

September 25, 1942

Dear Mother,

I don't know if you'll be able to read this or not, I'm writing on the train and we're moving pretty fast. Between three and four hundred of us are on our way to Santa Ana Calif. to pre-flight school. We left Nashville at about eleven this morning. It's now about half past three and we're somewhere west of the Tenn. river in either Al. or Miss. The country here is beautiful, hills and valleys covered with woods. We've been through two tunnels so far. There is a lot of cotton and corn alongside of the tracks most towns and they are just harvesting here. Twice I've seen wagons going into town loaded with cotton, and mules are all that seem to be used down here. It sure will be swell to get back to the farm and work.

We just came through another tunnel and by the looks of the ridge ahead we may go through another one soon. Yes, we're in it now and I guess this is the longest yet, the smoke and dust is terrible. Out of the tunnel now we're going downhill through a fairly deep gorge, and now we're out on the side of a hill and one can see for miles off to the left. It's hard work to describe scenery so I'll write about something else.

Arnie Fornier and Al Hilton are both on the train along with Walter Hart, they are all three in the car ahead as we were put on board in alphabetical order. Casey and Crandall the other two from Me. are still in Nashville a couple sad boys.

They think they'll be bombardiers and don't like it and I don't know as I blame them. I wish they were with us we've been together so long but that is the way the army goes we have to make new friends every

time we move.

Well I drew the most pay I've drawn since I came into the army yesterday. We signed for \$70 and got \$43.10 after everything was deducted. Twelve days as a dollar a day for meals, five dollars for P. X. checks and nine ninety for sports equipment. That included a pair of blue pants with a gold stripe down the side, a T shirt, a sweatshirt, a pair of sneakers, a pair of shorts and supporter and two pairs of white wool socks, but with all that out I still feel rich. We have to pay for our meals on the train, a dollar apiece but we're supposed to get that back at our next camp. The government will still owe me a hundred dollars at the end of this month.

Well I guess I'll call it a day and write some more tomorrow then I'll mail it when I get there, it ought to be quite a letter by the time we get there. I just hope that you can read it. We are the last car to eat so probably won't have supper till eight.

10:55 Sat.

We reached Birmingham about a half an hour after I quit writing yesterday afternoon. I'm writing this in New Orleans. We arrived here about an hour ago and were allowed to get off the train for a half an hour. I didn't get to see much of the town because I was a fool and started walking instead of taking a taxi. I came very near being late for the train also. We probably won't eat dinner until about two as we've got to go about eighty miles before we pick up the dining car. According to the shipping order we start pre-flight school the 29th of this month. Well we're just moving out so my pen will probably start wobbling all over the paper.

While we were in Birmingham yesterday a young cowboy sneaked aboard and hid under the flap over the steps on the rear of our car. They didn't find him till about an hour later. I'll tell you that was one scared kid, although all they did was put him off at the next stop. He sure couldn't have been very bright or he wouldn't have hopped a ride on a troop train, I want you to know it's dangerous. We're going to cross the Mississippi shortly so guess I'll knock off and watch the countryside.

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Sept. 28, 1 P. M.

I'm sorry I didn't write anything on this letter yesterday but I was pretty busy watching the countryside. We must have entered Texas about twelve Sat. night because we had breakfast at Ft. Worth. I guess you must have got my card from there by now. We stopped again for lunch in Wichita and stopped at Childress to pick up a box lunch which we ate on the train. It was colder than heck Sat. night and all Sun. morning but it's quite warm this morning here in Ariz. The wind is blowing in the window and dirt flying everywhere and we're just going fast enough so that it makes it hard to write good. I guess we're stopping now though and may have a chance to get off. We stopped this morning at Gallop New Mexico and were allowed in the station where we got something to eat and drink.

Well I just finished a good steak dinner. We were allowed to get off in that station I've already forgotten the name of it. It was right out in the middle of the desert. I don't see how people can make any money out here but they seem to, although there is very few houses mostly just shantys, and also most of the population seems to be Indians. I like the country out here though some say its desolate but back in New Mexico It was actually beautiful, all kinds of rock formations. One of the boys got some pictures and I'll get some of them if

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they come out good. The Capt. said last night that we've traveled far enough already to be there but they kept rerouting the train so that we zigzagged all over heck as you can see if you look at a map.

While a bunch of us were talking with the Capt. the other night the subject of furloughs came up and I said that we didn't have much chance out here to get one. The way he talked I'm afraid I won't be home until I get my commission, if ever. Oh well such is life in the far west. We're going to get there sometime tomorrow so guess I'll quit till then.

Well we've arrived and this letter sure is a mess but I guess you will be able to read it. This is another one of those unfinished camps, no water and the mess hall is just about a mile away. We haven't got our bunks yet but I guess we'll get them along with some foot lockers which are going to come in handy. I'll write some more later and probably a night letter will get there before this does.

Your loving son

"Bill"

Apparently a note written by Bill's mother to someone...perhaps she sent this letter to be read then returned to her.

"a/c William T _____

"Be sure to send this back or bring it. Mother"

Squad # 38 Pilot