



# See Here, Private Hargrove!

by Marion Hargrove

## CHAPTER VII

One of the nicest things about living in the kitchen in Battery C is that it has been known for its number-one brand, Buster Charnley, and drop around after supper and conversational fat. It's like a slow and mournful drawl, and refreshing dry humor is a pick-up at the end of a long, hot day.

Buster came prancing up the line, the other evening with a smile that started at the back of his head and enveloped his face from nose down.

"What's eating you, Walter?" I asked him. "—besides that egg-grin?"

"Leaving here, boy!" he sang. "I won't see me around for three weeks. And when you see me, you'll see stripes on my sleeves and a look of prosperity on my face!"

The man behind him wanted to get to the mashed potatoes, so he had to move on down the line. I got the whole story from one of the keyholes while I waited for my coffee.

At the end of the third place, they will come back as gunners' instructors, with a non-commissioned officers rating and a sergeant's extra pay on top of that. Walter Charnley's little boy was one of the two men.

I was chopping kindling for breakfast when Buster came around and I painted Fort Sill as a pack of rabbits, gophers, and snakes and assured him that Battery C was sending him to school to cut down the grocery bills. I hadn't been insulting each other in a friendly fashion for a while, I would have told him that wasn't particularly astonishing and I was sure he'd make a good instructor and the kind of non-commissioned officer the boys borrow money from.

Battery C will miss Ole Buster like he's away. The cooks will miss him because he always remembers to compliment them when he takes the meat loaf or the cherry slobber. The mess sergeant will miss him because he livens the kitchen when it comes his turn to escape. The boys will miss him because he's one of the best-liked there.

One of the sergeants near here came back from a recent leave with one of the most glorious shins that ever darkened the human skin.

"Ran into a door?" I asked him.

"A guy the wrong answer," he replied simply, "or rather, the answer he didn't want."

I looked at his face; his teeth were all there and his jaw was still on piece. I looked at his hands; the knuckles showed the marks of force.

"I was at a party," he went on, "when this fellow who lives next door to my folks wants to know the morale in the Army?"

"Excellent!" I told him; "excellent!"

"I knock me up and down sort of thing and wants to know what I had the magazine stories for how poor it is. Well, I tell you, I spend all my time with the boys and I believe what I see more than what I read."

"He goes on from there making snide remarks at the Army and the counter and the suckers we are for giving our time for what's not worth getting for in the first place. I stand politely for a while, because though I'm not in uniform I don't want to look rowdy. I stand as much as I can and then I ask him to his feet. It isn't long before his three brothers join the line. It was one of the brothers that his finger ring in my eye."

"Brother," I told him, "that ain't black eye. That's a badge."

"I lost the fight," he said.

"You won the argument, though," I told him.

"I'd like to use the sergeant's name, but he made me promise not to."

"I told the Old Man," he said, "that I got the shiner playing baseball."

...

"How can I fit you into a coat," moaned Supply Sergeant Israel, "with you fidgeting around like a race horse at the post? Stand still, dern you, stand still!"

"Heavens to Betsy, Thomas," I complained, "you're getting to be the fussiest old maid in the outfit. I'm not squirming!"

"In the first place, my man," he said, "don't call me Thomas or try to get overly familiar with your elders and betters. In the second place, don't argue with me. In the third place, don't fidget in the first place. And in the fourth place, don't agitate me unnecessarily. I'm at the end of my patience with you and I ain't feeling in no holiday spirit anyway."

I buttoned the handsome winter blouse and he stepped back to inspect it with the eye of an artist.

"Every time my wife gets mad at me, she has her picture taken to send to me. The picture I got today showed she's going to eat my heart out unmercifully when I can't put off my furlough any longer and I have to go home. And with domestic difficulties on my hands, I have to fit your winter uniforms."

He yanked at my coattail, straightened the collar and scratched his head. "Hargrove—37 long," he yelled to the boy at the desk.

"Man that is born of woman," I comforted him, "is of many days and full of trouble."

"Get off the platform and into this overcoat," he sighed. He held the coat while I got into it and he slapped my hand for fidgeting again. "Sometimes I wonder why I got to so much trouble keeping you boys dressed right. Here I spend the whole afternoon wiping sweat out of my eyebrows, just to see that your clothes fit you and you won't look like a bunch of bums—which you are."

"Do you know what some ungrateful kitchen termite said the other day? He started putting it around that the Army could double itself in half an hour by filling up the extra space in its trousers. Do your trousers fit you bum? He straightened the pleats in the back of the overcoat and gave the tail an unnecessarily vicious yank.

"Did I say they didn't?" I groaned, raising my arms despairingly. "Just because somebody else says you stretch the coat in the back so the man will think it fits right in the front, you have to go picking on me!"

"Me pick on you?" he screamed.

"It's a wonder my nerves ain't completely shot! Do I come around and put signs on the door saying, 'Walk Up One Flight and Save Five Dollars? Do I throw gunny sacks on your head and ask you to take up the cuffs two inches?"

"With my thankless job, it's a wonder I haven't collapsed before this. I wish I was a permanent kitchen police instead of a supply sergeant. Hargrove—37 long! NEXT!"

...

"This batter is my baby," Corporal Henry Ussery said, lobbing his belt for a real bull session. I've watched it grow from thirty-one men to what it is now. It was hard work building up this battery to what it is now, but it's worth it when you look around and see what you've done."

The assembly sighed en masse and decided to loosen its belts. Ussery was wound up again.

