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# 1941

**[1941-06-28]**

To: T. E. Goodin  
Rt. #1  
Erwin, TN

Postcard

June 28, 1941

Postcard from the War Department stating that Private John David Goodin has been accepted for military service.

**[1941-07-02]**

Envelope to:

Mr. & Mrs. T. E. Goodin  
Mr. & " Reginald Sawyer  
Miss Glenna Sawyer  
Erwin, Tennessee  
July 2 1941 FORT OGLETHORPE GA

July 2, 1941

Ft. Ogle - Ga.

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Tuesday Night

Dear Folks,

Just got some stamps this afternoon & decided to write while I can. Course, I haven't heard from you, but a J. C. boy who is in charge gets the J. C. - Press - Chronicle, & I read it every day.

Friday nite we came on our in trucks, & I had my 1st nite of Army life. My bed was wet as it had rained & they hadn't closed



the tent, but not bad. Sat. morning we started exams, physical mostly, only they could hardly be classed as that. Anybody who could see at all got in, unless they had some obvious defects. Which I didn't. Sis will remember the boy whose sister & girl were crying over him. Well, he was sent back, as all the arteries in knee had been severed once upon a time. He was the only reject in my group.

I've met more people here I know. - Dr. Harvey (Tammy Ratcliff's husband) was one of the 6 doctors who examined me. M. L. Bailey, David Silvers, the Register (county) of Carter Co.; one boy with whom I graduated at U-T last month; dozens from Knoxville, Johnson City Elizabethton; as well as a dozen or so with whom I used to go to TC with 5 & 6 years ago. So at least my stay here won't be lonesome.

Sat. afternoon we took our intelligence tests - 150 questions, out of which I scored 142 - class I. As a consequence, they have promised to place me in the Legal Department at the end of my 13 weeks basic training. But - one can never tell what they intend to do until they've done it. Heaven only knows where I'll be sent to. But I wouldn't be surprised if I go anywhere in the U. S. - most of the kids have gone to Ga. (south - oink!!!) & Camp Lee, Va. - 25 miles from Richmond, Va. at which place, I wouldn't minded being sent!!! Oh, well! One never knows!!

On Sat. afternoon, I happened to be looking at a Chatta. [Chattanooga] paper, when I saw Art's girl's picture in it!! Well - you know me!! I called up the people with whom she was staying, & talked to her and later she drove out to see me. She is really a nice kid - and somewhat Art's type. It was really a pleasure to meet her and talk to her.

Sunday, I slept all afternoon - it was 105° & the tents were not very good shade. I weighed in at 141 Sat. & I don't think I weigh 135 now. It's too hot. I'm learning fast not to drink cold water - two guys who had been drilling & were hot, drank too much & caught cramps.

The food is sloppy, but well-balanced. Breakfast seldom varies from eggs & 1/2 pint of milk. & you may guess how I love that!!



At any rate, I have had about 2 good meals since I've been here. But as I say it's balanced & not too bad.

Funny, all my clothes fit me - even to the 9-E shoes. And some of the boys have awful fits with their clothes. I've been fairly lucky so far, and I can't complain.

Yesterday we got our uniforms, drilled a little bit, & back to bed. Then up for 1st inspection - O.K.!

Today, Tuesday, we took exercises, & learned the fundamentals of marching steps. (I just ran out of ink & went over to the top sargent's [sic] tent & filled my pen. - I doubt if I get another one as nice as he has been - bet I catch Kitchen Police in the morning) after about 3 hours of alternate drilling & resting, we came in. Nothing this afternoon.

One is really surprised at some of the illiteracy & brilliancy floating around here. Several flunk out because they're too dumb. But the brilliant boys - wow - if they can see with 6 lens glasses they stick in here.

I was surprised at the lawyers in here, & they're thick as fleas. Some of the top - kicks here are lawyers, & all of them cuss at the fees they're missing. Oh - well!!

Some of the kids tickle me - such babies. So particular about their eating & drinking, dress, and so forth; others griping in general; mostly, though grinning & making the best of it.

