

Four Pettijohn Sons served in World War II,
Vietnam, Korea

Compiled by Ann Pettijohn Tomlinson
Summer 2004

Ross and Hilda Pettijohn passed away in 1983 and 1984, ages 92 and 86. These letters, written by their three sons during World War II should be read and enjoyed by their descendants and others for years to come. Finding the letters written home by Ross, Dyer and Bob when they were youths was like finding a treasure. Ann's first recollection of the War was seeing her mother, sitting by the old wooden Victrola radio, crying as they told of the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Hilda knew her oldest son was there, but the long wait to learn of his safety was painful for her and the entire family. Ross had left home in June of 1937 when Ann was 6 months old. This is his first letter home at the age of sixteen.

*Walla Walla, Washington
June 9, 1937*

Dear Folks

*Am all right and feeling fine. Am sending some money home for safekeeping. Have promise of about 2 weeks more work here so don't worry about me. Am in a hurry as am in town with the Boss who is waiting on me. Drop a line and tell me the news.
Your loving son, Ross P.*

PS: Address me at Touchet, Washington in care of Henry Garbe. Ross

*Stockton, California
20 Oct. 1938*

Dear Folks,

We arrived here last night safe and sound. Had pretty good luck coming down too. It was snowing from Shoshone to Wells, Nevada and pretty cold sometimes but the nice warm weather here now is enough to make up for it.

We are going to look around here a day or two for work. If we don't find any we will probably go on down to L. A. or San Diego.

I am going to send \$20 in travelers checks home for reserve. You can just save them till I send for them. They have to have my name on them again before they can be cashed, so I guess it's safe to send them through the mail.

This town has about 50,000 population and is spread out all over the country. The blocks are as big and the streets are as wide as Salt Lake's nearly.

If you want to write me, you had better send any mail to Visalia, General Delivery. I might not be around there for two or three weeks. There's not much more to say, so I'll close for now.

Yours - Ross

Fort McArthur, California

Nov 14, 1938

Dear Mother,

Well, I'm in the Army now. Took the oath this morning, got my uniform and a couple of vaccination shots. I don't know when they will ship me to Ft. Worden. At the end of the week, probably. I'll send for those two traveler's checks when I get located.

Dwight Hartzell signed up too, down at San Diego but is waiting till today to start up here. I was down to Rasmussen's again and went over to San Bernadino over the weekend to see the Knox girls. Well, I'll close now and expect to hear from me in about a week.

Your son - Ross

Ft. Worden, Washington

Dec. 4, 1938

Dear Folks,

I received the things okay and also got a couple of cards from Rollo that had been mailed to me in California. They were in the mail for about 3 weeks. I have been here a little over 2 weeks now and am making out pretty good. Each recruit has to go through 6 weeks of recruit training before he is "turned to duty" and stands guard or does fatigue details.

We have to learn all about rifles, automatic rifles, machine guns, gas masks and riot duty and also we have to know all about a bunch of different gases.

We have to know squad and troop movements and their orders. Every day we get out on the parade ground and march around with a rifle and bayonet over our shoulder. It isn't much fun either.

I am glad to hear that Melba won the football championship again. That makes 5 times in four years, doesn't it? If John Pline brings my suitcase of clothes home, I wish you would send them to me, and by the way, please address letter to me as Pvt., not Mr. That is what the Charge of Quarters told me.

I'd like to hear some news from around there. How is the cold storage doing now? Any more trouble? I hope not. How is Jerry Albin making out in school? I am sending some picture cards of the Fort and some of the artillery. They will show you what I'm mixed up with. I'm also sending the insurance receipt for the pictures I sent - I wish you would put in a tracer for them at the Post Office.

Well, I've got 3 pairs of shoes to shine this evening, so I'd better close. By golly if I learn anything in this Army, it will be the Boot-Black trade. Your shoes have to be polished all the time.

Your Son - Ross

Ft. Worden, Washington

Dec. 23, 1938

Dear Folks, I was very glad to get your letter the other day and the school papers that came today. I got a letter and Christmas card from Aunt Era, a card from Edna and a card from Woodie and Lyla. I wish I had some cards to return but I guess I'll have to write them my thanks. I got a letter from the recruiting Sergeant in San Diego too.

The bunch of recruits that I'm in will get turned to duty in the next day or two. We have passed all our examinations and have yet but to go down on the rifle range and fire our ten shots.

I believe you can just send the suitcase as it is. Yes, I'll be able to wear my civilian clothes and will be glad to get them. If you want to, send only a couple of the best white shorts and the tan one. If there are any besides that, take them out. You might as well take out the cribbage board too, and put in my camera tripod.

There is a night school here on the post for enlisted men. I might start to it after the first of the year. It would brush me up on my math, algebra and geometry. There is a radio school on the post but I wouldn't be able to get into it until next summer or fall. If I make good in it, I stand a chance of going to the Coast Artillery School at Ft. Monroe, Virginia and taking up radio there. It will be April 1940 before I could go there, though.

It hardly seems like Christmas here at all. The weather is mild, not cold. It doesn't rain here near as much as it does in Seattle. But the sky is overcast most of the time and it is foggy once in awhile. Today is the first day of a 10-day Christmas vacation. I think I'll get a 3-day pass and go to Seattle over New Year's.

I haven't written to Aunt Harriet, thinking I'd wait and see them New Year's. I sort of hate to face them after having skipped out as I did. Yes, do send me one of Ann's pictures. I've damn near forgotten what she looks like, and I get homesick for her once in awhile. How big is the dog by now? I suppose he is growing like a weed. How is the Cold Storage coming out in the lawsuit?

I've a slight cold for the past few days, but not bad enough to go on sick call. I guess it's just getting used to the climate. By the way, tell Ellis (Greenfield) to answer my letter if he hasn't, or I'll haunt him. I borrowed a fellow's typewriter to write this so I'd better close before he comes down after it. Answer soon and send the news.

Your son, Ross

PS: I borrowed a pen too. Send mine please, if you can find it.

Ann was two year old when this letter was written, and she had scribbled with pencil on one of the pages.

Ft. Worden, Washington
Dec. 31, 1938

Dear Mother,

We were paid yesterday so I'm sending this \$10 home for you to save for me. It sort of pinches things a little, but I think I can get by. I'm going to try and send \$10 home every month if I possibly can. When the suitcase gets here I will try to send the postage it cost, for it will probably be quite a bit. I guess I won't go to Seattle over New Year's. Have decided to wait till the first of February. So I will try to write Harriet soon. Well, I'm trying to answer the Christmas cards I got, so I'd better close now.

Your son, Ross

PS: I would like to open a savings account at one of the banks in Nampa. You might inquire about it the next time you're in town. Ross

Ft. Worden, Washington
January 14, 1939

Dear Folks,

I received the suitcase O.K. but the top and bottom were smashed in pretty bad. Lucky you had sewn cloth around it. There isn't much for me to tell. I have started to night school and like it fine. I think I will learn more Spanish here than I did in school for we have a teacher who spent three years in the University of Mexico at Mexico City and has taught in public schools.

Thanks for starting a bank account for me. It will be a little tough to put ten bucks a month away though. I'm going to buy a typewriter on time, which will cost \$3 a month, laundry costs \$2 a month, show tickets, \$1.40 for ten, haircuts 60 cents a month, tailor bill \$2 to \$3 a month, so you can see, I haven't much left on payday and this is a very close budget too. Believe me, in the Army, a fellow really gets to know the meaning and value of money.

Here comes a string of questions. Did you sell the popcorn? How is the Cold Storage business coming out? How is Melba doing in basketball? Are the W. P. A.ers still laying sidewalks? Who is Governor of Idaho since last election? How old is Ann this birthday, 3 or 4? Has Scharbach ever brought the camera home? I would like to have it sometime if you can send it. Send me a few neckties, will you, and put in that black one I had.

I am enclosing some pictures I took with my little camera - they are enlargements. When you answer, will you send Uncle Woodie's address, and I will answer the Christmas card they sent. I suppose Edna is still working in Boise.

Well, I'll close now, write soon. Your son, Ross

Ft. Worden, Washington
February 10, 1939

Dear Folks,

Got your letter and was glad to hear from you. I took a 3-day pass last weekend and went to Seattle. Visited the Crawfords while I was there. They are getting along the same as usual, I guess. Aunt Harriet is still wrapped up in school and a little worse with her communism. That is about all she can find to talk about and it must occupy her mind all the time. They have fixed their house all over - outside and inside, and it looks very nice. They have put in an open fireplace and a gas furnace. Les spoke as if he were going to get a new car this fall or next spring.

While I was in Seattle, I made arrangements to buy a typewriter but I will have to get Dad to sign the contract for me because I am not 21. The first payment is \$11 and I will make it the first of March and I have the money all ready to pay. The other payments are only \$5 a month and I will be able to make those very easily.

If you sign the contract Dad, send it to the address on the card and not to me. Be sure to sign them all and have a witness. If you don't feel like taking the responsibility of yourself or if you think I shouldn't get it, tear the contract up and tell me in a letter and I will notify them.

The films that were lost in the mail were okay. But there wasn't a very good job of developing done on them. The pictures that I send home, you can put in my album. I got the ties O. K. and what I need now are the clasps. I would also like to have my zipper loose-leaf notebook and that blue physics book that Dyer took to school last fall. I believe that I will send my leather jacket home next month if I don't sell it next payday. I should get \$6.00 out of it and won't sell it for any less because Bob should be able to get that much good out of it. It is getting too small for me. I bought some books - Algebra, Geometry and Spanish - and have started to the night school here. I don't know how much good it will do me but it will freshen up my math so I will stand more of a chance of getting into the Coast Artillery School at Ft. Monroe, Virginia.

I made first class gunner last month and we have started artillery practice. On the gun crew they placed me as number 11. That position is on the shot-truck, which wheels the projectiles up to the breech of the gun. It has been pretty cold here the last few days. We had a little snow the other night but not enough to amount to anything. Some of the fellows though, are from the south and California and have never seen snow before. That little dab of snow was quite an occurrence for them.

Today we had field inspection by the new Colonel. We had to display all of our field equipment and oh what a mess of it there was. Each soldier has half a tent, a tent pole, five pegs, rope, a pack carrier that goes on his back, mess kit, canteen and cup, towel, underwear, handkerchief, socks, razor, brush, soap, comb, toothbrush and paste, tin hat and campaign hat, extra shoestrings, raincoat, dog-tags, blanket, rifle and bayonet. All this stuff must be shined up and in first class condition and must be laid out just so. It takes about an hour just to lay it out and about 8 hours of good hard "bucking" to get it in shape. In addition to this, there is a whole herd of stuff in our footlocker or trunk that has to be folded and placed just right. About 15 suits of underwear, including "long handles", anywhere from 20 to 30 pairs of socks, and countless handkerchiefs. They must think that soldier have perpetual colds.

Then our buttons and shoes must be shiny all the time. Whenever a fellow runs out of anything to do, he always has an old standby to fall back on - buttons and shoes to shine. But we don't have much work to do, right now anyway. The hardest and practically the only work I've done yet was to shovel coal for two or three hours one afternoon. In the summer, they say, they take a lawnmower and mow the grass on the parade ground, ha ha. About once a month, each soldier catches a guard. Then he walks around the post, packing a rifle, and at night, yelling, "halt" at everybody to see who they are. Or he 'chases' prisoners. That is, he guards the prisoners while they are at work or mess. The only thing I don't like about guard is the orders. There is a string of them as long as your arm and you must be able to rattle them off anytime.

In the Army, they turn a prisoner out of the guardhouse, and the very next day, perhaps, they have him standing guard over the very prisoners he was in the guardhouse with. It's like getting let out of jail and then being made a policeman.

Well, it is getting about bedtime, so I'd better close. Anymore, I get sleepy if I'm up till 10:30. Haven't been up later than 11:00 for three months.

Answer soon - Your Son, Ross

PS: Have Dyer get Jerry (Albin)'s address so I can write to him. Ross

At this time, Dyer was 17 years old, Bob was 14, Dorothy was 12, Martha, 11 and Aunt Edna was 24. Daddy was 48 and mother, 43.

Ft. Worden, Wash.

Feb. 15, 1939

Dear Folks,

By the time you get this letter you will have answered the wire if at all. The call came from 9th corps area headquarters yesterday for volunteers for Foreign Service in Hawaii, in order to cut down the strength of the post, which is over strength. It was mighty short notice but I put in for it anyway as I wanted to go to Hawaii in the first place. The Captain said we'd have to show \$25.00 for traveling expenses if we wanted to go.

I only have \$10 cash and \$10 in the bank, which I couldn't get at on such short notice. That is why I asked you for \$15. I am sending you my bankbook so you can get \$10 of it and the other \$5 I can pay back next month. If you have sent the money and affidavit, and I get them too late to still be on the list, I will send it back.

Well, I'll close, and let you know after Friday whether I made it.

Your son, Ross

Ft. Worden, Wash.
March 5, 1939

Dear Folks,

Well, the typewriter came and I like it fine. I'm in on a clerical course here in the battery, learning how to type military letters and keep battery books. They are going to send a certain number of us from this post to the Presidio at San Francisco this summer on maneuvers, to do office work. If I'm good enough, maybe I'll get to go.

After I got to thinking it over and talking it over with Dwight Hartzell, we decided that I was very foolish and didn't want to go to Hawaii at all. It was just a whim, I guess, just like the whim that got me into the Army in the first place. But I'm not in the least bit sorry about that. So, even had you agreed and sent the money, I had already decided not to go when I got your letter.

I'd like to tell you a little about this Post, though. It is sort of considered as an Old Soldier's Home, like Ft. Rosecrans at San Diego. Most of the non-coms here are short-timers, and have "thrown out their anchors", that is, they have settled down, married, and have kept their rank from one enlistment to the next. The senior sergeant in this Battery has been here about 16 years. So about the only promotions come when a Non-Com either dies or is retired. There have been a few Pfc ratings given since I've been here. They have all gone to fellows who have at least a year's service in, at this Post. The best chance there is for promotion is Coast Artillery School, with a Staff Sergeant's rating just waiting for each graduate because Coast Artillery is mostly technical work, and technicians are badly needed.

I'm still going to the Post night school, although I have dropped my course in geometry and trigonometry because I can learn as much from the book in one night as the goof who teaches the class can expound in a week. He knows it well enough, but he sure as hell can't teach it.

It has been cold, blustery and rainy for a week, but one can tell spring is on the way. Sometimes there will be a clear morning and there are the most beautiful mountains I've ever seen anywhere, counting pictures, movies and all. On clear days one can see Mt. Rainier, Mt. Baker, and northward across the Sound into Victoria on Vancouver Island. It is about 40 miles over there. Believe me, if one could live on scenery, everybody around here would be very fat indeed.

I was on guard payday night, and I hope that I never am again. That guardhouse wasn't a guardhouse, it was a madhouse. Altogether, they put 14 drunk soldiers in that night, and there wasn't a chance for a wink of sleep between rounds. Those guys fought and yelled and shook the bars and made so much noise that they could be heard clear down at the Quartermaster's Wharf, nearly ½ mile away. Whew! When we came off guard duty I was nearly asleep on my feet, and when I came drooping into the barracks, Little Jesus (The top Sergeant) told me I was on a coal-shoveling detail right after dinner. By Golly, I'm still tired, 3 days later.

Mom got a new sewing machine, eh? (a little black portable Singer in a black case) I hope you're as pleased with it as I am with my typewriter, Mom. Did you trade the old one in, or let Bob tear it apart? Happy Birthday, Bob! But how old are you, 13, or 14? So Dyer has taken to swiping your bike, huh? You should lock it. Does Dyer still swipe the car and run off? Have you driven it any more, Bob, since I left? Do you remember the day we ran over the dog, down by the pea-picker's camp? Is Lawrence Roberts still running the paper route, or did he quit?

Tell Rollo (Hartzell) to write me a letter, Dyer. I think he owes me one. How is Ellis Greenfield making out? Is he still in the store? Ask him why he never writes. Tell Jerry (Albin) that if he wants to do something worthwhile or to make something of himself, join the army, and NOT THE NAVY. By cracky, if he was in here, he would hit the ball, and he

wouldn't get a chance to quit, like he quit school. I'll bet a stretch in here would do him more good than anything else there is. Well, it's getting late, and I'm writing a letter, not a book so I'll close. Write soon and send the news. Your son, Ross

PS: I would like very much to have that blue physics book of mine, and my zipper notebook, if you can find them.

Ft. Worden, Washington
April 8, 1939

Dear Mother,

I guess I'm very much to blame for not having written long ago. Am in very good health. Sleep a lot, eat a lot, lay around a lot and don't work much. Hands are as soft as a girl's and have grown about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch and gained 12 pounds since I've been in.

There isn't much to do around here except go to Post movies, so I wait until about the 15th of the month and buy a book of tickets for a dollar, off some soldier who wants money. Most soldiers are flat broke 2 days after payday, so loaned money brings high interest. I loaned \$1.00 to a fellow who is to pay me back \$2.00 on payday. We go to a roller-skating rink downtown once in awhile. I never learned to dance so I don't go to those, only to look around once in awhile. I'm still working as a student clerk.

Our Old Man, Capt. McCormick, left for service in Hawaii about a month ago. The Battery and everybody was very worry to lose him and he was sorry to go, too. We had a beer party for him the night before he left and as he went out the mess hall door, his eyes were blinking to hold back the tears. Everybody else's were too, I think. 1st Lieutenant. Ashworth took command, and is a good officer. When he called me in about my application for the West Point School, he learned where I was from and said he used to play baseball and football against Melba High while I was yet in Grade School. He didn't say where he was from, but asked how far Melba is from Mt. Home, so he may be from there.

A new Colonel took Post command the 4th, names Cunningham, relieving Col. Peace who is retiring. He is short, outspoken, frank, and doesn't seem to care if he embarrasses junior officers before the men. We call him "Napoleon". We recently went to Seattle for a ceremony and parade to celebrate the opening of a new armory and Washington State's 50th anniversary. Troops from Canada, Ft. Lewis, Sailors, Marines and Nat'l Guard were there. About 7,000 on the field at once, which ended with a 6 mile march from one end of the city to the other.

So George Simmons is joining the service, eh? With what little experience I've had and what I've learned, I wish I could give him some frugal advice. He should go to San Francisco and join because that's headquarters, and he'd have more chance to choose which branch of service, and he should steer clear of the infantry and cavalry. The Air Corps is a good place to be as they are enlarging, so good chance of advancement. Signal Corps in the 63rd Coast Artillery at Ft. MacArthur, California is a good place. The farther away he's sent from the point of enlistment, the more travel pay he'll get. I am entitled to about \$80.00 from San Diego. But some recruiting Sergeant will probably get hold of him, and fill him full of hot air, and he'll get stuck in some out-of-the-way post like I was, and wise too late. Next time I enlist, if I ever do, they'll have a tough time putting anything over one me because I've learned my little lesson, and will keep my eyes open hereafter, I hope.

