



3RD BATTALION 509TH PARACHUTE INFANTRY



Dear Shirley,

I wanted to write a letter thanking you for the wonderful package you sent me a few weeks ago. I use the water bottle everyday and the banner sits above my desk here in Afghanistan. I will treasure these things always. It is good to be reminded of our roots and where we have come from. I still miss walking into the big white building on Rte 11 and talking with my friends Vince, Justine, you and others. Those were some of the best days of my life. I will even say that I miss Major Kelley, hard as he was he prepared each one of us for the hard times ahead. I don't think that I would be anywhere near the officer that I am today without his initial guidance and his ability to place a drive and desire in me to want to succeed. He showed many of us that the reasons for success were not for ourselves alone but for the greater good of each other. His was simply one of the best officers I have ever known.

How are things in northern New York? I hope that the weather was good for both the Clarkson and St. Lawrence commissioning ceremonies. I hope that St. Lawrence has come to its senses and started to allow credits for Army ROTC classes. I was and am still pretty bitter about the decision not to count credits towards my graduation. I felt a little cheated by a liberal arts institution that claims to try and open its doors to all modes of thought and learning but yet fails to embrace service to our country. More importantly though was the commissioning ceremony that is coming up and has probably already passed by the time you are reading this. I can still remember mine inside of the chapel there at St. Lawrence. I remember looking up and seeing my two good friends Vince and Dan with Major Kelley up in the balcony. I have very fond memories of those days and know now that it was the people that made the days as wonderful as they were. I look back at the pictures of that day and chuckle at how empty the uniform is, now I have to spend countless hours making sure I have badges and tabs all in the right place. I guess I miss the easy uniform of a Second Lieutenant. I hope that this commissioning was as wonderful as mine was. I noticed to in the St. Lawrence Magazine that the Dress Blue Uniform is now used for commissioning. When did this decision come about and why? Is it because the Army is now going to the dreaded Army Service Uniform? I remember doing mine in the Army greens and I wondered what happened. Anyway I am sure it all went well. Please send any FA lieutenants my email and let them know if they have any questions I can answer, I am here to help.

I saw the Clarkson website and I can say that it is far above the one that existed during my time. It looks like you guys have a great staff and that you are preparing young officers much in the same tradition that I was trained in. I am glad to know that the Clarkson Battalion continues to demand high standards of its Cadets.

Yours Truly,

Captain Matthew J. Cahill, FA

HHC 3/509th
FOB Orgun-E
APO, AE
09311