

# *World War II Letters from "Chuck" Pressentin*

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## *Camp Edwards, Massachusetts*

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**Feb. 2, 1943** Chuck finally got his orders to report to Camp Edwards, on Cape Cod in Massachusetts. He sent a postcard from Washington, D.C.:



*Hello Folks—  
Here I go again. Seeing more places and people. Spent the day here looking the Capitol over.  
Tomorrow I'll be in New York and then on to Boston where I'll be stationed. Still have hopes of  
getting home soon.  
Love, Chuck*

**March 14, 1943** Charles sent a postcard whose front was a color cartoon-type map entitled "A Bird's Eye View of Cape Cod"  
Return Address: Cpl. Chas. Pressentin, Btry B 475th Bn. CA (A.A.), Camp Edwards, Mass.  
Charles was now 29 years old. His birthday was Mar. 4.

*Hi--Here's an idea of the area in which I'm stationed. I just had a swell dinner. I'm going to  
call the folks today. Will be seeing you before long.  
Chuck*

## *Camp Edwards Letters, Cape Cod, Massachusetts*

**March 24, 1943** Chuck sent a letter with a postcard enclosed. The card shows "South Section – Camp Edwards, Mass."

*Dear Pongee,*

*Brrr. It's cold here. Have a couple of inches of new snow. I believe I'll like it here. At least it's like it would be at home. The people are very friendly. I'm sure going to be busy. Must start in putting out a bit now. Chuck*



### **Camp Edwards, Cape Cod, Massachusetts**

In 1940, the U.S. Army leased Camp Edwards as a training facility as part of its mobilization strategy for World War II. The Army undertook significant construction which helped to expand Camp Edwards from a rustic military post to a small city, overflowing with new GIs. The new plan called for new capacity to house 30,000 soldiers and was completed in just four months. At the peak of the construction, 30 buildings were completed every day. During the war, the camp functioned as a sending off point for troops as well as a training ground for anti-aircraft units.

Today, the Camp is home to two training centers for National Guard troops.

## *Camp Edwards Letters, Cape Cod, Massachusetts*

### **The 475th Coast Artillery Battalion (Antiaircraft) (Automatic Weapons)**

Constituted 3 November 1942 in the Army of the United States as and activated 15 November 1942 at Camp Edwards, Massachusetts. Reorganized and redesignated 30 April 1943 as the 475th Antiaircraft Artillery Automatic Weapons Battalion (Semimobile). Departed San Francisco Port of Embarkation 1 October 1943 for overseas service and arrived on Guadalcanal on 21 October 1943 . After service in New Guinea , moved to the Philippine Islands on 14 July 1945 . Returned from overseas service and arrived at the San Francisco Port of Embarkation on 9 January 1946 . Inactivated 11 January 1946 at Camp Stoneman , California.

At Camp Edwards, Chuck was assigned to the 475th Coast Artillery Battalion and this would remain his unit until his discharge at the end of 1945.

**March 24, 1943** Chuck's letter has a six-cent airmail stamp affixed.

Return address: Staff Sgt. Chas. Pressentin, Btry B 475th Bn. CA (A.A.), Camp Edwards, Mass. Charles has received a promotion!

*Dear Pongee,*

*Just returned from five days in the field on maneuvers and found your letter waiting for me. Have been looking forward to hearing from you. So things are pretty nice on the West coast. Here we are still having sub-zero weather with lots of snow and rain. Certainly seems like the weather should be breaking. After all the 21st of March should be spring. Maybe the calendar doesn't work in these parts.*

*I like it here though. In a way the weather is a lot like it was last spring in Alaska. Nobody seems to pay much attention to the cold and our work goes on just the same. It should be making good soldiers out of these boys. If they can take this and be happy they should be able to take pretty near anything which they are apt to contact over there.*

*I'm having an awful time trying to finish this letter. It seems like I've always got about 100 things to do. I am responsible for a lot of things though and it does take lots of time to keep things rolling.*

*How do you like my new rating? Are you proud of your little brother? I've worked like hell for it since I've been here. Before I could have it I of course had to prove that I had learned something from all the schooling I had. My Captain is one smart fellow too. You just can't talk him out of things. Anyway I'm now only two jumps away from the highest non commissioned rating. Before long I'll be up there too, you wait and see. I may even decide to try for a commission later on; if I do it will be for Mom and Pop. Well Pongee must close. I'll write again just as soon as I can get a minute or two.*  
*Love, Chuck*

## *Camp Edwards Letters, Cape Cod, Massachusetts*

**April 22, 1943** Chuck finally got his hoped-for leave and went to Sedro-Woolley, WA to see his parents. Sometime after his return, he sent a one-cent postcard to Pauline. Postmark is Camp Edwards, Mass. The front of the postcard is a hand-tinted colored picture of men in front of barracks. The title of the card is: "Infantry Group in Bayonet Drill, Camp Edwards, Mass., on Cape Cod." Return address: Staff Sgt. Chas. Pressentin, Btry B 475th Bn. CA (A.A.), Camp Edwards, Mass.

