

Letters Home from Charles Pospisil, Camp Robinson, Little Rock, AR—December 1944

[Note: Letters as transcribed include some corrections to syntax, grammar, and spelling. Material of a personal nature has been deleted in deference to remaining family members.]

*Dec 1, 1944* (postmarked Little Rock, Arkansas)--Here's the latest--flash--They just issued us sleeping bags today for our bivouac starting Sunday morning at 5 am. It's gonna be tough, but I guess we're well prepared. The bivouac will include a 25 mile hike out there. We will have maneuvers, or war games as civilians know it, and here we will use live ammunition. I don't mean to worry you, but the public never hears of the casualties that happen here. Last week there were two killed and several injured. We will simulate actual combat conditions. Guess if one survives that, he will everything else...I don't know how often I'll be able to write, if at all, so please don't worry if you don't hear from me for a few days. However, I'll do all I can to keep you posted...Received word today we definitely will go to the main post for two weeks M.P. duty, or schooling, which brings us into the new year, so I guess our dream of being home for the holidays is shattered. However, it will be within days afterwards...Just came in from another night problem and had time to drop these few lines before the lights go out...Nothing else new. Everything OK. Will write one more letter tomorrow, Sat, before going on bivouac and I'll make up for several short ones this week...Received your Tuesday letter and know you are blue. Cheer up, Bun, the end is soon to come and our beginning will begin.

*Dec 5, 1944*--Just want to let you know it's plenty rough, but we're doing the best we can. It's raining intermittently, however we are dry at present...We are warm, and sleeping at night isn't too bad...Received your mail and glad to hear all OK...I'm trying to keep a diary and you'll know more about it (bivouac)...Please excuse my note, it is only temporary...I'm writing this in the prone position.

*Dec ?, 1944* (Postmarked Dec 11, Little Rock, Arkansas)--(N.B: Charles wrote "Date unknown; Dec ?") We will complete one week tonight of bivouac and it was a wet one indeed. Pouring rain, with mud and etc., for five days and nights. Yesterday and today, Fri. and Sat., were our first nice day and a bit warm, although a heavy frost we have in the mornings...I'm feeling fine, but find it rough...Hope to see you next year, sometime in Jan. Receiving your mail OK, thanks a million. Your letters are my only concern. Sorry I don't have time to answer them...Please don't do any Xmas shopping for me, nor send any package, for I'll be bringing it home within days after Xmas...I have my fare and then some...Remember me to the family with love.

*Dec 12, 1944*--Managing to drop a few lines under candle light. Do hope you are feeling fine and things (are) going smoothly for you...To say the least out here, it's really rough. The weather cleared up after five nights and four days of continuous rain. However, I'm so disgustingly healthy it didn't affect me in the least. The last two days have (been) plenty clear, but plenty cold. The lowest hit today at 18 degrees. The weather is as u predictable as I am. We are warm, so don't worry about that...Here are some of the latest rumors: Finish bivouac this coming Sun with a 25 mile hike back to camp. Will get in about 4 am Sunday morning. Then will report to the main post on Dec 24 or 26th of Dec, for M.P. training for ten days. It was two weeks, but supposedly cut to 10 days to Jan 6. Then our delay in route, or furlough. So, I

should be home within 2 or 3 days of that--this date, approx. Jan 9th. Then? Nobody knows...I tried hard to keep a diary, but found it impossible to continue with all the handicaps of overtime work. We'd start at morning and keep going all day until midnight. Maybe we'd get in early (10 bells), if we finished our problem early. Enclosed is part of the diary that I started and tried to keep, but was unable to...It's getting cold, so I'll sign off and climb into my sleeping bag, to try and keep warm.

1) Dear Diary: Started the dreaded bivouac this morning, this 5am, when I awoke from a slumber sleep in a warm hut. Reported for reveille at 5:15, chored my bunk, then had breakfast (scrambled egg, one slice toast and stick of butter, one cereal, and one cup of warm coffee. Altogether the breakfast was cold and the coffee just warm...Started out at 7am and walked or hiked approx. 18 miles and arrived at bivouac area at 12 noon 1155. It was a tough hike. Informed of our duties of pitching tents and that dinner would be served tactically at 2pm, meaning 5 yd intervals at the chow line, which was about a mile long. You can imagine it with 200 men spread out at 5 yd intervals. Took over one hour just to serve a complete COLD dinner--chicken, mashed sweets, spinach, one slice of bread, one cookie, 1/2 cup of warm coffee. Must tell you, we all starved, and that ain't no poop. After chow we proceeded camouflaging our tents and digging slit trenches--falling in and falling out and then falling in again...Now, dear diary, were all anticipating a supper chow. Must inform you, dear diary, it better be warm and lots more, or else trouble is ahead and my story next time won't be sweet and lovely, as this one.

