ones. The school don't amount to much as about the only thing we have is lecture that goes in one ear an out the other an then play some



game with them. Reads
on an course you know that
lots of fun ——. I won a couple
of packages of Camel Cigarettes
in a foot race in one of the
darnedest things but being a
didn't use them I wished a
head so very much.
They have detailed, for
this school, two men from
every company in the Division
so there is quite some company
of us are quartered in Billets
just like any other company
but this eve I got me the
good side of a French Madam
can rented me a room for
the three nights we were going
to be here, got a bed with about
10 ft of feather six chairs one
writing stand cloth closet (not
much use for it this) an an
heater & God looking glass

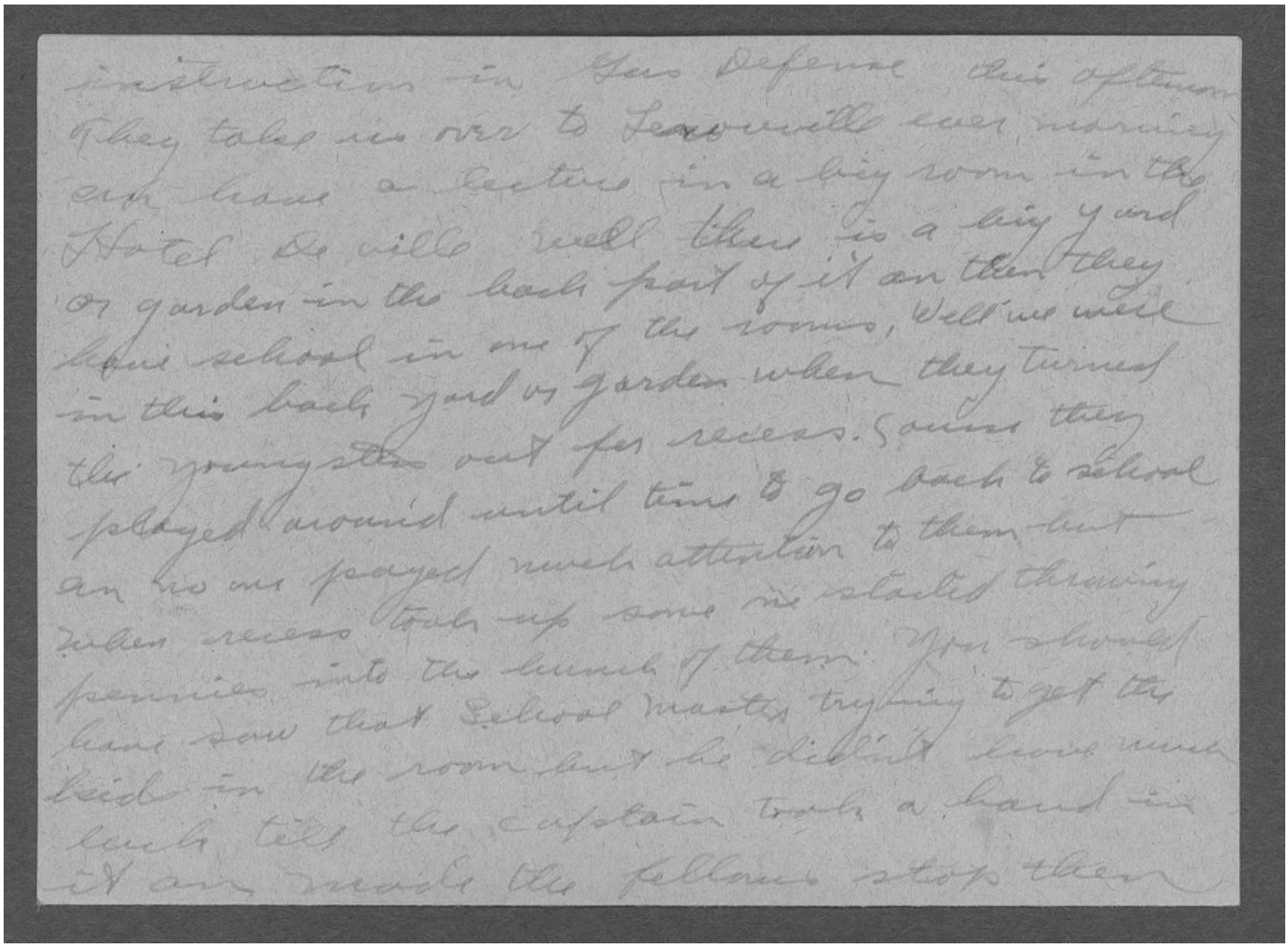


