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Image 1:

Sept. 20, 1944

Dear Mother, Dad, and Grandpa,

Well, as I am writing this you are on the train heading back to Dayton. I don't mind telling you I wish I were on that train with you. I promised you I wouldn't get low like I did before but I'm afraid I can't stick to that promise. You see for almost 9 months now I have been perfectly miserable and I know that I can never be happy until I am out of the Army. And God knows when that will be – maybe 3 or 4 years yet.

I know I did seem cheerful to you during our short visit, except for last night, perhaps. And I was cheerful, there's no denying that—cheerful because I was with you and away from this terrible environment of Army life. When I am able to get away from it all for a while like that, I try to forget all the unpleasant things and concentrate on a few hour of happiness. Every time I see you, I want to go into a lengthy discussion with you on my problems

Image 2:

and how I hate this life, and I never really get a chance to because there are two opposing forces, pulling within me; One wants me to let it all out and the other want to forget it all for a few hours and escape from reality. And unfortunately, the latter always wins in the end. And then after we have departed, I have misgivings, and that causes me to write everything out in letters that I should have talked out with you.

I have written you this same type of letter so often, and I don't like to write them anymore than you like to read them. But please bear with me, for it is the only way I can help myself.

For two days I was living in a world that is out of my reach, and then last night I began to realize how far away it is from the life I am leading at present. Now I don't mean to say that all I want to do in life is to lunge around hotels and dine continuously in expensive restaurants, etc. That is utterly ridiculous and simply out of the question. What I do want is to get out of this horrible atmosphere of filth and regimentation, to study for

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something worthwhile in life so that later on when I am older and more mature I may be able to enjoy the gracious living we are all accustomed to.

Now I do realize that I am in the Army because we do want to preserve our way of life. No one has to explain that to me. But when these lofty ideals are transplanted into the common, everyday happenings of Army routine, I tend to lose sight of that fact. After all, I have been in the Army 9 months, and outside of hard routines, and obeying and conforming to stupid orders and regulations, I have done nothing except K.P., guard, and latrine duty, latrine duty, guard, and K.P. plus a myriad of other details, plenty of ditch digging included.

I realize that nobody likes it, that millions are in the same boat, and that many, many

Image 4:

are in far poorer luck than I. You both have told me that many times, and you are absolutely right. But still I can't be content with that because what I have been doing in the past 8 ½ months has been bad enough.

It was such a relief to get out of this awful place for 3 days and [undecipherable] so very wonderful to be able to be with you. I would have been terribly disappointed if you hadn't come. The expectation and anticipation of getting out and seeing you kept me going for several weeks in spite of everything. Something like that to look forward to has always kept me going ever since I have been in the Army. And after it is all over there is always such a terrific letdown, and I always feel like there is nothing left to look forward to. That is the way I feel now.

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I shouldn't be writing like this to you all the time, and I hope it won't worry you. It's a terrible feeling to be so muddled and so hopelessly lost as I have felt all this year. Why should I be that way? I think too much, I know, but that's my makeup, and I can't change, especially under these conditions. If I could only be through with all of this, and be free to do what I want – to walk, and dress and eat like I want to – to be around intelligent people, to study, to read—to be home above all, and to have an opportunity to get somewhere in the world. I have given up hope of trying to get anywhere in the Army. Anything I had the slightest of attaining has passed me by. I have no particular job, and have

Image 6:

been in a state of confusion for many months.

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I came back to the area early this morning and found my name on the bulletin board for K.P., so I had to get up at 5:30 and go on K.P. That was a dirty trick. He could have waited one day at least.

I wrote all of the above at intervals while on K.P. I had officer's mess and saw Lt. Root. He told me he saw you. That's the only time I come in contact with him – when I'm on K.P.

Our 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. went home on an emergency furlough today and starting tomorrow that Maclaughlin is taking over his duties until he comes back.

Dad, if you could work something it would be swell. I didn't know what to say at first, ~~wh~~ but after seeing and talking to you I have changed my mind. We can give it a try, at least. After all, everyone else seems to look out for themselves.

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Thursday, Sept. 21

Well, I have read this letter over and I think it sounds pretty foolish. However, I am sending it on to you to show

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you how I get at times.

I wish I wouldn't be that way. It sounds almost manic-depressive – alternating moments of elation and depression. Wish I could cure myself of it.

Did you get my night letter? I sent it last night. I didn't send it collect because they just read it over the phone that way. It was only 99¢ anyway.

I am again in the Service Club. We are moving back to Camp Polk either next Wednesday or Thursday. Maneuvers are called off altogether. Why I don't know. Probably because there aren't enough outfits to hold maneuvers. Most of the outfits, I guess are either overseas or are going over shortly.

Our company commander said he doesn't know what we will do after we move back. He says we can take our pick of the rumors going around.

He says that as far as he knows we could stay there for the duration or move out the next day. I wonder if we would make a move if it

Image 8:

would be overseas or to another camp in this country. Apparently he doesn't know a thing, or he if he does he isn't telling. However, I really think he is telling all he knows.

I got a nice box of Dennet's candies from Freda and Charlie. They have really been very nice to me.

I will try to write a few lines to everyone. I must write Harry, Jr. -his birthday is Sat.

I think I will apply for a 3-day pass ~~for~~ for Yom Kippur. I probably won't get it though. But I'll try, anyway. The other 3 Jewish boys are applying also. One wants to go to Dallas, another to Baton Rouge, and another to Shreveport. 2 passes in 10 days time is a lot to ask for but I don't want to celebrate Yom Kippur with the services in the Leesville U.S.O. I may have to, though. If I do get this pass I won't be able to get another one for quite a while. You know, for some reason I didn't even think about Yom Kippur until today. Maybe you could have stayed here, but it's probably best that you went home, for I doubt if I will get it. 2 days would be plenty to go to Shreveport, too, so if this is refused I'll ask for 2 days.

Well, let ~~he~~ me hear about everything from you. Maybe there will be a day when things will be normal again. Who knows?

Lovingly,

Jerome, Jr.