2) *Dear Diary: (Dec 5)* This is my first opportunity to return to you since late chow Sun. To be honest and not tell a lie, I must tell you everything, so here I come and please do take all...We had chow Sun pm at 9 and by the time we were able to get to bed it was pretty late. Our meal was some more chicken, with some other slop which you couldn't decipher in the dark, as either by taste or smell...Our first night sleep was rather different from the ordinary hut, but it was warm, comfortable, and dry, in spite of the rain drops during the night...To let you know how it was made up goes like this: A site was selected, which provided us some degree of camouflage. We then put up four shelter halves, which made a 4-man pup tent. We then laid leaves and some straw, which they provided, then on top that several Class X raincoats--about six in all--then we rolled out our bed roll, which has a canvas bottom, comforter, a double thickness Army blanket with a zipper. On top that I supplied myself with my mattress cover from the hut and another blanket, which I brought with me. My overcoat I used as a pillow and my other blanket was kept in reserve. So, all in all I didn't feel cold and was kept good and dry...Monday morning my breakfast was lousy. Pork sausage, or better known as shit on shingles. This was cold, so I threw it away. I had 1/2 cup of warm coffee and that was all...For the morning we were allowed off, so we slept and kept quiet, to avoid details. For dinner we had ham, tomato, lettuce salad, potato, which I didn't eat and some string beans and coffee. In the afternoon we had a problem demonstrated to us a company, on a defense. A big farce...We hiked two miles to see it and two miles back. Arrived back just in time to eat, 5 pm. Had pork, beans, cabbage, salad, and coffee...We also had a night problem, but I played possum and didn't fall out. Stayed in my bunk and slept. It wasn't long before two other buddies came straggling in, also ducking it. By 12 midnight the problem was over and the other member of our tent came in. He congratulated us for our good work. It rained intermittently all the while and all during the night...It wasn't long before morning came and we got up for breakfast. This time, for the first time, I had my share of breakfast--cereal, plenty (warm); scrambled eggs; bread; hot coffee. And now, diary, I

am in my tent, finishing my story to you. 8:45 am...Dear diary, I want to mention one more thing. I received three lovely letters in yesterday's late mail, from the sweetest girl in all the world. I'd answer her letters, but it's almost impossible under these conditions.

3) *Dear Diary: (Dec 6)* Got lots to tell you and it's horrible. Safe to say there is mutiny in the ranks...Well, getting off to where I left off after our dinner chow yesterday, which consisted of stew and a slice of bread and coffee, we fell out for a problem: Small arm fire effect on aircraft. We marched to a field three miles away and there fired 24 rds. each at a radio controlled midget airplane. It was interesting and it was brought down once by rifle fire. Mind you, it was a nasty day and raining most of the time. After we finished, we were informed we were to stay and have a night problem there. So, we made fires and tried to keep warm and dry, without no avails. At chow, another company fed us their chow and several of the men left their ranks and when the captain found out he dismissed us at 6 pm and we marched back in mud, ankle deep, and soaking wet, to our area. Never will forget it. We arrived in our own company area and they fed us what was left...We then tried to get to bed and our morale was about as low as a quail's tail. We stayed overnight, however, while it rained pitchforks and hammer handles, but our clothes, shoes, and all was wet from the night before...Didn't bother to have breakfast this morning, because it was full of rain water...In the morning, the 1st platoon refused to go out, so something is bound to happen shortly. At noon we had beans, slice bread, jam, and coffee. It's still raining and we're trying to dry our clothes by means of fires and here in our tent, with a can of Sterno...This brings me up to date, dear diary, and it's exactly 1 pm, so I'll sign off until my next time to report.

*Dec 23, 1944*--It's me again. The first opportunity to do something on my own, without getting into the soup. Yes, I finally have a few minutes, to say only a few words. Please bear with me until after Tues or Wed, when I'll be able to write more. I promise to write an extra-long letter Sun (tomorrow)...We completed our training Friday morning at 5 am, after a nine-hour night problem, and spent all day yesterday and today turning in our equipment. Ever since I'm in the Army I never had as little to take with me as I have now...All I have is my summer and winter clothing; everything else has been turned in and checked off...To say a little more of the bivouac, I made the 25-mile hike back, but it wore all of us out quite a bit. To top it off, they didn't stop Sun, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday at all...I received your lovely Xmas card and those of the families. Your Christmas gift should have arrived by now, and card also. I do hope you like it. Believe it, I got a tongue lashing, because I tried to mail it before the PO closed at night on the post. You can imagine how they really worked us...I could write more tonight, but I'm just about through with my work and I'm headin' straight for bed and I'll write all day to you tomorrow...P.S. This is my first letter since bivouac; none are lost in the mail.

