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Archives Alive

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# What Would Fred do Without Evelyn?

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# Just an Ordinary Day

## RHETORICAL ANALYSIS

Harry discusses Waterloo longingly, showing that he misses that place very much. However, we can infer from his sentence "Seems almost like home to me" that it is not where he is originally from. Although he attempts to make his location, at Camp Shelby, seem not too bad, he does make hints at the fact that he would rather be at home. For example, he says "Personally, the longer I'm down here, the more I'm convinced that that section of the country is God's Chosen Land." The statement "the longer I'm down here" implies that he misses home and Waterloo more and more with each day, and referring to the town as a "chosen land" makes it seem like he likes Waterloo more than his actual hometown. It also implies that whatever is happening where he is now is a lot worse than Waterloo could ever be, possibly telling us that he has begun to appreciate his former life more.

He tries to avoid directly saying that he doesn't like being in training, but it is shown through more of his wording in the letter. Also, Harry uses a very tragic example to explain what the hikes are like. First, he seems to exaggerate with "the hikes out and back are killers", but then he goes on to say "the 337th took a hike which killed five and caused over half the regiment to fall out." This is very effective because it lets us know that those hikes really *are* killers, having killed 5 people already. However, Harry goes on to let us know that his regiment's hike should not be as bad because they've been gradually training and "should be better prepared." The tone of this is casual and almost nonchalant. Because his audience, Evelyn, is a journalist as well as a friend, he could have wanted to disclose nearly all details while still being sure she wouldn't worry.

The letter is very informal and Harry writes as though he is having a conversation. For example, he uses common words or phrases like "cause" and "not bad", and most of his sentences are fragments. I found this interesting because when I didn't imagine people of the 1940s to be have such similar vocabulary to what we use today.

Harry says in the letter he destroys all of his letters and goes on to explain why he has taken so long (a month) to write back. He makes sure to provide evidence as to why he hadn't been promptly writing, and this evidence is the training - which he very clearly reveals the severity of. The "P.S." statement at the end serves to remind Evelyn that he destroys all the letters, so she should continue to write despite a missed response. This short sentence could show how busy he gets in military training, or just how forgetful he is.

## HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

Harry Schlichting was a soldier of the 85<sup>th</sup> Division. I could not find out which infantry he was a part of, but, by researching the 337<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, I found out that they were all at Camp Shelby, Mississippi at the time this letter was written. Everyone at the camp was a part of the 85<sup>th</sup> Division. Also, about two weeks after this letter on September 29<sup>th</sup>, the entire camp was reviewed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt; he was stopping by as part of a tour of the country. Harry was most likely in a different infantry regiment since he refers to the 337<sup>th</sup> as something other than his own group. He mentions the 337<sup>th</sup> Infantry's deadly hike, but I couldn't find any record of it.

Camp Shelby was located in southern Mississippi near Hattiesburg. It was built in 1917 as a training site for WWI soldiers, but most of the buildings were demolished after the

war. They were rebuilt in 1940 so that the camp could be used for WWII training. Camp Shelby was named after Isaac Shelby, a Native American Revolutionary War hero and the first governor of Kentucky. Now, the camp is used by the Mississippi National Guard for training.

On this day in history, the U.S. had a victory at the Battle of Bloody Ridge at Guadalcanal, the largest of the formerly British Islands. This long and gruesome battle had been going on for days and required thousands of men. The U.S. and Japanese had already been constantly fighting for control of Guadalcanal. The battle began with the Japanese dropping bombs from planes to gain that land, but it was unsuccessful because the Japanese were searching for and found them. Over the next four days, there was more fighting that cost a total of 600 Japanese deaths and 59 Marine deaths. The Battle of Bloody Ridge at Guadalcanal ended with the Japanese soldiers retreating into the jungle and the U.S. taking victory.

The Strand, Harry mentions it in the paragraph where he is trying to locate Independence, is an old theater in Waterloo. It opened in the 1920s but became a subsidiary of Paramount Pictures in around 1941. The theater operated into the late 1970s with 1 screen and 1,063 seats. The building was located across the street from Waterloo's Lincoln Park at 402 East Fourth Street. Independence Avenue is located in a different area of town.

In his letter, Harry writes "I take you have no regular house and come and go as you please except for committee meetings. Not bad! Of course, I understand you have plenty of work but you can honestly keep your own house." I wondered if this was common for women in the 1940s to not have a house, or to do things that didn't require keeping up a home. During the 1940s and due to the war,

women were urged to enter the workforce. This was new because usually men would have the jobs and the women stay home, but the government needed laborers to keep the economy afloat. The government even developed tactics like “Rosie the Riveter” to show them that it could be fashionable and women would still be able to be feminine under all the dirt. However, after the war, these jobs did go back to men and women were encouraged to return to their homes.

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