

needs going thru
from D-Day to
end of war.

MHS

SC 1913 Harrison family paper
John C. Harrison letter to wife "China"

letters
before

Oct. 21 '43

&
after D-Day,
6 June '44

From what we have seen of the weather, it will be a bit rough. One minute the sun shines and the next it is cloudy and raining. It's a bit like Spring in Montana in that respect, but much damper. Even the natives say they have darn bad weather here in the Winter.

We have our Officer's mess in the cellar, a bit colder and damper than the ground floor, and to top everything we have to wear our blouses to supper. Shiny pants commandoism at its best. So if the blouse I sent home weighs less than five pounds I believe you had better send it over to me. Too, if you find that O.D. sweater among the things sent home, please send it over so that I can face the wintry blasts.

A couple of planes just went over and you would be amazed at the interest we have all developed in airplanes. The very sound of one of their motors sets us all to looking and I am sure no "Jerry", as they call him over here, will ever catch us unaware.

Last evening Major Nichols, Boyle and I went down to a Pub to have a half and half, and get acquainted with a few of the natives. There we got our first lesson in the art of handling our new money and it's quite a problem. My pocket is half full of copper and silver. Will write more about it as I learn the ropes.

(Next morning) We had a bit of a storm last night and a tree must have fallen over our line into the house for we were without benefit of electricity all eve. The ghosts must have had quite a time. I took off and went to bed about 2030 so that I could get warm.

1943

October 21 - Thursday

Since my last letter things have begun to look up. We have the furnace on and the old manor is quite warm and comfortable even tho it continues to blow and rain outside. The damp chill has about disappeared and the spirits of the lads has gone up 100%. With the warm air rising, we in the garret are practically overheated. Lt. Hutsflus who used to be in G-4 has come in to live with us. It is a bit crowded in our "blue heaven" but the company is good so we can put up with close quarters.

I have been out and around the nearby country a bit in the last two days and I continue to find it as enjoyable as my first impressions led me to believe. The country we are located in is comparable to the midwest in the sense that it is the farming country of England. However, over here most of the people live in little villages, from which they go out each day to work their farms. And too, there are a great many large towns spotted all around to which they go to do their buying.

The countryside and houses are just as quaint as pictured. Practically everything is built in brick and houses, barns, etc. all have thatched roofs-- some of them get from 2 to 3 feet thick. None of the houses are new, in our sense of a new house, but all look so clean and orderly that they give you a feeling that each one is a real home. The dates of some of the newer places are in the 1890's, yet over here they are new houses.

As we have read, the people all go in for gardens. Some of the flower gardens remain and I haven't seen one yet that wasn't attractive. In addition, there is a vegetable garden around practically every house I have seen. They seem to raise everything and I can now ell understand how they have been able to live, even when the subs were at their worst. They have just about become self sufficient as far as food is concerned. Around every town you see larger cultivated fields and each pasture has either excellent looking cows or horses. I am sure that if our own people combined and put their shoulders to the wheel the way they are doing over here that we could end this affair much faster.

lingo

If I stay here long enough I am afraid you won't understand my English when I return for they speak an entirely different brand than I have heard before. For example, a freight car is a goods wagon, a bouncer is a chucker outer, you never call anyone up--you "ring up", hard candy is boiled sweets, a chain store is a multiple shop, dessert is sweet, dish pan is a washing up bowl, a 5 & 10 cent store is a bazaar, fruit seller is a fruiteer, vegetable seller is a green seller, hood of a car is a bonnet, hardware is ironmongery, installment plan is the purchase and hire system, molasses is black triacle, newsstand is kiosk, potato chips are crisps, a roller coaster is a switch back railway, a run in your sock is a ladder, soft drinks are minerals, all sweaters are pull overs, ticket office is a booking office, an undershirt is a vest, a water heater is a geyser. And those are just a few of the terms.

As for their military lingo, I doubt that I ever will make heads out of it. I have a particularly hard time making any sense out of a telephone conversation so I am finding it much better to make personal contacts-- and I am sure they have equal difficulty in understanding me.

Today I acquired six solid copper finger bowls to be added to our collection of household goods. There was an auction of a big estate nearby. They are pounded copper bowls about three inches wide and about two inches deep and I think they are attractive. Will pick up some other things and send them back together at a later date.

October 22 - Friday

Have just finished digesting the "London Daily Mail", "Daily Express", "Daily Mirror" and the "Stars and Stripes" all of which papers we get here to keep us posted. Add all the papers together and you wouldn't have as thick a newspaper as your daily Tribune, but they are good papers nevertheless.

On a recent trip I saw the historically famous Stonehenge which consists of some large rocks piled on one another out in the middle of the Salisbury Plain. They are supposed to pre-date the Druids and no one has any explanation of how they got there.

Yesterday a mobile PX came by and I stocked up for the next two weeks. We are rationed to one bar of soap, either 4 tins of pipe tobacco or 7 pkgs. of cigarettes, one candy bar, one pkg. of gum, blades and two boxes of matches. These are sufficient except that when you run into some of these English kids they go thru your ration in a hurry. Around here all of the youngsters know what G-U-M is and do they love it. We gave a couple of pieces of chocolate to a couple of 6 year olds the other day and their eyes were as big as saucers. They are the politest kids I have ever seen.

October 23 - Saturday

Today has been a lovely fall day with a few rain storms in the morning and an afternoon of clear blue skies and lots of white clouds. I knocked off work around 1500 and took a long walk - 4 miles - into a nice village of about 3,500 people. Went down to the Lady and Men's Hairdressers "Barber Shop" and had a fine military haircut for one shilling (20 cents). The barber, like our own, is the place to get the news from and I learned a lot of local interest during the scalping.

Boyle came by and we "buzzed the benny" as you say, visiting a few shops and wandering around getting acquainted. Here, an American cigarette will get you into just about anywhere. The people really go for them. Young kids will stop you on the street and ask "Cigaret for the old man?". I located a church and tomorrow I will bedeck myself in all of my finery and go to church.

Tonight we are invited into a hearby town to a Red Cross Officer's Club where they are giving a party. We are going to look the place over and see if there is anyone around we know. It will probably mean getting in at 0300 but it will be a change. Over here, when you go out at night you never know for sure whether you will get home for when they blackout - they really blackout. Also, we drive on the left hand side of the road and our drivers are just catching on to the idea. It all goes to make a trip a bit exciting, plus the additional incentive of the possibility that some stray Jerry might get nervous and drop a bundle of love and kisses.

October 24 - Sunday

Since last night's letter I went into a nearby city, any town with a Cathedral is a city, and attended a Red Cross party. We had a drive of about 15 miles, which takes about an hour and a half in the blackout, and were treated to a fine time. For every available gal there were at least 12 Officers so most of us watched and sat around shooting the breeze. Black John met a Red Cross gal named Reilly from Boise, who is one of Betty's closest friends, so we had a fine Irisher to talk Montana and San Francisco to.