I will send the suit for Bob in a day or two. Ann must be growing very fast. I have a picture of her I took just before I left and comparing it with the ones you sent me, they don't look like the same little girl. Dwight says that Rollo tells him he, Jerry and Dyer are going

to Alaska when school it out. Seattle papers say there will be a poor season there this year. Not many fishing boats leaving the Sound yet, either.

There is a bed of tulips out in the lawn that I wish you could see, Mother. They are big tall ones, and a myriad of bright colors. I never did care much for flowers, but those tulips couldn't help but attract my attention and I find myself looking at them out the window. I know you would be crazy about them. Write soon and send the news. I was glad to get the clippings.

Your son, Ross

PS: If Dad doesn't read this, get him to tell me what outfit he was in during the First World War. I would like to know for the sake of curiosity. Scharbach told me that I would get an Annual (yearbook) for the use of the camera. I wonder if he will send it.

14th Coast Artillery -
Ft. Worden, Washington
July 3, 1939

Dear Folks,

I guess I should write, although I think you owe me a letter. The boys left for San Francisco on CPX Maneuvers today and Dwight got to go. I'm kind of sorry I didn't, but I took special duty here as clerk for the CMTC and they wouldn't let me quit. Capt. Myers told me they were keeping the best clerks here, but I think he was airing me a little. 150 CMTX's began to arrive the first, and I've worked every day. They sure look like a bunch of Johns in the old, war-issue uniforms.

We completed maneuvers for this year. I fired 30 rounds and made 127 out of a possible 150m, not so good, but better than I thought I'd do with my bum right eye. The National Guard was here 2 weeks, firing 6, 10 and 12" rifles. They hired a commercial tug to tow targets. Only got \$2 to the bank, which makes a total of \$17.00. I didn't do very well on the West Point Prep exams, not enough study I guess. They were very hard, and on the physical I was disqualified for color-blindness to red and green, which I was afraid they would catch me on. Five of us took them, three from this battery. Of the three, I was highest, twice as high as the next. None from this post made it.

How are the crops coming, and the cold storage? What about the lawsuit? Is Dyer helping at home? Rollo Hartzell dropped by on his way to Ketchikan, a few hours. How is little Ann coming with the talking? She is probably growing like the dickens and won't be a baby anymore when I get to see her next, the little rogue. I've been in the Army 8 months, which seems like days, sometimes, and years others. If I get a chance I'm going to transfer into the Air Corps at March Field, Calif. It is becoming the largest, most important weapon of the Army, expanding, taking in more personnel, which means new ratings for those who can earn them, and this Army isn't made up of college graduates by any means, either. It's been a month since I've heard from home.

Love, Ross

Ft. Worden, Wash.
August 10, 1939

Dear Folks,

Sorry to hear that Dad is ill. Wish I were home to help with the work. Tired to put in for a furlough, but the 1st Sergeant wouldn't let me. Still trying for radio school. Don't know whether to keep on with this thankless damn clerking job, as the old clerks say they

sure as hell wouldn't be Army clerks if they had it to do over. 13 or 14 years is a long time to just make Staff Sergeant, and 10 years experience wouldn't be worth a hoot on the outside, so I'm going to try and get into something with more future, like radio or electricity. I'll be damned if I'll stay in 30 years to retire as Buck Sergeant. I've been in long enough to see how the cards are held.

My Bunkie and I went to Seattle last weekend on pass, across the Sound on an Army ship, the USAMP "Niles". Missed the ferry back, and 60 miles is quite a distance to swim, so were AWOL about 5 hours. My first AWOL, so they didn't do anything - reminds me of playing hooky from school. Got the suit back, but won't wear it much. Sold my coat to a guy that transferred to MacArthur - maybe I shouldn't have, but I got \$10 out of it.

So Uncle Gene finally fell, did he? Too bad - too bad. (Uncle Gene was married to Carolyn July 8, 1939 at the age of 26.)

Infantry drill is changing Sept. 1. All of the old, detailed squad, platoon and company foot movements are done away with. Our Squad Corporal went to Panama - is a pretty good egg, been through the war and all over the world. He can spin some pretty grisly tales too. We have good rations. By careful budgeting, the Mess Sergeant saves enough each month to throw a beer party once in awhile or have a big turkey dinner with all the trimmings. One month, the acting Mess Sergeant we had, got drunk and put the fund \$200 in the hole, so we ate hash had beans for a while. Another time, we went without butter while they bought a spud peeler and a couple of slicers. No kick about the chow, just miss the milk. Only get a glass a day.

My typewriter is half paid for now, a fine little machine, but am going to have to teach it how to spell a little better. It's about time for retreat. Love, Ross

Ft. Worden, Wash.

Sept. 18, 1939

Dear Dyer,

Thanks for the letter. I was relieved from special duty with the Adjutant around August 1, then place on special duty with the Artillery Engineer, where I learned more in 3 weeks than 3 months in the Adjutant's Office. Wish I could have stayed there, it carries a good rating - Pfc and 4th Class Specialist at \$45.00 per month, but the Adjutant told the old man he'd turn me loose September first. The battery clerk is going on furlough, so I'll take his place. If I stay here, I'll make a rating sooner or later that will pay \$33.00 per month.

We finally finished firing our target practice Friday. From what they say, we made a good record. The target is a float about 12 feet square with big red cloth triangular shaped rigs on it, something like sails. Looking at it from the beach through an azimuth instrument it reminds me of one of your FFA hog-houses being towed through the water. It's 8 to 12 thousand yards from the guns, or 5 to 7 miles. Our very last shot yesterday hit dead center, and sank it. We made several "hits", which is anything that lands within 50 yards of the target.

To celebrate the end of target season, the battery had a Dutch lunch in the mess hall Friday night. This consists of beer, pickled pig's feet, Limburger, cold meats, dill pickles, rye bread and what-have-you. But the main item is, of rouse, the beer. We had 6 kegs for this one and believe me, these soldiers are rally in Paradise when they can get in there and lap up all the beer they want, free, and get drunk, fight and voice their sweet thoughts and sentiments in raucous versions of such old standbys as "Sweet Adeline". Next morning the mess hall and latrine look like a herd of hogs had been turned loose in there.

Was over in Seattle August first, and also September first. Rollo is down from Alaska and his mother is visiting in Seattle. Shag is looking around there for work, thinks he might get a job out at Boeing. Jerry is still in Alaska. He didn't come down with Rollo - no money. Aunt Harriet's place is all fixed up and looks pretty slick. Harriet is still monkeying

around the University and is writing a book about the history of the Washington State Grange on the side. Les is still selling booze for the state. Cousin Kate is in her last year of high school. She has grown and developed a lot in the last couple of years, and would be a pretty nice looking gal if she weren't so fat.

Dwight Hartzell got back from Frisco the last of August. He was down there for 6 weeks and got to see the Fair. My little typewriter is more than half paid for - I owe \$30.00 on it yet. At \$5.00 per month, it will be paid off by next March. I've got \$17.00 saved up in the bank at Nampa. Have been trying to save a little each month, but it's hard as hell to do. Could have put \$20.00 away the last couple of months, but went to Seattle instead. From now on, I'm going to stay away from that hick town.

You want to take that ornery Bob in hand and get him off on the right track there in High School and get him out for football. I hope you keep me posted on how the games come out. You lost quite a few players last year, didn't you? I had a letter from Mary Lee just before she left for San Berdoo. She mentioned some scrape that Ellis and Earl got into. I'd like to get the straight of it just for curiosity's sake. What was it all about? Rollo says Jerry told him that Melba had a theater all fixed up with good seats and a sloping floor and all. Is that so, or some of Jerry's BS?

Well, we had a big parade and review for retiring Chaplain, Lt. Col. Bonner this evening, and I'm pretty tired. By the way, Infantry drill and manual of arms was changed Sept. 1, and everybody is learning the new drill. It's the physical _____'s. Nobody likes it much. Isn't near as snappy as the old, and doesn't look as good for parade or reviews.

Kiss Ann once for me. And when you see Norma Greenfield, tell her there's a soldier over here who is eating his heart out and that he will die if she doesn't write him that letter she owes him.

Ross

(Written after a furlough home to Melba. His baby sister Ann was almost 3 years old.)

Ft. Worden, Wash
3 Nov. 1939

Dear Folks,

Well, I arrived back safely after a good trip. The worst part of the journey was that I had to walk out to the Post from town through a heavy downpour of rain, carrying my suitcases. It is a mile and a half. I got in Seattle at 6:00 a.m. Wed., went out to Harriet's and stayed that night. Mabel and Dean were coming up today, but I couldn't stay to see them. Harriet says that cousin Jack got hit in the eye while initiating freshmen at school and they are afraid it might be blind.

Was sort of glad to get back to the post. Everything is about the same. I got a worse bunk back than I used to have, but am going to trade with a guy that is AWOL. We had fixed anti-aircraft gun drill this morning and policed up the barracks. This afternoon is free so I'm going to buck my equipment back in shape. I went over to Ft. Lawton in Seattle to see Ed Woods, Pop Woods son, but he was gone AWOL and I didn't get to see him.

Love, Ross

Ft. Worden, Wash.
Nov. 15, 1939

Dear Folks,

We were paid our ration money the other day, so I'm sending Dad the money he loaned me. Thanks a lot, Dad. I just came off guard, which was rainy and sort of miserable. Saturday our battery went to Ft. Angeles to parade for Armistice, sponsored by the American Legion and VFW. A good parade, not very long, with a big feed and to-do afterwards.

They are establishing a 200-man recruit camp here, to be sent to Panama. I don't know just what I'll do Thanksgiving. Harriet invited me there - say I noticed when I was there, her dining room table is exactly like yours. That's a sort of funny coincidence isn't it?

Last night the country around here was shaken by an earthquake. When I awoke this morning I heard everybody talking about the building shaking and windows rattling. I must be a sound sleeper because I didn't hear or feel it. The Top Kick said it shook the dishes out of his cupboard and broke most of them. The Inspector General was around here today inspecting the office. He gigged the clerk because he didn't have the Circulars on Army Regulations posted up to date. Last year they got gigged because they didn't have a Correspondence File and Record. The Inspector looked at it this time but it was up in good shape. Tomorrow we are having a full field inspection in barracks and a parade with inspection in ranks.

What does Ann think about my being gone? Does she miss me or ask where I am? Did Sis win the Halloween contest with her costume? I haven't finished that roll of film yet but probably will Sunday. Dwight Hartzell got back OK but I've only seen him once. Better close now. Please answer soon.
Your loving son, Ross

Ft. Worden, Wash.
January 12, 1940

Dear Folks,

Two of us in this battery passed the examinations. The other fellow is my bunkmate and his name is Jerry DeVore from Yakima, a damn good kid. I'm glad we'll be going together. We go for a physical the 16th and will be discharged the 22nd, re-enlisted the 23rd, and leave for San Francisco. Wednesday, the 24th. We have to catch the first transport bound for the east coast in order to reach Ft. Monroe by March 1. We will leave the transport either at Charleston, S. C. or at New York. (We sure as Hell hope it is New York because that would be more fun). Gee, I'm so excited about this deal that I can think of nothing else to write about. Of course we haven't gone yet but I don't see where there can be a slip-up now. A Staff Sergeant's grade at \$72.00 a month lingers over the horizon, waiting for me to come, viz. the C. A. School, and grasp it. Believe me, I'm going to bend every effort to do so.

I spent Thanksgiving waiting tables, Christmas and New Year's Day walking guard. Cousin Kate sent me two urgent pleas to come to Seattle for the holidays. One at Thanksgiving and one at Christmas but I couldn't go. Was on guard yesterday over a man who is crazy and has spells from shellshock. They are going to send him to St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Wash. D. C. He told me that he had just returned from Foreign Service in the Philippines at the outbreak of the World War (ed. note - It wasn't called World War I yet, because WW II hadn't happened) and that he served with the 65th Coast Artillery overseas.

He said he was in Battery 'C'. I don't suppose you ever met up with him, Dad, but his name is John Shannon. They call him "Dusty". He is a little, short baboon-faced Irishman and was some kind of a clerk during the war.

I think I'll send some stuff I don't take to take, and I'd like that slide rule around there someplace. Thanks a lot for the Christmas gifts. Tell Aunt Vera Hello for me. I need Uncle Woodie's address. I sent him a Christmas card addressed "The Bench Dist., Boise, Idaho". I wonder if he got it.

My pal Turk transferred to the Panama detachment. Has been on furlough to Detroit and just got back. In 10 or 11 days I should be in 'Frisco.
Your son, Ross

Dear Ross

Well, how is everything in Seattle? Everything here is fine. We played Kuna yesterday and beat them 13 to 7. Other games we have played are Star 0, Melba 32; Eagle 25, Melba 6; Mountain Home 7, Melba 13; Franklin 7, Melba ?; Caldwell sophomores and freshmen 1, Melba 6. We have a yard team this year. I play inside tackle with Fred Johnson who weighs 107 pounds and he is all man. I have played every quarter of every game so far. I was elected F. F. A. President last Monday night. We are going to have another Mustang round up this year, November 5. Aunt Vera wanted to send the Social Security blank to you. If you have signed up before, fill it in and send it back. If you haven't send it back anyway. Well, I have to get this in the mail. So Long.

Your brother, Dyer Pettijohn

We play Middleton Friday. Please write.

Ft. McDowell, California
January 19, 1940

Dear Folks,

They call it "Angel Island" but it seems like a hellhole to me. There are about 5,000 recruits and casuals here now and everything is in an uproar. We left Seattle at 11:30 last Thursday night and got in San Francisco early Saturday morning. Had a nice trip down by train. We were paid off on our finals the day before we left and everybody has a lot of money to spend. That is, everybody but two of us. One guy got rolled for \$150.00 before we left Seattle, and another lost \$85.00 playing blackjack on the train. But neither of them gives a damn. It's sure funny how irresponsible soldiers are about their money. Most of them don't seem satisfied till they're broke.

Yesterday we got passes (miraculously) to go to San Francisco. It is sure a swell town - better than any other on the West coast, I think. Seeing the bridges and Treasure Island was sure a thrill. We got a nice close-up look at Alcatraz. The Government ship that runs Angel Island docks there.

We've had 2 physicals, and another tomorrow. In a large casual depot like this, with so many men passing through, they keep a close watch for disease and parasites. The chow isn't so good, 9 meals a day, 1800 men per meal. We sail tomorrow, arriving in New York February 17. I'll write from Panama, and try to send pictures from New York. Our ship will be Chateau Thierry.

Your loving son, Ross

USAT Chateau Thierry
Somewhere at sea
February 7, 1940

Dear Folks,

Oh for the life of a sailor. Yeah, what a life. We've been at sea over 8 days now, to dock in the Pacific end of the Panama Canal tomorrow. Foggy and rough when we left out under the Golden Gate Bridge and for 2 days it was awful damned rough. I was lightheaded and dizzy some, but didn't get sick.

Had a hard time getting around on this thing until I got my "sea legs". Oh deck, you'll find yourself walking uphill, then the next instant, plunging downhill, but I don't notice it at all now. I suppose when I go ashore in Panama I'll stagger up the street like a drunken man.

Chow aboard ship isn't so good. We go by the 1st class passengers and officer's galley on the way to the mess hall, and their food looks so much better than the stuff they hand us on a big tin platter. It's pretty greasy, but we get quite a lot of fresh fruit and ice cream.

Of the four main decks, A and B are used by first class passengers and the ship's officers. B is the galley, mess hall, recreation rooms and shower rooms. D deck is hold and troop sleeping quarters and whew. The bunks are 4 feet high, about 2 feet above each other, and two feet between tiers. They consist of a piece of canvas about 2 feet wide and 6 feet long, held taut with rope, hard as the floor, with no mattress, only a blanket and pillow. But that is plenty - if I had my choice sleeping in that hole and Hell, I'd take Hell and never regret it. I can hardly stand to be down in that stifling heat more than 15 minutes at a time. They take their bunks up on poop deck where it's nice and cool at night.

There are about 120 soldiers and 60 sailors aboard. The sailors are going to New York and then aboard a new battleship they are building in the Philadelphia shipyards. Tonight is my 4th tour of guard duty, but luckily I haven't caught any KP's - it's hot in those galleys too.

We've sighted land four times on the way down the coast of Mexico. Have seen lots of porpoises, tuna and marlin. It's quite a thrill to watch them jump. The big marlin jump clear out of the water, sometimes ten feet into the air, their bodies flashing in the sun as they shake and twist. Thousands of flying fish jump out of the bow waves and skim 50 yards or so over the water, then plunk suddenly back into the wave. It's a peculiar sensation to see a fish flying along like a bird (only they don't flap their wings, fins or whatever they're called). There are sharks too, the biggest one I've seen rose right up under the port side of the stern one day, when I happened to be standing there on the poop deck. He was a big hammerhead, at least 30 feet long. The biggest fish I ever saw, and I got a good look at him. Once I awhile a big sea turtle floats by. The only ones I've seen were about a foot and a half across.

We have calisthenics every morning in the after-deck well. It is some fun. You should try to do a full knee bend on the deck of a rolling, pitching ship. The formation is more of a riot than it is an order drill. All the officers and non-coms wives come to the rail of A deck and stand there watching us and laughing. We had a stowaway aboard ship who got sent back to San Francisco on an army transport we met. But he was disappointed.

We've had 2 fire and boat drills, mine is lifeboat #12A. We don life preservers and stand by to lower away the lifeboats. Cigarettes are cheap on board, 60 cents a carton, with no tax - no federal revenue stamp. Showers are salt water - pure brine where you can't get a lather even with hard-water soap. In this climate you feel sticky all the time, so it doesn't do any good to take a shower anyway. Every one runs around stripped to undershirts and slacks to keep cool. Every kind of tattoo imaginable can be seen on probably 90% of the guys.

I've had a good time so far on this voyage but will be glad when it's over. Sort of tiresome looking at water all the time. They say we're picking up 300 more soldiers in Panama, so we won't pull any more duty between here and New York. I hop so. Will write when we get to Brooklyn so goodbye till then. Love and kisses to Ann. Ross

Ft. Monroe, Virginia
February 25, 1940 (Ross was 19 ½ years old)

Dear Folks,

Well, the journey is finally over and here we are. Came down to Norfolk from New York aboard a civilian steamer, the George Washington. It took us all one night and we rode first class. Boy, it sure was different from riding in the hold of a transport. School doesn't start until the 4th of March, so we have a week yet. The class here now graduates the 29th. They aren't told their grades or standings until graduation day so all of them are "sweating out" the list. Also where they will be assigned. There is a corporal out of D battery graduating with this class. He says he already has his orders and is going to a post in Maine. Most of them, they say, are going to foreign service. I suppose that is probably where we'll go too, if and when we graduate. The weather here is about like it is at home this time of year. They call it the sunny south, but it isn't so "sunny" right now. This post is like all coast artillery posts, practically surrounded by water, and very large for a C.A.C. post. Has two regiments, not including the detachments and school

We all managed to get rid of what money we had on the trip and are wondering when we will be paid. I'm going to get me a pair of glasses. My eyes have been bothering me a little and I don't want to take any chances with them. It sure is fine to get back to good show again! 3 weeks of that transport grub leaves a person feeling sort of wan.

