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Image 1:

Aug. 13, 1944

Dear Mother, Dad, and Grandpa,

It was certainly good to be able to talk to all of you this morning. I have to call from the Service Club as the building in the battalion area in which the phone I always used is located is locked up. I think I wrote you that before. I wanted to call when they brought us in for some code last week but couldn't because of that and also because we had to go back before lunch.

I received the birthday cake yesterday, and it is simply marvelous. It is so delicious and so beautiful too. It kept remarkably well. It is fresh and not broken at all. You packed it well, Dad.

Mother, as usual I was glad to get your letter yesterday. Dad, I received your letter with the stamps on Friday. I needed the stamps, for some I had are stuck together from the dampness, etc. I have had a good supply though with the ones

Image 2:

both of you have been sending and with the bunch I bought in Shreveport upon my return.

What did the Greens name their baby? They have so many, it's quite confusing and difficult to keep up with them. Funny, it was born on my birthday. It will probably be a little stinker just like the rest of them.

After getting off guard last night I went to a movie and again slept through most of it. I can't stand grade "B" pictures but I go just for the sake of having something to do. Last night it was ["Twilight on the Prairie"](#) and some other nauseating film whose name I can't remember and don't even care to. Double features are sickening, anyway.

Tonight I am going to see Paulette Goddard and Sonny Tufts in "I Love a Soldier." It should be very good.

Every day when I go on guard it rains. The sun shines brilliantly until then. Although today it is clouding up and it did start to rain a few minutes ago. It is a few minutes past 12 and I am going to have lunch in a few minutes. I had a good breakfast here at the Service Club this morning.

Image 3:

(3)

Aug. 13, 1944

When maneuvers start and we go tactical it will be terrible. We won't be able to come in at night for showers or anything else. We won't be able to have any lights at night. You can use a flashlight if you put some carbon paper over it or some red fingernail polish some that the light can't be seen. We will have to wear pistol belts and steel helmets plus, of course, the helmet liners, all day long. I don't know if we will have to carry carbines, but if we do, we will have to keep them on or near us at all times, even when eating. We will have to string out yards apart under trees, bushes, etc., in chow line, in order to prevent the "enemy" from observing. Also we will have to hide our mess kits under our shirts while standing in chow line so that the glare from the metal won't permit the "enemy" to locate us from the air as well as from the ground.

Image 4:

I think maneuvers will start Sept. 10th. Tell Milton he is wrong. A couple of months ago when you were down here there was talk of no more maneuvers in the U.S. La. was supposed to have been condemned

by the health authorities, etc., but that isn't true. It might have been true at the time, but if it was, it has been changed now. The 68th is going to be neutral, I hear. On maneuvers, various units move around several times in a week as the fighting progresses, but I understand that we will be in our present bivouac area for the whole maneuvers. Of course that can be changed ~~cha~~ like everything else in the Army. When you move it is very hard. Our tents must be put up, the kitchen set up, also the Colonel's tent, supply tents, medic tents, etc. Latrines, garbage pits, etc. must be dug. Also foxholes. We will have to dig foxholes when maneuvers start. Right now we don't have to bother with them. The 86th Division, my old outfit, is also camped near here getting ready for maneuvers. Other divisions are also here or coming. (The Infantry – ugh!)

I just had a fried chicken dinner and it was very good. I'm writing in the library now.

Image 5:

(5) Aug. 13, 1944

I came over here a few minutes ago and I immediately spotted the new "Sat. Evening Post." Just finished reading Stanley's story. It's wonderful. God, what blood curdling experiences he has seen and gone through. Have you read it yet? You probably will have by the time this letter reaches you. Olive's blood pressure will probably go up 50 points when she reads that story. It's certainly well written. But what a subject to write about!¹ Will he have plenty to tell when he comes back. He will really go places fast with his ability. It's a damn shame his career had to be interrupted.² He has really gotten ahead in the Army though. Just think, he has been overseas for almost 3 years. Isn't that correct? Just [undecipherable] when did he leave the country? That story will undoubtedly leave most of its readers sitting on the edge of their seats.