Then this morning we got up in time to attend services at a very beautiful little church located about 3/4 of a mile away, just outside the grounds of the manor. A number of us went down and we liked it so well that I feel certain that the parish has some new members. I don't know how old the church is but I am willing to wager that it goes back into the 16th century and I imagine that at one time it served as the church for the noblemen and their families in this vicinity.

After chow this afternoon Boyle and I started out to get some exercise and to enjoy a fine afternoon. We met three young Englishmen around 20 and their young sister, a girl of about 11 and after walking along with them for an hour or so, they invited us in to tea. They come from what is probably a middle class family over here and it was very interesting to meet their families and to listen to their experiences over the past 4 years.

Afternoon tea, by the way, is really a small meal and is served between 4 and 5. Along with tea was bread, jam, cookies and cakes and then they have supper around 8 in the eve. We stayed on with them for about 2 hours and had a very enjoyable time of it. Mr. Palmer, the father of the tribe, is a Pvt. in the Home Guard and the family kid him a good deal about his rank and duties. However, from what he was able to tell us I can imagine that he has put in a good deal of his spare time during the past 3 years. He told us that during the invasion threat one out of three had a rifle and the others shot guns. Each was given 5 rounds and when that was spent there was no reserve. That wouldn't have gone far if the invasion had come but I can't help but feel these people would have made each one of these 5 rounds count. The more you see of the people and the country the more you have to take off your hat to them. They didn't know they were licked, or at least admit it.

Tell our Duchess that I am sending her some post cards under separate cover. I think she will like them.

I am sorry that censorship prohibits the mention of towns and locations for it would be so much easier for you to follow me by supplementing my descriptions with the use of maps and outside reading.

October 25 - Monday

On a brief walk this afternoon I met a few villagers and they lent me some books on local history so that we can get some idea of what has gone on around here. The people are very friendly and seem quite anxious to help make

our stay a pleasurable one. They are rationed so much that one hates to go into their homes for fear they will offer you something rationed.

October 26 - Tuesday

In my travels I have seen the Salisbury Cathedral which is said to be one of the most beautiful in England and I would have a hard time visualizing a much more beautiful church. I don't know how it compares in size with St. Johns in N. Y. but I think that it is quite a bit bigger than the National Cathedral in Washington. They have left in most of the colored windows and they are by far the most exquisite in that field of art that I have ever seen. We were fortunate to get in during the late afternoon and the sun from the west added much to the windows on that side. Inside the building proper are the graves of prominent personages that go back as far as 1220. The fact that a Cathedral is located in the town of Salisbury makes it a city, while larger towns like Southampton remain towns due to the lack of a cathedral. Everyone comments on the fact that the Jerrys have not bombed the cathedral for it is most certainly the dominating bit of architecture for many a mile.

I had not realized before the prominent part that the church plays in the affairs of England. There are numerous churches scattered throughout the countryside and in all of the villages, towns and cities, and the people seem to be much more religious than the average run of Americans.

There is one institution over here that I am convinced without which this tight little isle would long ago ceased to exist, and that is the bicycle. Everyone seems to own one and it is not at all unusual to see elderly ladies pedaling down the road several miles from town, and the weather being what it is, they are usually in the rain. Too, you see a mother going to market with one or more youngsters attached to her cycle in one manner or another. I am told that in many cases both men and women ride as far as 15 miles to work and home again every day in all kinds of weather.

October 28 - Thursday

On a recent trip I got down to the city of Bournemouth which is the Atlantic Beach of England--only much nicer, and I had my first glimpse of the English Channel. The countryside reminds me a bit of the California coast from San Francisco to Monterey. In the town the Red Cross have a very fine Officer's Club and enlisted men's club, both famous resort hotels, and it will be a fine place to spend my leaves.

October 28 -

As I wrote in this morning's "V" mail letter I have been down to Bournemouth and I am already looking forward to my next visit. It is a town of over 150,000 and is the newest city in England -- only 50 years old. They say it is the closest thing to an American city over here and after a fair survey of it I can say it will certainly do for my money until I can return to the States.

The town runs along hills above the English Channel and from the cliff's edge overlooking the Channel you can get a fine view of the Isle of Wight. There seem to be some fine shops that will take some exploring and I will see if I can send some luxury items home. The place is full of parks, modernistic buildings and fine hotels, so with the exception of a few trips to London and our countryside, I intend to see more of the place.

Saw the first actual bomb destruction there and the newspapers haven't overplayed the stories of bombings. As has been reported, one hit a church and

leveled it completely. However, they seem to take their casualties and the debris was pretty well cleared away.

One of the things we are getting a kick out of is asking directions from the natives. They are always very polite and very explicit in their instructions. It goes like this, "You go down two squares, turn right and the place you want is the second building to the left. You CAUNT miss it." Then you carefully follow these instructions for about 15 minutes and ask the next person. They go thru the same regamarole, always ending up, "You CAUNT miss it". Maybe they caunt, but we have surely done a good job of it. Finding your directions in one of the good size towns around here is an art that I am afraid I will never master.

So far this week the weather has been perfect and I am getting in an hour and a half of hiking before supper. I am getting to see the countryside at its best. All around us are the relics of the Roman and Celtic invasions of Britain, and I have a Roman coin that I picked up that dates back to about 250 A.D. It is about the size of our penny. I will either send it home in the first package or bring it back as a luck piece.

October 30 - Saturday

To prove what a small world this is, I ran into Shube Dycke, former coach at M.S.C., and now a Red Crosser, as I walked into the club tonight. (Hallowe'en)

October 31.- Sunday

Have spent most of this fine Sunday outside walking from 8 to 10 miles this afternoon after getting up in time to go to church this morn. In a few minutes I am going down to the village to visit a British Major that I have spoken to several times in the settling down period that has just about finished.

November 1 - Monday

Since writing my V-mail last night I have had quite an interesting 24 hours getting acquainted with our English friend. Just after dropping your letter in the box, I went down to the house of two English Majors where I spent the evening. They both had their wives with them and a couple of youngsters so I was right at home. They are all young people, early thirties, and that IS young, and I feel that they will be good friends. One was a solicitor (lawyer) and the first thing he asked me was were the American Courts as riotous as shown in the movies. Unfortunately, the movies have certainly given the English a cockeyed idea of America. We had a good evening together swapping stories and I am going back again soon. One of the guests was from up the country and she told me that since the blitz began that she had had 37 different sets of evacuees in her home.

Then this afternoon when I was out for a walk I ran into an English RAF Wing Commander with his wife and young 21 month old son and they invited me in for tea. He is an immensely interesting fellow for he has been in the RAF since the last war and has been all over the Empire--except Canada and North America. He is grounded now due to an accident after Dunkirk and is therefore able to get home quite often.

We now have a radio on this floor and I am hearing the end of a command performance starring Bing Crosby, Schnoz Durante and Kay Kyser. Sounds mighty good!

November 2 - Tuesday

We seem to be in for a week of rain for it has been misting for the last three days as it did when we first came in. However, if the weatherman will give us a sunny week every so often like last week, we won't mind it too much.