I would like to get Dick Swainston and Buck Montgomery's address if I can. I know they are at Ft. Dupont, Delaware, but don't know which outfit or anything. My address here is E. S. Detachment, Coast Artillery School, Ft. Monroe, Virginia. Answer right away, and send all the news. Love, Ross

April 4, 1940
The Coast Artillery School
Ft. Monroe, Virginia

Dear Folks,

I got your letters okay and the slide rule. A month of school is over now and getting harder - electricity and trigonometry are awful stiff and keep me on the jump. Most of the guys know this stuff, and have had code, too. Keeps the rest of us digging to beat hell, with school hours 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. 6 days a week. It's an awful strain.

It snowed Easter Sunday and has been rainy. My typewriter is all paid for - I got the title the other day. I've heaved that box all over the country - carried it aboard the transport ship and off again. I've taken 4 rolls of film. Chow here isn't as good as the outfit - funny looking vegetables about the size of golf balls that taste like a mouth full of starch. They call them spuds, but I don't know. Doesn't seem to be any beef around here - mostly pork, and poor at that. In one letter, Dad asked about foreign service. That is service in United States possessions: The Philippines, Panama, Hawaii, Alaska, or Puerto Rico. There are no Army garrisons in foreign countries since the 1st Infantry came home from China.

I haven't written to Dick S. as I heard that his battalion has left Ft. Dupont. It's time to go back to class, 6:00, so I'd better close for now. Your, Ross

February, 1940
O. D. & R. Depot
Brooklyn Army Base
Brooklyn, New York

Dear Folks

I've been anxious to get this letter off to you for the last day or two but haven't had time.

I suppose that you have got my letter from Panama by now. We docked at Balboa, on the Pacific side, a week ago last Thursday afternoon. They gave us shore leave until 11:00 that night.

We went over to Panama City, capitol of the Republic of Panama. I don't know how to

Describe that place. A sailor gave DeVore and I a ride over there from Balboa. When we came over a little hill, we saw a large slum section spread out below us. As we skirted them along the hill I thought, "Wall, we'll be coming to the main part of town pretty quick". The sailor let us out of his car at the entrance or what looked to me like a narrow, dirty alley. I asked him, "Where is the main drag?" "This is it, Mac", he said.

And that "alley" is the widest and straightest street in the city. Just wide enough for one car to pass another without running up on the sidewalk. Most of the rest of the streets are just wide enough for one car to go through at a time. And they are crooked too. It's just like as if some giant had taken a stick and given the town a good stir.

The Panamanian language is Spanish. Most of the Panamanians are just Spanish-speaking blacks. A full-blooded "spik" is about as rare as a white man. All the shopkeepers, cab drivers, bartenders, etc., know just enough English to run their business and that's about all.

There are all kinds of little joints along the street where they sell silk cloth by the bolt, handmade leather goods, clothing and all kinds of things like that. All that stuff is cheap as the devil, too. I bought a beautiful red and blue silk scarf-type thing for fifty cents that I'll bet would cost three or four dollars in the States. And I bought a pair of handmade, alligator hide slippers for three dollars that would cost ten here. I would have jewed him down to two dollars for the slippers, but was in a hurry to get back to the ship. I wish I'd had enough money to get a few more things than I did while I was there. Maybe I'll have another chance in 7 or 8 months.

There are thousands of little black "spik" kids all over the place. Most of them are half naked and the rest are naked. Each one has a little god, sort of a shoe shining stand. They follow you around, pestering you to let them shine your shoes. And there's no getting rid of them. No matter if your shoes were shined, not 5 minutes ago. If you're sitting in a bar or restaurant they slip up and dab polish on your shoes to ruin the shine, then haunt you until you get them shined again for "cinco centavos" (five cents). The impudent, tenacious little brats. They are what I dislike about Panama.

The main drink down there is called "Rum-Coke". All it is, is Coca Cola with Rum in it. In most of the places they don't savvy a Tom Collins or Scotch Highball, just Rum-Coke. The beer down there is better than it is here.

We started through the canal at high noon on Friday. I've seen so many pictures and have heard so much about the canal that I didn't get much thrill from a first-hand "sweat". I was quite a sight, though, to see the locks operate. So was Galliard cut. A person can see in his imagination how that mountain looked before they cut a hole through it.

There was a lot of dirt moved out of there. Batun Lake is a beautiful place. Looking at the shores of the lake a person can get a good idea of a genuine tropical jungle.

We were at Cristobal and Colon on the Atlantic side from Friday evening until midnight. Cristobal is in the Zone and Colon in the Republic. Colon is a much better town than Panama City. It is laid out square and the streets are wider. It seems more civilized than Panama City. Yet it has its hole-in-the-wall joints and shoeshine boys too. Another thing I never saw the likes of - they are cars, midget busses a little larger than a station wagon, called "Chivas", pronounced "Cheevaz". There are hundreds of them on the streets. They take the place of streetcars.

About 300 troops boarded the ship at Panama, bound for New York. The first and third days out were the roughest of the voyage. Believe me I was really seasick. But I wasn't alone in my misery. There was scarcely leaning-over room at the lee rail. The best thing to do when seasick is to lay flat on the deck and roll with the vessel. It seems funny now, but was pathetic then to see those poor guys rolling around all over the decks and in the scuppers not giving a damn whether the ship sank or flew. The first morning out it was perfectly nauseating in that hold where we slept. I couldn't stand to be on my foot down there for more than a minute at a time. I made three attempts to go down and make up my bunk for inspection. Each time I got down there and nicely started, I would get sick and have to dash madly up to the rail and fresh air again. Finally, I carried my things up to the poop deck and hid them in a lifeboat until after inspection. Then it didn't make a damn how they were folded.

We docked at Charleston, South Carolina last Thursday. That town gave me a very poor first impression of the south. Of course it is an old city, but it seemed to me like a rickety, rundown-at-the-heels place. Everything seems jammed together, huddle dup like there wasn't any room. The same way with Panama City. I guess I'm too much of a westerner and miss the wide-open spaces. We were all glad to get back aboard and watch old Fort Sumpter disappear off the stern.

I caught two KP's between Charleston and New York on account of most of the troops disembarked at Charleston. The only ones left aboard were the School Detail and Sailors.

We docked at the USATQM docks here at Brooklyn last Saturday about noon. It would be worth a transport voyage around the world to come sailing through the narrows and see those skyscrapers towering above you, and the Statue of Liberty. I've seen pictures of the New York skyline but believe me, no picture on earth can do it justice. It has to be actually seen to be appreciated.

But down in the streets of New York is just like Seattle or San Francisco. City streets, a lot of people, streetcars, traffic cops and all the rest. Only there's a lot more electric signs in this town. Saturday night we went up on top of the RCA building. DeVore didn't want to go up. He said, "It ain't worth forty cents, chick." But the minute we stepped out on the roof he changed his mind. Nobody would blame him, either. Seeing New York at night from 70 stories in the air. They seem like 70 miles. I believe the RCA building ranks second in height to the Empire State. Either of them certainly dwarfs the Smith Tower in Seattle or the Los Angeles City Hall.

Yesterday we went over early and just walked. And we walked and we walked and we walked. Over half of Manhattan Island. From Union Square to Central Park. From Grand Central Station to 12th Avenue. We saw Times Square, 42nd and Broadway, Columbus Circle, Madison Square Garden, Carnegie Hall, Museum of Modern Arts, Rockefeller Plaza, Little Church Around the Corner, Metropolitan Opera House and a lot of those famous theaters. Also walked by and looked in a lot of those ritzy nightclubs like Jack Dempsey's Bar. Walked by and looked in.

This Brooklyn Army Base is quite a place. A small city in itself. We are situated on the 4th floor of the building, which is the JD & Rd floor. Each floor contains squad rooms,

mess halls, recreation rooms, Post Exchange, barber shop, tailor shop, everything we need. And there are 7 floors in the building. I'm going to get some postcard pictures or it.

I took a lot of pictures on the trip and am going to get them developed as soon as I can. We leave for Ft. Monroe on Wednesday, probably by train although they might send us down on a small coastal steamer.

I believe Buck Montgomery and Dick Swainston are at Ft. DuPont, Delaware. If I get a chance, I'm going to look them up. Maybe you can get their exact address for me and forward it when you write. I'd like to get a hold of that slide rule. It is around there somewhere. I couldn't find it when I was home.

I'll write you again when we get to Monroe and you can answer me then. Maybe I ought to write Aunt Harriet a letter tonight since they don't even know I've gone. Goodbye for now.

Love, Ross

Ft. Monroe, Virginia

May 9, 1940

Dear Folks,

I got the newspapers you sent today, and suddenly realized that I haven't written for more than a month now. And you're probably wondering what is the matter. We finished trig last week and I finished 3rd highest. Hope I can do that well in electricity and radio communications. We've battled our way up to 9 words a minute in code now, and start sending Monday. Now on out will be the roughest grind. Four hours of code practice a day and the rest learning why a certain inductance has resonance to a certain frequency when in parallel with a certain capacitance, or which direction the current gets out of phase with the voltage across a 10 ohm positive impedance. And a lot of other stuff that's about as easy to understand as the Iliad in the original Greek. But I guess it'll come, - slowly. The radio class is dropping in strength a little, some because of poor grades, or just couldn't hack it. A couple of guys got drunk and went swimming naked right in front of the Generals' quarters. Another from St. Stevens, Oregon went over the hill, leaving \$200 worth of stuff behind. His buddy thinks he went off limits down in Newport News and got killed in some joint - they are investigating. I'll never get used to the South and blacks. There are millions of them. They have their own schools and stores. They can ride only in the back of streetcars or busses, have separate drinking fountains on the street. Payday we went to Norfolk and on the ferry we were standing around in the lounge and noticed that everybody else seemed to be over in the other part, separated by a newsstand. As we went out the door I found out why - the sign on the door said "Colored Salon". We felt pretty foolish. Norfolk was brimming over with sailors - we couldn't find a hotel room for any price. At eh YMCA they were sleeping on benches and pool tables, and on the street, in doorways, and just wandering around.

Chow is as bad as ever - I think the mess sergeant has $\frac{1}{2}$ interest in a boloney factory. Weather is still cold. There is a lot of local historical significance, so always tourists. They come to the Chamberlain Hotel, a big resort. We can look out the window and see where the battle between the Monitor and Merrimac took place out in Hampton Roads. Inside the old Fort, which is separated from the mainland, is the prison where Jefferson Davis was kept. Up the James River about 30 miles is the site of the Jamestown Colony, first permanent settlement. Signs all over mark Civil War battles. Along the road to Hampton is a cemetery of soldiers killed in battle. Acres of white crosses, each just alike, similar to a cross-planted field of corn, and when one stops to consider that 4 each stands for one man, it is hard to realize that there could be so many dead in the whole world.

Anyway, looking at all of those crosses sure makes it seem like a lot. In 1936, I think, there was a flood here and over on the library steps there is a high water marks about 6 feet above ground. We're nearly at sea level, with sandy soil, and not a mountain. The girls are friendly and talkative as the devil. When you dance or skate with one, it isn't 2 minutes until you know her name, age, life history, ambitions (and she'll know yours, too, if you aren't careful). They seem to know we get a big kick out of their Southern accents and they can really put one on! Whew! How would you like to see me come marching home with a rebel wife on my arm?

The Major says I don't need glasses, so that's that. I've gained a pound or two, but don't see how on this chow. Our electricity instructor, Warrant Officer Greer has his nose in French Grammar all the time - says he's getting prepared and means it, too. Seems to me there's more talking and arguing about the war situation, but we'll see

Congratulations, Dyer on your graduation day and Thanks for the announcement. Why don't you write and tell me what you plan to do now that you are out of high school? Still contemplating the Navy? Or more school? More school would be my recommendation any day. Then if you go in the Navy you've got two strikes on the other guy and only 5 yards to go.

What is Vera doing now? Is Ellis still working in the store? How are Granddad and Grandma? Well, I'm going to close now before I cut loose with a "you-all". I've got to tell the class tomorrow about the impedance of an A. C. circuit so had better get to handshaking with my book.

Your son, Ross

Fortress Monroe, Virginia
May 27 1940

Dear Folks,

I got your letter a couple of weeks ago. In two days, school will be half over. It's gone by fast. My grades in Math and Electricity were excellent (90 to 95). I didn't expect to do that well. Now, Radio and code - we're up to 12 words a minute with 8 to go and three months to do it in. Some have been at it a year and can't take 20 a minute yet.

I've got a damn boil on my right leg, right in the muscle, and it hurts to beat hell. Am going to the hospital to see if they can cut it out or cure it some way. It's the first one I've had, and hope it's the last. I think no-good chow caused it. The barracks are brick, brand new, and bedbugs something awful. They get something that stinks to beat the devil and pour it on the bedsprings, but as soon as it wears off, they come right back. Maybe we're lucky we've got what we have and aren't out in some mud hole, taking pot shots at Hitler.

On holiday, I think I'll go up to Washington with another guy for only \$8.00 by train or \$6.00 by boat. I'd like to go, as when we leave here, we'll probably go right to New York, and on to Panama. Haven't written to Harriet. They probably don't even know I'm gone. Guess I should write on of these times. Hear taps, so better close.

Your son, Ross

Ft. Monroe, Virginia
June 13, 1940

Dear Folks,

I got your last letter O.K. and Bobs. The boil got infected on me, and I've been flat on my back in the hospital since the first. They tried to drain it, but that didn't work, so

they cut it open and it's starting to heal. I've been walking around yesterday and today. It would have to happen right when the class is taking up the most important part of radio - tubes. Instructor Greer was over to see me the other day and he said I can always take it over, but that will mean a loss of \$300.00 pay. Most important, I lose 3 valuable weeks code practice but what the hell - what's done is done. I'm probably lucky I didn't get my leg cut clear off. If I don't make it this time my best bet is to get in a radio station someplace and qualify in code before I try again. Then, with the practical experience and what I've already had here, I would be a breeze (if I don't get another boil on my leg).

It's been pretty warm. I suppose dry there. How are Granddad and Grandma? I hope Vera has found something. Is Ellis still working in the store? Bob told me that Him was working in Boise. Bob, you can have the breeches if you want them. The way it looks, maybe you ought to get used to wearing them anyway. Love to all and write soon,
Ross

Ft. Monroe, Virginia
July 13, 1940

Dear Folks

I was very sorry to learn of dear grandmother Pettijohn's passing away, but was not very surprised, as we know she was getting pretty old. (Ed. Note: She was born in 1861...79 years old.) I wish I could have seen her once more. We should have gone over to Twin Falls while I was home. I think that's what Dad wanted to do, but we didn't get around to it. I suppose Harriet and Mabel were down. Got your Father's day letter while I was still in the hospital and was surprised to see all those letters. I was there 23 days and have a big red scar on my leg. I took a make-up exam and made a C which is considered very good. The code has me discouraged and I'm having a hard time catching up. Six weeks to go. A number of us are sweating out the Signal Corps lab at Ft. Monmouth, New Jersey where the Signal Corps is perfecting a new radio range finder for aircraft. Those who go there will really be in on some inside dope as only a handful of men in the whole world know anything about this secret weapon. However, I will probably remain here and take the next course, which will last until next February. Theoretical radio work and receivers. It's fun and quite a thrill to set up a rig and establish communication with another outfit. To know you can get her up and make her work, that you can put your theoretical knowledge to practical use. It gives you that proud, expanded feeling that comes from knowing you have done a hard piece of work well, and ego runs rampant. But the automotive class calls us a bunch of Indians and accuses us of secretly using smoke signals. The grease ball! You should see the grease dripping off their bunk rails.

What we are doing is gaining as much practical work as possible with the different sets used by the Coast Artillery. There are a lot of them and some of the equipment is antiquated. They just outlawed the old spark-gap transmitters last year. Some of the sets use a gasoline engine to turn the generator. They're a headache, cranked by a tope wrapped around the crankshaft. After pulling that tope for about ½ hour with never a fast out of the old baby, you get to thinking, "I had a good home, but I left it!" Then you sit down on the ground and start cussing, or crying, according to your temperament. Then some lame brain that got F's in class on gasoline engines walks up, gives her one yank and she starts purring like a kitten.

Inspections around here don't amount to much O - just a glance at your cap, haircut, shoes, a peek into the squad room, and that's about all. One guy has gotten gigged since I've been here, for wearing civilian shoes.

I haven't written much in the diary you sent, Mother. Here are the pictures you asked about. Ann ought to get a kick out of them. I've got an enlargement of an Army tug that took us from Angel Island over to Frisco when we left. Is Mary Lee Knox married? If so, I'll call it a beautiful "snow job" on some poor guy. I'm going to write Aunt Martha at Moscow. Hope Dad gets the mail carrier's job - there ought to be more chance with a Republican Governor, shouldn't there? Would like to send Dyer a graduation present, but am sort or broke all the time. I hope he can go to school this fall. For one reason it would be a good idea to get the Reserve Officers Training, what with these rumors or compulsory military training and all. A year in the Army would be no picnic under those conditions. It would be squad tents and mess kids. Field living, which is hard on the untrained, as Dad can tell you.

Ten acres of tents are on the other side of the Post now, and they're building billets as fast as they can. There is a great fervor over this Citizen's Military Training Camp stuff here on the east coast. The office workers from the big cities go in for it. They spend their vacations in the camps, navigating their potbellies around the parade ground doing column right, making the world safe for democracy. And THEY PAY THE GOVERNMENT \$75.00 each for the privilege of playing soldier for a month. It takes all kinds. I'll try to write before I leave. Your loving son, Ross

(Ed. Note: This is Dyer's first letter, a 1 cent post card from San Pedro, California dated July 29, 1940:

Dear Mother

We arrived at our outfits this morning after we laid in the recruit barracks all day. Got in San Pedro 10:00 a.m. yesterday morning. Bob can have my clothes if they will fit. I would like that shaving brush and soap and other things you think I'll need. I've forgotten what I've left already. I'll try to write a letter right away and tell you about my experiences and trip before I forget. We're going down to get our bedding and other things from the supply house. My address will be: Private Dyer Pettijohn, Battery D, 653 Coast Artillery, Ft. McArthur, San Pedro, California (Ed. Note: Dyer had turned eighteen in April)

San Pedro, California
July 29, 1940

Dear Folks,

Well, now that I'm fairly settled I'll attempt to write. The day I left with my car, that kid I told you about who wanted to buy it, went into Linzey's with me, but they wouldn't let him take it, because his credit rating wasn't good, so they gave me \$10 and I turned it over to them. I left Boise about 5:30, after taking physicals and everything. Another kid who joined the same day and I arrived in Portland about 7:30 the next morning, and went up to the main recruit office and went through all the red tape again, and were sworn in about 11:30. After that we went to Vancouver to the recruit barracks.