*Dec 24, 1944*--Another Xmas is here and I'm without you. Gonna be a hard night to get over with. It's rather a nasty day, with intermittent rain, and not at all like the holiday...Got a little news that's different, dear, and believe it or not, but guess what. I received a broken down package from the (P.O.). Honestly, I felt like sending it back and thanking them for it. It was an oversize box, 5 lb. size, filled with 5-cent and 10-cent articles. Would have thought a lot more of them if they sent a carton of cigarettes.

Never will I donate again to any of their causes, like they used to preach...I have one consolation, and that is I have you to come home to. Oh, what a thrill it is thinking and planning for it...You should have received your Xmas gift and I do hope you like it. Wish I were home to see you open it...Your next gift of any kind will be your engagement and wedding ring...Had one of the men bring me a pt. of P.M. for Xmas Eve. Believe we will play a little penny ante and have a snack at midnight...Mom sent me a package with cheese [batanga?], which I got early in the week...No, I didn't receive any package from the Masons as yet; probably get it a little later because of so many changes of address...Bet you're getting your tree trimmed this moment, and I see you in your house coat or dress, planting rain and tinsel on it. I'd never believe it, I'd be in the Army another Xmas. It seems one can't say with any assurance he will be out by next Xmas either...Please forgive me for not writing more, but I'm not myself; feel badly because I'm not home with you. The anxiety of coming home in mid-Jan, about the 10th, makes me a bit reluctant. Please bear with me.

Dec 25, 1944--Merry Xmas, Sweetheart...First, to tell you of the weather--it was a nasty, wet day, with rain and fog, which added to our loneliness. We lounged around, played penny ante, chewed the fat, talked about the war in general. The only Christmas spirit around here was our mess hall, which had stringers of red and green stretched around. Gee, it sure was a blue day...We did have a good dinner, however, and enjoyed it a lot more than the Thanksgiving dinner we had. Plenty of turkey, gravy, peas, potatoes, cranberries, and all the trimmings, pie, cake, and coffee. Tonight for chow we had turkey stew and it also was very good--plus what was left over from noon...The one holiday is almost over and we're moving over to the main post. Tomorrow we'll probably put on the finishing touches of cleaning up...I can't wait until I get home to seeing you just once more before I go somewhere else. If you wouldn't be there, I wouldn't come home...Did you get your gift? I can't seem to write everything about the last three weeks, but it will be a lot to tell you about when I get home...Went to bed last night about 1:30 pm (sic) after having a midnight snack--and what a restless night. I kept thinking of you and your Xmas tree and what we would be doing...All in all, Xmas day is almost over and it's just another day.

*Dec 26, 1944*--It's our last day here, for we're moving out tomorrow, late afternoon. Yes, time is drawing near to be in the states, I'm afraid. We're going up to the M.P. school for about ten days, and then home...Can't say there is anything new, except that the weather is cold and at this moment is raining hard and freezing, at the same time. I'm feeling fine and there isn't a thing you couldn't cure, to put me back in the swing...Received your lovely letters, letting me know you're not angry with me, even though I have neglected you somewhat, but not intentionally. Please forgive me for I'm terribly mixed up with things...Guess what. Received word from Dick Russell--getting a discharge sometime during this week, for ulcers of the stomach. He had x-rays taken and they prove he's got them. Said he'd like to see me when on furlough. He expects to be home then...Received word also that you received your package safely. I can't wait until I get word in tomorrow's letters on how much you do or do not like it. There is a picture story behind this and I'm saving it for you when I get home...Received word today also that the Masons sent me a gift package of a 2-lb box of candy for Xmas, but I haven't received it...That just about makes the bulk of the news from Arkansas...Am now wondering whether you received two other packages I sent home. The jacket I sent shortly after your gift package...Can't think of anything else, so I'll sign off and prepare for tomorrow. I'm looking forward to our furlough together. Remember me to

the folks, with the best of health to all.

