

World War II Letters from "Chuck" Pressentin



Fort Dix, New Jersey



In June, 1943 Charles was transferred from Camp Edwards on Cape Cod, to Fort Dix, New Jersey.

June 17, 1943 Chuck's letter has no stamp. Instead, it has "Free" written over the cancellation. Postmark is Trenton, NJ

Return address: Staff Sgt. Chas. Pressentin, Btry B 475th AAA(AW) Bn), Ft. Dix, New Jersey.

Somewhere in New Jersey

Dear Pongee and Family,

Well here I am in New Jersey. Only been here a week and I've already seen the whole state. Since last Monday morning we've been out on a maneuver which has taken us all over New Jersey and around Philadelphia. Right now we are camped just outside Atlantic City and this afternoon our whole outfit gets to spend the rest of the day on the beach having a good swim.

I'm now attached to the 4th Division 13th Corp which by the way is President Roosevelt's pet outfit. It seems that the General of our outfit is a personal friend of F.D.R. This bunch has been stationed in this area for the last 28 months. It's really a big outfit and has in it about 14,000 picked men.

I was up in New York last weekend and as usual I had a lot of fun. Shucks I can get around in that city as easy as if it were Portland, Oregon. In fact I really have a lot of fun on the subways. Boy how they travel. I'll swear some of them go at least 60 miles an hour in between blocks. I was at the Astor House in New York Sunday with the intention of seeing Harry James in person. 'Twas such a crowd though, I gave up the idea and took in the show at the Stage Door Canteen. Danced with several of the cuties. Could have taken one of them out to a show or something but my pocketbook was too flat. Haven't got the guts yet to let them pay for the check.

Boy you ought to see the crowds in Grand Central Depot on Saturday nite. People heading for all corners of the earth.

I suppose Barbs will be back working in the harvest this summer. Wished I'd got to see the kids. I have a 10-day furlough coming up in a couple of weeks. Could make it home if I could afford the plane ticket. Haven't inquired as to how much it would cost. Write. Love, Chuck

Fort Dix Letters, New Jersey

July 17, 1943 Chuck's letter has no stamp. Instead, it has "Free" written where a stamp would usually be. No postmark.

Return address: Staff Sgt. Chas. Presentin, Btry B 475th AAA(AW) Bn), Ft. Dix, New Jersey.

Fort Dix, New Jersey

Dear Pongee, Al, Barbs, and Noel.

Guess I better see if I can't do a bit of catching up while I still have time. Things have been popping the last two weeks or so around here. As you know—we'll be out of here in just a couple of more days for the Pacific coast. It's rumored we'll leave from San Francisco when we embark. Of course we really don't know what our destination is going to be. I just hope it winds up to be Alaska. Lots of troops have shipped out of Frisco for there.

I called the folks last night. It makes the 5th time I've called them in the last two weeks. After I leave here I may not have a chance to talk to them for a long time. Still who knows how things are going to work out.

I've been issued all new clothing. Everything must be A-1 before we leave here. I also was issued a nice wrist watch. Another thing I'm proud of is the new carbine 30 caliber semi-automatic rifle I've been issued. Had it out on the rifle range the other day and made expert with it. All I seemed to be able to hit was the bulls' eyes. I hope I have the chance to open up on a few Japs with it. It's really a beautiful little gun though. It's just like all the officers have.

I was awarded an efficiency and good conduct ribbon the other day by the War Dept. Only three of us made this honor in our outfit. My record for the past year has been perfect so it says in the letter accompanying it. I sent it on home to the folks.

I've taken out \$10,000 insurance for the folks and I intend to send them my wages as soon as we hit a boat. I've got this all arranged through an E-allotment plan. Guess I won't have any use for money over there anyway.

I had another picture taken last week. I sent Mom two big ones, 8 x 10. Maybe you can talk her out of one of them. That is if you want it.

Well Pongee, guess I'll close. I hope I'll have a chance to see the family again before we start across the puddle.

Love to all, Chuck

Fort Dix Letters, New Jersey

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

Return address: Staff Sgt. Chas. Presentin, 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

Fort Dix, New Jersey



Chuck's formal portrait, taken at Fort Dix, New Jersey while he was waiting to ship out to the Pacific Theater.