Next day, we got tickets, and came to San Pedro. Today we were measured for uniforms, which we get tomorrow. Probably start drills before the week is out. Enjoyed the trip down very much, and saw many things of great interest. But as far as the country goes, none of it beats Idaho, including all of California.

San Pedro isn't a bad little town, but I won't get to see much of it because we can't leave the Post for 6 weeks. I'm going to send you the \$10.00 I owe you Dad, as soon as I get my first check if I don't have to pay too much stuff. Well, it's just about chow time, so I'll sign off. This army chow sure goes good with me. I think I've gained 5 pounds already, and that sea breeze is nice. We can see the ocean on two sides of us. Tell Ann Hello for me. I'm going to send her something for a souvenir as soon as I can. I'm afraid I'm going to miss her a little.

Your loving son, Dyer PS: Send Rasmussen's address when you write.

Ft. MacArthur, California
August 11, 1940

Dear Folks,

Well, I'm getting along fine so far. My first 2 weeks recruit drills are over today with full dress inspection this morning. I passed pretty well. One fellow got KP for not shaving. We get up at 6 a.m.; make beds, shave and police up the barracks, then stand roll call, after which we eat breakfast. We march about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile to the field and drill for 8:30 to 11:30 and from 1:30 p.m. till 4:30. There are 3 pair army shoes, rifles, and field equipment to keep polished, and what I mean, polished! I have drawn Post Exchange checks twice and most of them have gone for equipment - have to have 3 sets toilet articles for footlocker, field pack, and to use. Haircuts once a week, and laundry fifty cents. After these are taken out and P. E. checks, I don't know how much I'll have left.

I didn't get in where I thought I would. I am on the upper reservation and the lower fort is down close to town. We are up on a hill surrounded by trees so it is hidden by the ocean, out on a peninsula with water on both sides. The ocean is not as fascinating as I thought it would be. We see lots of boats and a damned foghorn woke me up this morning and has been blowing every since. The China clipper just flew over a few minutes ago.

The weather is damp here, but I'm not disappointed in it. There are 7 batteries up here, each with about 100 men. I don't know much about the lower fort - have been down twice. Once for a package you sent the other day and once for a parade, which they have once a week. Got a letter from Katherine Ivey the other Day and wasn't very enthused about it. Would much rather it had been from home. Have a notion to write and tell her to lay off, but don't think I'll even write.

I do hope you won't worry about me, Mom. I know it hurt you to see me leave, the way I did, but I felt I had to do it sometime, and didn't know exactly how. I will try to write often, and come home on my furlough in about a year. I wish you would write and tell me how everything is - Bob and Dad and the girls and little Ann and Mom. Gee, I didn't know I missed you so much until just now. I just about got tears in my eyes. Please write and tell me about everybody, and how the mail job is turning out. Does Ross know I'm in the Army yet? Write and tell me about him. Bob, if the folks are too busy, you write and give me the lowdown. I must quit now and get ready for bed. Send Ross's address when you write. I might get a 3 or 4-day leave someday. Well, I must sign off. Your loving son, Dyer. Don't work too hard, Mom.

Fortress Monroe, Virginia
August 11, 1940

Dear Mom,

Glad to know Dyer got in the Army, and the Coast Artillery. It's the best branch of the service. He'll be glad over the Navy - his first transport trip will convince him. I never suspected he was colorblind too. I wonder how he got away with it so long - no one else knew either, did they? If I knew what outfit in the 63rd, I'd write him a letter right away. We're down to our last three weeks of school, all in suspense as to where we'll go. Haven't made my 20 codes yet - get all nervous and shaky on tests, and invariably make too many errors. I'll make it before school is out.

On about the hottest day we've had, we stood inspection for President Roosevelt. We got a couple of good ganders at him but it wasn't worth standing out in the hot sun three hours for. He looks just the same in newsreels.

In about a week, I'll get my caboodle together and send it home. Damned if I'll cart it all over the country for the QM again. Thought I'd be able to save \$75.00 or \$80.00 when I came, but haven't. I bought a \$40.00 suit, a \$23.00 set of 5 technical books, etc. If they help make me Staff, it will be worth it.

I hope you can find a way to let Bob go over to Longview to school. It would be a good thing for him and he'll be able to get along better than what I did. I've got to write Dwight J. At Worden tonight. Think he went to Ft. Lewis on Maneuvers this summer, and want to find out how he made out. I leave here right after the first. Heaven knows where. I don't. Your son, Ross

Ft. MacArthur, California
August 20, 1940

Dear Mom,

I received your letter Monday - sure glad to hear from you. We had a full field inspection Monday - more bother than anything, hiking three miles with packs about 75 or 80 pounds. The inspections are easy if we take a little time and use our heads. The non-coms in this battery are a swell bunch of guys, and I get along well with the other recruits - they seem like the kids around home. One of my best friends is an Indian kid from North Dakota named Roy Holy Elk. He's not like most Indians - he talks and jokes the same as anybody. Another kid I like pretty well is Roy Cockerell, an acting Corporal. But I don't make friends very fast. It is a bad practice.

My first payday will be Saturday after next - sure will be glad to be turned to duty. About 8 guys were, after putting in two months. No more drill, just guard, KP, etc. I'd like some of my civies too, leather jacket, brown pants, and cords. Have to sign off so I can shave and work on my gun a little more. I really think a lot of my gun. The Lieutenant has complimented it the last two inspections. We've only fired once - 10 rounds apiece.

Give my love to Ann and tell Grandma hello for me. Payday I'm having my picture taken and send some home. Send a picture of Ann. It seems like I've forgotten how she looks. Give my love to the family and tell Bob to stay in there and pitch. I miss him more than you can imagine. He was more of a brother than I ever thought. Goodbye Mom, and don't work too hard. The girls ought to help you more than they do. Ann will when she grows up.

Your loving son, Dyer Pettijohn

PS: I answered Uncle Gene's letter and will write to Ross. Send his address

*Ft. Monroe, Virginia
August 31, 1940*

Dear Mom,

Well, today is the big day we've been looking for. We were graduated at 8:30 a.m. - you ought to see the diploma - and better yet, the Staff Sergeant's warrant. Here's hoping I hang on to it for a long time. I'm ordered to Ft. Hancock, New Jersey with 20 others, leaving tonite at 9:00. We'll probably be there six months.

I mailed a box of books home yesterday. Bob can have the clothes if they fit. I wrote Dyer, and got an answer the other day. He'll make a good soldier and do fine after he gets used to Army life. Would like to see him come back to school, and he can get in if he wants to. I'll send him my Pfc, stripes - give him an incentive.

I didn't make it up to Washington - I hope during the next 6 months I'll have more time to look around. There's a lot of celebrating here now. These guys wetting down their stripes. Seems funny, I'm not as thrilled at making Staff Sergeant as when I made first and fourth. Seems sort of matter-of-fact.

Bulletins are coming over the radio for a bad storm this evening. They may have a flood and we're getting sandbags ready. Sure hope it doesn't hit before we get off. We take a ferry from here to Cape Charles. About a 2 ½ hour trip. Might see some fun. Will send a definite address later. Love, Ross

*Ft. Hancock, New Jersey
September 4, 1940*

Dear Folks,

I got here OK the first, and am just getting settled in quarters, an apartment building with kitchen and bath - nice, with lots of room. Much better than barracks, and good chow too. Boy it's like the Waldorf Astoria compared to what we had at Monroe. I've got my appetite back, and it seems like I'm hungry all the time. Today (a week day!)" we had fried chicken.

It's only eight miles across the water to New York City. She sticks up over there like a sore thumb. We're at Sandy Hook, right on the ocean, and get all the wind. They say it's cold as the devil in the winter and we'll be here 4 months or so, so we'll be right in the middle of it.

We're working on some very secret equipment here and are cautioned on every turn to watch what we do and say. It's a responsible position we're in.

I suppose Woodie is gone by now. Did he go back to sea? I'm going to New York on Friday to see the Fair and some guys down at the Army Base from the West coast.

Your son, Ross

*Ft. McArthur
Sept. 21, 1940*

Dear Mom,

I'm off for another weekend and thought I'd scribble a few lines. Ellis and Edna came out here to see me as you know by now, probably. I sure was surprised, and didn't know hardly what to do or say. I was over in the mess hall and a fellow told me there was somebody at the battery looking for me. I looked out the window and there was Ellis's car. I would like to have seen Aunt Vera too. I went down and visited the Rasmussens last weekend and had a swell time. We went all over Los Angeles and to a big theatre where we saw "Gone with the Wind". Vada Mae has sure changed - something happened, and she is shorter than Martha Jane. I'm a good two feet taller

than her. The twins are cute, but they bawl quite a bit. I also saw most of the Knox's while I was there.

They sure have been shooting the parades to us lately. We had two last week, and a regimental inspection this morning. The rumor about moving has died down, but I look for it after the draft starts. I heard from Ross at Hancock - tell him I'll take those Pfc stripes - maybe they'll bring me luck. I'm, on main guard tonight. I'd have given my next month's pay if you could have come down with Ellis and them. You would have enjoyed it, and you deserve it too. Tell Bob I'll send him a sailor cap payday and I need his pants size. I can get him some Gob Pants for practically nothing and they would be kind of a novelty for him. Well Mom, thanks for the clothes and the pictures. Don't work too hard and tell little Ann hello and hello to the whole family. Your loving son, Dyer

(Ed. Note: On September 27, 1940, Germany, Italy and Japan formed a military alliance.)

*Ft. Hancock, New Jersey
September 22, 1940*

Dear Mom, The old "mill has been out of kilter. Just got it fixed today. Doesn't do a typewriter any good to go shipping it all over the country. We've been busy scrubbing woodwork, painting floors, washing windows, and trying to rig up a little furniture. A regular bunch of housewives around here. The carpenters of the gang are throwing together a table or two and some clothes lockers.

We're getting pretty advanced and new work, designing and building ordinary component radio circuits such as power converters, oscillators, amplifying systems, etc. It's fun and very interesting - the theory at Monroe is doing us a lot of good. One instructor is a tall thin Pollock named Belot, the other a short fat fellow named Woodland. Quite a pair of Tech Sergeants, always and forever arguing with each other about something, but they really know their business. Woodland will come up and say, "Sit down and design a 25Z5 supply with 450 volts output and 10 mils bleeder current". When you show him your circuit he will say, "Now go in the lab and build it". Then he will come in and look it over and start arguing with Belot about it. But you can learn something from every word they say.

There's lots of high voltage running around out there, and 2 or 3 guys have been knocked on their can. Always the same ones - they get careless. Believe me, when I grab a wire, I look and see where the other end goes to!

Everything is color-coded, for instance a resistor with a green dot, a red dot, and an orange dot on it would have a value of 500,000 ohms. If you can't tell green from red from orange, you're out of luck.

Dyer owes me a letter. Now that they passed the conscription bill, it's better that he's a volunteer and not a draftee. I wouldn't worry about us getting into the war either. Old Hitler is going to have his hands full over there for a long time.

I went to the Fair in New York and took pictures. There's so much to see, I'd like to go back. It's better than San Francisco's. For a man in uniform, everything is about ½ price. If I save \$30.00 of my \$72.00 a month, I'll have \$1000 at the end of this hitch. We have no more clothing allowance. Everything is on memorandum, and has to be turned back in.

I need to buy more books, and some tools and instruments, which are expensive as the devil. I'm going to get some good trunks - every time I move, I get so mad at boxes and barracks bags. You sure accumulate things.

Is Woodie going to San Diego? Did Vera find anything in California? Kenneth Hill got the mail carrier job - who is he anyway? It's been nearly a year since I was home, and might be a couple more. The mosquito-bitten swamps of Panama will probably get half of us when we leave here, it's hard to tell. Two classes have gone there already.

DeVore went back to Worden to wait for assignment - graduated top man in the electrical class. Some set of brains - he's happy-go-lucky, always broke, clowning and raising hell. Lost \$80.00 playing blackjack in Frisco. Said it cured him and how he'll play nothing but poker. I was #23 in our class of 31, and lucky to be that high, being in the hospital so long. My scar is still raw-red and bothers me some, but will heal better in time.

Well, I've got to sew buttons on a shirt. Love, Ross

Ft. McArthur, California
Monday, October 8, 1940

Dear Mother,

Just thought I'd let you know I'm still fine. We fired the 20 caliber rifles today for positions. I qualified to shoot for record in about a week or so. Made 124 out of 150 - 7th or 8th out of 60 men. I averaged 3 bull's eyes out of every 5 shots. I sure would like to make expert when we shoot for record. We're going to fire the 3" guns starting Saturday. The War Department stopped most of our parades. We only have those and inspection once a month, when before, it was three a week. Am going to take 2nd class gunner exams soon. They expended the A. A. a lot when the draft came in. I think they are going to split our battery up and start a new regiment from it. Pretty sure we're leaving for Texas the last of November. Glad to get your letter, Bob. Write again soon. Am going to have some pictures of the Fort to send. Saturday after next, after we're done firing, I'm going to drive myself down and have some pictures taken. Had drill with gas masks on. Don't care much for those things. I see there are about eight destroyers in the harbor. Last night the town was lousy with sailors, marines, and army. Floyd Stover came out from San Diego to see me about three weeks ago. Sure looks good. I weigh 185. Tell Ann hello.

Your loving son, Dyer Pettijohn

Addition to this letter dated October 12:

I got your letter from home today, Mother. I never mailed this yet. We fired this morning. Those 3" guns are sure fine. There are 8 Navy boats in the harbor. They're sure pretty. The weather is comfortably warm - haven't been cold since I've been here. Sure wish you could live in this kind of climate. Tomorrow I'm going to see Gordy and those guys. I've only been out to Rasmussen's once. I'm sure shamed of myself. Will send Dad the money on the first. I sent these pictures so you could get some idea how it looks here.

Ft. Hancock, New Jersey
December 8, 1940

Dear Folks,

We'll finish up here between December 10th and 20th. Our orders came, and I'm not going to Panama. Boy, I'm sure glad of that. I'm ordered to the Hawaiian Department, to

sail from San Francisco January 16th. So I may be home for Christmas. Dyer sounds like an old trooper already. I don't suppose I'll get to see him before I leave the states.

Dad, in his letter, was wondering about a Staff Sergeant rating. Well, the lowest in rank is the "Buck" Sergeant, with three stripes up. Next is Staff, with three up and one down. Then comes First Sergeant and Technical, which rank the same and draw the same pay. First wears three up and two down with a diamond in the middle. Tech is the same without the diamond. Master Sergeant is the ranking grade, three uOp and three down. If I am promoted, I'll be Tech and then Master.

They're going at it hot and heavy around here in Presidential campaigns. You can't turn the radio on without getting some politician. They even have transcriptions of short talks given by Wilkie, which they play at every opportunity. It looks to me like most of the New York papers are against Roosevelt. I'll bet he sweats blood winning this election. Maybe if Wilkie is elected, Dad will get the rural post office route. I hope Ann is well by now. I'll bet she has grown a lot in the past year. I'd better close for now. Love, Ross

Ed. Note: Mother saved a California newspaper article titled '63rd Prepares to Leave Fort', and it says:

"San Pedro yesterday afternoon heard for probably the last time in a long while the muffled clamor of anti-aircraft guns.

At the conclusion of the daily practice, officers of the 63rd Coast Artillery at Ft. MacArthur canceled all previous warnings to mariners against entering firing areas between Point Fermin and Point Vicente, and said the regiment will start packing for its move to Ft. Bliss, Texas.

Although a definite date for the trek has not been scheduled, regiment officers said they expect to pull out by the end of this month.

Organized as a mobile unit, the 63rd doesn't have to call in the transfer man. With wheels on their guns, searchlights and sound detectors, and big four-wheel drive trucks to haul the duffle, the regiment of nearly 1,500 officers and men will make the long move to their new station in a body.

Practicing almost daily since the 63rd was increased to full regiment strength a little over a year ago, the anti-aircraft gunners have used stations along the coastline from Pt. Fermin to Pt. Vicente for firing points in shooting at target sleeves towed over the ocean by airplanes. Many night practices with searchlights and guns also have been conducted.

The group that came to Ft. MacArthur in 1929 was ordered to the Texas fort a month ago and at the same time it was announced the Third Coast Artillery, home regiment of Ft. MacArthur to man the coast defense and railway guns, will be increased to full strength of about 1,5900 men and occupy barracks to be vacated by the anti-aircraft companies."

Ft. Bliss, Texas
December 8, 1940

Dear Folks,

We left good ole MacArthur Tuesday morning about 6:30 and arrived here, much to our sorrow Friday about 2:30 p.m. We came 860 miles through Arizona, New Mexico and southern California. There are about 10,000 soldiers here, and about half in tents without frames or anything - just dirt floors, no wall lockers. Our convoy was over 20 miles long and when we stopped

for bivouac at night those trucks really took up the space. When we were on the road, you could look up the road and down, and see nothing but trucks, trucks, trucks. They would go through towns wide open, no matter how big or small. They stop at nothing. We're about 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles west of El Paso, and when we stopped here, the soldiers got out and cursed and jumped on their hats. They were really a downhearted bunch. It's out in the desert and there are two anti-aircraft outfits, four cavalry outfits, one field artillery, and one infantry. Monday after next, we'll move into our own quarters, which isn't so bad, with tent houses and good showers and latrine. They're going to split the 63rd in three new outfits starting February 15th. I might have a chance for a rating, I hope. Never mind sending anything for Christmas, because I won't be able to send much home and I have everything I need anyway. Words can't tell what a place like this looks like. It's just a tent city, and a big one. Goodbye, and I hope you're all well. Your son, Dyer

Hq. Battery 63rd C. A. (A. A.)
Ft. Bliss, Texas

Dear Bob,

I received Mom's card and the stripes the other day, just after I sent that last letter. I'm going to send that picture of Ann home with a few more things - I have another one. I had my first accident today, a small one. I ran into a damned fireplug with my truck just as I was pulling away from the R.S.O. building with the Supply Officer in the truck with me! It made him a little mad, but I think he'll get over it. I don't think it will cost me anything for straightening the bumper and fender. I haven't been over to Mexico since last month. Some of the soldiers got robbed and cut up pretty bad this payday - it's a real rugged place, all right.

Glad you are taking an interest in schoolwork. You'll wish you had when you get out, if you don't. Wish you hadn't used your money to pay my debts with. I'll pay you the last of this month. I'll also send enough to pay the rest of it. I'll send that dollar I owe Ray too, and Dad some. I'll have quite a little coming and can spare it at last.

The sun shines most all the time down here, a little cool in the mornings, but warm by nine, and we run around in shirtsleeves the rest of the day. I've been roller skating out to Washington Park a few times. The gals all say "You all" like those OKIES up there in Idaho. They talk crazy as hell. Some good looking ones, too.

I was talking to a fellow from the 202nd A. A. National Guard. He thought I was related to the people that put out Pettijohn's cereal. Says it's the main cereal in Chicago where he's from. Don't know if I'll get to go back to California or not - hard to tell about this army. They say one who talks about the future in the Army is a recruit, or crazy. Probably won't get home next summer - it's hard to get off since they've taken on all this new strength. I'll give it a try when I have a year in. Tell all the folks hello. Watch your step.

Your brother, Dyer W. Pettijohn

PS: Too bad about Katherine Ivey. I wrote to her for a while but got mad and quit. She's just like any other silly little high school girl. She don't worry me in the least.

Ft. Bliss, Texas

December 22, 1940

Dear Folks and Ross,

It's Sunday again so I'll try to write. I went down for the first time last night - didn't think much of the place, though. My weight is at a new high - 195 with my uniform on. I made marksman in rifle, which isn't very good. I think I'll do better next year. The new outfits they've taken out of the 63rd will be formed at Wilmington, North Carolina, and mostly older men. Most all the men are going to cadre schools. I'm going to the gun commando school, of course. These cadres are due to leave February 15th, so it'll be two months before we find out if we made a rating or not. I think I can pass the expert gunner's exams. Tomorrow, we're moving to our stationary place. Tents, but with floors. I hoped we'd settle down so we could get furloughs every year, but it don't look like any of us are going to be here very long. Probably another cadre will go out four or five months after this one leaves. Glad I'm not going on the first one - they'll probably go to some island out in the Atlantic. I've heard a lot of old soldiers say they would bet anything on it.

Don't send anything for Christmas, because I won't be able to. It's three miles to the Post Office and ten to town, and you can't get anything worth a damn anyway. I hope everyth9ing is all right at home, and Bob isn't as ornery as his older brothers were. Hello Ann, I suppose you're more bother than you're worth nowadays. I'll bet you don't look anything like this picture I have of you. Do you still get up and monkey with the faucets on the sink? I hear Sis is quite the belle of the ball around there (Dorothy). She ought to get along fine. She hasn't god me to HOUND her all the time.

Well, I go on K.P. tomorrow - the first one I've caught since we've been here. They aren't so bad now that we're in the field. Don't have all those damned dishes to wash. I haven't caught a guard here. Wish you could see that kitchen truck and how it's fixed, Mom. It's really some out6fit, going through towns and cooking to beat hell, as if nothing was going on at all. They say the sewers in Tucson, Arizona caved in after our convoy rolled over them all day.

I'll sign off now. Hope you have a good trip to the islands, Ross. Might take a short and go there myself after a year. Love to everyone, Dyer

PS: How did that damned derrick turn out, Dad? It didn't seem to me like there was enough room for the third cutting of hay on top of that stack. Hope you got rid of those damned pigs.

Ft. McDowell, California

January 2, 1941

Dear Folks,

Arrived in San Francisco Tuesday morning and reported in. Made connections on the train just fine all the way. Found Aunt Charlotte's (Granddad Moore's sister-in-law) place O.K. She had just received your letter that morning. They wouldn't pay me my rations on my furlough and delay enroute. That's about what I expected. I have to send them clear back to New Jersey and get an endorsement before I can get the money. I' guess I'll get my other pay tomorrow though. By golly, I'd better. I'm about Broke. If that insurance policy comes before the 15th, sent it here. Will try to write again soon and let you know how I'm making out.

Love, Ross

San Francisco

January 22, 1941

Dear Folks,

I'm O. K. and rarin' to go tomorrow. Have been busy - my baggage has been a headache - so hard to move around and get straightened out for checking aboard the ship. Port is hold baggage, part baggage room, and part cabin baggage. Finally got it all settled and checked in this afternoon. All there is to do is go down and get on board in the morning. They've got me assigned as mess sergeant aboard ship. I'd like to know why they picked on me, of all people. Gee, I don't know anything about mess records, and running it all. Bit I suppose it will be some duty like chasing K.P.'s - hope so anyway.

Paroczui reported in the 18th. He had an extension on his delay and had a few more days at home. Saw Olsen, Fowler, and Comstock out at Scott. They seem to be doing O. K. That Olsen has put on a little weight and grown some, it seems to me.

We walked over the Golden Gate Bridge one Sunday. It sure is a nice view but quite a hike. Saw Rollo Hartzell too, and he's learning to be an air mechanic. He's sure got a good thing there, and is right at the top of the class in his work. Was sorry to hear of Bill Summer's accident. Wasn't that tough luck! I suppose nothing has come out yet on the rural carrier's job. Will write as soon as we reach Honolulu, so goodbye till then.

Love to all, Ross

PS: Ask Ann if she remembers little Charlotte - she remembers Ann. (Ed. Note: This would be Granddad Moore's brother Bob's granddaughter.)

Ft. Bliss, Texas

Dear Folks,

I was glad to get your card Mother and was overjoyed to know that you had taken a small vacation. It didn't sound like you got a very long furlough though. It sounded like a 3-day pass.

I had a tooth pulled last week. It was the one that had the big cavity. I was sure glad to get it out - it was starting to bother me a little and I had been losing a little weight. I feel better already. We are still going strong here, trying to get these draftees ready to go on maneuvers. I have my bunch in hand well enough to make out - I hope. I read in the Coast Artillery magazine that a regiment of C. A. had its rations captured one day. Boy, if that happens to me, I'll never live it down. We have to haul rations for three nights next week. Mom, did you get the \$10 I sent awhile back? I have started saving for my furlough after maneuvers. I'll send about \$60.00 home. We are leaving in two weeks for Louisiana. Sure hope we don't go back East after maneuvers. I'll take my furlough if I have to walk back. It will be a year the 24th of this month when I left home.

Your loving son, Dyer

Fort Bliss, Texas

January 30, 1941

Dear Folks,

I like my new job very much and am getting along fine. We had a boy in our outfit killed the other day. It costs us two bits every time somebody gets killed. (war games) We got about 400 draftees last Sunday. They are sure a sorry looking bunch of soldiers. I imagine I looked the same way they did when I joined. The cadres are leaving the last of February for Carolina. The soldiers

going on the cadres are going to Carlsbad Caverns, up in New Mexico. We'll probably go up there next summer on maneuvers. They fitted us up for overcoats yesterday - sure swell looking coats. I have more coats than I know what to do with. I'm getting pretty good with my truck. At first, I thought I'd grind the gears away before I learned to double clutch the damned thing. Some of the guys saw our orders the other day, and nearly all of us are making Pfc. I look for our ratings before Feb. 15th.

Haven't heard from Ross since he left Angel Island. I expect a letter before long - I imagine he's pretty busy for a while. I've been downtown only once since I've been here in Texas (2 months). We have everything we need here on the post. Theatre costs 14 cents a show, and the Post Exchange (PX) has anything a soldier needs. There are about ten PX's on this Fort. It's pretty close to 9:00. Be good, everybody. Your loving son, Dyer

February 3, 1941

Dear Mother

Your letter came yesterday. I'm sorry you haven't heard from me but maybe my last letter has finally reached there. I was in the hospital only 15 days and have been doing just fine since I got out. I'm sorry you were worrying about me. I haven't decided about my furlough. I can get 15 days starting February 19th - have tried every way I know how to get 30, but they won't budge an inch. It's a long way for that amount of time, but will be worth it, and will take in Thanksgiving. I want you to write me Mom, and tell me what you think. I'll be hard to argue out of it - I've been gone a year and 5 months. Little did I ever guess that I'd be away that long when I left. But I don't regret joining. I'm a poor judge, but think it's done me good. Your loving son,
Dyer

Fort Shafter, Honolulu, Hawaii
February 4, 1941

Dear Folks,

Or Aloha as they say it over here. Had a pretty good voyage. Seven days. I was sick the first day and a half, but it was pretty rough. Boy was I glad to walk down that gangplank and away from that mess hall they had me in. If they ever give me that duty again, I'll jump overboard, I think. There were 863 men to feed three times a day. The mess hall would only hold about 150 at a time. No sooner would breakfast be over, than it would be time for dinner. K. P. Detail was 45 men, all recruits, and most of the seasick the whole time. Four or five times a day I had to go down the roust them out of their bunks and up to the mess hall or nobody would have eaten. It was hard to make a gang of guys work when they were so sick they could hardly stand, but it just doubled the work for the rest of the fellows. They inspected every day at 10:30 and everything had to be spic and span. It took a crew of eight, peeling steady, to keep the cooks in spuds, carrots, onions, etc. I was up at 5:00 and lucky to get out of there at 10:00 p.m. Honestly, I think that was the worst experience I've ever had. Mess Sergeant! Whew!

I think Hawaii will suit me fine after I get into the swing of things around here. Ft. Shafter is a nice post, fairly close to town. All the buildings are old, though. Barracks aren't much more than four walls, a roof and a floor, just one floor high, and open on the sides. The battery I'm assigned to is a searchlight outfit, which means drills and target practice at night (the disadvantage of a light outfit). The Top Kick, Sgt. Potts, came here

from Worden. He seems to be a nice fellow, and a good top sergeant. Paroczai was assigned to Battery E, the other searchlight outfit. Together, they form the 3rd Battalion. I'm quartered in barracks now. It will probably be five or six months before quarters are available, but I don't mind staying in them, except my equipment has to stand inspection.

Haven't had a chance to see the town or surrounding country much yet. What I have seen sure looks like the pictures, though. Had better close and fix up my bunk. They use mosquito nets here, and it's quite a trick to get the blamed things up so they don't leak someplace and let the mosquitoes in. Have you heard anything about my insurance?

Love, Ross

Fort Bliss, Texas
February 18, 1941

Dear Mother

Been quite awhile since I've heard from you. Just wondering how everything is. Not much doing here, same things happen. I think I write the same letter every time. We got the 37mm guns for this regiment the other day. They sure are a nice little gun. They shoot a one-pound shell and are fully automatic. Very effective on low-flying planes.

They have our section about all finished now. They've been working on it every since we came here. I'm sending some pictures I've taken. I have my album about $\frac{1}{2}$ finished now, which I'll probably send home when it's finished. We got our overcoats the other day - now that it's warmer and we don't need them, only at night. I think we may get our khaki outfits in another month or so. Have sure got a lot of clothes! Guess I'll lay off for now - will write payday when I send some money. Hope to hear from home soon. Love to everyone, Dyer

Fort Bliss, Texas
March 8, 1941

Dear Folks,

We got some more draftees yesterday and today, all from New York City, most Italian. Some can hardly speak English. They are going to put us on war rations, starting July, lasting three months. I suppose we'll go on maneuvers to Louisiana. We've been busy issuing clothes and tools, and hauling lots of rations. I was going to put in for an automotive course and go to school, but I tried too late. I'll have another chance next fall. I've learned a lot about trucks, and am assistant truck master at the supply office, and work in the warehouse too. The truck master is a Corporal. I may have a chance to take his job over when the cadre leaves. I've got some money to send home. Don't worry about me, Mother, I've hung on to my money pretty well. I've been in town four times since I've been here and I know what gambling is like in the Army. They don't get my money! I bought two pair of shoes payday. A pair of oxfords, and some moccasins to wear around the barracks. G. I. Shoes are heavy as hell, after being on cement floors all day. I could have got a furlough last week but passed it up. I'm sure I can get one next Christmas, if I don't get to go to a transportation school. Hope everyone is well and happy at home

Hello Ann.

Your loving son, Dyer

March 16, 1941
Fort Bliss, Texas

Dear Folks,

Hope you 're all well and happy. Starting Monday, I'm in charge of the two gas stations for the 63rd, one for each battalion. I think I'll like it pretty well. I think I've made a pretty good impression on my bosses, Capt. Lemmon and Sgt. Brown have been giving me a few of the breaks at the R.S.O. All the men down there are good guys, and will pull on your side if they like you. The truck master is a good friend, and has sure been swell to me. I think I got the job through him. He says he hates for me to leave the trucks because he'll have to battle all the drivers himself. I've been his stooge, or whatever you may call it, helping keep them busy and keep the trucks clean, etc. The bunch took exams for specialist Saturday. I would like to have tried but was too late.

Wrote to Ross the other day. I sure hope he likes it over there. A fellow can learn to like most anyplace if he tries, I guess. A lot of them don't like this place, but I don't think it's so bad. Those New York draftees say this is paradise compared to Fort Dix back east. It's turning spring down here now, the leaves are coming out on the trees over on the main fort, and the mountain back of the 63rd section is turning green as well.

Haven't heard much about maneuvers yet, but they're sure =cooking up something, I can tell that. I heard the 202nd National Guards are going to Panama - hope it does them good (they don't get along with the 63rd very well). They issued them short khaki pants and pith helmets last week.

The 63rd is getting some of those war noodle trucks, the R.S.C. got one Jeep pickup - sure a crazy looking think. I go to the show quite often at the Anti-Aircraft War Department Theater (That's the name of it). There are about 7 A.A. (anti-aircraft) regiments that go to it, which is a big tent that holds 2,000 at once. Wooden seats, but it isn't bad, with perfect sound and the largest screen I've ever seen. Until next time, your loving son, Dyer

Fort Bliss, Texas
April 11, 1941 (2 days after his 19th birthday)

Dear Mother,

Boy, I was sure glad to get the birthday cake and the card. I was lucky to get two pieces of it, but they were sure good. I got four letters, a postcard and the cake, all the night of the 8th. I'd forgotten all about my birthday and had to talk fast to get out of the 19 wallops from the guys in my tent. They sure did go to the cake, though

I've changed jobs again taking over the ration detail. I have to draw rations for the whole 63rd - 11 batteries at the main fort and downtown. It takes four trucks every day, and about ten on Wednesday. They're going to give me a carpool rating the first, \$54.00. Then maybe I can send the money home that I should. Aunt Era (Dad's sister) wrote and said Harriet divorced Les. She must be a grand character. They're taking a picture of the 63rd tomorrow but I won't be in it, because I'll be drawing rations (too small to see me anyway). Thanks again for the cake and handkerchiefs. I needed them. Is Jim still working in Boise? What is his address? Did Gene ever come home?
Love to all, Dyer

SPECIAL ORDERS

Fort Bliss, Texas

May 16, 1941

TO BE CORPORAL

Private Dyer W. Pettijohn, 19004071, Hq Btry, 63rd CA (AA)

OFFICIAL: WILLIAM H. FRANCIS, Captain, 63rd Adjutant

(Ed Note: The Pettijohn third son Robert left home at age 16 to live with his father's sister and husband, Mabel and Dean Micklewait in Kelso, Washington.)

Friday 29, 1941

407 N. 8th

Kelso, Washington

Dear Folks,

I arrived safely but got very tired of bus riding before it was overwith. I traveled all night with several stops and got into Portland the next morning at 10:25. Portland sure is a mammoth size town. I thought it would be a few times bigger than Boise, but not about ten. We were 20 minutes going through Portland on the bus. I took the next bus from Portland to Kelso and got it about two. Jack was here yesterday and last night, but he started hitchhiking this morning back to Seattle.

Mabel and Dean are sure swell, and I'm sure I'm going to like it here. Dean showed me through the school yesterday and it sure is a big, complete schoolhouse. I made my application for registration about a half hour ago. It will cost me \$1.50 for registration and R3.00 for student body and activity tickets. I would like to write to Ray and Bill Hawley who is in Orofino, but I haven't got their addresses. Ray gave me his – it's Box 64, 604, or something but I'm, not sure.

I went downtown today and got a raincoat. It cost me \$5.98, but it was the cheapest I could get. I also got some underwear and a few things I needed. I'd like to get a pair of cords, but I'm getting sort of low. I'm sending my bankbook home so that you can take my money out and sent it to me. I hope Dyer sends some before too long. Mabel or Dean hasn't said anything about paying anything to keep yet, but I'll find out.

Dad, how are you and Martha getting along with the cows? I hop you don't miss me too much. In school, I'm going to take English II, typing, chemistry, French and Band. I couldn't take solid geometry or advanced algebra as I had wanted, because Dean is going to get me a job working in the school cafeteria, which will take about an hour a day. I get \$5.00 a month, and dinner every day out of it.

Mabel has quite a few piano pieces here, most of them popular, but she only has one of mine, so I wish you would send me them. Sort out (My Sister and I, one of the "So You're the One", 'Donkey Serenade' and all those old ones. Just send me the newer ones that I have bought. Mabel says I look slightly thin, and she wants to put some weight on me. Well, I'll close for now, but write soon.

Your son, Bob

May 1, 1941 – German submarine sinks American Ship Robin Moor without warning.

Fort Bliss, Texas
June 14, 1941

Dear Mom,

Sorry I haven't written before. The batteries are coming in tomorrow from the firing range. It's been quite a job hauling clear out there every day, 100 miles round trip with 60 miles pavement and the rest desert. Boy, are the roads rough!

What is Ross doing now? Is he still at sea? I have an insurance policy made out to you Mom, with Jefferson Standard for \$4.00 per month that I'll send. We're getting Idaho potatoes down here now. I can tell the difference in taste, too. I'll be glad when these maneuvers are over and we're settling down again. I may get a furlough in October or November if we go back to Long Beach. Did you hear about the soldiers taking over that airplane factory in California? They were from Fort MacArthur. I sure would like to have been there. It took them 30 minutes to break up the whole strike. As ever, your loving son Dyer

July 1, 1941
Fort Bliss, Texas

Dear Folks

I'm sending \$5.00 in this letter for Dad. Would send more, but we're going on maneuvers, and there are things I'd like to get before starting. Was glad to hear from Jim - he seems to be doing very well. Says Ellis joined the Navy. What a chump. I sent my album - hope it gets there all right. Don't let Ann (age 4) cut the pictures out of it. Love to all, Dyer

Fort Shafter, Honolulu, Hawaii
August 3, 1941

Dear Folks,

Here it is the first of August and I've been out six months already. It seems like I just walked of the boat yesterday. We're kept fairly busy with target practice maneuvers and such. A new Colonel took over command so of course there's a big inspection coming up. The whole island is a beehive of activity with Government buildings going up right and left. Everyplace you look, there's a gang of men working.

I've been enjoying pretty good health, except I've had three boils on my neck in the first two or three weeks. They're sure miserable things to put up with. If I'm bothered anymore, I'll have them prepare some anti-boil toxin. I've quit eating with the outfit and have gone on separate rations. I can't cook, but neither can those birds over there.

My old buddy DeVore arrived in the department about 6 weeks ago. His coming was a complete surprise to me, and you could have knocked me over with a feather when he yelled at me as his boat docked. He's stationed in Harbor Defense over at Ft. Kamehameha. Says he has a soft job taking care of two diesel power plants and their generators. I've run across several fellows I knew on the mainland. Saw a guy I took recruit drill with at the Ordinance Depot. He's been here two years, is out of the Army, and working in a good civil service job. Makes \$1700 a year, and says I should try it, but I can't see it. The best job of the two would be Master Sgt. In the Army, which I'll probably make in three years. There's a little security here, and after the war's over there's going to be a hell of a lot of depression, especially out here. I haven't looked up George Kirkland. It's so hard to find anybody out

there at Pearl Harbor. Uncle Clive wrote and said Kate is there for the summer. I owe one to Dyer and Bill Ritchie, who was in Pensacola the last I heard from him

I've been thinking about attending officer's candidate school, but can't make up my mind. If I made it, I'd be put on the reserve list and go to a year's active duty, after which I revert back to my present status. A 2nd Lt. Draws \$125 pay and has to spend it all for uniforms and social activities. I drew \$84 and can save \$40 or \$50. Of course officers have social prestige - gentlemen by law, but they are bound by social restrictions. I've seen many of these young college-boy officers downtown and different places that would give their eyeteeth to bust loose and raise hell like the soldiers do. I figure I've got 30 years to do anyway and if I can do them as Master Sgt. I'll be setting on the troops.

