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Image 1:

August 19, 1944

Dear Mother, Dad, and Grandpa,

Tonight, Sat. night, I am sitting upstairs in the Service Club writing this letter. I did not get to write to you yesterday, although I wanted to badly enough, so I am determined not to let this day pass without writing to you.

Well, this afternoon my fun ended and I had to return to the bivouac area. It made me sick just to think of going out to that horrible place, let alone seeing it and living there. They make it so miserable for us. It's just terrible. Oh how I wish the whole war were over, and that I were out of the Army and able to lead a free, normal life. The Army is just like a prison. I never hated anything so much in all my life as I do the Army. For almost 8 months now I have been perfectly miserable except for the time I have been able to be with you.

Image 2:

Please don't think I'm acting like an infant, but I just can't bear it. At times I feel like screaming all this out to anyone who will listen, but naturally that is impossible, and would certainly get me into a lot of trouble so the only thing I can do is write to you. I hope that you will bear with me.

If I could only do my work during certain hours and then be free. But no – the Army places all kinds of stupid and unnecessary restrictions on you, so that what few small pleasures we could have are denied. You haven't any idea what a terrible feeling it is to have all these things hanging over your head making you feel like a prisoner or a slave. I think it will drive me crazy before it is all over. You can't even walk like you want to in the Army – you must march like so many trained animals being put through their act in a cage. We are constantly preaching democracy and yet there is nothing in the country that approximates totalitarianism as closely as does the Army. I despise saluting, saying "yes sir" being ordered around, etc. like a slave.

Image 3:

(3)

August 19, 1944

It's so terribly, terribly unfair. The conquered people must bow down to the Nazis. It's the same way in the Army. And we say "All men are created equal. What a laugh.

Up until last week we were entitled to "Class A" passes which were good from Sat. afternoon until 6 o'clock Monday morning. I have never applied for one until 2 weeks ago. I just received it then and had never used it and now they have taken them away from us. I had planned to use that pass and stay overnight in the barracks. We can get a pass to camp on Sat. from 6 A.M. to 2 A.M. but cannot stay there overnight. Also if we want a pass to Leesville we must apply for it 12 hours in advance. Before all we had to do was to take the "Class A" pass out of the box. We can't stay overnight anywhere in camp or in Leesville unless we are married and our wives are here. And on weekday before we could stay out until 6 A.M. –now it is 11 P.M. –the time of the

Image 4:

curfew in Leesville.

I am coming into camp tomorrow as early as possible. I want to call you. I would have called tonight, but the delay is 3 hrs. and the call wouldn't reach you until about midnight Dayton time (11

P.M. here). I wouldn't have minded waiting but it would be too late as you would be asleep. Then too I did call once today. It did me so much good this week to hear your voices. I wanted to talk to you too, Dad, this morning, but I called too early. It's a good thing I called when I did though for after that call, I went back and ate lunch and then we had to clean one of the barracks after which we were sent back to the woods. Yesterday and today the guards of Hq. Co. had to clean Hq. Co. barracks. We did one out of 3 -hq. Co. having 3 barracks. The new guards must do the rest. They must even do it tomorrow, Sunday, and one of the boys asked if he could get off to go to church and was refused. And he really goes to church every Sunday. He doesn't go so he can get out of something.

I felt so much better for a week, and now I am so down-hearted and depressed again. We thought they might let us stay over the week-end.

They are sending a bunch out to form a cadre for a new outfit at Camp Bowie, Texas.

Image 5:

(5)

Some of the cooks and non-coms<sup>1</sup> I despise are going. By the time they get through there won't be anyone left except a few of us K.P.'s and guards.

The fellow I pitched my tent with is going too. He is a Jewish boy and is from Dallas. He is a Sgt. or to be more exact is a T/4 (Technician 4<sup>th</sup> grade). His name is Ernest Spiritas. Knows the Lefkovitzs although he belongs to the Orthodox congregation. Says he was in the same Boy Scout troop with David Lefkovitz who is a captain in the chaplain corps now. He thinks so much of Rabbi Lefkovitz, and refers to him as "Dr." His wife has been living in Leesville, so he goes in every night. He is a swell fellow, and I hate to see him go. Camp Bowie, where he is going, is about 100 miles from Dallas. Wasn't Milton there? Now I will have to find someone else to pitch a tent with.

Everybody says this is the worst camp they have seen.

Image 6:

I would like so very, very much to be with you on at least one of the holidays if not both. Seeing you is about all I'll have to look forward to for a long, long while.

Dad, I received the "U.S. News," N.Y. Times and Herald-Tribune and was so glad to get them.

Mother, your pears came today, and I was so eager to eat them, and when I opened the box they were all spoiled. It is such a shame, for I know they [~~undecipherable~~] must have been marvelous. I like fresh fruit so much. I wonder if washing them had anything to do with their spoiling.

I came in tonight on a truck that brought the boys in for showers, but they are going back too early, so I will take the bus back. I hope the bus driver knows where our bivouac area is located for I don't think I could find it in the daytime. I'll get there somehow though.

