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Image 1:

Ziracco, Italy

June 10, 1945

Dear Mother, Dad, and Grandpa,

Well, we are still here and not doing much of anything. I am working on the radio as per usual—it is not very busy today, so I thought I would write this letter. Our schedule usually runs about 4 hours on duty and 12 hours off. We have another radio hooked up so we can listen to all the good programs while on duty. You know, I just remembered, Mother, that in one of your letters a long time ago you asked if I were doing the same work I did at Polk. Well, I am a radio operator, and am still sending and receiving dits and dahs.

Dad, today is Father's Day, and although we are thousands of miles apart we can at least be together in our thoughts. The very best to you on your day.

It has been very hot during the day, getting cool in the evening, making it nice for sleeping. Occasional showers cool things off also.

We are living in pup-tents (complete with mosquito netting, hot and cold running rain-water, and all species of flora and fauna). Seriously though, it is a pretty nice set up.

No one knows a thing about the future. We are just marking time, I guess. Time will tell.

Please send some food whenever you care to.

Image 2:

(2)

Ziracco, Italy

June 10, 1945

I saw two movies this past week. "[Tonight and Every Night](#)" with Rita Hayworth, a technicolor musical, and "[The Unseen](#)" with Herbert Marshall, a mystery. Both are very good. Have you seen them? They are new pictures. I read the reviews in "Time" not so long ago. We really look forward to these movies, for there isn't anything else in the way of entertainment.

They are going to start an Army Education Program which I think is a very wise idea. Originally, it was intended for occupation troops only but now it is ^{also} for all troops awaiting redeployment, etc. As I understand it, there will be two programs, one educational and the other recreational. We will be required to take one or the other for 4 hrs. a day. I am anxious to take a course in something, but what, I don't know as yet. It is really an extension of USAFI (U.S. Armed Forces Institute). I'm sure you have read about it.

This doesn't mean anything one way or the other in regard to our future Army activities, but is to keep our minds occupied. It's better than close order drill, road marches, calisthenics, etc., which they would use if it weren't for this program.

I don't think we will be here very long. I don't know, though. Neither does anyone else. One point we all agree on—the U.S. is the best country in the world and we want to go back there pretty darn fast.

Please send some food whenever you care to do so.

Image 3:

(3)

Ziracco, Italy

June 10, 1945

The four T-shirts you sent arrived this past week and are swell. Just the thing for the summertime.

Thanks for sending the American Express checks, Dad. If I got a pass, that money will come in mighty handy.

Also your boxes and papers and magazines keep right on coming, and it's great to get them. Yes, I too wish Russia would enter the war against Japan. It would certainly be a tremendous help.

My films are being developed now. I'll send the prints as soon as I get them.

I'm anxious to see them myself. Send some more film if you can get it.

Harry Jr. has been sick most of the time since he entered the Navy, hasn't he? Where is he now? Stanley Frankel must be on Luzon. God, he has been out there a long time. Does he have any chance of getting home under the point system?¹ It's harder for officers to get out than enlisted men.

I saw a number of men in the Jewish Brigade when I was in Florence.² Couldn't talk to them though. Language is certainly a great barrier among the peoples of the world. Perhaps, if we all spoke a common language and knew one another better, there wouldn't be wars. I have seen their trucks with the Star of David on them quite often.

Please send some food at any time.

Image 4:

(4)

Ziracco, Italy

June 10, 1945

You should have gone to the opera festival in Dayton. It must have been excellent.

I recently learned that the 68th is in the Philippines. Took them 52 days to cross. I think I wrote you that before.

How does Jimmy Danmam get home so often? I wouldn't care to be in the Navy, though.

It's terrible how rumors spread so quickly. Several boys had letters from home from their parents saying that they read in the paper that we are all already on our way to the Pacific. I think they must have read wrong, though. Probably 10th Armored or Army or something like that.