Hope the crops are coming okay. They should bring a good price this fall, it looks like, with this "war boom" pseudo good times on us. I suppose you are used to seeing soldier around there now that they've got an Air Base in Boise. The city folks are already probably cussing the soldiers for a ho-good lot, while they take their money as fast as they can rake it in.

I see every magazine and newspaper is filled with a lot of propaganda and hoey about the new "army of draftees" - "Selectees", we're supposed to call them. A year in the Army is enough for them and they're yelling to go home to mamma. They don't seem to give a damn that Hitler is on his way to beat down their back door and take their candy away from them. Some morning they're liable to wake up and find themselves talking a language they don't understand.

Tell everybody aloha for me. I hear that Ellis joined the Navy. Is Jerry Albin still entangled in his mamma's apron strings I wonder? What will she do of he gets caught in the draft?

Well, goodbye for now, Love, Ross

(A picture postcard featuring an artist's drawing of the Abilene skyline)

Abilene, Texas
August 6, 1941

Dear Folks,

We are stopping here for two or three days. We don't know where we go from here, but will in the morning. I'll write later. Dyer

Shreveport, Louisiana
August 21, 1941

Dear Folks,

We are in the midst of Corps maneuvers, 5th vs. 8th. We pushed them back about 15 miles the first day and now after three days are in a deadlock and neither side is getting anywhere. The 63rd is about 30 miles south of Mansfield. We have E and F batteries up on the front. They are 50 caliber machine guns and 37 mm batteries and then Battery G is back in Mansfield guarding the airport. They're in a radius of 45 miles. Our three outfits are here in a little town guarding a railhead where we get the rations and other supplies. Hq. Btry. Is out of town about three miles.

They use a lot of deception getting here. We came through the town in daylight, and went ten miles on the other side into a dense forest and waited till dark, then came back and set up in a complete blackout. We get the rations early in the morning and have them all out before daylight.

We'll go back to Mansfield day after tomorrow and have one more war before the big one down around Lake Charles.

Clothes get dirty as hell down here and the chiggers and mosquitoes are eating on you all the time. But it's still a lot of fun. There was a Red Army cavalry truck brought in here a few minutes ago. Our guys captured it hauling horses for the Blue Army. We have an armored division on our side. They say it is raising hell with the cavalry up front. Excuse my writing - all I have to write on is a thin magazine. That's all for now. I'll write later. Love to all, Dyer

Fort Shafter, Honolulu, Hawaii

Sept. 25, 1941 (the day after his 21st birthday)

Dear Folks,

I've got some news for you. I hope you like it. I am going to get married. Ruth and I have planned it since I was home last Christmas but we haven't said anything because I wasn't sure I would be able to send for her until a few weeks ago. I hardly know what to say except I'm about the happiest guy there is. I think I'm pretty damn lucky to get her and know you approve my choice, don't you, Mother and Dad?

She'll be able to come the first of January. I'll probably be able to get 1 quarters on the post here. If not, I'm allowed \$72.00 a month in lieu of rations and quarter.

Now Mother and Dad, I hope you take this like I want you to. You'll probably think I'm doing a crazy thing, but I don't. I wouldn't get married if I didn't think I could support a wife and family. The Army wouldn't let me get married if it didn't think I could, either.

I am in good health and spirits, even if I AM cooking and eating my own chow now. The mess in the battery got so poor that I finally started batching. Saves money too. Last month the ration amounted to \$18.00 and I spent \$12.00. Have been swimming quite a bit, and playing tennis. I'm going out for the battery boxing team, but think I'm more or less a punching bag for the other guy. It's a lot of fun though, and the best exercise there is.

I can't say anything about our activities here. You know, potential spies behind every tree. They sure pound it into us to keep our mouths shut. I can say we're really on our toes - ready for anything, especially the Navy. The Japanese issue is the big topic here - Hitler is too far away.

I had a letter from George Kirkland. He is coming over the first to see me. It damn near takes an act of Congress for anyone to get into Pearl Harbor now, so I can't go out there to see him. Had a letter from Dyer the other day in Louisiana. I need Edna's address. Is Woodie still in New Hampshire? He's really in a shooting war now for sure.

I was sorry to learn of Mr. Albin's death. Is Jerry in the Navy, or what? It said in the article he was in San Diego. How are Grandma and Granddad? Mother, was I ever baptized into the Mormon Church? I'd like to know because I think I ought to be. I wish you could see the Mormon temple here. It is the most beautiful building and grounds in the islands. I'll send a picture if I can find one. I'd better close for now. Hope to hear from you soon. I'm sorry I don't write more often, but the time seems to go so quickly.

Your loving son, Ross

Pearl Harbor was bombed nine weeks after he wrote the above letter, and there isn't another letter until the one dated February 10, 1942. Mother clipped an article from the newspaper titled

"Melban 'O.K.' In Honolulu" and subtitled "Ross Pettijohn Jr. Cables Parents; Other Items":

MELBA, Dec. 10 (Special) - Mr. and Mrs. Ross Pettijohn have received word from Dyer that he is to be stationed at Portland air base for some time. They have also received a cablegram from Ross Jr. that he is OK. He is at Fort Shafter in Honolulu.

Miss Ruth McClintick was honor guest at a shower last Thursday, given by Mrs. David Trauernicht. She received many gifts. Miss McClintick was to sail early in January for Honolulu where she was to be married to Ross Pettijohn, but her sailing has been indefinitely cancelled by the government.

Melba councilmen have made arrangements for Melba to participate in a blackout Sunday night.

Woodie Moore (Mother's brother, Uncle Woodie), son of Mr. and Mrs. W. W. Moore is stationed at Cocosola in Panama on the submarine Bass.

Mr. and Mrs. Glenn Olsen and daughter Lynn are visiting his parents, Mr. and Mrs. George Olsen. (On the flip side of the article, is an ad for Fine Handbags, \$1.00; Corduroy Shoes, \$1.29; Crisp Aprons, 49 cents; Fancy capeskin gloves, \$1.59)

Fort Bliss, Texas
September 27, 1941

Dear Mother,

Your letter came yesterday I suppose. We've been on a weekend road march to the Carlsbad Caves in New Mexico. I thought I'd answer back soon and get your idea on this furlough. I can take it from the 19th of October until November 4th. Fifteen days is all I can get now, so I might as well take it next month before it gets too cold up there. I have the money now, and I've purchased a swell suitcase. Ross didn't say anything about getting married in his last letter but I could read between the lines and tell what he was up to. I can't see anybody getting married in the Army and being chased all over the country, especially in times like these.

Don't worry about me, Mother, I'm not serious over any girl. I haven't been in love since I was a freshman and had a big plunge over Elaine Greenfield. But I was the only one that plunged. Ha ha!

I was really surprised about the new addition to our family, and let's hope it's another baby girl. They are much easier to raise. I sure hope Bob sticks the school term out. I'll send some pictures I took in Louisiana. Hang on to them. Hello everybody.

Your loving son, Dyer

World War II and Vietnam Experiences

As told by A. Ross Pettijohn and his brothers Dyer, Bob & Victor at their parents Golden Wedding Anniversary Reunion - summer 1968 - Coos Bay, Oregon.

Oldest son Ross

When asked what he was doing at the time Pearl Harbor was bombed December 7, 1941 he replied, "Sleepin!"

Then someone asked what time of day it was. "Well, it was about 7:00 in the morning. I was with the 63rd Coast Artillery, and had spent about a year at Fort Shafter, with training radar operators on our anti-aircraft radar, and we'd been hearing all sorts of rumors. One was that we would be shipped to the Philippines. We were schedule to go on a joint Army-Navy exercise that week. I was, at the time, a tech

Sergeant, and was what they called a Maneuver Officer. You wore a band around your arm that said M.O., and you had all the responsibility and authority of a 2nd Lieutenant.

I was with the battalion ammunition train, and in preparation for the exercises, we'd hauled out ammunition from the Red Hill Craters to all the anti-aircraft positions, put in communications, and were all ready to move out. But for some reason, the plans were changed just that week, and instead, we held a regimental parade in conjunction with some other department parades at the Fort Shafter headquarters, after which our material was all parked along our Regimental parade ground under the trees, and also, when they canceled the exercise, we went out and hauled all the ammunition back into the ammunition dumps.

So the morning of the 7th, which was a Sunday morning, we were sleeping late. I occupied non-commissioned officer's quarters which were up the street from our quadrangle area a block or two, and lived in there with two or three other graders.

We heard this bombardment-type noise, which wasn't unusual, because the Navy engaged in offshore exercise occasionally. Of course, my first thought, and my companion's, was that this was just another of those exercises, and we were roundly cursing the sailors for this interruption of our Sunday morning snooze.

But in a few minutes, I got a call from the First Sergeant, and he said, "Ross, you'd better get your ass down here, we're in a war!" It was apparent by the time I got up and looked outside. The sky was full of Japanese dive bombers who engaged in deep dives over Pearl Harbor, their pull-outs fanning out in all directions, of course, and coming over our quadrangle area and up and down the roads making strafing runs. So I got my gear and went down to the battery. We had a certain number of small arms locked up in the local supply room, which we got out. We issued all the weapons we had at hand. VAR's were about the heaviest that we had, rifles, and pistols.

We took up defensive positions within the area and fired at available targets as they came over. I don't know whether we hit any, but there were some that crashed in and around the area. I don't know whether it was due to our fire, or whose, but at any rate, a few came down. After the first wave, we gathered our forces and started moving the materials out into position. My battery had searchlights and they were gotten into motion, out into defense positions on the beaches and previously prepared places.

My particular material was the radar, which we had set up behind Fort Shafter on the hill for training. We manned the radar operation and that night, our most active engagement was the supposed fighting off of bombers coming in, and that turned out to be B-17's coming in from the States. We shot down, I think, seven that night, of our own B-17's. The most personal combat I got into at that time was a little warfare between the M.P.'s and the Ordnance who thought each other were Japs, and me and my radar were right in the line of fire between them.

We had no blackout facilities on the equipment, and stuck out like sore thumbs. Incinerating bullets set fire to the brush on the hillside, and we had quite a conflagration there, a god part of the night. The best I could do was to call my local C. P. and tell them that we were under fire, and probably would have to go out of action, and that's what we proceeded to do. The next morning, I took a tour around there and saw several bullet holes in the top of one of the generator fans.

So that was my experience during Pearl Harbor day. During the day itself, no one knew what was going on, nobody knew the disposition of the enemy forces, and nobody knew what they were going to do. We heard rumors that there were 80 landing craft off Barber's Point. We heard that there were Japanese paratroopers dropping into the hills in blue uniforms and coming down, so everybody was pretty edgy.

There were two waves that came in over Pearl Harbor, one at about 7:58 or so in the morning that lasted about a half hour or so. That's when they got the ship Arizona. The next one was about 10:00 or so, maybe a little earlier. By that time we had marshaled enough forces to present quite an anti-aircraft defense, and they weren't nearly as effective that time. They had different targets, too, that time. They'd really achieved their basic objective on the first wave, and on the next they hit the airfield - Wheeler Field and Kanawai Bay, the big Naval air station out on the other side of the island.

Not many ships made it back out of the harbor. The carriers were all out, fortunately. The harbor was pretty well blocked by the damage done to the battleships. Of course, the Japanese had managed to bring some miniature submarines right up into the harbor, so there weren't many ships that got out that day.

Before the war started, I was waiting out in Hawaii for our gear to show up. We didn't really have any radar equipment at that time, and there was about six or eight months there, that I didn't really have any technical work to do, so they put me and another fellow (an Army Radar Technician) on the battleship California for training. We went aboard there to learn about the Navy's radar.

We were put up in the Chief's quarters and given full run of the ship on the basis of Chief Petty Officer, although we were only Staff Sergeants at the time.

Actually, I was promoted to Staff Sergeant while we were at sea on the California, as I found out later.

We spent a month or two, cruising around out in the Pacific everywhere on exercises, battle maneuvers, training, and so forth. Of course I made many friends who were (Ross paused here for a long moment - we all knew it was a deeply emotional remembrance for him and we were all touched)...killed on Pearl Harbor day. The California went down.

On the second wave, the Japanese used high-level tactics, rather than low level as in the first. We had our anti-aircraft in position. I imagine they lost 50 or 60 planes, all together, out of two or three hundred in both waves. Now these may have been the same planes. I don't know whether they went back and landed and took off again, but I'd say there were between 200 to 500 sorties in the attack.

I had a little run-in with "Washing Machine Charley" that people in the states heard about. Of course down in the Marshalls and Gilberts, they were flying out of Quadulan and were in the Gilbert and Phoenix Islands, and the Japanese were still in Quadulan, Anawetoc, and up in there. On moonlight nights down there in the equatorial areas, it's real bright. These guys would send out their Washing Machine Charley nuisance bomber, and he'd fly down there with one 500 pound bomb and drop it and fly back. You could always depend on this guy coming down maybe three or four times a month. More nuisance than anything else. No one was killed that I know of, and very little damage was done. It was always in the middle of the night, and you'd have to jump out of your sack and run out and jump in a clip trench.

On the coral atolls, the water table at high tide was only about this far below the surface, and the first night I was there, the first thing we had to do was go out and dig a foxhole to jump in. So I went out and dug me a nice deep one. At 3:00 in the morning, we got an alert. I went out and jumped in - it was full of water! The guys would anchor an empty oil drum to keep the water out by using rocks and weights to keep it from floating out. Of course, nobody told me about the water. They knew I'd learn."

Dyer

"What did I do during World War II? I put the sewing kits in those little Red Cross packages!"
(*everyone laughed*)

Dorothy said, "Whenever we get to talking about World War II with someone, and what we were doing, and Pearl Harbor, and all that kind of stuff and I tell about my brothers, I somehow have the idea that you, Dyer, wanted to go overseas, and you got real mad when they sent Bob. You said, "That fresh kid right out of high school, and they send him over there", but you got all the way to France, didn't you?"

"Oh yeah, all the way"

"And then the war was over?"

"Well, let's see. We docked in about April, I guess. We spent about eleven days on the ship, crossing the Atlantic alone. Went through the Straits of Gibraltar into the Mediterranean Sea, along the coast of North Africa, and then crossed over to Marseille. Talk about cold, man it was cold there...(*The tape ended there. Germany surrendered on May 7, so the War was pretty well over, by the time Dyer reached Europe.*)

Robert

"Well, I was in the 15th Armored Division in World War II, and we were hangin' around La Havre, France getting ready to load for a few days. We got aboard ship there, bag and baggage (duffel bags) early in August. We were one of the first armored divisions out of Europe, because we were a young one in Europe, and we were still pretty well equipped.

At any rate, I paid no attention to who the officers and other people aboard were, except those in my own cavalry unit, so I marched up the gangplank, and after they had pulled it up. We were just getting away and out into the harbor, and I was watching up along the second deck of the ship - the poop deck or higher deck. I saw an officer that looked very familiar up there. I studied him over for a few minutes, and I was sure then, that this was my Uncle Jim Moore 'cause I knew that he was an officer with the

Eisenhower headquarters down in Paris. I knew that he was in the military government, and I knew the war was over for him, same as it was for me.

So I called up to him, and I says, "Colonel Moore, Sir!", and boy, his head snapped around like that, and he says, "Who's that down there that knows me?"

So I waved at him, and he waved back, but I don't think he still knew who I was. I was a buck private, and he was a Lt. Colonel. So I hopped onto a gangway, and went on up there (he called me up) and shook hands with him. He was quite happy to see me, and I, him, of course. He attempted to get better quarters for me, and let me bunk up there in his cabin, but I stayed with my unit down there in the hold."

"Hell," said Dyer in the background, "Boy, I'd have moved in!"

"Well, he had three other officers in there, so it wouldn't have been any better - a little tighter."

"At any rate," Bob went on, "we had a lot of nice conversations on the way back. We compared cameras and loot, and every other think going' on. Next time I saw him was in Sandpoint, Idaho during the time I was going to the University of Idaho. That was about it. I think the name of the ship was the USS Marine Devil. We landed in Boston harbor and my unit deployed right down to Camp Miles Standish, and from there we took trains all over the United States to wherever our destination was."

Vic asked, "Didn't you get captured by the Germans once, or was that a momentary..."

"Well, I was down in southern Germany with a cavalry unit on reconnaissance patrol and we went down one of these roads we shouldn't have been on.....we should have, that was part of our mission, to go to this town. But the military policeman blocking roads here and there and yon said that the area down there wasn't clear yet. We told him that was what we wanted to find out - who was down there. Well, there was a small SS unit down there that we ran smack into. Our mission was to get out of there, and bring back intelligence, rather than start a firefight with them, but they surrounded us. They kept us for a little while, but we'd already put a call in on our radio, and our unit sent tanks down there and we captured the SS units rather than them us.

They herded us into a barn and had us all, hands up in the air, and I was afraid for a little while there, that they were going to be belligerent with us. But they knew the war was over as well as we did. We had a soldier there that spoke good German, and he explained to them that we'd already put a call in. We had a little strip of cavalry headed down there in light tanks. It wasn't any real problem.

Another time we were about ready to go over a bridge on reconnaissance patrol and it was dangerous to cross any bridge. This one blew up right in our faces. We jumped right into the river."

Victor

(Someone asked youngest brother Vic if had any narrow escapes, and if he was at Da Nang).
"No narrow escapes. Yes, I was at Da Nang. I took language school before I went, so I could talk with the natives quite a bit. Also, we had a little detachment of native troops stationed up on the mountain that were supposed to be guards, but they were more trying to eke out a living there, than guarding anything. They were pretty poorly fed troops. They wore rubber sandals instead of combat boots, and rather than wear them, their feet hung over the edges, and the thongs just sort of hung on their feet.

We had an electronic intercept van that had some equipment, which monitored the North Vietnamese aircraft frequencies, and our mission was to gather information on the Migs that they were sending in from China. At that time, they didn't have any Mig 21's or Mig 19's or any jet aircraft whatsoever in North Vietnam.

Three or four months after I got to Vietnam, we started picking up these North Vietnamese broadcasts on VHF and we later confirmed them as being Mig aircraft Transmissions. That was the first time Migs were known to be in Vietnam, which was a violation of the Geneva Convention (which had already been violated by everyone concerned anyway, so I don't know why they really cared)."

(Ed. Note: The tape recording ended at this point.)