Yesterday they were short of guards so I had to walk my regular post from 4-8 P.M. and then again from 4-8 A.M. They originally had me down the second time for 12-4 A.M. but another guard knew I would be tired and asked to change with me.

Image 7:

(7)

August 19, 1944

I sewed another pair of fatigues up tonight. The 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt was getting fussy about the holes.

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<sup>1</sup> Non-commissioned officers, i.e. Sergeants.

Guess I will have dreaded K.P. Monday. 2 of the guards with me have it tomorrow.

I had the "Sat. Evening Post" with Stanley's story and was saving it, but someone borrowed it and never returned it.

I was able to get "Time," "Life" and "Newsweek" yesterday. I'll bet you have sent them to me already. From now on, though, I won't be able to buy these things.

I am so happy you are sending my radio. I have an amazing amount of things in my tent now, but I don't care.

Can you get some canvas? I have nothing to put on the ground.

A sleeping bag will be swell too. It gets awfully cool here at night even now.

Image 8:

And the days are so very hot. Oh, it's terrible. I just hate this climate, Louisiana, the Army and everything about it.

I didn't go to a show tonight for I wanted to make sure I'd get this letter written.

I am receiving all your wonderful letters right along.

I'll bet that electric outlet on the front porch is nice. We needed it so badly.

The peaches were wonderful. I'm not sure I wrote you that I got them O.K. They were so delicious and pretty too.

I didn't go to the camp photographer. I don't really like to have my picture taken. My eye shows up so badly. That's another one of my worries. That makes me so miserable, too.

I would like to write a few lines to Stanley Frankel. I may not get a chance to write him, but please send me his address in case I do. I haven't been able to write anyone else yet.

Mother, that tin box you say you are sending is just what I need. I know you had the beach sandals ready for me to take back, but I didn't take them for I had no room for them.

I think I remember those book ends, Mother.

I won't need my other khaki suit now. If I were living in camp I would have you send it.

Image 9:

(9)

August 19, 1944

Are you planting a big garden for fall, Mother.

Yes, I think the sweater will be better sleeveless, although when it gets real cold I'll probably wish it had sleeves. But then Army clothes are so bulky and I'm afraid sleeves wouldn't work out.

I wondered too if that were Stanley's picture in the fox-hole. I meant to ask you.

My feet are getting better now. If it gets any worse I will go to the medics.

I would like to see "[Dragon Seed.](#)" It hasn't been here yet. I read the book several years ago.

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Sunday, August 20, 1944

I had to stop last night because, for one thing, I ran out of ink and I also had to make the bus back to the bivouac area. The bus driver knew where it was and even knew where Hq. Co.'s entrance is located. It was pretty darn cool last night. I hate to think how it will be later on. Right now the days are so beastly hot and late night and early in the morning it is so cool.

I got up about 7:45 and left for the camp around 8:30 I didn't eat breakfast because

Image 10:

I intended to eat at the Service Club, but they stop serving at 9, so I was too late. I did go in to the coffee shop and had a chocolate sundae, some doughnuts, and a glass of milk.

I placed the call at 9 this morning and was given a delay of 2-3 hrs. Actually it took over 4 hrs. I wanted to call today for now I will only be able to call on Sunday and then perhaps not every Sunday if I have details or something. I was so disappointed that I missed talking to you again, Dad. I felt sure the call would come through before 1 o'clock Dayton time.

I am glad to hear that you are feeling so much better, Grandpa.

I am again writing in the Service Club. I just returned, after seeing Wallance Beery and Binnie Barnes in "[Barbary Coast Gent.](#)" It was pretty good.

It is raining again. Oh, the climate is terrible down here. I ate here this noon –fried chicken, mashed potatoes, peas, cole slaw, 2 dishes of sliced peaches, and 2 glasses of iced tea. I'm going down for dinner in a few minutes. After I finish this letter I guess I'll go over to the library and read a little while, maybe hear Winchell (he's on vacation though, isn't he?) at the Guest House, and then head back for that place! I must be in by 11 –as I said before it used to be 6 A.M.

I bought a Shreveport paper this morning. The news is all good, but as I say over and over, again and again, when will it end?

Image 11:

(11)

August 20, 1944

This is about the longest letter I have ever written. I just feel like writing on and on just as if I were talking to you.

I just had dinner and it was about the same as noontime – a few changes, lettuce, tomato, and celery salad, Boston cream pie, carrots.

It has stopped raining and is clearing up.

I was keeping all the stamps that I bought in an envelope and they all stuck together again, but I was able to pull them apart and can use them. This envelope was in a cardboard writing portfolio the stationary comes in. All the envelopes stuck together again. I just can't keep anything nice. I should have put my stamps in the little book [undecipherable] you sent me, Dad.

The cap I got at the Lion Store is full of ink and is ruined. I had a bottle of ink in my musette bag along with the cap. The bottle leaked and got over part of the cap. I have some cleaning fluid but I don't believe it will take the ink out. I am now wearing the cap that was issued to me which I never liked. Could you get me another one? I don't like to write in all the time like this for new things, but everything gets ruined and I have no way of buying them myself.