about 4 ft by 6. Some style I'd forget I mean a carpet & fur rug to dress on but the only thing lacking is a stove but it isn't so very cold now hasn't been tho it always does & frost pretty hard every night. Hasn't so a snow flake this winter & here it is Dec. of it keeps this up the French winters are not so worse but I guess it a long time until spring tho I don't figure I'll get to see it on this side of the pond.

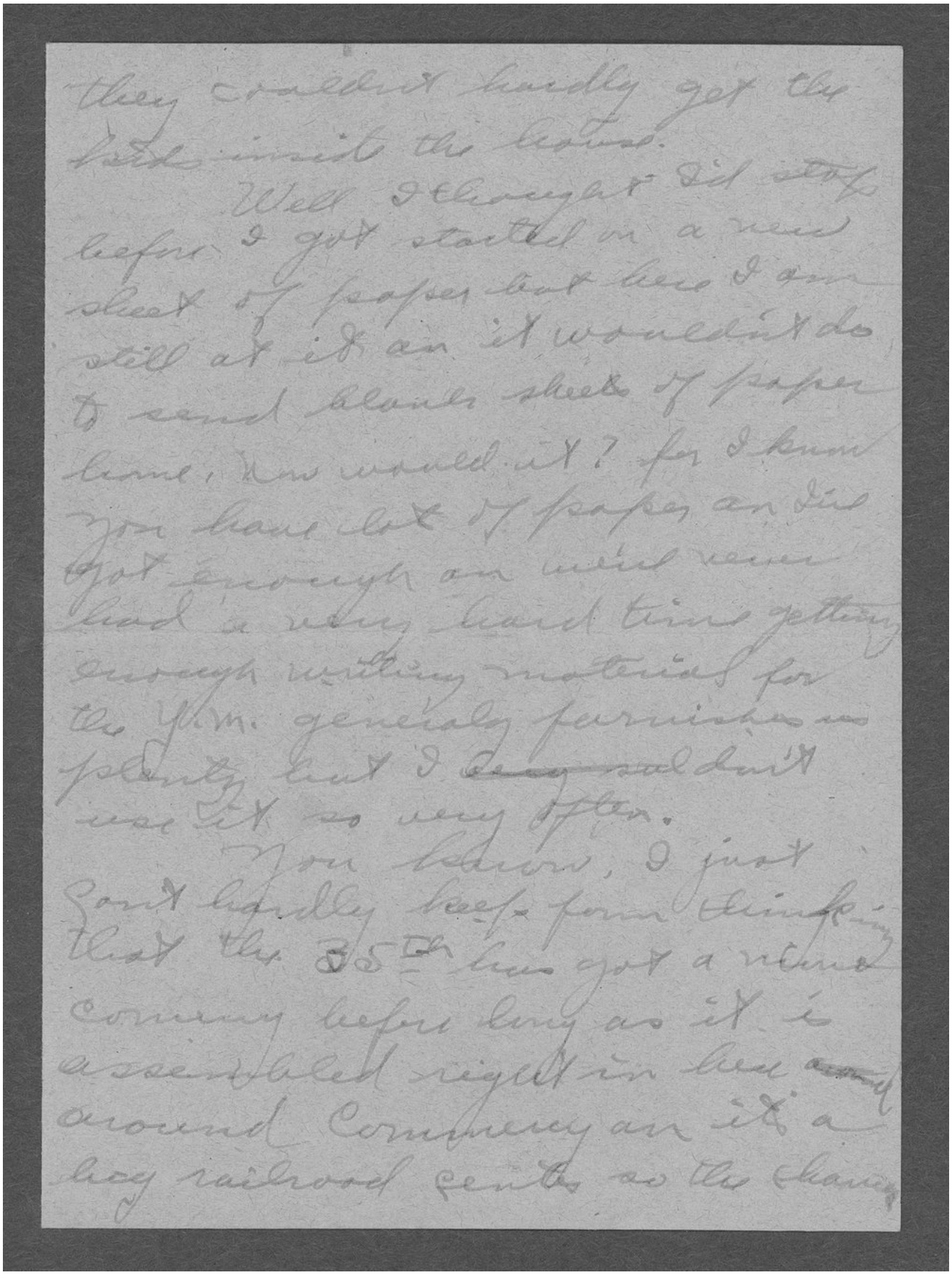
Paddie how goes the training by this time; Pretty frosty I'll bet, I should out an quit training the 25th of last month or I mean we turned in our horses about that time an since then have been living a life of ease. Can you imagine me in a pile of feathers so big that you have to have an air tube to breath. Ha! Boy; Well that's what I'm going to fall into just in about 1 hour from now between two sheets an no reveille, Oh Boy this is the life.