Boeing Field
Seattle, Washington
December, 1941

Dear Folks,

Sorry I haven't written before but they've had us going day and night since we got here. We thought we were going to Portland, but they brought us up to Seattle, and set up around the Boeing aircraft Plant. We got here the 15th and it's rained every day since - mud up to our ankles. I want to call Aunt Harriet - I think they live on 80th Street, which is a long way from here. We have five batteries attached to us, making 16 in all. That is really a pile of rations. I sent some money home just before we left and a suitcase. We were in one hell of a mess just before we left and I had to give the suitcase to a friend in the PX and let him send it C.O.D. I sent the money in an envelope. I got the Christmas card yesterday, Mom. Thanks a lot. Was glad to hear Ross is O.K. I hope you don't worry too much. We will probably sit here until the war is over. This place sure is going full blast. Seattle is a hilly town. The train passed through Kelso, Washington and I sure would like to have stopped for a few minute and seen Bob. Don't worry about me - everything is Hunky Dory (only they are working me too hard). Love to All, Dyer

Ft. Lewis, Seattle, Washington
December 29, 1941

Dear Brother (Bob),

I haven't had any chance to write since we arrived. We're at Boeing Field in Seattle, and that's about all I can tell you. They're very strict about military information at present, but it looks to me like we'll be here for the next few months, anyway. So far we can't leave the area, except for a few hours at a time. I have called most all the Crawfords in the phone book, but can't find Aunt Harriet. Does Mabel have her address?

I got a card from Mother for Christmas and she said they have received word from Ross saying he is O.K. I'm glad they didn't send us to the Philippines as we were originally ordered before the war broke. It's hard to write and still not say anything about the Army - that's all I know anymore.

I'm still with the regimental supply office, handling the rations. Our battery is set up just south of the United Airlines Hangar. I am writing this with candlelight so don't be surprised at mistakes, etc. Tell Uncle Dean, Aunt Mabel and the rest hello for me. Hope you enjoyed a Merry Christmas. Your brother, Dyer

PS: I sent some money to Mom, and if you need any, please let her know. I want to help you out all I can. I heard they put out an order prohibiting soldiers from bringing their wives or relatives to the islands, so it looks like Ross's plans will be held up for a while.

Fort Shafter, Hawaii
T. Sgt. Ross Pettijohn
Btry A, 69th CA (AA)
February 10, 1942

Dear Folks,

My present well being seems to be a matter of some concern to the family. I'm sorry for causing this. There is no need for worry at all. I am in no danger and am enjoying the best of health. Since I don't like to have my letters read by persons other than for whom they are intended, I don't write any letters. Please expect very few from me.

Thanks very much for your Christmas package. I received it January 29th. The fruitcake was moldy, but I nearly ate it anyway, it looked so delicious. Congratulations on the birth of our new brother. (Victor was born on January 21) My love and best wishes to the little Swede. I feel sort of sorry for him, though, with three big sisters to ride herd on him. The girls must be quite a pair or young ladies now, according to Ruth's letters. And Bob will soon be old enough to join the Army, won't he? I'm glad to know he is doing so well in school at Kelso, and with his music. You don't know what a disappointment to me it was that the plans of Ruth and mine were disrupted so rudely. But perhaps it was for the best. I am very happy that she seems to be such a part of the family. Already more of a Pettijohn than I ever was.

I had the good fortune the other day to run into Bill Curtis. We graduated from high school together. He was drafted into the infantry. I also saw John Black. He was going to get me Don Person's address but I haven't seen him since.

Don't worry when you don't hear from me as often as you think you should. If I'm wounded, missing or killed, you'll be immediately notified by the War Department. Tell Mrs. McClintick thanks for her letter to my commanding officer and her anxiety for me. It is quite hard to realize that I have caused you so much concern, all unnecessary. However, I will greatly appreciate it if no more such letters are written. They are rather embarrassing to receive.

Love to all. Tell Grandma and Granddad hello for me.

Your son, Ross

Fort Shafter, Hawaii
February 27, 1942

Dear Folks,

I'm still alive and kickin', trying to get used to wartime conditions here. I saw LeRoy Curtis, Al's brother the other day, and John Black. Had a card from Don Parsons - hope to see him soon. Ruth tells me Dyer is a mess sergeant now and would like to become a flying cadet. More power to him, if he can make the grade. I'd sure like to see him do it. I think he'd be a better flyer than 'belly robber' and the Army needs flyers. Hope he gets your approval.

I wonder if the little brother looks as Swede as his name sounds. I pray that you and he are doing well, Mother dear. And that he doesn't squall like the rest of us brats did, for your sake, Dad. Hello to the girls and Grandma and Granddad, and Thanks, Aunt Martha for the kind gift. I haven't heard news from cousins Ray and Jim for a long while. Well, I'll try to write again soon as I can. Pleas don't worry about me.
Your loving son, Ross

Ed. Note: Mother had a small 2" x 3" celluloid notebook, which said 'Memo' on the cover. It is bright green, and has an orange parrot on it...I remember it from early childhood. I found it at the time of Mother's death, in a box of things in a drawer, and very little is written in it. Her brothers Gene Moore and Bob Moore's addresses in Spokane, Ross's at Las Cruces, New Mexico and funny things Bob and Dorothy said when children. Bob: "Could you eat without sharp on your teeth?" "Does fire grow off of coal?" Dorothy when asked to perform a task: "I will, after soon." (Her earliest procrastination technique). The book has a tiny 1929 calendar on the back page, and that's about all, except for this poem, penned in her handwriting and dated March, 1942:

The winds of March may be drear and cold,
But Victor Pettijohn is two months old.
The snow has melted, the springtime skies
Are just the color of Victor's eyes!
The promise of June lies on the hills,
But Victor has borrowed the daffodils
And some of their color is bright upon
The shapely head of Pettijohn's son.
The news of a world, dark with mischance
Can never alter the circumstance
Of the rich possession our glad hearts hold,
Victor Pettijohn is two months old.

Little did she know that this tiny son born so late in her life, at age 45, would be their tender guardian and pillar of strength in the last faltering years of their lives.

Melba, Idaho
February 15, 1942
Letter from Ross J. Pettijohn to his son Dyer

Dear Son:

We are all well. Young Victor is coming along in great style. Spring is on the way here although it is still cold at night and freezes some. I have been hauling manure. Today being Sunday, I hitched up one of the black colts I bought from Knox last year. They are coming two years old and quite big. He worked fine. Tame as a dog. I see that Herschel Cummins has joined the Navy Air Corps. Gene Rutan left lately for the Marines. We have not heard directly from Ross but through a friend of Ruth's who says that he is very busy and can't write. I do not understand any condition where he could not write but it may be that he is on some special work. I hope you make Staff Sergeant, and glad to know that you are getting along well with the mess. It is good job if you can handle it.

As for joining the Air Corps, my advice is to stay where you are. A soldier should never stick his neck out for the axe. Flying is very dangerous work even in peacetime. There will surely be an enormous amount of air fighting when the U.S. gets going. Anti-aircraft is important also, so you can feel that you are doing your bit there as well as elsewhere. We are in it now but I have never thought that the average citizen of the U. S. is under a great deal of obligation to get killed fighting in Asia or anywhere beyond the Hawaiian Islands. It should be soldier's aim to do his duty and beyond that to live through it if possible. The world is going to keep rolling along just as it has in the past, regardless of wars. These

wars are all, without exception, for world trade and the right and opportunity to exploit the resources and markets of the world.

Herschel Cummins is at Seattle somewhere with the Naval Air Corps. There are no young men around Melba now.

We are sending your birth certificate and I shall see Mr. Scharbach about your high school transcript and recommendation right away. But think it over well. You may not be able to pass the physical exam on account of color blindness. I suppose that after cadet work a flyer is commissioned. Will you keep your present rating as a cadet or will you have to go back to the rank of Private? There is nothing romantic about modern war. It is all danger and misery. And after a soldier comes back alive he gets no thanks from the country. See what they did to me in the civil service. Passed me up twice for a boot licking New Dealer.

Let us know how you make it, and the best of luck.

Dad

(Ed. Note: Ross Pettijohn Sr., after returning from WW I and marrying, landed the Melba Postmaster job under the Republican administration. But at that time, when a new party took control in Washington, D. C., government jobs changed parties, all the way down. So he lost his job to a Democrat when Roosevelt became President, and bought a 40-acre farm where the Melba water tower now stands. He was bitter about it for the rest of his life.)

Fort Shafter, Hawaii from Ross to Dyer at Ft. Lewis, Washington

Dear Dyer,

I was thinking all the time that you owed me a letter, but I guess you don't, because I found the last one I wrote to you in my letterbox tonight. Heard you finally got a furlough. I suppose things seemed dead around Melba with everybody gone. Do you get to see Bob at all? I think he ought to go in the Army when he's old enough. A college education is fine, but I'd feel funny as hell going to college right now when all my buddies were out fighting. Bill Ritchey isn't here now. (Ed. Note: He was the son of Manley Ritchey, after whom the Nampa Airport is named) Seems like this place is a mecca for Melbans. Bill says he will be 1st Lieutenant soon - same old Ritchey. He saw Keith Cummins in San Diego before he came over. Well, I'd better close. Dyer, write soon and tell me how you're making out.

Your brother, Ross

April 17, 1942

Dear Mother

Just a few lines to let you know I'm O.K. Notice the change of address. Can't tell you where I'm at, but it ain't any closer to home. Will you please send me Ruth's address? I've lost it and can't remember what the number is (but don't tell her that).

I'm O.K. and making out fine. Whatever you do, don't worry about me. Give Grandma and Grandpa Moore my best wishes on their Golden Wedding Anniversary. I had a chance to see Hersh Cummins a couple of times before I left. Give everyone my regards.

Your loving son, Ross

Hawaii
April 21, 1942

Dear Mother

I thought I'd take a few moments to write. I was glad to get your letter with the picture of the baby and Ann. He's a typical looking Pettijohn all right. But I hardly recognized Ann, she has grown so much. From the sound of the winter weather there, there's liable to be a fast run-off in the spring. Hope the water situation is good, as crop prices should be sky high. How are the (grand) folks making out - do they hear from Woodie and Jim? Tell them hello for me, and Mrs. McClintick too, if you see her.

Ruth seems to like it O.K. in D. C. I'm afraid I sadly neglect my correspondence with her, as I do with everybody nowadays. What do you hear from Dyer and Bob? Isn't this his last year of school? (Bob had just turned 17.) I'm a hell of a guy. Can't even remember the ages and birthdays of my own brothers and sisters.

Can't tell you much about myself. Manage to keep occupied - one way or another most of the time. My letters must now be sent to the Postmaster in San Francisco. Hope to hear from you soon. Tell the girls hello.

Your son, Ross Pettijohn

Fleet Radar School
Pearl Harbor, T. H.

Dear Folks,

Got Dad's letter, and glad everyone is doing well. It's been some time since I've written, but I'm always thinking of you even if I don't show my love and affection by writing lots of letters and things like that. It just isn't my nature. It's too bad that Dyer and his job couldn't get along. But I don't blame him for not liking to be a Mess Sergeant because I've had my own little experience at funning a mess and know just how he felt.

You mentioned that Bob may not be able to go back to school this fall in Kelso. I'd sure like to see him go, and if he needs any help I can let him have \$300 or \$400. I took out an insurance policy with the War Department nearly 6 months ago, so you should have received it b7y now.

I was surprised that Keith Cummins was commissioned. Can't seem to imagine him as anything but a little fellow with leg ache. Has Herschel earned his wings yet? If so, did he take his commission in the Navy or in the Marines? My friends out here are nearly all warrant officers now. Farine, Merritt, Wise and Gibson - the fellows that used to be our neighbors. DeVore got married June 24 to a very nice girl. She owned the beauty parlor at Shafter and her relatives are quite well to do. They had quite a wedding, but I couldn't go. DeVore says he's in for W. O. too.

My own status I haven't been able to fathom for 6 months. I put in for Officer's Candidate School, Coast Artillery, three months ago, and haven't heard a word yet. Guess I'm not politician enough or something. Also can't follow up my applications and see that they're not wastebasketed by some lazy clerk...the other day David Potts told me to put in the W.O. exams. He'll probably be one soon, and has it coming, as he has about 27 years in the Army, 15 of them 1st Sgt. He's a good soldier and a good 1st Sgt. And for that reason is not well liked by most of the men. But you can damn well bet that he is respected by every one of them. He should be a Captain and a Battery Commander. I haven't seen my friend Paroczai for quite awhile. I finally had some pictures taken and will send you one as soon as I can.

Your son, Ross

Seattle
November 19, 1942

Dear Folks,

Thanks a lot for your last letters. Uncle Clive and Aunt Zita were here in Seattle last Sunday. I went out to Les's place to see them, Harriet and Kate. We had a nice visit. Boy, that Clive can sure shoot the questions to a person. He's sure swell, though. They invited me to come to Davenport for Christmas, and Les wants me to come out there, but I doubt if I can get away at all. (Ed. Note: Uncle Clive Pettijohn lived in Davenport, Washington, and was the Judge of Lincoln County for many years.)

I hope you hear from Ross soon. I have transferred to Headquarters, 2nd Battalion since you last heard from me. I'm supposed to make a rating soon. They've held me up twice, as the regiment is over on ratings. Well, I'll make this one short. There is nothing to worry about Mom. Your little son has escaped the clutches of these awful women. I hope you can read this. Bye now,
Love Dyer.

Hawaii
December 12, 1942

Dear Mother,

I got your letter and the pictures today and four letters from Ruth. Thought for a while I was coming back to the mainland, but not so. The best time to expect me home is when you see me walking in the door, and that won't be for quite awhile, I guess. I got a Christmas box from the Melba community. Don't know who to write and thank for it, so maybe you can do it for me. Also got one from Uncle Clive and Aunt Zita. Dyer looks like he has changed quite a bit in the pictures. Bill Ritchey was here for a while, but is gone now. Don Parsons and Melba Todd's husband Gene Hayes should be home soon. They didn't think much of this place, and were anxious to get back.

I've allotted \$50 of my pay to you Mother, and you should start getting it in January. I don't want you to save any of it for me, but use it as you wish. Your letters won't be photographed unless you write them on the V mail forms. Tell Grandma hello for me, and Merry Christmas. Your loving son, Ross

1-cent postcard
Kelso, Washington
July 13, 1943 (Bob was 18 years old)

Dear Mother

Cousin Donnie and I are at Kelso now. I leave again tomorrow morning. I shall send my belongings home before I leave. Kelso is the same as I left it. Wet and raining, although it cleared up some today. I washed, cleaned and Simonized Mick's car today. Some job. Ralph and the rest of the fellows were glad to see me, and we're all ready to go to the service. I'll write of further developments.
Love, Bob

1-cent postcard to Aunt Mabel from Bob

Dear Folks,

I'm leaving from here for some reasons of my own. This is certainly a mass production induction center and the U.S.O. is very nice to us. I'll send my stuff for you to put in that black bag and send

home for me, if you will, please. Another thing, be sure and turn my ration coupons to the board as soon as possible. Goodbye for now, I'll write later. Love, Bob

(Free) no stamp picture postcard of Mt. Rainier, Washington
July 17, 1943

Dear Micklewaites

See the mountains on the other side? I'm ten miles on the other side and it's pretty as a picture. Where we are is a good place, and they feed us till we can eat no more. The fellows in my company are a swell bunch. I'm sure glad I didn't take my furlough. We have good bunks, but they're hard to write on. Mine is about six feet high and the second one up. Things are kept surprisingly neat and orderly here. Things sure are cheap at the PX. Love, Bob

Fort Lewis, Washington
July 17, 1943

Dear Folks,

I'm here at Ft. Lewis now and think it's swell so far. Things are cheap at the PX, and shaves are 15 cents. We start a drill and work detail tomorrow. Leave here in a few days for God only knows. These Bunks are fine, but hard to write. Love, Bob

Wood Moore
C/O American Embassy
London, England
12 February 1943

Dear Mother and Dad (Granddad and Grandmother Moore)

Just a few lines to say hello and let you know I am quite well and not too underfed (Woodie was 36 at this time). I have a very good assignment here, which I like very much. I hear from Lila quite often, and occasionally a few lines from other members of the family. But for the most part, news is quite stale by the time it reaches me. I dislike being away from my family. I know they need me, but no more than I need them. However, I presume most families are upset these times and perhaps my lot is much better than that of many others. I shall be glad to see the thing through so that I can go home and live normal again. Until then, I shall carry on as everyone else is. My love and regards for you all, always.

Your son, Woodie

June 15, 1943

Dear Mother,

Here I am back home again and sure glad to be here, you can bet. Went out and saw Hersh and also looked up Ellis Greenfield, who is at the same place. Ellis looks the same as ever. He doesn't like the Navy so well, but is getting along O.K. He is a 2nd class metal smith (which corresponds to Staff Sgt. in the Army). Everyone says I look thinner, but better. I doubt if I am any thinner. It is only an optical illusion. Had a letter from Ruth. She had been home. How did she look? Is Dyer home on leave yet? Another year, and maybe I'll get a furlough. Give Granddad and Grandma Moore my love. Hersh says Victor has red hair - that so? Well I have a red mustache. Your loving son, Ross

December 11, 1943

Dear Mr. & Mrs. Pettijohn

I want to thank you very much for remembering me on Christmas. It was very thoughtful of you and I certainly appreciate it. Our squadron is getting new planes, so I was back in San Diego for some time, helping to get them ready. It seemed mighty nice to get back there for a while. Was in town yesterday and saw Ross, but he was so busy he couldn't come with us, but he looks fine. Said he is going to make Master Sgt. Soon. We plan to get together soon to talk over old times again. A Merry Christmas to you and the family.

H. M. Cummins

Camp Roberts, California

August 30, 1943

Dear Dad,

I've finally finished the first phase of basic. We're working on those small radios mostly, now. Next week we start on a bigger set in the command car. The 54th, 55th, and 56th battalions had a parade (drill) last Friday and D battery won. We received a comment from the Colonel. We march in a battery formation of 4 platoons, 70 men each, which make 16 abreast. The drill is rather easy, except for flank movements with so many men. Incidentally, my platoon is the First platoon, Building 6202.

Love to all, Bob (he was 18 years old)

Camp Roberts, Calif.

September 5, 1943

Dear Mother, Dad and Family

This is a comic sheet I picked up at the rec. hall and I thought it would do for a letter. They are fairly true-to-life caricatures. I've been through most all of them. The infiltration course comes in about the 11th week, and I dread it. Several have been hurt over the course, but if one keeps his head down, he is safer, I hear.

On my first pass this weekend I went to Paso Robles with a friend, about 13 miles from here. Went to a show and a dance. The USO's are pretty nice and treat us human, which is more than most people can do. Of course you can't blame them, as there are about 10 soldiers to every civilian. The young soldiers like me don't understand that attitude.