Image 12:

We are living in the field and yet they expect us to look like we just stepped out of a bandbox. I just don't understand and never will understand the methods employed by the Army.

I probably received some mail from you today, but I have been away all day so won't get it until tomorrow.

I forgot to write you that a couple of weeks ago I found a dead mouse in my barracks bag. That was on the day I was sick I was lying in the tent. I smelled something funny and thought it was part of the carcass of a dead deer [undecipherable] which was back in the woods and which the hogs had been devouring. But when I went to investigate I found this mouse in a heavy envelope which you had sent me, Dad, and which contained the "N.Y. Times," "Herald-Tribune," etc. That was really sickening.

We had to clean the barracks and they are simply ~~o~~ver-run with cockroaches and ants and other bugs. When we were living there they used to swarm into our foot lockers. Honestly everything in the Army is so dirty and unsanitary. I could tell you plenty more that would really make you sick just to hear it.

Image 13:

(13) August 20, 1944

This morning I was talking to a Sgt. Dicker, the battalion supply sergeant. He is a German refugee, a Jew, of course and is one marvelous person. He has only be in this country a few years speaks English very well though with a thick accent. He is a master sergeant, the highest non-commissioned rating. Well, as I told you a bunch are going to Camp Bowie on this cadre deal, and 3 Jewish sergeants are going this Spiritas boy, Sgt. Arkin, a buck sgt.<sup>2</sup> and Sgt. Stein, a staff sergeant. And Dicker is boiling because they are being sent. He tells me that Sgt. Maclaughlin, another master Sgt. and head of the 2<sup>nd</sup> R.I. platoon (I'm in the 1<sup>st</sup> R.I. platoon) vowed that he would get rid of all the Jews. Dicker says this Maclaughlin is extremely race conscious – a Jew-baiter, and is always talking about the Negroes. He is a Southerner, so I suppose they are “niggers” to him. Dicker says that once there was a Mexican in the outfit and Maclaughlin referred to him as “that greasy, skinny Mexican.” I heard Lt. Karpovich referred to the other day by Sgt. Lee, a tech sgt. in my platoon, as “that Jew, Karpovich.” Sgt. Dicker says he came to America to get away from all that, and now finds so very

Image 14:

much of it here. He said he had always heard of our fine principles and can't understand why there should be so much prejudice.

This Maclaughlin has always been pleasant to me, but he is the sugary sweet type. Dicker says he is pleasant outwardly to everybody [~~undecipherable~~] but seething inwardly. And that is true. There are plenty of people like that, you know.

I think they all have it in them. I know a couple of the cooks have. I dread K.P. more than ever for that reason. And I'm not so sure about Sgt. Wertzberger, the head of my platoon. They all have it – some show it more plainly than others. It's really terrible to think that this country should be so full of it.

Sgt. Dicker had another non-com busted for some reason, he tried to explain the circumstances to me, but [~~undecipherable~~] couldn't fully understand him but from what I gather this fellow got what was coming to him. And now all the other non-coms are giving Dicker the cold shoulder—won't speak to him. If a non-Jew did it, they probably wouldn't even care.

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I just went in to the Guest House to listen to the radio. The Conrads went to a movie and the other girl, the fat girl whose husband is a redhead (I don't know their name) went home for a month. Heard part of Gabriel Heatter, 5 minutes of CBS news and Winchell's program although he wasn't on.

Image 15:

(15) August 20, 1944

There doesn't seem to be much that is new, although everything looks good. I can't understand what is stalling the Russians. When I was home they were so close to East Prussia and now they haven't

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<sup>2</sup> Slang for the lowest grade of Sergeant.

crossed the border yet. And they still haven't taken Warsaw after several weeks of fighting around the city. I just wish it were all over. I hate this life so very, very much. You can't believe anything you hear nowadays on the radio. Yesterday when I was still in the barracks we heard a report, although it was unconfirmed, that the Allies had taken Paris. And tonight I hear they aren't even in the city yet.

When I go back I'll probably find out that I'm on K.P. tomorrow. It's awful twice a week.

Write me everything. I want to write you every day last week I could, and I wish and hope I can keep it up. Love to all of you.

Lovingly,

Jerome, Jr.

P.S. Do you think the war will ever end?

Image 16:

I just prepped an envelope an hour ago for this letter and it sealed up on me. 18¢ worth of stamps gone to waste.

We can't go to the 9 o'clock show now for we must be in by 11. And if we want a shower we can't make the 7 o'clock show. Might be able to make it by walking in the middle of the 1<sup>st</sup> show. Gee it was so nice at home. I really felt like I was full again. Fellows stationed near large towns are certainly lucky. There is nothing here. You read all the time about stars and entertainers coming to the camps, but they never come here. It was the same way at Livingston. They always come to the cities where they don't need them for there are plenty of other things to do and see. This camp is so isolated.

Image 17: Front of Envelope (NT)

Image 18: I could use another stamp book for I have this all filled I have some stamps left over. (Back of Envelope)