"When I got here, there wasn't anybody else but the instructors. We spent four weeks eating dust and running rabbits. There I was—I'd spent thirteen months learning the old drill and tactics to where

probably seen them rolling noisily but smoothly through town—large canvas-topped trucks with a folding bench down each side inside. You'd expect to be hauled out of one of them, beaten to death, at the end of a 130-mile trip. They give a tolerably bumpy ride, just tolerably.

When we started pitching camp, about a quarter of a mile back from the beach, we found the place already inhabited — by cannibals. These creatures, which masquerade as harmless flies and even camouflaged by the harmless sounding name of sand flies, must have vampire blood back in the line somewhere.

The bull session nodded wisely and Corporal Ussery went on, "Now this young Corporal Joe Gantt, for instance. Now, this Corporal Gantt when he first came in, was one of the greenest rookies in the bunch. But he snapped out of it and made corporal in four months."

"Was that soldiering," a voice broke in, "or handshaking—as the Latins used to say, mittus floppus?"

"Much as I can't stand Gantt, I'll have to admit it was soldiering. That's the way it is. You sweat your head off hammering the drills and the isthmus and the military courtesy and guard duty and the physical hygiene and the manual of arms into them. They're all clumsy and awkward as a bear in an egg crate at first, but then you can see them, after a while, snapping into it and getting better and better. By the time we've had them thutten weeks, and they're ready to be assigned to their posts, they're as keen and alert as a bunch of West Point cadets. They're extra good cooks and better soldiers."

"Isn't a good soldier a specialist at griping and growling?" somebody asked him.

"When a soldier can gripe," the corporal announced in a pontifical manner, "he's happy as a pig in the sunshine. When he doesn't gripe there's something wrong with him. That's another thing you learn. When you first come here, you didn't know the first principles of griping. You gripped about the clothes; you gripped about the beds; you gripped especially about having to go to bed at nine o'clock."

"Griping is an art, just like goldbricking is an art. Before you leave here, you learn that you don't enjoy griping a bit when you spread your energy all over everywhere, griping about everything. You learn to choose one thing and specialize in griping about that."

"If you want to be a specialist at griping, you have to get on your toes. You get to where your clothes are comfortable. Where you used to think the food was terrible, now you pretend that you don't get enough of it. You like the beds and by nine o'clock you're sleepy. So you have to find something special to gripe about. If you haven't got any originality at all, pick you out one special non-com and gripe about him."

"Now, you take Private Hargrove, for instance. First came here, he gripped about me telling him he was carrying his rifle wrong. Now he gripes when I tell him he's carrying it right. He might have something there. He still carries it like it was a 75-millimeter gun. He's getting so shiftless, even at griping, that he can't find anything to beef about except not getting any mail. I'm going to write all his creditors, so he won't even be able to gripe about the mail."

"That reminds me," I said, "Did I tell you boys what Sergeant Taylor told me about Ussery today?"

"Nine o'clock!" Ussery shouted. Lights out! Break it up!"

...

Somewhere on the wild coast of South Carolina, the battalion in which I cook is being treated to a weekend to combine business with pleasure. We can romp in the Atlantic while we get a "taste of the field." With the wind blowing the sand into kitchens and pup tents alike, it will be nice to get back to Fort Bragg for a taste of the food we eat. A vexed soldier here don't grate his teeth. He crunches them.

We made the trip here in lorries, which are the mechanical age's nearest approach in appearance to covered wagons. You've

### State College Hints To Farm Homemakers

By Ruth Current  
N. C. State College

To distribute the wear on sheets we suggest to homemakers that they put the small hem at the top of the bed at least half of the time.

To protect sheets from snagging and tearing we suggest that a mattress cover be placed over the bed springs. Remember too that a bit of adhesive tape carefully bound over a rough place on the spring will also help to avoid a tear.

Wash rag or chenille rugs just as you wash blankets; let them drip dry. When hanging, fold over line and fasten two clothespins down each hanging side, pinning double thicknesses. Shake or brush when nearly dry to fluff up.

Wash curtains as you would silks. Put curtains of fine material such as lace and scrim in a net bag to wash. Starch keeps them fresh, crisp, and clean longer. Use a large kettle so that all curtains for one room can be starched evenly and at once. Do not hang curtains on the line to dry but roll up in a sheet. Iron when damp dry.

In hanging sheets out to dry, put large and small hems together; swing large hem over the line, with small hem on the outside. Place clothespins at one-foot intervals. Straighten selvages. When removing, fold sheet crosswise again, and it is ready for ironing.

Hang tablecloths lengthwise, putting selvage edges together. Pin closely, like sheets.

Hang guest towels singly with a third over the line, and with embroidered part or colored edging at the bottom.

Hang bath towels singly, a third over the line. Shake when dry to fluff up nap. Do not iron towels.

For handkerchiefs, napkins and washcloths, hang two or three over each other by the hem, not by the corners.

While a jury was being impaneled, a prospective juror was asked:

Attorney—Are you a married man?

Prospective Juror — Yes, sir, about 52 years.

Attorney—Have you formed or expressed an opinion—

Prospective Juror (interrupting)—No, sir, not for about five years.

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The Best Part of the Meal

From where I sit ...

by Joe Marsh

Grandma Hoskins knows a lot about history—but when we asked her where the first brewery was built in America, she wouldn't take sides.

"You see," says Grandma, "wherever the colonists settled, one of the first things they thought about was food and beer . . . In fact, one reason why the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock was because the Mayflower was runnin' short of beer."

Well, that was a new one on us, but Grandma showed it to us

—just as it was written in the Mayflower's log.

And it seems that all through our early American history beer sort of tempered the hardships and helped to make us a tolerant, moderate people.

From where I sit, beer is the American drink of moderation and friendliness—kind of a symbol of our personal liberty.

Joe Marsh

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