*Dec 28, 1944*--Good evening, darling. Do hope you're feeling fine and the cold's knocked out and something of the past for you...The weather here is terrible. Cold, rainy, and icicles all day on the trees. At this moment it's raining rain and freezing slightly...We moved to the main post yesterday, at 4:30 pm, and hence no letter from me. But as of today, you'll be getting one every day again. It really was hell the last three or four weeks at the expansion area at camp here...Well, we are now combat M.P.s, without a doubt. We are the last of the M.P.s to be trained that have had M.P. spec numbers. Henceforth, all M.P.s will be picked from IRTC or infantry units...Our next stop will be a furlough and then overseas. The last group, which left here two days ago, went on their furloughs and some have shipping orders to Fort Ord, Calif. and Fort Meade, Maryland. I'll have news just where I'm going before I leave on furlough...Our new huts are five-man huts, built exactly like a garage with a wooden floor about 18" above the ground. They are all white on the outside and gas heated...Our food is 100 times better than at the infantry post. We had more leftovers today than what they fed us in a regular meal at 106th Bn(?)...My new address: Name, Serial No., Co. B - M.P. School IRTC, Camp Robinson, Arkansas...We were asked also to inform our addressees not to write any letters following our leave here, for many times they are lost and not delivered. However, it was only a friendly suggestion to us, and not an order. I will then let you know how soon I will leave, so that none of our mail is left over or lost here...We are having classes now, instead of field training in M.P.s--Traffic, Military Law, Tommy Machine Gun and Pistol, and Criminal Investigation. Too bad it only lasts for two weeks, as the classes are very interesting, more so than the field work...I'll explain all about the jacket when I get home. Believe I'll have some more for you before long...Oh, yes, I didn't receive word as yet about a Xmas card I sent you. I hope you received that with your gift. It was the prettiest in the store, or I should say in town...Well, there is nothing new that I can think of, except to say I can't wait until I have you to meet me at the Penn R.R. Believe me, if I knew you wouldn't be there I'd never come home. I'm missing you terribly and am afraid I won't want to leave when my time comes to go again.

*Dec 29, 1944*--The weather is still miserable, although it didn't rain as much and it did get a bit warmer...We had our usual classes in Military Law, Riot Psychology and Crowds, Nomenclature of the Pistol 45 cal., and two hours of Judo...After late chow, I showered up and washed a few personals, cleaned up, and now I'm writing you...I received your Xmas Day letter and happy to know you like your gift. Sorry, however, your Xmas was blue and lonely. We both felt the very same and missed each other terribly. We have one more holiday to go and then it won't be long before we see each other. Try not to be blue, for things will change this year--we hope!..Believe me, I didn't see a Christmas tree this year with lights on or otherwise. One doesn't know it's Christmas around here at all. Just another day for the Army, except for the holiday turkey which we had...Can't say there is much news, other than we are all waiting patiently for our furloughs or delay in routes. It can't fail us this time. It will be 14 mo.s (?) in Jan since I seen you last and it seems like a million years...P.S. Did you receive your Xmas card as yet?

*Dec 30, 1944*--The weather has been terrible so far; haven't seen the sun in over a week. Constantly raining, damp, cold, and foggy. Believe the old year will roll out/blow out/slide out that way...I want to remark about our mess or chow once again, for it is excellent. And believe me, it wouldn't take long to

fatten this piggy up. For I did lose considerable weight in the expansion area. My trousers have a good 2-3 inches opening on the waist. You have a good idea how they hang on me. However, two weeks of this chow and I'll fill in somehow...Can't say there is anything new, except that our training here is all class work and very good. One of the best I seen...We got word today that classes will go on as usual Jan. 1st and no one had better be under the influence of liquor. Also, there will be a 1:30 am curfew Sunday night. This will make it just another day for all of us...We should be completing our course here about Jan. 12 and within a day or two I'll be on my way home...Received your Tuesday letter, but (not) one word of your Xmas card. Can't understand it, if the folks and relations got theirs, and not yours...So happy to hear your gift fits you perfectly. No, I purchased this gift all by myself and a different salesman woman waited on men. This woman was a middle aged one and the other a young chippy.

Dec 31, 1944--The best of the day and everything to you. Do hope you're feeling fine and all (is) going your way. The radio in our room is playing Blue Heaven. A pretty piece when a violin plays it...Anything new with you? Nothing out this way. The old year is surely going out mighty wet, for it's raining hard and no signs of it stopping. Did all my chores this morning, like washing out all my personals, etc. I did everything so that I can usher in the new year without an Army worry...Gonna be another tough night, but I'm planning on spending it right here in our day room. We have a nice cabinet radio, with davenports and easy chairs and gas heat, which is so much more convenient, not having to worry about a fire. Probably will be up late and you'll be constantly with me...We had a good pork dinner with mashed potatoes, gravy, lettuce, corn, and coffee. I had my share of it and enjoyed it very much...At this moment, a radio announcer just said that a new rumor is out of Belgium--Hitler is dead. Could that be possible? Probably by the time this letter reaches you it might be so...Received no mail today, but I'm blaming it on the service. I'm sure you haven't taken the attitude of not writing. I hope...I was thinking, knowing you and how sweet you Re, you might be keeping up the Xmas tree until I come home. May I suggest not to, because after two weeks does begin (to) make things uncomfortable. So if you wish, I won't mind at all if (it) is taken down. I'm sure if I asked to keep it up you would...You have no idea how much I'm planning on coming home this time. I'm looking forward to it with such anxiety. I hope it doesn't fail me...(I) expect to write a few more letters to friends before closing the day. I have one to answer to Dick and several to Mom and another to a friend who was at Douglas with me. He is now at P.O.E. at Ft. Louis, Washington...Can't say there is anything else that is new, so I'll close this letter--the last of the year.