

---

---

# VOICES OF THE PAST

---

---

SSG RICHARD TURNER'S LETTERS

KOREAN WAR

1951

---

---

*The following letters from Staff Sergeant Richard Turner can be found in the Korean War Veteran Survey Collection at the US Army Heritage and Education Center in Carlisle, PA. The letters are presented here unedited and contain words and phrases that were in common use among Soldiers at the time of the Korean War. While these words may be offensive to some they accurately reflect the attitudes and standards of the time.*

March 12, 1951

Korea

Dear Mom,

I received your letter and altho I just wrote to you a couple of days ago I still will write and give you all the latest news. I have a small fire here by my side and as we're in the woods we can keep them. It's really comforting to have a fire. Usually we don't stay in one place long enough to have one but for the past week we've been hitting it pretty lucky as for time off. Co B is on its advance today and we just might get to stay here all day. I sure hope so. Our company usually is in the lead.

We had to ford a river yesterday and I got my feet wet. It was rather shallow but my boots have holes in the sides and the water came in. We have been in the mountains now for a long time. It's very seldom that we see roads or houses. I haven't shaved for two weeks now and I look like one of those old hermits. I got a chance to wash about three days ago at a deserted Gook house. It was really like heaven. I don't think I'll ever be clean again.

Yesterday we took a small village from the Chinese and I got a chance to pick up a carrying board for my pack and bed roll. It's really nice too, I just strap everything on it and hoist it up on the old back and away I go over the mountains. I also traded my big rifle off for a carbine. It's about half as light so I'm really setting pretty. One of my men got back from the aid station two days ago too and I unloaded a box of ammo I was carrying unto him. This is the best I've had it for some time since I've come to the Infantry.

It's really warming up around here these days some of the guys are shedding some clothes but again they won't listen to me about keeping them. It seems they never learn. It's really OK to have the sun out as we can get a lot of our equipment that's damp dried out. It gets a little cold at night but its not anything like it was awhile back.

Could you possibly get Jim Phillips address for me? I might be able to see him some time. Stranger things have happened. Boy that Phyllis is really taking off on the news stuff isn't she. I sure look forward to seeing that TV set. I've only seen about two of them as they weren't on the market too much when I was stateside. Won't be long now till it's been three years away from there. It sure seems like it now for with all the changes that I hear about. I'll get back someday. Absence makes the heart grow fonder, and mine is about as fond as it can get.

I wrote to Bud, Phyl and Cara two days ago now. I had the whole afternoon off that time so I decided to use it up that way. Some NCO club in Tokyo Japan sent me a big bunch of stationary and I split it up in the squad. I was really happy to see it too.

I'm really going to have the money by the time this is over. I have three months back pay coming now and couldn't spend it off I had it. I'm saving a good \$ 150 a month. As long as I

stay in this Army I'll make out. If I could just make another stripe I'd be setting pretty. Might do it later on but it's a little early for it. The Infantry doesn't have as much rank as headquarters does and its about nine times as hard to macho.

I hope that Frank gets in the forestry. It's really a good deal. I had a lot of fun up there. It'll do him good to get away from home for awhile. If you send me any boxes make sure they are as small as possible and sent by air mail. Some of the guys get big boxes and they take months to get here and then they are too heavy to carry. Be sure and send that candy I asked for. I could really use some now. That toothbrush too could be put to good use.

I'm still in good health and hope you, Dale and Frank are too. Tell Frank to write when he gets time. I like to hear from him but he never writes. Did you ever get those boxes of mine from Japan? The ones with my sword and things in? I hope so I sure would hate to lose that stuff. I hear talk we're only about twenty or thirty miles from the parallel but no one seems to actually know. We can only rely on rumors and scuttlebutt have as nothing is for sure from one day to the next. Well Mom this is about all for now. Write soon and be sure and send some pictures.

Lots of Love,

Dick

P.S. Say Hello to Dale and Frank