Fraid it'll be a days different story to-morrow night as we go back to the Company to-morrow afternoon but it wouldn't do for a soldier to live like it would it? do for a soldier to live like that & Dory Jones he'd as soon a hand to get along with.

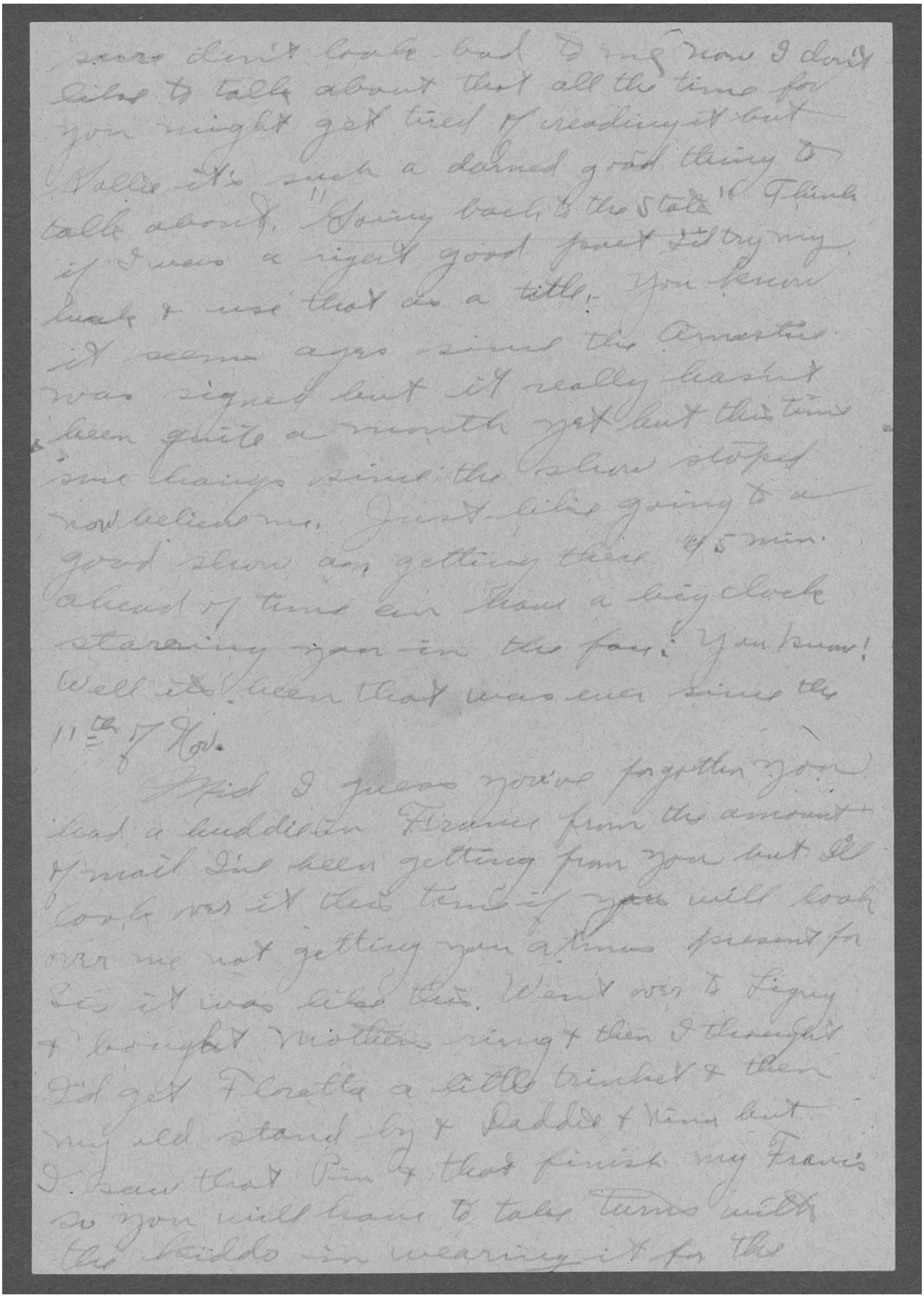
A rather laughable incident happened while we were having a little