I don't suppose I'll see you before I'm stationed, so I'll call as soon as I learn when I'm to be shipped & talk to you all - it may be a couple of days & it may be 2 or 3 weeks. But I'll call some night, just for the heck of it.

Love to each & all, & all my girls - I'd sure like to see all of you!!

Love,

Johnny



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**[1941]**

No date No Envelope (Camp Wheeler Stationery)  
Monday a.m. 9:30

Dear Folks,

Have 10 minutes off & will write a couple of lines. Wanted to write yesterday but caught K. P. (washing dishes, mopping, etc.) and had to get up at 5:15. I had planned on getting off yesterday & catching up on my sleep and correspondence, but I didn't make it!!

The 5:30 a.m. business is getting me down. I got "sick call" this morning & went over & had some work done on my teeth. He took my false one out & won't put it in till Friday. & me going to an invitation dance tomorrow nite. I won't dance much - I'm too out of sleep. But, well, that's the army.

Reg is crazy as h---, talking about only working 4 hrs. We are on duty from 5:45 till 6:30 at nite. Drill, lecture, details (all kinds of work - I'm even a cement mixer now, & we do all kinds of work). We never have more than 10 minutes off at any one time. Saturday, we're supposed to be through at 12:00. But most of the kids worked till 3:00 & then a bunch worked till 5:00. I finished my cement job at 2:00 & quit.

Our 13 weeks of "basic training" starts today. I'm missing part of it. I worked too d--- hard last week, & I'm coasting this week all I can. If only I could get about 18 hours sleep once.

When are you all coming down? I had a nice letter from Jean. I thought you all would be down yesterday, but glad you didn't, since I had to work all day. I took a 1/2 hour nap yesterday a.m., & a short one yesterday afternoon, but I could still sleep about 14 hours!! I haven't been able to even write cards for the last week.

I sure appreciated Sis's letter - but I'm going to need one of my 2 checks (I should have a retail credit) pretty soon. My



expenses have run about \$1 a day since I've been here - I left home with \$21, & I have about 6.25 left. I've bought a few odds & ends, necessary to army life which aren't furnished. I'm going to buy some shoes, a shirt or two yet.

I got my fill of milk & drinks yesterday. I had about 6 or 7 1/2 pints, a quart of grapefruit juice, a couple of gallons of grape juice, and so on. I really went to the toilet yesterday. Usually, all I go it about 2 or maybe 3 times a day - it just sweats out of you. It sure gets hot here, & I don't mean maybe.

If I had time to think & were awake enough, I could write an interesting letter, but I can't quite make it today. So maybe sometime next year I'll be able to make it for you.

If you all should happen to come down, & Jean can't come, why couldn't you bring Kat or Lou? I haven't had a date in about 3 weeks now, and I'd love to have one!!

I'm supposed to meet a girl from Randolph-Macon Tuesday nite, if I make it to the dance. But I may sleep instead. Thursday nite, the Macon lawyers are giving all the camp lawyers here a barbecue - and I'm hoping to make that, too. 1/2 of this "intelligence" is lawyers, 1/3 teachers, & the rest a duke's mixture. But they're nice kids - they're from Pa., N. Y. Tenn., La., & all Southern states. Some brilliant, and others medium, & rest of us dumb like me.

Well, my outfit is not back yet, and I got to finish this. Best of luck, & write when you can.

Love,

Johnny

**[1941-07-27]**

Envelope to:  
Mr. Thomas E. Goodin, Sr.  
R.F.D. #1  
Erwin, Tennessee



Personal  
July 27, 1941

Saturday  
Camp Wheeler  
(as usual!!)

Dear Dad,

Was glad to get your letters and want you to know I appreciate them. And you asking me for advice about trading is sort of ironic, isn't it? You're the trader, not me. But my advice would be to buy you a new car, jack it up, & run the jitterbug!! Seriously, George is right, in his cars, & I haven't caught him wrong yet, and you know he's pretty solid. also - get your a set of new tires and store them.

