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Dear Folks,

Received letter from you this noon just before eating dinner. Will answer it immediately during noon hour rest.

It has really hot down here now and there isn't much relief from the heat during the night. You asked something about the topography of this country. It is a kind of a flat plain but it is broken in some places by some kind of a geologic formation - I don't know whether you would call them mountains or hills. They look like some worn down mountains. I'm going to send you some pictures of the landscapes around here so you can form some idea of what it's like. There are no trees around here, merely a short type of shrubbery which grow quite thick. I have been reporting in previous letters that I am located in a semi- desert and in the same letter reported heavy precipitation. This isn't a complete contradiction of terms because I guess it only rains here in the spring.

I wrote a short note a few days ago asking for \$10 on a very abrupt way without much explanation. Will try fill in a few details now. Practically all the Universities in the U.S. offer correspondence courses in all conceivable subjects. You can earn about 1/4 of a degree by the method. The reason I wanted the \$10 was now that I have spare time now in the evening and on Sundays which I may not have later when we have to go out on maneuvers. Will receive about \$18 next Friday from which must be deducted \$4 insurance, \$3 cleaning bill and laundry. Then there are as many incidental and miscellaneous expenses that are very necessary. - You can see from this financial statement that I'm not accumulating much surplus wealth.

Well, last Saturday afternoon I had an audition for trumpet playing. The man who is to direct the band had all band instrument players together and called them in one by one into a little room where he had them do some sight-reading for him. I'll have to report that I came away from there rather disappointed. In the first place - my lip was in rather poor shape from lack of practice, and worst yet, from being chapped from these sandstorms down here. I managed to squeeze out a few clear notes and did all the sight- reading o.k. I asked him if I could have another chance when my lip is in better shape and he said yes. It's a difficult grade to make though I'm afraid. There were about 8 or 10 trumpet players just from this regiment of whom many were professionals. There was one little elf-like little fellow there without any hair who really could really finger. The most depressing thing I found out there was that the Division band will consist of only 24 men. He said that would eliminate mostly all except professional musicians. The musicians have a professional status in the army and I guess they really put in lot of time practicing. Have to play a concert daily as well as for frequent parades, etc. Don't get the idea that I've given up hope altogether. There is a chance of getting into regimental drum and bugle corps. Which is, of course , a rather poor compromise.

Right now I am holding down a job of gunner on a mortar gun (small artillery piece) - also have a big heavy revolver. Been practicing putting up the mortar and using intricate sight mechanisms.

You asked me if I had talked to the lieutenant who is an ex- AAA man. No I have not. He isn't in our company. The Becker boy lives right close to my tent. - I didn't realize that this Becker was any relation to those you know until I talked to him last Sun. Such a nice fellow.

Will draw to a sudden stop here because I have no more time.

Virgil.

P.s. Please send me the Readers Digest, Luella. And about those cookies or that candy - Believe I prefer candy.