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Image 1:

June 19, 1944

Dear Mother, Dad, and Grandpa

It's now Monday evening and I am sitting in the dayroom writing this letter. It is so terribly hot here this evening that I just don't feel like going anywhere. I'll probably go to the movies tomorrow night. The show, "[Song of Nevada](#)" with Roy Rogers (a stinking Class B picture)! Sounds terrible, but at least it will offer a little diversion. The heat here is intense. Even if you do nothing except sit down you start dripping buckets of perspiration.

A Lister bag (one used to supply water in the field) has been set up in the company area and is kept filled with ice water. Paper cups are kept by it. There is a water fountain in each of the barracks, but there is no means by which the water can be cooled, so consequently it is always warm. Today it is actually hot.

Image 2:

Cokes aren't good for me, I know, but they are awfully tempting especially when there is nothing else. At the main PX I have been getting chocolate sundaes and pouring cokes over them, which here in the PX in the battalion area I have been doing the same with plain ice cream. I used to like ginger ale so well. Haven't seen any for six months.

Saturday night I had a wonderful steak with french fries at the Service Club. Mrs. Conrad said the steaks that night were the best she has ever seen there. I went up to see her yesterday and took her a pile of newspapers. She was awfully glad to get them. Said she intends to write you this week, Mother. They have been very busy at the Guest House. They are all filled up, but get a lot of cancellations every day! Her husband expected to be furloughed in September, but was told he would have to take it within the next 60 days. She intended to keep on working wherever he was stationed, but he told her that she would have to stay home after his furlough. So you know what that means. He expects to be going across.

I met another girl who works in the Guest House. Her husband is in the 8th Armored, and she was down in the dumps because she thinks

Image 3:

(3)

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they will also be sent over before long. But then, you can never tell. You have to disregard most of the things heard in an Army camp. It's the biggest rumor factory in the world. Still Sgt. Conrad should know something.

What will happen to the 68th Signal I don't know. I don't see how it could ever go over as a complete unit. It seems with reason to think that it will send men out from time to time as replacements.¹ They have been doing that, you know. A bunch went out in Jan., and they are in England

¹ Replacements were trained troops sent to one of the active theaters of war as individuals rather than as complete units. Once overseas, they were typically assigned to a Replacement Depot, where they awaited assignment to a unit that was understrength in their specific rank and occupation due to casualties. While these Replacement Depots had some major issues and have been highly criticized, this system was put in place in an attempt to avoid situations that had occurred in earlier wars where there was no replacement system and units became combat ineffective as organizations as they took casualties with no way to make good their losses. Thus, in

now. The Conrads had a friend in this CO. who was in that group. However, its futile to keep on speculating.

Sat. night I saw "[Ladies of Washington](#)" which wasn't bad. Yesterday I saw "[The Eve of St. Mark.](#)" It's a war picture, to be sure, but it is simply marvelous.

For the past two weeks, I have

Image 4:

been washing my own clothes instead of sending them to the laundry. And they really look clean too. At least I know I will have my own things, for the laundry sends back everything but the night clothes. For instance, if you send a good linen handkerchief you get back a tattered old rag in its place. With good hot water and [undecipherable] my washing has been excellent so far. Yesterday all I had to do was hang everything outside and it all dried almost immediately. It's just like the desert regions around here.

I had a fried chicken dinner last night at the Service Club. We have a lot of iced tea in the mess hall which, of course, makes a big hit with me. Mother your cold beet soup sounds wonderful. I know I'll want some when I'm home on furlough. I'm still hoping I'll get it in July.

There was some excitement her Friday night. An ammunition dump about ½ mile from here blew up. I have never heard such terrific explosions. There was a huge blaze all night. All the electricity in camp went off and we were without lights Friday night and Sat. morning. Friday night I was on K.P. and we had to G.I. the mess hall in the dark.² What a life! About 9:30 the water was turned off, so it could all be used to fight the fire.

Image 5:

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So I had to go to bed without a shower after finishing K.P. God, did I stink!

Sat. morning I was on range detail.

Today I was told that I am now in Class A, or, in other words, fit for overseas duty. The situation is completely reversed. I tell you, you can't be sure of anything in the Army. All Class C men were reclassified wherever possible. Another boy I have been with since Benning was in the same position, and the medical officer, a captain, told us that we would be put in Class A regardless of our eyes so long as we were able to talk and walk. Some other fellows in Class C were interviewed by a Lt. Col. And 2 Captains, but not us. All the medical officer asked us was how our code speed was coming along. I overheard the Capt. Tell the Colonel and the other Capt. That "even though they can't meet the minimum

Image 6:

overseas requirements, they seem to be doing a satisfactory job in radio, so we're going to keep them here." Afterwards Jim Fiedberg told me that ~~the~~ all Class C men were to be transferred to the 8th Service Command which would send in an equal number of replacements. They're trying to get rid of all Class C men, and that is the method employed. I don't know what it all means.

the American Civil War regiments with assigned strengths of 1,000 men commonly had less than 300 effectives when entering battle. This also, to some extent, represented an element of the industrialization of war, with soldiers beginning to be seen as interchangeable parts or cogs in a great machine.

² G.I. here is used as slang for cleaning...also sometimes referred to as a G.I. party.

Churchill's statement that the war might end this summer was quite reassuring. Germany must be closer to defeat than we think. God, how I hope for the war's end. Japan won't take long. I'll bet Russia lets us use Vladivostok as an air base for knocking out Japan after the European war. Finland, it appears is on the brink of disaster. The Nazis apparently have no air force. Certainly they would # have made use of it by now if it were in existence.

Dad, I received your letter today. Is Larry Fourham(?) still going to school? [undecipherable] is either a 4-F or a damn good draft-dodger. I feel the same way about Dave Stone.

Mother, the luncheon you went to sounds very nice. Their home must be beautiful.

Grandpa, are you able to get a room at Elkhart?³ Boy, what I wouldn't give to be in that climate now. How's the steel business? Booming, as usual, I hope!!

Image 7:

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Have you heard "[Long Ago & Far Away](#)"? It's hauntingly beautiful, if I may coin a new phrase. Music is a wonderful thing – so soothing and so restful. What is better than wrapping oneself in a dream land of music? All the cares in the world seem to fade away. Am I becoming rhetorical? If I am, I don't mean to be. Believe me, I am still completely rational.

Well, there isn't ^{anything} else of importance to write about, so that is all for the present. Love to all three of you.

Jerome, Jr.

³ Probably Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin