Letter to Parents
May 30, 1918
Mr. John Godwin
Smithfield
Va.
38 Company
10 Training Battalion
155 Depot Brigade
Camp Lee
Va.
Camp Lee Va.

May 30, 1918

Dear Papa & Mama,

As today is a National holiday we don't have to work quite so hard and besides there are not many in this Co. who are able to work today. Yesterday we had to cross the camp ground which was about four miles. I guess I took physical examination. Then were inoculated and vaccinated and then were mustered into service. We left our barracks about 12:00 clock and got back that night about 9:30 had to march all the way back through a pouring rain but most of us had dry clothes to put on. The whole day's experience beat all I ever went through. When the examination and vaccination was going on it wasn't anything to see a man fall out, I could
been some but the floor clear across the
room, some dropped out all along the
road side, they were brought in on a
truck. I piled my cases together and
got along alright. I passed examination,
they claim that I'm alright, some
of the boys were rejected
none that I was acquainted with.
Laid out the army insurance.

All of the boys did that.
We are very well cared for. I have a
cot, fed sack with straw in it, and
two sets of blankets, then two
tin plates, knife, folk, spoon and
drinking cup. Each one has to wash
his own dishes and keep them with
him on or near his cot. There is some
soil around when we go out to
wash dishes. They put most of our
boys in another barracks, tell them
some time though. Red Stutings, John
Lyke, Callie Kerne, Norman Beale,
Taylor Baker and Shepherd Adams
are about all I know well, that
are in the barracks with me, but
are learning new ones every day.

The lined up this morning and
organized the Co. into squads of eight
my corporal is from Stafford, he
seems to be real good natured, I
think he weighs about 250 lbs.
I am second tallest man in 35-
Co. well, the other fellows isn’t any
taller than I am, but he is larger,
so he is the first man in the front
lane and I am second.
Our Sergeant is the finest man
I’ve seen up here. I only hope we
aren’t be transferred. I haven’t heard
him say a cross word to any body
didn’t please with all. He is real good
looking, favors James Jordan a little,
but has long gray hair.
The first day I was here I was
sick, but I wouldn’t get on the
sick list that morning because they
would have carried me to the hospital
set and would have to stay there all
day and I didn’t want to do that.
So after a while I told the Sergeant that I was sick, so he told me that I might stay around in the house all day and not go out in the sun, that suited me exactly.

There are more people here than any one place I've ever been and they are bringing in new ones every day.

I thought out my first washing Tuesday, washed some more today.

I haven't been in the kitchen to look yet but my time is coming.

We have dined three times a day: soup, beef stew, beans, beef hash, sausage (horse) I guess, but we don't get much big meat when you get that its in small pieces. I heard a fellow sitting close to me say at one meal that he didn't believe they gave him any meat, but then he said he had just turned a bean over and found his meat under it. I think they are velvet beans that we get. I can make out very well with what I eat. Someone said I was falling up already.

Will have to stop now.

Love to all.

Paul
Letter to Father
May 31, 1918
Mr. John Godwin
Smithfield, Va
NATIONAL
WAR WORK COUNCIL
ARMY AND NAVY
YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION
"WITH THE COLORS"
Camp Lee Va
May 31, 1918

Dear Papa,

I am sending you the furlough blanks. You are to fill out Section I. You had better ask the sheriff about how to date that part of it. I have heard it talked of here that no furlough would extend over Aug. 15. That would make it about 60 days.

I want you all to answer and fill in the questions that I left out in Section II. They are the 7-11-13.

Then take the affidavit before some Notary, sign it and then take it to the Local Board. When you send it back I am to take it to the Captain. I don't know as it will amount

HELP YOUR COUNTRY BY SAVING. WRITE ON BOTH SIDES OF THIS PAPER
to anything but, the Sargent told me to try it any way. Don't forget to fill in the blanks that I left out. I am getting on all right so far. I was sick yesterday from the first vaccination but am feeling fine today. Haven't had the headache but once since I got here that was yesterday morning when I got up. Didn't feel good the night before, but it didn't last long. The Sargent said that this was an extra good Co. of men that I am with. They are all nice to each other no matter where they come from. There are some rough talking ones like you find everywhere.

We certainly are fed swell here. I don't wonder at food getting scarce. If they feed them at all the camps like they do here. But if they choose to give it to me I am sure going to eat it. I have a great appetite. You and John wouldn't like the hash and soups like we get, but I always liked it. Had ice cream & lemonade both last night. Love Paul.
Letter to Father
June 4, 1918
Mr. John Godwin
Isle of Wight, Va.
J. William Eley
Camp Lee Va
June 4, 1918

My dear Papa,

I received your letter a few minutes ago and certainly was glad to get a letter from you. A few years ago I wouldn't have believed that I would ever live far enough away from you to have to write to me, for I then made up my mind that I would stay with you always, but we never know what's going to happen.

I sent you the furlough blank several days ago. Some of the other boys sent them and some didn't. Barlow, Hall, Stallings, Home, and several
other filled them and sent them back. I asked the sergeant about it and he said he might try but he didn't think we would get off because it would be as the Captain said, and that he had granted them to so many before this he didn't think we could get it. You can get it filled out and send it back and I will see the other boys before we go to the Capt. The boys from Isle of Wight were the only ones that had blanks, of the whole bunch that came in this draft. All of us boys are still in the same Co. and the Sergeant says he thinks we are likely to stay together through it all. That makes it better for us all. Most of this Co. are Virginians. They are drilling us pretty hard this week. They took us off to a big field about
a mile away Sunday night
To hear a lecture and a cloud
came up, which broke up the
lecture we lined up and
ran a good part of the way
back to miss the rain, but
running on the cment street
jared me so that the muscles
of my legs have been sore ever
since. I got my new shoes
yesterday and they certainly
have relieved my feet. I got
9½ so that I would have them
plenty big.
They have Non Commissioned Officer
school in this building every
night any body can go now who
wants to. I think I will go
some and study up a little
on the work, it won't do me
any harm if I never get an office
because I see the quicker you are
to catch on to a drill the easier it is for you. There are some
men here who seem to be half
dummies. They can't even keep
step. The officers take them off
one side and even have to hold
on to them and drill while we
are resting.

I guess Louise is home now. I wish
I could be there to see you all.

We will still be under a quarantine
until next Sunday. After that
we may get a pass to come home
some Saturdays evenings.

How are you all getting on
with the crop? Did you plant
any more peanuts. I know
that piece of corn back of the
house is pretty now.

You can fix the paper and send it
back and I will see Ray and the
other boys and do whatever they do.
Don't work too hard and make
yourselves sick.

Love to all,

Paul
Letter to Father
June 27, 1918
Knights of Columbus
War Activities

P. Godwin
Co 17 Co 5 Batallion
Camp Infantry Replacement Camp
Camp Lee Va

Mr. John Godwin
Isle of Wright Va

To H.V. Wilson
June 27, 19..,

Dear Papa,

I am going to try
to write you a few lines
tonight, although I don't have
much time to think about any-
thing but drilling. The Lieutenant
says that we can't drill and
are thinking about something
else, and he certainly is the
truth, for you would make
a mistake every time.

I am getting on very well
with my work, haven't had any
extra drilling to do yet. When
I first got my rifle, I began
handling it so well that the
Lieutenant asked me if I
didn't have military training
before.

How are you all getting on
with the crops? John and Dave tells that you haven't much grass. I hope you can get the peanuts landed without much trouble. I guess all the corn is laid by, I would like to see it. I know it is pretty.

Well I had the pleasure of signing the Pay Roll Monday, but I don't know now when I will get my money. You never know one minute what you are going to do the next here.

I put in my application for a pass next Saturday. I don't know if I will get it or not, but I'm coming home if I possibly can. If I can't get a pass to come home I want you and Mame to come up to see me one Sunday real soon. Get someone to bring you in a machine and then you can start sooner and have longer to stay. I certainly do want to see you all. From what I have heard we won't be here much longer. They say we have to be
Knights of Columbus
War Activities

Camp

ready to go across by the middle of July. I don't know whether that is right or not, for the officers are not allowed to tell exactly when anyone will leave.

Well I must close now.

With love to all,

Paul.
Letter to Mother
July 2, 1918
Dear Mama,

I was certainly disappointed Saturday when I heard the Captain say that no week end passes would be issued, that everyone had to be there Sunday morning to answer the muster roll so that all our names could be sent to Washington in order to get our pay. They had me on detail last, pitching tents, and when we finished the Lieut said that all who had been working on the tents could get a pass to Sunday. So I went Adams and we went over together. We went down to the train and saw his mother. She expected him to go home with her. We went in and got us something good to eat, stayed around there a while and then went back to camp.
Sunday morning they finished calling the roll about half past eight and then they gave notices to any one I could have come home but I wouldn't have had hardly an hour to stay after getting a way from the train. I thought I would wait until next Sat so that I could stay all night. Then decided that I would go to Richmond and spend the day, as I hadn't been out of Camp but once. So I went and got my pass and started out. I didn't have any trouble finding Uncle Philip's, got there about twelve o'clock, and I surely surprised them. When I got there they were all at Mr. Johnson church except Aunt Julia. They came back one at the time and all were shocked when they saw me. Isabel jumped up and clapped her hands as usual. After we got dinner Aunt Liana and I went around to Mr. Johnson's and stayed a few minutes and
then went back and stayed until about six o'clock, Aunt Lusi and Uncle went back over to Manchester where I got on the
Rathabing Car. I certainly did enjoy the day it was such a
relief and change to what I have every day. I got back to Camp
about nine. Aunt Lusi was about halfway in the motion to
come over here with Mr. Johnson and family the next day but
after she saw me she decided not to go as she would have to
go all the way back by herself.
She said she was satisfied that I
was getting on alright, without
coming over here to see. Said
that I looked better than I had
for a long time. (Well I have
 gained six pounds in the last
two weeks.)
Last night after supper I had just started to write a letter as the clerk came in and said that he wanted me to go on guard duty. I hated to hear that as I had been up late Sat and Sunday night and knew that meant very little sleep for that night. I went in with him and they made me corporal of guard for that night, so I didn't have to walk up and down the streets watching. I had to line the guards up and march them out to the different posts and then march them back. Then I sat by the door and listened with my rifle and bayonet by my side, in case the guards should have trouble with anyone. I had to run out and arrest and bring them in to the guard house, but everything was quiet, had no trouble at all.

The guards generally have a half day off after being on duty, but this morning all of us had to
go on the rifle range for the first time so I couldn't get my rest. In the first ten shots I made and five perfect ones the others were very good. The rifle forever kicked me my shoulder gave out so I could hardly touch the rifle to it before I stopped shooting. When we stopped and ate dinner I stretched out on the ground and took a good nap. Just about twenty steps from the firing line while hundreds of rifles of other Cts were roaring. You can imagine how sleepy I was. I never thought I could go to sleep in such a fuss. I must close now. Do Papa well? I hope you all are well. Love to all.

P.S. I am sending you a
picture although it isn't good they are scratched and speckled and everything else wrong with them.

P.G.
Letter to Father
July 15, 1918
Mr. John Godwin
Isle of Wight
Va
(C/o R. V. Wilson)
Dear Papa,

We are still at Camp Lee expecting to leave any time, I guess we will get ready by tomorrow night although I haven't heard whether the orders have come in or not. We reorganized the Co again today. They say we stand now just like we will when we get over. There are three of us together now that started out together when we got here. I was glad to get back with them for they seem almost like home folks now. One of them is the big fellow that was standing...
there close to me yesterday and that told you he came from Suffolk. My little corporal that I showed you has been changed to another squad. A new Captain has also been assigned to the Company to go across with us.

I certainly was glad you all came yesterday, you got here so late I was afraid you were not coming. I was sitting in there on my cot trying to clean my rifle but wasn't doing much to it because I had my mind on seeing you all. I looked first out of one window and then the other and I happened to see you just as someone called me. We didn't have much time to be together but under the present circumstances it was about the best we could do. I know you got tired of seeing us pack up and can pack our equipment.
I hope you all got home early and were feeling well when you got there. I guess you all are getting on very well with the crop. I would like very much to be there to eat some watermelon, for I don't think I will get much until they get real cheap. Well, I will have to close this now.

I send my very best love, and will say good-bye to each of the family until I land some where.

Don't write any more until you hear from me.

Your son
[Signature]
Letter to Father
August 5, 1918
Via New York

Mr. John Godwin
Smithfield
Virginia, U.S.A.
Dear Papa,

I am writing you a few lines this morning to say that I am still getting on alright.

I have traveled quite a bit since I last saw you all, and have actually seen things that otherwise my imagination would have never presented.

I would like very much to see you all but I know that's impossible now, so I have given up everything strictly to duty, and am looking forward to a happy future when it's all over.
and when I can come back home again. I tell Louise to take a picture of the whole family and send me. I am real anxious for it.

Remember me to all of my friends around there and give my address to any one who cares to write to me.

Now I want to say this to all of you, don't wait for me to write every time before you write again. I will be glad to get a letter just as often as any of you will write. I guess this is the week for the Meeting at Uppala wish I could be there to attend.

I hope all of you are well and getting on alright. I guess I will close now for this time, I may write more next time. You all write to me and tell me all the news.

My best love to each of the family.

Your son

Paul

Priv. Paul Godum
5 Prov. Co. 1 R. D (White)
American E. F.
Via New York
Letter to Father
October 9, 1918
OCT 9

Mr. John Godwin
Smithfield
Virginia

U.S.A.
Oct. 9

Dear Papa,

I will write you a few words tonight to let you know that I am getting on alright. I have had a bad cold for the last few days, but am getting better now.

The weather is so peculiar over here that I don't wonder at anyone catching cold. In the morning there is frost and ice all around and I almost freeze, then in the middle of the day the sunshine...
I guess you enjoy reading the good news from the front that we are getting now.
I know I do.
I got a letter from Louise last Sunday, and was glad to know you all were well. I hope you are now.
Hurry and write to me and tell me how the peanut crop is. I know those pen hogs are pretty now.
I must close now.

Very best love from
Your son - Paul

Pvt. Paul Godwin
Base Signal School
1st Depot Division
American E. F.
France via New York.
Letter to Father
October 25, 1918
OCT 25

Mr John Godwin
Smithfield
Virginia
U.S.A.
Dear Papa,

I received your letter some time ago but haven't had time to write before now. I have just finished moving, I walked about twelve miles yesterday with my pack and you can imagine how I felt when I got here. I graduated at the Signal School two weeks ago and I am going up now as a Telegraph Operator. I hope I will be able to do something to help bring this war to a close sometime. I think it is almost over and again I have hopes and think we have a lot to do now. I am getting up near enough to town to stay there all night on week nights, and I hope you all are getting on alright and as well as when I left school. I weighed 207 pounds. Can you imagine seeing me a big man like that?

I won't have time to write any more this time as I want to get this off in today's mail.

Tell sister I am sending my coupon for a Christmas package, but I would like to advise her to send a sweater. Have it to her to decide though any little thing from me must please you. I send my very best love to you and the rest of the family.}

Love,

Paul
Letter to Mother
November 16, 1918
Censored by

Mrs John Godwin
Smithfield
Virginia
U.S.A.
Dear Mama,

I will write you a few lines this afternoon to let you know that I am still getting on nicely although I am tired of France. I guess you were delighted at hearing the good news lately as well as everybody else. I think the concluding of the Armistice will mean immediate peace.

I don't guess I will be home to eat Christmas dinner but I do hope I will be somewhere in the States. I am disgusted with lining up for every meal and living in barns, tents and holes in the ground.
I just got back from my first trip to the front a few days ago. I know I didn't go through half of what some of the boys did, but I saw enough to convince me that there are horrors connected with every battle. I didn't get wounded or anything like that, but I did fall in a shell hole one night and hurt my weak shoulder and had to call someone to help me out. I tell you life on the front is great. The night before we started to the front I went over to look for Charlie Darden. I found him, Shady and David Garner and also saw Goodrich the next day. I was some glad to see them for they were the only home folks I have seen since July 31. I walked up to Charlie's tent and called him, he recognized my voice at once, but he was surprised and said he had heard I was over here, but had no idea I was anywhere near him.

Well, I hope I will see you before very much longer. We are already dreaming of parading in Richmond in the near future.

Hope you all are well.

Your son,

Paul

Fort Paul Drum
Headquarters C. 917 Inf.
American E. T.