November 3 - Wednesday

Enclosed are samples of some Scotch plaids, along with the clan, and if you will send me your measurements, I may be able to get a skirt made up. It would take 2 or 3 months but I believe it would be worth it. We might also have one made for our Duchess if you can give me measurements that will fit her in a year or so. In the meantime, I will try and locate some coupons.

Things are running along right smoothly with every hit at least a base run. We are well settled in our old manor and have the place quite comfortable. Chow is fine and yours truly has to exercise to keep from gaining weight.

November 4 - Thursday

In a recent trip I got up around the Warminster countryside and saw the estate of the Earl of Warwick, which is quite some showplace. It is in beautiful rolling, wooded country, a bit different than our type but plenty pleasing to the eyes. The nobility certainly did live the life of Riley before this war began. Just what their future is remains a question, for with the taxes these people pay over here, I can't see much future for a wealthy man.

Ran into a few desert friends on the trip, none of whom you know anything about, but it was nice to see friends. They saw to it that we were fed and put on the right road, and that is important in this country.

November 5 - Friday

Have done a little traveling during the daylight hours of this week and have seen more of this part of England. It's a funny thing over here, you may travel only 75 or 100 miles but it takes you all day and you feel as though you have been on a heck of a long trip. However, when you do travel 100 miles you see a lot of different kind of countryside and types of towns and villages. In one part the Norman influence may predominate with villages built to look exactly like a French village, while down the way a few miles there will be an entirely different architecture and consequently something new.

The system of roads is marvelous if you can ever learn to find your way around, and I might add that a map in many instances just confuses the issue. There are all kinds of good hard top roads and they run in all directions -- from many different points. Too, there are few, if any, road signs and no signs when you enter a town so you constantly have to ask questions. Then you have to interpret what they say. All in all it's great fun -- if you are not in a hurry. The roads are just wide enough for two cars to pass, about 10 feet, and on both sides beautiful trimmed hedges grow right along the roadside. There are more miles of hedges in England than Carter has pills. They seem to use them as fences and to mark boundary lines.

November 7 - Sunday

I did get down to the village church this morning to attend Memorial Services. There were a few British Legion there and the local Home Guard was

turned out in force. Most of them are middle age men and a number had many World War I decorations.

We are organizing a Christas party for the children of two nearby villages. There are about 100 evacuee children in the neighborhood and we hope to gather together enough sweets and things to help make their day a happier one. Too, having youngsters around will help us to enjoy that day a lot more.

Speaking of children, I don't think that I have ever seen so many babies per square mile as there are in this part of England. They must all be called "furlough" or "leave" for short for there are few women around who are not pushing "perambulators". It is really quite a laugh to go through Salisbury where I will wager there are more yearlings per capita than any town in the United Nations. And such babies! They are the healthiest looking specimens that I have seen since the Duchess. They put the youngsters outside practically every daylight hour, rain or clouds, and the kids seem to thrive on the fresh air. Too, the British Gov't has done much to educate the mothers and there isn't a question about its paying big dividends.

November 9 - Tuesday

Went down to the village last night and got acquainted with some more of the villagers. The man who had us in, Stewart Wilson, had a lot of good and fairly recent American records so a good time was had by all. The more I see of these people the harder it is for me to understand how they got the reputation of being reserved.

November 9 -

Tomorrow night a Mrs. Baker, who has traveled all over America, has asked us down for high tea. That is something like our supper and Boyle and I are going down. For such a small village there are so many interesting people. (The Censor deleted half of this letter)

November 11 - Thursday

The evening out last night down at the village proved a most interesting one. One of the ladies had been in Southern California for a time with her brother, who was quite a movie actor, and she is living with a widow in a very attractive old house. Both are around 50. Boyle, Hutflus, Coombs and Fancher went along and they had a fine time also. A number of the villagers came by and we had cider, beer, tea and some cookies. Good conversation and pleasant company certainly do much to make an interesting eve. I have a hard time realizing that such a small town can produce or have in it so many interesting people. Some of them have lived here always, while a number have moved in since the war.

November 13 - Saturday

I am seated before the fireplace of a beautiful English manor that has partially been taken over by U. S. Troops. The room is completely paneled with carved solid oak that alone cost several thousand. Outside there is a lake and in the owner's private forest we have counted 45 deer. Sorry I can't tell you where it is so that you could see where I am.

In a recent trip I added the country around Andover and Newberry to country I had not seen before. It is all different and continually interesting. The countryside around Newberry is much like the rolling hills of Pennsylvania.

Ran into Paul Haines, the officer we met in San Francisco from Two Dot, while we were listening to Bob Hope and Skinny Ennis. Was he surprised to see the gold leaf.

November 14 - Sunday

I am once again before the fireplace in the beautiful room I described in yesterday's letter after having spent a mighty cool day in the field. It started out snowing this morning with a slight flurry of snow and most of the rest of the day it rained--a cold intermittent rain for which England is so famous. After such a day a fireplace is heaven sent.

I have been in Oxford on a recent trip and it is on my must list for a return. Truly it is everything you would imagine it to be. I can hardly wait to return for a couple of days of sightseeing. The buildings, greens and gardens of the various colleges of Oxford are outstanding in both their simplicity and antiquity. Unfortunately it was Sunday and I was on business so I had no chance to get into any of the shops.

November 16 - Tuesday

Have just returned to headquarters from a few days on the road and I am sure it will take a couple of days to thaw me out for riding in a jeep on a cold day is a might cold affair.

Three Xmas packages were awaiting my arrival. That isn't half bad service. Some of those packages are making as good time as the Air Mail.

I really saw some fine country on the trip with Oxford as the very definite climax. The beauty of traveling over here is the difference in the various towns and countryside itself. In 10 miles you pass from one type of country into entirely different landscape, and military installations haven't changed the towns as they did in the States. Up in the Newberry and Oxford territory you have fine rolling wooded hills while down around Salisbury you find fairly flat (down) country. In between you find many interesting small villages that would take a good deal of brousing around in to really see the sites.

After I get a couple of days in London I am going back to Oxford and really spend some time on a bike visiting the various campuses and doing the place up proper. The place is full of interesting shops, book shops, etc. and I should be able to pick up some prints and things for you.

Traveling south from Newberry thru Andover and Amesbury you approach Salisbury from the north as you cross the famous Salisbury Plain and you can see the Cathedral spires for many miles away. It is a tremendous cathedral and if I can I would like to go there to a Christmas service. Like all of the towns mentioned it has very interesting looking antique shops and jewelry stores that have a lot of second hand silver. Unfortunately, the Americans with all their money, have begun to make prices a bit dear but there are still some good buys if you can get around. It is no wonder the whole world thinks we have an unlimited amount of money for the lads over here throw it around like chicken feed. Some try and show off while others just don't have anything particular to do with it or haven't any sense. Irrespective of the reasons, it makes it plenty tough on the natives.

I was reading in the London paper the other day where a reporter found U. S. Troops paying 50¢ to get their shoes shined when the price the Englishmen paid was about 5¢ and \$2.00 for a haircut or a shampoo--usual price 25¢. Such carryings on don't promote the best of relations with our British friends.