*Dear Pongee,*

*I'm really sorry because I didn't get down to Portland to see you. I thought I'd have more time at home but instead my furlough was cut short. We are now out on the range. Have been sleeping in a pup tent for the last seven days. It's still awfully cold and wintery here. It was sure good to see the folks. I hardly left the house while I was home. Chuck*



**Charles, front, 2nd from Left, Mar. 1943**



**At Sedro-Woolley, April, 1943 Charles with new rank**



**May 3rd 1943** Chuck's letter has a six-cent airmail stamp affixed. Return address: Staff Sgt. Chas. Pressentin, Btry B 475th Bn. CA (A.A.), Camp Edwards, Mass.

*Dear Pongee and Family,*

*Well here I am back at the old grind. Wouldn't mind it at all of the weather would just make up its mind. One day the sun shines and the next it's probably freezing or raining. Thought the weather used to be tough at Sitka but I don't believe it could compete with Cape Cod. The locals around here keep insisting spring is just around the corner but they can't seem to locate the corner.*

*We've been spending a lot of time practicing playing war out in the field. We've spent the last 18 days on maneuvers and it's meant sleeping in pup tents, going without showers, wearing your clothes night and day and etc. While we were out like this we were attacked by enemy forces, went through gas attacks, bombed by sacks of flour and shot at by blank ammunition.*

*Some of the battles were really realistic. Even engaged in some hand to hand battles in the middle of the night in a rainstorm. You ought to try it some time. It's fun but I guess that's the only way for the boys to learn. Probably won't be too long before it won't be for fun but for keeps. The harder we pour the training on them here the easier it will be for them when they do see action.*

*I called the folks early Easter morning from Boston. Had a chance to go up for the holidays and really had a swell time. Met lots of nice people including a couple of cute gals, so now I'm looking forward to going back up there soon. Had dinner with Alice Pressentin in New Jersey on my way back. She asked all about you and the family. Write. Your brother Chuck [Alice Pressentin was a first cousin of Pauline Pressentin Kemmerich.]*

## *Camp Edwards Letters, Cape Cod, Massachusetts*

May 17, 1943 Chuck's letter has a six-cent airmail stamp affixed.

Return address: Staff Sgt. Chas. Pressentin, Btry B 475th Bn. CA (A.A.), Camp Edwards, Mass.

*Dear Pongee and Family,*

*Well here it is Sunday—the day I spend washing clothes and getting my equipment back in shape. I've really got a lot of things to do today. One thing I must do first is bleach the floor in my room with lye. It's getting to look awful. Should be as white as snow. I've also got a big washing to do.*

*Tomorrow we have to take the boys over a course where we'll be under fire. Real bullets and everything. We'll have to crawl through barbed wire entanglements and must keep our posterior regions as close as 30" to the ground otherwise we'll get hit. Dynamite will also be exploded in our face from time to time to simulate bombs. Will be something new for the boys but I've already been through it twice. It's not an easy task. It means crawling 80 yards on one's belly and back. Elbows and knees are always bleeding at the end of the course. It is good training though.*

*Well Pongee it shan't be long before this bunch will be on its way. We have about two more weeks of this final training, after that we can go anytime. Haven't the least idea but I do wish it could be Alaska. Being here on the East coast though it's more apt to be Ireland or Russia.*

*We've been in quarantine now for two weeks. Two of the privates came down with measles and it sure upset all schedules as far as pleasure is concerned. I had planned a trip up into Maine and Vermont for this weekend and now it looks like I may not have another chance.*

*I'm now in line for the 1st Sgt rating in our outfit. He's supposed to transfer out soon and when he does I'll step into his boots. It will be as far as I can go as a non-commissioned officer. My next hope is that after we are in action I'll be able to earn a commission in combat., My Captain has talked me out of going to Officers Training School and says he can grant me the gold bars after we get across. I do hate to become separated from this bunch and that's what would happen if I was to go on to school. I've helped to build up this unit and I really feel like I'm a part of it. After all we have to fight sometime and I like the spirit these boys have. They also like me and that's a mighty big factor. After all I don't want a bullet in my back. That's a rough statement but then if you could see how some of the privates hate certain non-coms you'd understand. That's just one quick way of settling it.*

*Well I better get to my tasks. I could ramble on for pages but I'm afraid it would just be a repetition of what I've already said.  
Love, Chuck*