Chanute Field
Rantoul Ill.
Dec. 20, 1917.

Dear Dad:

I've got just a few moments to spare, and I'm going to try to tell you how satisfied all the boys are here. We landed safely, and were very much surprised to find ourselves quartered in barracks, which were previously occupied by commissioned officers, and fitted up with "all the comforts of home", and the boys were so surprised that they thought a mistake had been made, and began to fear that they would be transfered. But things are sailing nicely now, and our lieutenant told us last night that we (the 152nd and 153rd) are to be the "permanant squadrons" here. That means that we shall be here all winter, and possibly late next spring. Word came from the colonel that we were to be instructed in the school here, and those who could qualify, would be held for instructors, for the "boys to come. Now doesn't that look promising? We have the best lieutenant in the service, I think, and so do most of the other fellows. He's a "prince," but can be as stearn as the rest of them, if the fellows "lay down" This morning I was appointed "orderly, for the day, but had not held the job more than three hours, when I was pulled out and shipped up to "headquarters", where the put me to work, assigning the different men, in the camp, to their future positions. Its some job alright, and just as

9

9 A.M. Friday Dec 21.

Was interrupted last night. A lieutenant came in a borrowed my pencil, so I had to quit, as the only thing left was red ink. We worked last night till nearly 11 o'clock. "Right in with the lieutenants captains and colonel," and had to stand reveille this morning at 5.30 Oh it's a great life alright. Things are moving so rapidly here, that I may not get a chance to write for a few days. For example: Last night I was told to report to the "office of the school of instruction" by the man in charge of distribution. (He's a Mc too) It was a soft job, he said, and I guess he meant it. Well this morning at mess. (6.00) I was called out of the mess hall and told to report to the school of instruction for "non-coms." That struck me, as being pretty good, and I jumped at the opportunity. After attending one period of drill, I was informed by our friend Mr. McDaniels, that my services were needed back in his department. Now can you beat that? Well here I am, back where I left off, but not worrying, because McDaniels' word goes here, and if I use him right I guess he'll fix me up after the rush. I would like to get back to that school again. The other fellows are [illegible] assigned to the different shops, around here, to learn the various parts of the machines.

You remember Dad, when I was leaving, you told me "to stay on the ground". Well in case the impossible should happen, and I should

get a chance to "go up", may I have your consent? You know what it would mean to me: Commission and everything. Don't think for a minute, that I have had a chance, No! those things are scarce, all I say is "if" Do you get me?

Now just a word about the town. (you see I hate to talk about myself, but on the level, I just wanted to let you know how things stood.) The population is about 1800, mostly retired farmers, and the town looks it. Especially the parts I've seen. Very nice houses, and hospitable people. Have heard that it is not unusual for women to offer their services in the various kitchens, to help the boys out. Sounds pretty good, doesn't it. The weather here is exceptionally mild, they say, for this time of year. However, winter's coming, and tell the girls to get busy with those needles. A helmet would be very handy, after the sweater is done. Woolen socks? Yes! we can wear them, (tell Mary E). They would go fine with out trench shoes. I'd like to get ahold of some puttees if possible. But those can wait, We, at least those who can afford them, are permitted to wear leather or spiral puttis, here.

I wont be able to get a furlough till my course of instruction is completed, and I cant say when that will be.

Hoping that you, mother, May and Es, will enjoy all joys and happiness of the season, and that you will not worry over my welfare, as that is assured. I remain

Your own,

Richard.