You see a lot of Italian prisoners all over the landscape and they seem to have the run of the place. They work on the roads, in the fields, everywhere, and usually they are by themselves except for large groups you occasionally see a civilian directing them. They appear quite happy with their

lot, and cold on days like these.

Except for missing my family I am having a heck of a good time and getting a tremendous kick out of England. I get a laugh out of everything for it is so different from anything I have ever seen.

November 16 - Tuesday

It has cooled off a good bit down here and we are getting real November weather. There is no mistaking the season. As I look out my window I can see ice on the pond in our front lawn. Add to that the moisture and you are really chill.

The only difference between our falls is that everything over here remains green except, of course, the trees. The fields and hills are just as green now as they are in the Spring. It looks a bit odd to see the leaves all gone on the trees and yet everything else remains green. Such is Merry Olde England.

November 17 - Wednesday

You would get a great kick out of the youngsters over here. The girls going to school all wear the same kind of clothing but seem to have ribbons around their hats to signify their grade. The boys wear different colored striped caps and scarfs to show their grades. All of them are the healthiest and nicest looking bunch of youngsters I have seen in a long time.

November 18 - Thursday

Saw some new country on the trip for I got down around Dorchester (not pronounced a bit like it is spelled) and Blandford. The country around the latter town is a bit more hilly and a good deal more open than where we are. The country has been logged off, but for occasional groves of a few hundred trees, and they seem to grow a good deal of grain there. Also, the dairy business flourishes between the two towns. Both of the towns are old and interesting and I hope to get back again when I have a bit of time to look around. So far, my trips have been strictly business and I have had a lot to do in a very limited time, so I don't have much chance to look around at all the places I travel thru. That is the big difference between traveling in the Army and as a tourist.

It is really amazing how little money you need over here. So far this month my total expenses (orderly, laundry, PX, etc.) have run about \$7.00. Guess the only time you need any is when you go to London on leave. If you do the bright spots there they say you really spend the do-ra-mi.

Am going to a nearby village to see an American traveling show tonight.

November 19 - Friday

The weather continues to remain mighty cool around the edges. There has been ice on the pond in our front yard and that has been there for a couple of days. However, none will try skating for several months for they say it doesn't remain cold for too long and that spring comes early.

They seem to have especially hardy flowers here for in spite of the frosts every night, there continues to be roses and many other varieties in the yards of our fellow country folk.

November 21 - Sunday

One thing I don't think I have mentioned before as one of the differences in the U. S. and England--over here the dogs do not bark at cars. In all the riding around the country I have done I have yet to hear a dog come running out to bark at the passing vehicle.

November 22 - Monday

We are making preparations for Turkey day with much gusto for the birds have arrived from the States and every man in the UK should get one pound of bird. Here is what an Englishman says when he pulls a boner, "I say, I certainly dropped a brick there".

November 27 - Saturday

We are giving a tea party tomorrow for the local populace which gives us all an opportunity to pay off obligations to people who have been nice to us.

November 29 - Monday

The tea party went off in good style yesterday and I think our village friends really enjoyed our efforts. Several had their first Coco Cola and today are probably wondering about those crazy Americans. I gave one to the local Rector and had to persuade him first that it was non-alcoholic.

November 30 - Tuesday

I have been on a shopping tour and purchased three etchings for your Christmas present. They probably won't arrive in time for I am going to have to figure some way to ship them over. They are done of English towns and villages and one country scene. They are by one of the finest artists in England and are quite good.

December 1 - Wednesday

The party given by the General last night at the forward echelon was quite successful. It was not compulsory but we were given to understand that all but the sick, lame and wounded would be there. They brought out a number of nurses from a nearby general hospital and a GI bank that was excellent and I believe everyone had a pretty good time. I drew a Lt. from Boston who was a bit on the hefty side, inclined a bit to lead me, but after I exerted myself and showed her that I would do the leading, she turned out to be a fair dancer. I will send you Special Service Officer Garson's invites and "Wolf Cards" which I think are quite clever.

I am going to bundle up a few London papers in the next couple of days and send them to you so that you can get some idea of their size and the British viewpoint. Compare them with our New York papers for they have a comparable circulation and you will get some idea of how they have cut down. I enjoy their editorials and features and have learned much of British politics and viewpoints from them.

December 3 - Friday

In a recent trip I got into Southampton and in spite of a heavy fog I had a chance to look the town over. After seeing Southampton you can feel

December 13 - Monday

The lads in the Air Corps are going to be a terrific problem after the war for they are geared too fast. You can tell the Red Cross and the Junior League that the job of rehabilitation for these men alone is going to take a good deal of thought and planning. The end of the war will be just the half way mark for organizations like those mentioned.

December 17 - Friday

I have located the town of Beccles for you. It is about 90 miles NNE of London. Locate Norwich and then go SW to a seacoast town of Lowestoff. The town of Beccles is about 10 miles inland or west of Lowestoff. I will try and find out about your Mother's family by writing up to the deacon of the church. The church, no doubt, would have some record of the family that would be of interest to you.

We have been undergoing a bit of cold weather and have seen a few real honest English fogs. Such weather is not for riding around in a peep and I appreciate my cold leaf more than ever for now I get a C & R when I make trips instead of a peep. Such is the Army and sometimes I think its rules make sense. Especially on a day when I have a long trip to make.

The optimistic reports of an early peace that seem to be circulating around home are causing no end of disturbance to the military over here. For the life of me I can't see how any thinking man or woman can be a party to that kind of talk. These Germans are not licked nor will they be until we land on the continent and go all the way to Berlin--and that is going to be some job. Don't let this peace rumor talk build up your hopes for I think it is one of the deadliest campaigns of propaganda that the Germans have used upto date. I believe they are trying to make the American public believe that a campaign against them is unnecessary and then when it comes, with it's losses, they hope that the people will turn against our Army and Navy departments. I hate to be a pessimist but we have one heck of a long way to go before they say uncle.

December 18 - Saturday

The day has been a hectic one that has kept me tied to the desk, going every minute. It is now 1530 and I have to get in a 5 mile hike with pack before supper. These hikes are compulsory and I should have taken mine Thursday. If we don't, we are reported.

December 19 - Sunday

The day has been a pleasant one. I got up at 0830 for I was the inspecting officer and had to go over both the rear and forward echelons. After finishing my inspections of the forward I went to church with Col. Simmonds and Col. Cort. We went to St. Marys which is one of the largest and most complete constructions of the Saxons which remains in England. It is a beautiful little church. It consists of Nave, with indications of some Westadjunct, Chancel, South Transept and South Porch. The fabric is of flint rubble. Inside the late Norman Porch is a representation of the Crucifixion, of great antiquity, built on the wall, the coloring is still plainly visible.

The service was high church but the Vicar was a good speaker so that part of it didn't bother too much. The only disappointing part was that they didn't sing any Christmas carols. I hope to hear them Christmas eve at the Salisbury Cathedral.

December 20 - Monday

Our Christmas party comes off tomorrow and all this kids of the two nearby villages are all excited about it. These people have been in this war so long now that some of the youngsters can never remember a real party. They just haven't had the things to set aside to put one on. Therefore it should really be quite an occasion. One that will be worth remembering at future Christmases.

There is a U.S.O. leg show in a nearby village so I am headed out. These shows really are good and the GIs eat it up. Might say that the officers kind of like them also.

December 21 - Tuesday

Last night's leg show wasn't bad tho there were little legs shown. The show had five gals, a magician, a violinist, a songster and a dancer and they did alright. I believe that a soldier audience is as tough as there is, but once they get the idea that the actors are really putting out then I think they become the world's finest. However, that period in between when the GIs are looking the show over trying to make up their minds must be real hell on a master of ceremonies and cast.

The Christmas party comes off tomorrow instead of today as I reported. We are going to give them a movie, many have never seen or heard a talkie and after that Santa will pay them a visit. I have four little guests, children of Majors Petts and Gower, my English friends, and a little four year old girl who lives with the Petts. Her father was a Navy man and went down with his ship earlier in the war. I look forward to the party more than the youngsters--and that is something.

With Christmas just upon us, our third and all of them wartime, I would hazard a guess that it will probably be the last war Christmas for Europe. Not that I believe Europe will open up to us but I think that by this time next year we will have won peace for this part of the world. It's going to be rough but when we have done the job we must, especially people in the U.S., beware a phoney repentance by the Germans. We must make them see that war is not a paying proposition, a tough job in itself, but we must not skimp in it.

Meanwhile on this Christmas with people paying outrageous prices for turkeys, trees and toys, we must remember that these things are trivial in comparison with the disappointment of innumerable people of occupied Europe who must spend another Christmas under Axis rule. For all of them it is the 4th Christmas of bondage, for the Poles the 5th, for the Czechs and Austria the 6th. Their wonderful Christmas customs--the open lighted tree before the window so that the beggar could enjoy it, corn stalks in all backyards to feed birds, models of mangers everywhere, all these and others must wait until another year.

With all of this, our own sacrifices, those of our friends and country, we still remain the very fortunate. And it is up to us to insure the Christian world that in 1944 the people of Europe shall at last know a Xmas without fear. This is a task worth participating in.

December 22 - Wednesday

Sure and it has been a great day for the Irish. The party went off with a bang and the youngsters have just pulled out for their homes. I would estimate that we had about 150 youngsters from the age of $3\frac{1}{2}$ up to about 11. As I told you in a recent letter, it was the first party for many of them and they

I will be on duty until about 1100 when I intend to take off for the village to attend a Christmas service. Then after dinner I will stay on until about 1500 when I will go out to the tea that the Petts have invited me to.

Christmas Day - Saturday

Considering the circumstances my day has been quite a perfect one. After church and a wonderful meal I started out for the Petts mansion and I made a few cheer calls as I went thru the village. I arrived in time for tea and to see Father Christmas come to the Petts home. The children were really wonderful when they received their gifts. Tho the gifts were few and most certainly not what they would have been at a peacetime Christmas, they delighted the children who were thrilled at the very idea of receiving a gift.

After Father Christmas disappeared we went to tea, what the English call a light meal arounf four o'clock, and when it was over the job of getting the youngsters to bed began. There were four British officers out, men away from their families, and I know that we all appreciated the Pett's home. We talked and drank until about 2030 when we had a big supper of sweets, cold goose, cheese mince pie. After that we went back before the fireplace to talk and tell stories until an hour ago when I decided to head home. It's now 0100 and I am sleepy for I have had a good Christmas.

December 27 - Monday

Since writing you yesterday I have been having quite a time. First of all, along with Col. E. and Boyle I went out to some friend's house for tea and supper. They have what they call a farm, a few miles outside the village, and you should see the place. They have a house that is big enough to house a small army. It is called "Down Farm"--as is the custom over here for everyone names their farm or their cottage. Mr. and Mrs. Frank Wallace are the owners of the farm and they have living with them a Mr. and Mrs. Ellis who have a youngster about 8 months old. The Wallaces are people in their 40's and the Ellis' their early 30's and they are some of the finest people I have ever known. The Ellis's lost their house in the blitz and have been living with the Wallaces for the last couple of years, and in addition to the Ellis's they also had about 20 refugees for months, so you can see that the house is fair size.

We got out there about 1600 just in time for tea and stayed until 2300 last eve. In addition to us, there was a young Czech flyer there whose name was Frank, he said it was no use telling us his last name. He was a very interesting chap and had lived more in the past 10 years than most of us will in our lifetime. He used to be a flyer in the Czech army and when the Germans came in he went to Poland where he joined their air force. He was caught by the Russians in eastern Poland and spent over a year in a Russian prison. The British government and his own government in exile finally arranged for his release and he came to England where he has been flying a Spit for the past three years. If I could write, I know that his story would be a best seller in any country.

To get back to our party. After tea, which was quite a meal, we started to play pontoon, the British version of Blackjack--only the rules are a bit different--and I paid about 10 shillings learning them. It was a lot of fun tho and I think that our English hosts got a great kick out of the way we talked up the game. At the hour of 2030 we were again summoned to the dinner table to partake in the delightful custom of supper. Mrs. Wallace had a special English plum pudding brought on to the table with the brandy burning, and in the pudding were several six pence pieces. If you got one of them, it meant that you were to have

6 months of good luck--and that should be enough to carry me thru--and she, being the fine hostess that she is, saw to it that her guests got a sixpence piece. That will explain the enclosed coin. By the way, save this for our Duchess to wear in her shoe on her wedding day.

December 28 - Tuesday

Went out on a 5-mile hike again today. The countryside is still very picturesque for it remains quite green in spite of the lack of leaves. There are lots of rabbits in the fields and the countryside is full of chinese pheasants.

I don't think that I told you about the Yule log that the Petts had in their fireplace on Christmas day. Not that a Yule log is much different than any other kind, but it was the first I had ever seen and because of its connection with Christmas stories and songs, I got quite a kick out of seeing one. It is a very heavy wood--looks and burns about like oak.

I have a ticket to "This is The Army", the stage show, which is showing at one of the nearby cities. The show has been touring England playing to royalty and GI's with equal success and appreciation. At the present it is over at Bristol where a number of our officers went yesterday to see a performance at which the old Queen Mary was in attendance. They say she got quite a kick out of it.

1 9 4 4

January 1 - Saturday

This morning for breakfast we had served the first real honest to goodness egg that I have eaten since arriving in the UK. That is a good way to start off another year. The eggs were sent in to us by the Wallaces who are the people that had us out last Sunday night. They can say all they want about these powdered eggs, but I know they will never take the place of the real McCoy.

This noon, along with Bob Snyder and Larry Larson, I went out to dinner with the English family I told you had invited three Americans. They were very fine folks, and to make our dinner as American as possible, they had a turkey brought all the way over from Ireland. You can't beat that for hospitality! The family's name is Rhodes and they live on a farm not too far away. He was an officer during the last war and due to ill health caused from gas and wounds, and because his wife could not stand the damp coast, they moved up into the hills where he became a farmer. They have built their house on a hill that overlooks miles of down country and it is one of the best views I have seen around these parts. Their house is full of old books and wonderful old china and glass. I could not help thinking of Mother and Ginner as she showed us pieces that date back to 1600. Some of it Ginner may have heard of for Mrs. Rhodes says it is world famous. It is called Waterford glass and I believe is made in Ireland.

Once again I have to mention what an amazing group of people I have met in these small villages and throughout the countryside. They are great readers and some of the best conversationalists that I have ever come across. I do believe that they read a great deal more, and much better, than the American of a corresponding class, though I find that we know much more English history and folk lore than they do American.

January 2 - Sunday

As per usual I ended up over at the Norfolk Hotel before dinner where I had 3 Pims before chow and my spirits were sailing high when chow time came. The dining room of the Norfolk is a beauty and the food and service right up to the atmosphere. We had a fine salad, baby spring chicken, vegetable and a fine dessert--all with fine tablecloths, napkins and fancy silver. It is odd what a

January 9 - Sunday

As you can see I am safely at my leave destination (London) and am writing from one of the Officers Clubs. Have just signed the state register and see Wm. H. Bertsche Jr. on the roll. Montana is quite well represented in the ETO.

I arrived here just after 1300 and have been on the go most of the time since then. I checked in at the billeting office and got a room in the Strand Palace Hotel, which is supposed to be one of the best but it seems to be quite a distance from the sights I want to see.

After a bit of chow I headed for the aftre noon tea dance at the Grovesnor House, where all people in town are supposed to meet and, believe it or not, I ran into one of the fellows who used to be in the Construction QM office in S.F., Major Haes. There wasn't anyone I knew at the dance but over at the new fancy Officer's mess I ran into a friend from C. & G. S. School with whom I had dinner. After he left I went up to the bar and got talking with a fellow who turned out to be from Conrad. His dad is a lawyer up there and I am sure F.A. Sr. must know him. His name is Doyle.

* The saying here that "An Englishman was heard to speak in Barkley Square" is not at all exaggerated. The town is full of Americans and they all seemed to be out walking today as I walked from the hotel up here. I saw Trafalgar Square on the way and the famous Piccadilly Square. Also got into Hyde Park but for some reason no speakers were letting fly at the time I was there. I am going to have to head out for the hotel for I haven't the slightest idea of where it is from here and it is black as the ace of clubs outside. Some of that famous London blackout that we have heard so much about.

January 10 - Monday

Wings
As the boys in the Air Corps say, "I have had it" and after about 8 to 10 miles of hiking around on the hard pavement, I do believe I have had it. In the day I crowded in the Changing of the Guard, the Houses of Parliament, Westminister Abbey, St. Pauls, The Tower of London, the bridges, the Law Inns and Temples, a ride on the tubes, and topped off the day by having supper with an old M.S.C. friend, Joe Walters.

January 11 - Tuesday

The day has been a bit dreary on the outside but quite busy for me. I awoke to find a cloudy day with definite showing of rain and fog but set out regardless to do the sites. First I went to the National Gallery to see an exhibition of war paintings. They were very good and I am sending you a couple of small books that have reprints in them. They are excellent studies of the Allies, with particular emphasis on the British.

Then I wandered up Regent Street to a place that had china on exhibition-- also for sale. I found 3 after dinner cups for your collection and mailed them at noon. Don't ask what they came to but I do believe they are fancy additions to your collection.

I then wandered out into the rain over to the big officer's mess where I ran into Bud Weber, Sigma Chi of G.W.U. He is the brother of Bill whom we met at the Palace Hotel in S. F. the night we were up to hear Ray Noble.

January 12 - Wednesday

I have spent most of the day wandering around just looking. Got up at 0830 and then spent the forenoon with someone who has a surprise for you (Charcoal portrait). This afternoon I have window shopped and that's all. The purchase of

old silver and that sort of thing is out of the question here for the prices are terrific. There are some beautiful shops and the stores with china and glass are really something!

I went to the famous Selfridge Store and saw an extremely worthwhile exhibit put on by our 8th Air Force. Also visited an Art Exhibit that was very good.

January 14 - Friday

I am now back with the unit and ready to get lots of sleep to recover from my vacation.

The Wilkinsons were very fine people. Sir Russell is a regular Army Colonel, a doctor, and tho he has never seen Wilkie, he corresponds quite regularly. He has a son of 23 who is a Captain in the 8th Army and a daughter 21 who is quite attractive. Mrs. Wilkinson was a very pleasant, typically English gentlewoman, and believe me, they were nice to me! Sir Russell took me to his Club, the oldest in England--1616--for supper.

January 15 - Saturday

The trip to the Old Bailey was a highlight of the trip. I went down there about 1000 and was shown all thru the building by the man in charge, a Mr. Burk. He took a good deal of time to show me around and I won't forget his kindness in a long time. The building must have been one of the show places of London before the blitz, but unfortunately they were on the receiving end of several bombs which did considerable damage to the inside, and also some incendiaries that cused a bit of havoc. However, the very fine chambers were not damaged to any considerable extent and the offices of the Judges and Sheriffs are alright. The offices and chambers are all done in Tudor style with fine oak paneling thruout the building. They really are much more comfortable looking than the chambers and courtroom of our Supreme Court. After a tour of the building I had a chance to sit in on the trial of two cases, one the receiving of stolen property and the other of a doctor who was charged with helping to procure 6 abortions. The court room in trial is quite a place to see for the barristers still wear gowns and wigs and the judges, in addition to their wigs, have the fanciest gowns you ever saw. The Chief Justice was wearing a scarlet gown trimmed around the arms in white ermine and he really looked like his nibs himself. The trials I heard were indeed quite simple and very impressive. There is no fan fare in the courts at all. You get the opinion that both the state and the defense are there to try the case on its merits and are entirely satisfied to leave it up to the jury to draw their own conclusions when they have submitted their case. Another thing of interest is that they have cut the number of jurors down to 7, except in capital offenses, in order to conserve manpower. In Mr. Burk's office was a picture taken during the burning of that part of the city that is something I will never forget. The photographer must have been several blocks from the building for you can see in the foreground the outlines of many roof tops. The picture was taken at night and in back of the Old Bailey is a terrific fire burning around the Guild Hall. It is so bright that you can see very clearly outlined in the sky the statue of Justice--sword and scales quite clear--that rests on top of the dome of the Old Bailey several hundred feet above the street. It is one of the best photographs I have ever seen and gives you some idea of what a terrible affair that must have been.

I went out to the Wilkinson's at 1830 and met Mrs. W., their daughter and Sir Russell. As I have said before, they are very charming people and they made me feel right at home in their very fancy apartment. After having 3 very strong Scotch and sodas out there we went to his Club. There we had partridge for supper, and several glasses of wine. He asked me whether I wanted French or

These things should be known at home especially by the people who talk not knowing of what they speak.

Another thing that has made quite an impression on me is the way the English are having to cut down their beloved trees. As you know, before the war most of the lumber came in from Norway and Sweden and now with that supply cut off for over 4 years they are having to cut into their beautiful forests and I am willing to bet that each tree that falls is a sad affair for the men who have to do the job. Then after they have cleared an acre or so of forest land it is cleared entirely of stumps and you see the land army gals in with their plows getting the soil ready for some kind of crop. They waste no time, these people, and they have really learned what land utilization means. As for the branches and twigs, they are all collected and every bit of it is used for fire wood.

February 13 - Sunday

I am writing down in the club room before the fireplace-- our heating system. If the English would do away with the fireplace as the heating element for their homes, I believe they could solve their very serious fuel shortage problem. However, fireplaces are traditional so I expect some other solution will have to be figured out.

February 12 - Saturday

It is now 2110 and a few of us are sitting around the officer's club listening to the BBC report. Starts as you know with the strokes of Big Ben and the news of the bridgehead operation sounds pretty good. Before the news we were listening to "Sally the Bitch of Berlin", a German gal that sounds off every evening to us poor Yanks. You would get quite a kick out of the guff the Germans send over to lower our morale. It serves rather to give us our comics each day.

I took off this afternoon to enjoy the sun and before I left I loaded up with some of your gum, life savers, hersheys and one orange that had been given us for our breakfast. I ran into an Englishman with a 3-year old daughter and when I asked him if the little girl had ever had an orange. He said "No" -- so she got the orange and you should have seen her eyes. The candy was readily disposed of to the youngsters playing in the village.

I met the village Vicar out for a walk and am going down for tea with him next Wednesday afternoon. He is a fine old fellow who has an inquisitive mind that makes for an enjoyable session.

February 16 - Wednesday

This afternoon I went down to the village and had tea with the Vicar and his wife. I took along about 2 months of back issues of Time for them and we sat around talking mostly about American politics. These people just cannot understand why, right in the middle of our war effort, we are taking time out for a national election. I find it a very interesting job trying to explain to them our political system and I find that their questions keep me on my toes most of the time. Explaining to an Englishman our dual system of State and Federal government is quite an afternoon's workout.

February 20 - Sunday

After a rather dull day yesterday, I topped it off by going down to the "Rose and Thistle", renamed the "Pig and Whistle" by our men, and had a few bitters and a bit of stout. Our men have really taken over the place and I believe that should we stay around here a few more months, we will have the Innkeeper and his wife talking-- English. Col., Boyle and I are about to take off to Down Farm for the evening.

February 23 - Wednesday

Everyone is beginning to take quite an interest in the coming elections over in the U. S. and just about every Englishman with whom you get in a conversation wants to know what you think is going to happen. If the people at home are taking as much interest in the election as they are over here, it is going to be quite an affair before November rolls around. They have a hard time understanding why we are having an election right now and I believe some of them think that it may have repercussion on our war effort. Once you have explained it all to them they then want to know whether or not you think Roosevelt will be re-elected, and that calls for a good deal more talk, prefaced with the remarks that the Army is not interested in politics, and anything you say is entirely your own opinion. I don't think that there is any question about their wishes to see the G.W.F. re-elected for he is tremendously popular over here, as he should be, but I think that most of their worries are based on the possible election of some one of the isolation crowd. Wilkie is quite popular among the people that I have talked with, for he has been over here and they had a chance to look him over.

* It's getting along to that hour. Am listening to a lot of good jazz coming out of Germany. That is the way they intrigue us Yanks and the English (who love dance music of all kinds) to listen to their guff.

February 24 - Thursday

* Tonight we are all going down to a nearby town to see a traveling USO show. If it is like the others we have seen it will be well worth going to see. These poor show people that come over here really get a terrific workout on the "Spam Circuit". They give as many as 4 shows a day under all sorts of conditions and in every conceivable kind of show place.

After writing to you last night I came up about 2200 in time to get to see quite a show from our roof top. Reminded me of the days we used to do the same act on our apt. roof in S.F. but over here it is a good deal more colorful and considerably more noisy. It was miles away from us but we could watch the searchlights, flak, and hear some fair sized bombs. It's funny, but every time they have a raid and drop anything the pheasants set up one heck of a racket. They fly around and cackle like a bunch of old women. Seems that the ground vibration bothers them. We now have a stock question of everyone, "Are you nervous in the Service?" I think some are!

February 25 - Friday

As I told you in my letter yesterday, we had a USO show down in one of the nearby towns and one of the funniest things happened that I have ever seen. The master of ceremonies went thru a big build up preparing to play the clarinet and after several minutes of routine he put the mouthpiece up and just got ready to blow when the air raid siren went off. It couldn't have been timed more perfect. You should have been here to see the look of astonishment on the face of that M.C. I don't know whether or not it was his first raid or not, but he was obviously "nervous in the service". The show was good and in spite of the threatened intrusion they went on and gave out with a fine performance, but I am willing to bet that the M.C. will never forget his one night stand with us and his build up for his clarinet will no doubt include the story of the siren.

tall and locked as tho it were of solid gold. It was really quite a thing to see. This processional met the three judges at the door of the Cathedral and proceeded thru their guard of honor into the Cathedral. Just inside the Bishop and Arch Bishop of the Cathedral awaited the arrival of their most honored guests, and after shaking hands and exchanging a few pleasantries (probably about a poker game of last night) they proceeded up the aisle followed by the choir, who of course were all dressed up so that it made quite a colorful show. This group, along with a selected few, were seated in the choir section of the church, and the rest of us were seated down in the Nave. Like all Cathedrals, the acoustics were not so good but the choir, most all of them little boys, could be heard and they were well worth going to hear.

After church I went out in the churchyard to look over tomb stones. There is one that is world famous and I found it without knowing of its fame, and it was not until I started to write down the verse that one of the local people told me that it was one of Winchester's land marks. Here it is for your enjoyment:

"In memory of Thomas Thatcher, a Grenadier of the North Regt. of Hants Militia, who died of a violent fever contracted by drinking small beer when hot, the 12th day of May 1764, age 26 years;

Here sleeps in peace a Hampshire Grenadier
Who caught his death by drinking a cold small beer
Soldiers be wise from his untimely fall
And when you're hot, drink Strong or none at all.

Erected by the fellow soldiers of the regiment".

There are many stones in England with verse but this is one of the best I have seen.

I then went up to the South Gate Inn where I had supper last evening and where I met and enjoyed its owner, Mr. Hearterly. He is a man in his early 60's with 3 sons in the service, all flyers, one of whom was recently killed in action over Germany. I had struck up quite an acquaintance with him last evening and just before I left last eve I asked him if he would have a place for me this noon. Being a small hotel, or should I say Inn, and with Assizes on and terms on at the University, you have to make appointments in order to get into a good dining room. Fortunately, he was able to work me in at a table this noon. I went from there to the bar where I had a short Bass Ale before closing time at 1400. At the bar I renewed my acquaintance of last eve with Paddy O'Driscoll, a real mick that has been around Winchester about 17 years, but whose heart is as he says in the Mother land. At the bar this afternoon were the following names, all American soldiers: Kelly, Dugan, O'Tools, Sullivan, Ryan and Harrison. Paddy got quite a kick out of it and told us that he probably had seen our fathers or grandfathers down at the station taking off for America.