Seven weeks gone and ten to go. I still like the Army, but am looking forward to that furlough at the end of basic, which will be five days at home, plus traveling time. I'm going to have a picture taken for you Mother, to set on that bookcase in that little corner. I also found one of those service bars that you wanted. I had a hard time finding one with three stars. (Ed. Note: This was a small rectangular flag, which the mothers of servicemen hung in their window, with a star representing each member of the family in the military) I tried everywhere, and finally found it in a little jewelry store. It was the only one they had. I actually believe she was saving it for me, and I hope you like it. Must close, they are starting some kind of a Sunday evening show here at the service club which puts an end to the letter writing.

Love from your son, Bob

Dear Mom,

I got your letter this evening, and think it is the longest one you have ever written to me. I got a package from the community and one from Uncle Clive and Aunt Zita for Christmas. I've written them thank you's. You know I don't want you to be sending me packages and things. Goodness knows, you have enough troubles as it is! I wish you

wouldn't worry about me Mom, like you do. There is no need for it all. If I were sick or in danger it would be different, but I'm not. I've only been in the hospital once since I enlisted four years ago, and that's a pretty good record.

Aunt Edna sent me a card. I never knew she was married. I felt silly telling her that. It sure makes me feel like a stranger to the family. I'm worried sick about Ruth, Mom. I made a mistake writing her as I did. I haven't a lick of sense about anything like that. I should have known she would misconstrue my meaning. I was only trying to tell her that she shouldn't build up hopes and dreams on me that would level to disappointment and regret later, because it will be a long long time before I come back to her and maybe not at all. I just wanted her to realize that. I know how it feels to follow a fantasy and expect things that can't possibly happen. I know how miserable a person can get with disappointment and disillusionment. I don't want that to happen to her. She thinks I'm trying to get rid of her for someone else - that isn't so. I love her and am true to her and always will be. In the first place, I don't have a chance to meet women I'd be interested in marrying, and I don't have time to get to know them well enough to want to marry them if I did. Besides, I don't want to. All I want is Ruth. But I want her to be happy. If she should ever decide that she could no longer be happy with me, then I don't want her to feel bound to me or obligated. That is all. I'm going to send you some money to help her, Mom. Now don't you let her be foolish about it either. It's about all I can do to show my love except by just hoping and praying for her.

I've always been a hell of a son to you, Mother. Selfish and crude, senseless and irresponsible and lazy. I had the idea that I couldn't be happy unless I was roaming the country without a worry or a care. Maybe I'll grow up someday and get wise to myself. Well, I'd better close. Tell Grandma and Granddad hello for me. Your loving son, Ross

Ross & Ruth were married, both in full uniform at her parent's home in Melba, Idaho 12 September 1944.

Camp Hulen, Texas
June 19, 1944

Dear Folks,

Well, how does he look - like a real G.I. eh? Bob, I'm sorry I can't make it as I expected to. I won't be able to leave until the 2nd of July. I hope you have good luck going and coming, and a good time home. You're going to have G.I.'s around quite a bit this summer if the three of us get home. I'm looking forward to coming as enthusiastically as I did on my first one. It's always the same feeling to be going back, after being gone. When I was home last time, I thought it was my last trip, but my luck is still with me. I have a couple of pictures I'll send. Don't let them scare you. I sent the roll we took, Bob. I'll send you a print of them when they come in. This does it for now. Bob, don't snow the girls under up there - I'll bet they really go for you. I saw Beth and Mary again last weekend. Couldn't make it this time, though. Hello Vic and Ann. Love, Dyer

Ed. Note: Dyer and Beth were married eight months after this letter, in February of 1945. I didn't find any letters written in the next few months. Possibly because it was a crucial and busy time for the three

boys. June 6 was D-day, the largest amphibious attack in history, by the United States and its allies on France and Germany. By September of 1945 we had liberated Paris and pushed into Germany with the 1st Army. In October, MacArthur invaded the Philippines, and in December was the "Battle of the Bulge". The German counter offensive in Ardennes Forest drove part of the Allied line back, but the Allies held at Bastogne against all odds. January 9 was the U. S. assault on Luzon in the Philippines, and February 19, the Battle of Iwo Jima. On March 7, the American army reached the Rhine River to occupy Cologne, Germany. Okinawa was then captured, and on April 12, President Roosevelt died and Harry Truman was sworn in as President. I was in the 3rd grade.

At home, things weren't so good either. Mother became very very ill, and had to have surgery. I found a receipt written to Dad from the Nampa Clinic for \$213 and dated Feb. 5, 1945 along with flower cards from the Rebekah Lodge, the LDS Relief Society, Marie, Delia Doser, Louise Peckham, Roxy Jensen and Glyda Webb. I was eight years old and wrote her a letter while in the hospital, "Dear Mamma, I am in a chair with pimples all over me. We think it is chicken pox. This makes three days since I've been out of school. I hope you will be home soon. Victor is fine. I haven't much more to say. Love, Ann"

Somewhere in France
February 13, 1945
(Small V-mail photocopy)

Dear Folks

I feel guilty for not writing more, but circumstances have been such that writing letters has been quite impractical. I didn't get seasick on the boat, but didn't enjoy the trip much, since we were so crowded. Living facilities were kind of bad. I saw LeHavre and the city was quite a wreck. From what I could see of it, there wasn't much left standing that was any good. I could sure tell what the results of war are in one quick glance.

The French countryside here is very pretty. They have trim little hedgerows around all these little farms and the roads are mostly narrow, about like our country roads, but these farmers cultivate right out to the edge of the road leaving no space for weeds and trash to collect. The weather is about like our coastal weather over in Washington, which means rain, rain and more rain. Right now we're doing a lot of work that could be labeled "shaping up". I've been here several days and visited a few small towns, with a lot of interest. We get a bang out of the way the French live and act. I try my best to talk to them, but it's no easy matter. I have a little pamphlet with a few phrases that helps me some. I'd sure appreciate a French-English dictionary if you could get one for me. I'll also request a box of food in case you would send me a small one in compliance with postal regulations.

I hope you are all right, Mother and recovering with speed. Did you get the flowers I did my best to send before I left New York? There wasn't much I could do in the way of a real nice plant, but I hope it turns out all right. I'm perfectly all right, although a bit hungry most of the time. Rations are slim right now. I hope they get better. As far as living quarters, we are billeted right now, so I'm lucky to have a good solid French roof and four brick walls around me. I sure dread having to throw a bedroll down in the cold rain and mud. I'll try to write every three days or so. Please don't worry about me any more than is necessary over here. It's a pretty good country to be in, even if there is a war on. I've seen maneuvers in Texas that were a hell of a lot worse.

All my love, Bob

Somewhere in France
February 19, 1945
V-mail

Dear Folks,

I got the birthday card today, Mom (his 20th). It was a beautiful letter, Mom and thanks a million. I trust you are recovering nicely and it takes a load off my mind. So Dyer is engaged? Beth is a very nice girl. She's good looking and plays the piano and sings beautifully. I guess she knows the ins and outs of the kitchen too, because she can whip up a real snack in a hurry.

Naturally, I can't tell you where I am, Mom. They censor all our mail, but I'm glad they don't censor yours. I guess you can write what you wish. The French country is still very beautiful, and it has been nice for several days. So you can see I haven't run into anything rough yet. All for now, Love, Bob

Western Union Telegram
February 20, 1945

Love to the best Mother in all the world. Am well and fit. Wish I could be with you.
Robert Pettijohn

Western Union Telegram
February 25, 1945

We were married last night. Everything is fine. Hope to see you soon.
Love, Dyer and Beth (Dyer was 23)

February 26, 1945

Dear Folks,

This V-mail is quite slow, I presume. My last letter from you was Feb. 2. I'll keep writing V-mail along with Airmail to keep a chain of letters to you, though. I enjoyed a fair-sized show this evening, so am in better spirits than usual. We get just about enough to eat with a slow but steady improvement, but I am definitely not gaining weight. I feel a bit like an old man now that I've passed my 20th birthday. One more year, and I'll be of age. I've suddenly realized that I've actually reached the age when most young fellow get married and settle down to live a life of their own. Boy, that will be the happiest day of a lifetime when I get out of this mess. The boys in the lines are going again, but still have the hardest part of West wall fortress to hurdle. After building it for 25 years, I don't look for it to topple in a few months. From where I sit, it still looks like a long road ahead. I'll try to keep writing regularly so you won't worry.
Love, Bob

Somewhere in France
February 28, 1945

Dearest Mother,

I'm sure sorry if that lull in hearing from me during January upset you in any way, especially after the operation and all. You must understand though, that there was a reason for it. We spent a lot of

time at _____ and along with other complications made it quite impossible for me to communicate at all.

I do hope that you are steadily growing stronger and feeling better. As long as I am assured that things are O.K. at home, I can do my best over here.

Most of my pictures of you and the family are in the furlough bag there at home. But I would sure like to have a late snap of you and the kids if you have one. I'm all right here, and as safe as if I were at home in your kitchen.

All my love, Bob

Somewhere in France
February 28, 1945

Dear Folks,

Another day done. Nothing new happened and I'm still O. K. We went about 20 miles across the country this afternoon to get a dental check. Some spots around have been bombed pretty badly and the pockmarks are quite thick there. Most of the towns haven't been damaged much, however. The coastal cities get it worst. Some are really a mess.

We have been trying to improve our little stove without much luck. The thing doesn't seem to have a big enough pipe. It pours out a lot of smoke, only out of the wrong end. Our homemade beds are still in good sleeping condition. With a sleeping bag, and lots of straw, we manage to keep quite warm. All for now, Love Bob

Somewhere in France
March 6, 1945

Dear Dad,

I received your most welcome letter of Feb. 8 today. I hope Dyer got another furlough in April, but of course he probably will, with his furlough luck. Mother says you are considering selling the old place at the right opportunity. There should be a demand for farms after V-day and some of the heavier industries slack off. The picture looks good continually over here. We are kept well abreast of the news along the front as fast as it happens.

I remember the letter I got from you with the caption on it. I haven't sent any mail directly to Mom, so I guess you understand that I will as soon as I can. I'm still O.K., getting enough to eat, and quite safe, so don't worry about me.

Love to all, Bob

Somewhere in France
March 9, 1945 V-mail

Dear Folks,

I'm still here and O.K. I had a letter from Aunt Zita today. The boys in the lines are still doing a wonderful job and I hope they keep it up. There's still a long road ahead. I get a case of furlough blues now and then when I get to thinking of home. I sure will be glad to get back. I hope you are feeling much better, Mom. I don't hear from you very often so I suppose you're not hearing much from me, cue to slow mail. All for now. Love, Bob

Somewhere in France
March 11, 1945

Dear Folks,

We've been covering the country looking for souvenirs. Most of them are too rusty, though. We have a few rifles off the beach though, and some ammunition. They are all right for shooting at rabbits. Spring is coming slowly day by day. I'd hate to have to do much soldiering in miserable weather. The mail is still slow – I suppose it has to spend so much time in depots on the way. What does Dyer have to say about prospects for a furlough? Something else you can send me from home is a light scarf about a hard long to wrap around. They aren't issue, but sure would help a lot. All for now,
Love, Bob

Somewhere in Germany
March 29, 1945

Dear Mom,

Well, it's goodbye France for a while. I sure enjoyed the country while I was there. I got to visit Brussels, Belgium once. It's a more modern country than I thought. Some of the buildings in the city look like some of those post-war houses. I also visited Laissone and Chateau Thierry, both World War I battles. The memorial monument overlooking Chateau Thierry was very beautiful. Don't worry about me. I don't anticipate sticking my neck out. We have the upper hand all the way, so nobody has to take any chances. Things will wind up any day now. It will be a great relief, I guess, for all of us. I'm kind of anxious to start to school again and see if I can stand a human way of life. All my love, Bob

Germany
April 22, 1945

Dear Mom,

I finally found a bit of time to write a letter. I sure hate not writing for a spell because I know how much you worry. I'm sending a \$40.00 money order. No use keeping money here. I can't spend it. Spring is breaking slowly in Germany, and it's been raining a lot. All I can tell you about myself Mom, is that we were in the Battle of the Ruhr Valley. Most of us came out in good shape, but some of the boys weren't so fortunate. All for now Mom. I'll try to keep writing regularly. Love, Bob

Ed. Note: Two days after Bob write this letter, the nations met at San Francisco to sign the United Nations Charter, establishing an international organization to preserve world peace. On April 28, Italian patriots shot Mussolini, and on April 29, German armies in Italy surrendered to Allies. On April 30, Adolf Hitler committed suicide in Berlin. On May 7, Germany surrendered. August 6 was the day the first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, the 2nd August 9 on Nagasaki. On August 10, Japan sued for peace, and officially surrendered September 2.

20 October 1945
San Francisco, Calif.

Dear Mother,

I thought Ruth had written you a letter telling you all about my arrival here on the mainland but last night she said she had only sent you a wire, so I'll try to give you all the up to date news about us.

I left Hickam Field, Hawaii on the 10th of this month by air. Landed at Hamilton Field 12 hours later after a really enjoyable trip in a new C-54 'Globester'. I called Ruth that night to let her know I was here. The next day I got my orders arranged sending me to Camp Beale for release. I reported in to Camp Beale on Sunday the 14th. We drove up there, that is, Ben took us up there in his car. The place is way out in the wheat fields up near Marysville.

I was really surprised at the speed and efficiency of their discharge system there. They process everyone, get their records straight, pay them, give them their final physical and release them in 36 hours. I was through and kissed goodbye to everything GI at 11 a.m. Tuesday and 16th. I am on Terminal Leave now. During the four months I held a commission, I accrued 11 days of terminal leave. So on the 27th of the month I will be completely out of the Army, except for my reserve commission as 2nd Lieutenant.

Ruth says she thinks she will get out next week. She is in the process of her physical now. She has a lot of red tape to contend with.

I have been quite busy since I came back, trying to find us a place to live, trying to buy clothes and getting set to start the University. I won't be able to start there until the spring term in March. Between now and then I'm going to work. I don't have a job lined up yet but won't have any trouble getting one when I decide to start.

After Ruth gets out she would like to take a little trip down to Los Angeles to see Edith and George and their babies.

It sure seems good to be back here on ground that is 3,000 miles wide and know that I'm here to stay. I know I'm going to miss the Army now and then. You don't forget seven years of Army life overnight. It will seem strange for a while to be out from under the protective wing of Uncle Sam.

Mother, I'd like to have you send me the bonds and cash I have there. I don't need it at the present, but want to have it as hand. If everything goes all right we'll be living here in the Bay area for the next four years or so. I went up to see the people at the California Veteran's Welfare Board and they said that since I came into the army in California I would be entitled to the benefits under the California Veterans Farm and Home Purchase Plan. That means the state will put up the money to buy a house and I pay them back at a monthly rate for a period of 20 years.

I'd sure like to do that. And it would be as cheap as paying rent on an apartment. They gave me an application form to fill out and send in so I'm going to do it and see what happens.

The University gave me a form to send to my high school to have a record of my grades there put on it. I am sending it to you and would appreciate it very much if you will take it over to the high school and have them fill it out and give it back to you. Then you can send it to me and I'll submit it with some other papers that I have to fill out myself.

As soon as we are settled in a place of our own, I am going to ask you to send me all my books and things I have around there. We could stay here with Mrs. Cotter as long as we like but it is too far from Berkley. I want to find someplace over there if possible.

Do you have Aunt Martha's address Mother? Ruth doesn't have it. I would like to go see her if I knew where she lived.

Well Mother, It's been quite a while since I've written. I was under a hell of a strain those last few months in Hawaii. I wanted to prove my ability as a shave tail, even knowing I was to get out in a few months. I worked pretty hard. There was really a lot of work to do. We had an 85% turnover in men in the battalion in 2 month's time. We lost all of the non-coms and key personnel we had. Our replacements were recruits with nothing but basic training. We were required to maintain our tactical positions and were expected to maintain our operating efficiency. We were also instituting a post-war educational program for the short-timers. At the same time we were gradually losing the officers. When I left, my duties were Bn Radar Officer, Bn Communications Officer and Cryptographic Security Officer. The day before I left I inventoried the Post Exchange. For my three months as an officer I got an efficiency rating of Superior and I'm quite proud of that.

I'll close now Mother and hope to hear from you soon. Give my love to Granddad and Grandma when you see them. I have a bag of shells I got for you. They're in my footlocker, which I shipped as hold baggage and probably won't get here for six months.

All my love, Ross

7 November 1945

Texas

Dear Mother

This is the first letter I've written since I was discharged last Sunday at 12:30 a.m. in Fort Jackson. I left here a week ago yesterday and made it back yesterday. And now I'm a civilian again. A lot has happened to me since that day I kissed you and little Ann goodbye and drove that old '32 Chevy out of the yard. I wouldn't trade my experiences for anything, but I'm glad they are over and I wouldn't take anything to start over again.

Best of all, I have found Beth and the rest is over. We can start our life together now with no interruptions. I know it won't be easy to get over "not being in the Army", but it will be fun.

I would like to see you up there at home, but I won't be able to make it for a while, maybe next year. I hope Ross and Bob get out before long. Please write and let me know how you are all getting along. We are patiently awaiting the arrival of that little boy. (Ada Beth) The doctor says he may be a little later than we had planned. It won't be very long now. Anyway, we will keep you posted if you'll encourage us with a letter now and then. Love to all, Dyer and Beth

A. Ross Pettijohn, 81, native son of Melba, lately of Hemet, California, died Wednesday, Feb. 6, 2002. Ross was born Sept. 24, 1920 in Melba to Ross J. and Hilda Moore Pettijohn, the oldest of seven children. In 1938, he enlisted in the United States Army. He was later commissioned and served as a 2nd Lt. in Hawaii during World War II. He was a Pearl Harbor survivor. At the time, his wife Ruth McClintick Pettijohn was serving as a Corporal in the Women's Marine Corps in San Francisco, and his brothers Dyer and Robert Pettijohn were serving in Germany and France, in the U. S. Army.

Ross remained in the military until the 1950's, when he joined civilian ranks as an aero space engineer, first for McDonald-Douglas Aircraft, and finally for Martin Marietta Corp. He assisted in the Apollo space program, and was at Cape Kennedy when several satellites were sent into orbit, as well as the "moon shot".

He is survived by his wife, Ruth of Hemet and three daughters, Christine Oliver, Margaret (Don) Bordenkircher both of Lovelock, Nevada; Catherine (Don) Crook of Camarillo, California; three grandsons and two great-granddaughters. Also brothers Dyer Pettijohn of Harlingen, Texas; Robert Pettijohn of Sierra Vista, Arizona; Victor Pettijohn of North Bend, Oregon; Dorothy Johnson of Burnsville, Minnesota; Martha Morrise of Roy, Utah and Ann Tomlinson of Nampa.

Final arrangements are with Riverside Cremation Society of Hemet, California and Riverside Veteran's Cemetery. A family memorial will occur there at a later date. It is requested memorials be made to a children's cause.

Dyer W. Pettijohn – obituary

Robert Pettijohn - obituary