I'll bet that home-made butter is good. Is food hard to get at home? I don't see how we can hope to feed the whole world. If we feed these people over here, they will become apathetic and never shift for themselves. They will never appreciate what we give them, and will always want more. They don't do a thing to better themselves. They lead a very primitive existence. Grandpa, after seeing Italy, I'll wager that the territory you came from is not much different than it was when you left it some 60 odd years ago. For all Europe, I think, is alike. There are either the very rich which are few and far between, or the very, very poor, which includes almost everybody. I guess it's a survival of the feudal system when all the peasants worked for the large land owners.

¹ The point system was a system devised at the end of World War II to determine which soldiers would get to go home and which would stay for occupation duty. Soldiers got points for time spent overseas, as well as for any awards for valor or injury. Soldiers with the highest points were sent home and discharged.

² "The Jewish Infantry Brigade Group, more commonly known as the Jewish Brigade Group or Jewish Brigade, was a military formation of the British Army composed of Jews from the Yishuv in Mandatory Palestine commanded by British-Jewish officers that served in Europe during World War II. The brigade was formed in late 1944, and its personnel fought the Germans in Italy." https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_Brigade See also the article on the Jewish Brigade in the scrapbook located in Scrapbook of World War II Era Items, circa 1940s, Box 16, Folder 1, Jerome Epstein papers, C0262, Special Collections Research Center, George Mason University Libraries.

Please send some food at any time.

Image 5:

(5)

Ziracco, Italy

June 10, 1945

There is no such thing as a middle class here.

I watched the farmers plow their fields with a shovel and plenty of elbow grease, or with a very primitive plow drawn by oxen. They all have wells from which their water is obtained. We always put halazone tablets in the water before we drink it.

Funny isn't it, about Bud Weisman being in the same convoy. They left us, I think, at Gibraltar, and sailed on to Southern France. We then traveled alone.

I wonder if Seymour and Harry Hurst will be coming back to the States. It's so hard to tell because they are always switching armies, corps, divisions, etc. around.

From your descriptions, the yard must be beautiful this year. It is always so pretty.

I have been taking a shower almost every day. It feels good to get a shower and clean clothes in this weather, especially. The company sends a truck down to the shower unit every day.

Those banana splits make my mouth water. We had some ice cream coming over on the boat. Haven't had any since. We have been warned not to eat any of this so-called ice cream the Italians put out. Their milk isn't pasteurized, and the ice cream is horrible anyway.

It would be nice if you could go to Chicago and Milwaukee. Are you planning to go anywhere else this summer? It would do you all a world of good.

Please send some food at anytime.

Image 6:

(6)

Ziracco, Italy

June 10, 1945

All the generals are returning to the States. I'll bet N.Y. goes wild when Eisenhower returns. [Mark Clark](#) took a bunch of G.I.'s back with him. I have a picture of him conferencing with a couple of generals—Hays and Major General Crittenberger, IV Corps Commander – just before the big offensive. I don't know if I can send it to you or not. It was taken by a friend of mine who worked with the division photographer for a while.

David Olch will be a lucky guy if he gets out.

How is Uncle Izzy getting along?

So Leah Stein toured Italy in 1937? I'll bet she didn't live in a foxhole, though. I would like to tour all these countries some day. These places are nice to look and take pictures, buy souvenirs, etc. But I could never stand living in Europe.

I can wear the T-shirts on or off duty. Anything goes overseas.

No, I haven't had any peaches here. I think it's too early for them. There are plenty of cherries, though.

Those sketches of Italy you sent, Mother, are true to life.

Those girls certainly went through college in a hurry, didn't they?

Well, I had better stop for chow now, so will come to a close. Love to all of you.

Lovingly,

Jerome, Jr.

P.S. I am enclosing a label from a champagne bottle.³ Wish I could send you some of that champagne.

³ See Scrapbook of World War II Era Items, circa 1940s, Box 16, Folder 1, Jerome Epstein papers, C0262, Special Collections Research Center, George Mason University Libraries.