instructions in Gas Defense. Our Captain they take us over to Leavenville every morning and have a lecture in a big room in the Hotel. It is a big yard or garden in the back part of it and then they have school in one of the rooms. Well we were in this back yard or garden when they turned the young'sters out for recess. Some they played around until time to go back to school and no one payed much attention to them but when recess took up some one started throwing pennies into the bunch of them. You should have saw that School master trying to get the kids in the room but he didn't have much luck till the Captain took a hand in it and made the fellows stop then

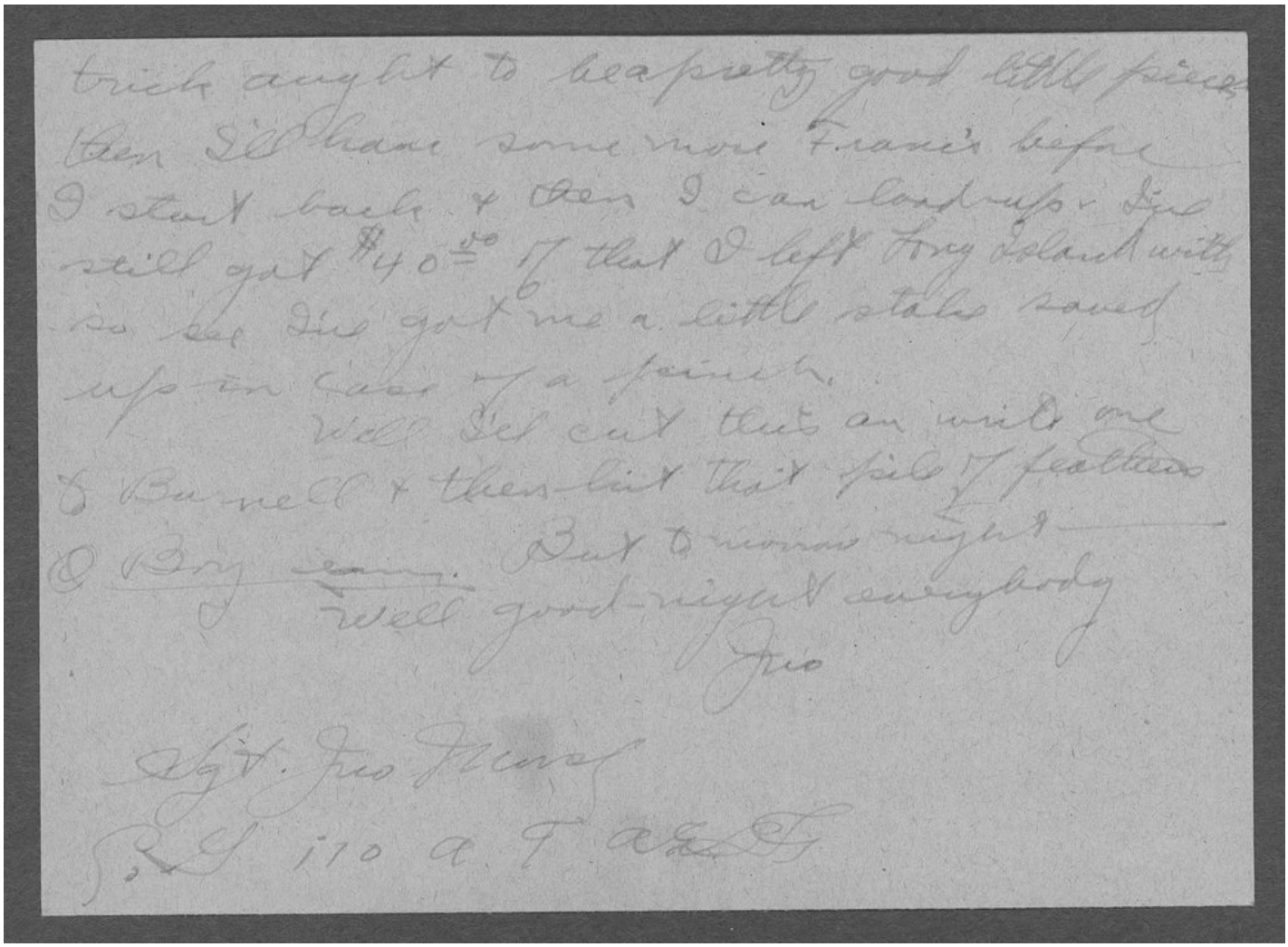


they couldn't hardly get the
mail inside the lines.
Well I thought I'd stop
before I got started on a new
sheet of paper but here I am
still at it an it wouldn't do
to send blank sheets of paper
home, how would it? for I know
you have lots of papers an I've
got enough an we've never
had a very hard time getting
enough writing materials for
the Y.M. generally furnishes us
plenty but I ~~dont~~ reckon I'll
use it so very often.
You know, I just
can't hardly keep from thinking
that the 35th has got a record
coming before long as it is
assembled right in here
around Company an it's a
big railroad center as the Chaun



scars don't look bad to me now I don't like to talk about that all the time for you might get tired of reading it but Golly it's such a darned good thing to talk about. Going back to the States I think if I was a right good poet I'd try my luck & use that as a title. You know it seems ages since the Armistice was signed but it really hasn't been quite a month yet but this time one hangs mind the slow steps now believe me. Just like going to a good show on getting there 4/5 min. ahead of time ain't you a big clock staring you in the face? You know! Well it's been that way ever since the 11th of Nov.

Kid I guess you've forgotten you had a kiddie in France from the amount of mail I've been getting from you but all look was it this time if you will look over me not getting you a Xmas present for Cris it was like this. Want over to Tigny & bought Mother ring & then I thought I'd get Loretta a little trinket & then my old stand by & Daddy & Nina but I saw that Pin & that finish my Francs so you will have to take turns with the kiddo in wearing it for the



trick ought to be pretty good little piece then I'll have some more France's before I start back & then I can look up & Jim will get $140.00 if that I left Long Island with so he Jim got me a little stake saved up in case of a finish.

Well I'll cut this an write one to Burnell & then hit that pile of feathers & Bry ~~can~~. But to wish you night ~~night~~ ~~night~~ ~~night~~