Don't plan on waiting till I get out before getting one, cause [sic] unless I'm discharged for something unusual, I won't be out of here for two and maybe 3 years at least. It's not official, but our officers tell us that, and they certainly aren't playing. This is serious, and they're trying to get volunteers for Puerto Rico & Panama now.

Now, Dad, another thing on my chest to get off. When you write, skip all this patriotic feeling, and don't try to cheer me up. I don't need it. I pride myself on the fact that I've got enough of you in me to face and tackle anything, big or little, one year or 10. And I realize that you've been all any boy could ever ask for for a Dad. I've criticized you and even you'll admit you've your faults, and you've spoiled me some (ha?) - but still I wouldn't want any other Dad than you. I know you so well, I can about tell what's in your letters before I open them. I know what you're thinking now. But, don't worry about me - I've got enough of mother in me to make the best of everything, good or bad. Even getting in the "intelligence" - when 90% are casualties which is the highest percentage of loss in any department. Cause, well - I'm in a good bunch of boys, good officers, and hard work, mentally and physically. But, as I say, don't worry.

And now, Dad, a few words about Mother. Sometimes, I know you



could turn her across your knee, and probably be right in doing it. But, Dad, she's always stuck to you, even when she could have (and maybe should have) turned you across her knee. She's having a tough time, now - the worst in her whole life, and please, for my sake, if not hers, do what you can to make her remaining years a little happy. Because you've never had close contact with your family, you couldn't understand what I'm talking about and I couldn't explain it - but I know. She's had a couple of close calls to a nervous breakdown already, and if she gets through this summer - it will be a miracle. Dad, you are a man, and even the collapsing of your financial empire didn't unnerve you - but with Mother, it's different. Remember that, and regardless of what happens, please don't ever tell her "I told you so." Spare her that much. I know this is vague and doesn't make sense to you, but then again - you may know. I know that you know tens of thousands of things you aren't supposed to know. At any rate, regardless of what comes up, try and help her. It may hurt you, too, but being the man I think and know you are, you'll swallow your thoughts and grin.

I hope you and Mother can come down. Why don't you come to Chattanooga on the Streamliner, and then come on down? Of course, for her, it would be better to come to Spartanburg, spend the nite, & come on over the next day. As for that Streamliner trip, wish you & J. R. would come down on that trip!! I'd like to see him. And Pop - you have a little saved up now, you could relax just a little and enjoy yourself out once in a while - and I'd love to see you. Macon is a nice place - but it's Georgia, & that's enough said.

I've been in the hospital since Wednesday with an infected, abscessed jaw - where my wisdom tooth was. I'm O.K. now, and leaving in the morning. Don't tell Mother, as she would only worry. And incidentally, when you get through reading this letter, maybe you'd better tear it up, & burn it.

It seems a funny sort of letter for a kid to write to his Dad, but well, if anything should happen to me - you'll know how & what I feel about you, and everything. I'm afraid there have been times when I've been an awfully bad boy, especially to you, but being like you are, you've overlooked them in me when you wouldn't have anyone else.



Don't know whether you can work out anything for Reg or not, but for Sis's sake, hope you can - and don't say anything to anybody that would kill any chance. Like what you said to J. R. - that made me mad!! You might be taking a chance, but that's what we all are doing, so - try & give him a break.

Since I've got to write to the rest of the family, I'll be closing now. Pap, try to understand what I've said - and don't think about it.

With all my love, as always,

Your son,

Johnny

**[1941-09-09]**

WESTERN UNION

September 9, 1941

Telegram to Captain Thos C Goodin wishing him a happy 50th birthday.

Envelope to:

Mr. & Mrs. T. E. Goodin

R.F.D.#1

Erwin, Tennessee

**[1941-12-17]**

December 17, 1941

(Letters to M/M T. E. Goodin)

Fort Knox, Kentucky

[letter is typed: says he got the apples, very cold on the range, mentions Xmas]