Just ran out of ink, so I must use the library's beautiful (?) black ink.

Image 6:

Had a letter from Harry Daniels yesterday. Says Al [undecipherable] is still waiting. He must be rejected for some reason. I don't believe you have to wait that long these days, do you?

I would like a radio. If you can't get a smaller one, perhaps you could send the battery set we used in Atlantic City. I will appreciate a radio more than ever on maneuvers for I really will be isolated then. It's bad enough now. And I ^{am} always [undecipherable] happy to get the papers and magazines.

Grandpa, thanks so much for the money. It's really best to put it in the bank like you are doing, for I don't need it here. Hope you are feeling better and are fully recovered. Wish I could come home as soon as you seem to think I can. Am afraid it will be a long while yet even if the whole war should end today. However, just let the war end. That will be one glorious day. Everything certainly looks wonderful. I wonder just what they are doing in France? It must be something pretty big. They have kept everything veiled in a cloak of secrecy for several days for security reasons, so the paper states.³ God, I wish the Nazis would throw in the sponge.

¹ Epstein seems to be referring to an article written by Stanley Frankel, a Captain in the Army, about fighting the Japanese in the jungles of the Pacific. For the complete article see Capt. Stanley Frankel, "Every Night We Die," *Saturday Evening Post*, Vol. 217, Issue 8 (August 19, 1944): 17, 97.

<http://web.b.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=24&sid=0933e165-e21c-4d54-b75e-6094b680a5e2%40pdc-v-sessmgr01>. Post article somehow?

² Presumably here Epstein is referring to Stanley's civilian career.

³ Major events in France at this time included 1) operations aimed at encircling the German troops in the Falaise Pocket, which ended with the destruction of the German Army Group B as an effective fighting force, although the

Image 7:

(7)

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They are losing heavily on all fronts and yet they keep on fighting. It doesn't make sense. I'm sure that Hitler, Himmler, etc. are fighting on just to save their own necks, not the dear, dear Fatherland or the damned German people. It's a wonder the Germans, both civilian and military, wouldn't realize this, and do something about it. But then, the Germans are too stupid to realize ^{that} their situation is hopeless. They're too stupid to understand anything.

Well, its time to go back and get ready for guard, so I must close. I'll write more tomorrow.

Can you understand why the Army is banning so many books and magazines? Are the Republicans behind that? The movie "Wilson" was banned.⁴ Also "[Heavenly Days](#)" with Fibber McGee and Molly. "The Time for Decision," 2 of Charles Beard's books, "Yankee from Olympus," "Lend-Lease" by Edward R. Stettinius and a host of others have been banned in camp libraries on the theory that they

Image 8:

will influence the soldier vote.⁵ It doesn't sound very democratic. The Republicans are just as free to throw propaganda in the soldiers' faces as are the Democrats. So why should they be allowed to do these things? Civilians aren't told what to read (not yet, anyway) so why should the soldiers? Of course a soldier can buy or subscribe to anything on his own.

Love to you all.

Lovingly,

Jerome, Jr.

Allies are unsuccessful in closing the pocket and a large number of German troops escape to fight again and 2) the preparations for Operation Dragoon, the amphibious landings in Southern France that begin on August 15th.

⁴ A 1944 movie chronicling to political career of Woodrow Wilson.

⁵ Epstein is likely referring to the results of the 1944 Absentee Voting Bill. Republicans inserted a clause into this bill that prevented the government from providing soldiers any magazines, newspapers, films, literature, or other material that contained "political argument or political propaganda of any kind designed or calculated to affect the result of any [federal] election." This was in response to Republican fears of both Roosevelt's popularity with the troops and that the Democratic administration would strengthen this support by distributing campaign propaganda to the 12 million American men in the military. For more see Molly Guptill Manning, "Books in Wartime: The Fight Against Censorship During World War II," *Federal Bar Council Quarterly*, Vol. XXIII, No. 3 (March/April/May 2016), <http://federalbarcouncilquarterly.org/?p=393>, accessed March 22, 2018.