
VOICES OF THE PAST

SSG RICHARD TURNER'S LETTERS

KOREAN WAR

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.

Dear Mom,

Got two letters from you now and decided I'd better get busy and answer while I have a few minutes. Sure is nice to get mail every time we have mail call. I heard from Phyllis and Cara a couple of days ago and Cara sent me a nice picture of herself. She certainly has changed.

I can't wait to see the house. Dale should be pretty near all finished with it by the time I get home. Figure I ought to be home some time this summer. Sure hope so any how. I was called down to battalion headquarters the other day and the captain there wanted me to transfer to S-3 in headquarters but when I told him I came over in July he said I should be going back pretty soon. The same day the battalion commander presented me with that bronze star I had coming. He seemed nice enough but you never can tell about officers. It's a real nice medal and has my name engraved on it. I don't know how I'll get it back home as it's rather cumbersome to carry around. I won't throw it away so I'll have to figure something out for it.

As soon as that candy gets here I'll write and tell you it got here. I sure hope it gets here right away. I sure can use it. We aren't getting any but what's in our c-rations. Sgt Legacy hasn't written to me about that money but he will send the camera I know. He's a good guy. I'll drop him a line one of these days and ask him about it tho.

I hope Ridgeway is half as good as old Mac. I never had any kicks about him and of course what little I saw of Ridgeway was OK. If I ever get a chance I'll look up Eddy and Jim Phillips. I've seen Jim's outfit several times but I never knew he was in it. I haven't seen the 38th Regt now for some time. I might run across it soon tho and I'm going to see if I can see him.

We're sure having nice weather here lately. I've had my shirt off most of the day and am trying to get an early tan. My hands are all toughened up now with callouses on the palms. Something I haven't had since I came in this Army. These marches we make are something Mom. We break all of the time, and I'm in pretty good condition now. Was getting sort of a pot belly but its long gone now. Sitting around those headquarters sure didn't do me any good.

I sure look forward to those cookies you're going to make. I haven't had any for a long time now. I remember those big ones you used to make with all of the raisins in them. I can almost taste them now, stretching my imagination considerably that is. Tell Frank to write and give me all of the latest school poop. I like to hear from him. I hope Frank gets that job with the forestry. I had a good time up there in _____. I imagine he would too. If I thought it would be any good I'd drop them a line but I suppose the people have all changed and I'm just one of those forgotten jokers they had working there for luck of something better to do.

We up on the line again but the gooks have all taken off. I have a foxhole here that's big enough for three and I have my rocket launcher man and his asst. in with me. One of them is one

of my old men and we stay awake most of the night battling the breeze and filling the new men with all kinds of gory war stories. You'd be surprised how it makes them stay awake on guard at night. Of course not according to Emily Post and scared the devil out of them but it's the only way to keep them on the ball. We're in low mountain ranges now and its easy walking and climbing. The gooks left here so fast they left all of their equipment including some papers which I found and turned in to be translated. I hope they were important and end this war sooner.

Well Mom I guess this is all for now. Write soon and send some pictures if you can.

Lots of Love,

Dick

Say hello to Dale and Frank for me.

P.S. Do you want to save these souvenirs for me? Mom they're the first I've seen