When it came time to close up at 1400 Mr. Hearterly asked me if I would like to take a walk around the town. We wandered down first to the Cathedral where he told me some things that I didn't know about it. First of all, one side is about 4 feet lower than the other due to the fact that it is constructed on pilings, and when they diverted the river that runs under the Cathedral, the pilings rotted and it was necessary for them to do a great deal of work, using divers under the Cathedral in order to build up its supports. Also, the front window which looks like a jig saw puzzle of colored glass, is that way because of the damage that Oliver Cromwell did to the church. Seems that he did a bit of shattering in his day. We then proceeded down thru the Winchester University, a very beautiful ancient school that I had to confess I had never heard of. However, it is one of their good schools and today General Montgomery was there to visit his son and he talked in their chapel this morning. We saw their War Memorial and next to our tomb for the unknown soldier I think that is is the most

garden each year--it covers a block or two. Due to the war, the present bulbs have stayed in the ground the year round for four years but they still are beautiful. In addition to the tulips they have many other lovelies and the garden is all worked around a rock garden pattern.

April 6 - Thursday

I have just come in from a long walk up in back of my quarters and while in the process of admiring one of the most beautiful gardens I was invited in to see it in its entirety. The house is perched alongside of a hill with a sloping lawn and garden that extends about 100 feet down the hill. The view is much like that of Jean and Bob's down in Monterey with the added attraction of this colorful garden. My host turned out to be a solicitor and has invited me to stop by his office and has also given me an open invitation to his home. Needless to say, I will take the offer whenever possible.

April 7 - Friday

Wings
There are a couple of new slang phrases that are getting to be GI that might be of interest. When something isn't going the way it should you hear, "I take a poor view of that". Another is "How about that" which is used to express surprise. Then too we have the slang of slang for this war "He's had it". The latter is used constantly and is now part of our everyday tongue.

While walking around the town yesterday afternoon I found a China shop that has some Royal Doulton pieces and I think I will pick up a few for you. There is a set of six pieces that look like saucers and a medium sized plate--they call them sandwich sets here. Also there is a separate plate of medieval pictures-Doulton--that might make a good separate piece. I will go back early next week and have them packed.

Recently I have visited two new locales, both of which a lot could be written. One is Tiverton located on the Exe River which appears to be one of the nicest trout streams in England. The other is the city of Plymouth and there I saw the most devastated city so far in England. They say it is next to Coventry and after seeing Plymouth I have no desire to go farther. They have practically flattened the heart of the town and much of the rubble still lays where it fell with just the streets cleaned up. It is really a terrible spectacle and must have been an awful experience to have gone thru. Somehow these English took it in their stride and business goes on best it can. I didn't see much of the residential section but I have been told that parts of it took an awful beating. One lady I talked to told me that the bomb that destroyed her home, while she and her mother were in the cellar, broke three complete sets of old priceless chinaware and the only thing left unbroken was a 10 pence glass.

April 9 - Easter Sunday

This morning Doss Lynn and I got a peep ride out to the little village church I have told you about before. We arrived about a half hour early and from 1030 to 1100 the little valley in which the church is located was filled with the chimes or bell music that lasted the whole 30 minutes. After such a preparation the only reason for a person not going to church is that he doesn't want to go for there can be no question in anyone's mind that church is about to begin. You have the pamphlet of the church so it really needs no further description except to say that the use of white lillies and the bright yellow daffodils made the little church even more beautiful.

I do not know whether the British are like the U.S., but like us their churches were filled to capacity, generally with people over 40 with a smattering

that had been pretty well worked over during the blitz. It was a barn-like affair with most of its windows boarded up. There was no heat in it and it is one of the coolest places I have ever been in. Yet because of the simplicity of the church and its people I will long remember the service.

May 9 - Monday

I have just finished a conversation with some English telephone operator who tried in one difficult lesson to teach me how to speak English. I was, as they say over here, booking a long distance call to a town called Leicester. After studying the name for several minutes and throwing out every possible American pronunciation, I finally arrived at what I figured would be somewhat near an Englishman's way. You guess ed it--I was still 100% off. After giving the operator several pronunciations she asked me to spell it and just like that she said, "What you mean is Lester". To which I naturally added, "I knew it all the tire, I was only fooling". At such times I am sure I know why the foreigners all came to America. American is much easier to speak than English.

Arthur Garson is coming down here sometime this afternoon and will stay around tonight. We will be mighty glad to see him for it will be the first time he has been around since he left Corps.

May 10 - Wednesday

After supper last night I decided to do a bit of walking. I had been wanting to see a church here that had been blitzed and has now been opened up for services with just the shell of the church and no roof but the sky so I headed up there early in the evening. The church, St. Andrews, was built in the 14th Century and from what I could learn about it, it was one of the finest in this part of England. Three high explosives and many incendiaries left all but a side chapel in complete ruin, except that the walls were so thick and so well constructed that they remained upright and served as a chimney when it was on fire. After it was all over all that was left was the walls and bell tower. The people of the church got together and cleaned the debris up and planted grass and flowers where the pews and aisles had been. Now they have services every Sunday with a very plain alter in the front, surrounded by very colorful flowers. The congregation stands during the entire service.

While I was looking at the ruins of the church the bells began to ring and upon investigation of what caused them to do so, I really learned something new. About half way up in the tower is a room and inside it I found about 15 men practicing "peeling the bells". Each of ten of them were on one end of about a 100 foot rope. On the other end were bells that ranged in weight from 700 to 4000 pounds, and by a number of combinations of pulling the ropes they can ring out various church music. It was most fascinating to watch them take their lead from an old timer. I found that it is no easy task and that most of the men had been doing it for years as sort of a hobby. One of them told me that the best "peelers" in the country have lasted three and a half hours. Considering that they pull the cord at least 10 times a minute, I decided to make something else my hobby.

The bell tower was quite interesting from a constructional angle. It must be about 60 feet high, its walls are 14 feet thick at the bottom and about 6 feet thick at top. I was up about 30 feet in the bell room and they were 9 feet thick there. Perhaps that is why even a big high explosive landing but a few feet away couldn't damage it.

May 11 - Thursday

Here it is 2310 and with the double summer time in effect it is still quite light out. This makes for all kinds of complications in the social system,

June 4 - Sunday

I have just come in from a Sunday eve at Down Farm and it is late.

June 5 - Monday

You asked a good many questions about my present assignment and there are naturally many that will have to remain unanswered until I get home. I have been told by several of the higher ups that they are all very pleased with the work I have been doing and the chances are that I can expect to continue doing much the same sort of work.

June 6 - Tuesday

Somewhere in England. Well the great day has arrived and believe me it has been a mighty exciting 24 hours. The mighty air armada kept passing over head shortly after darkness until noon today. I could just about have reached up and touched Bob's plane.

This great event has come as a great mental, physical and emotional release for everyone. Particularly is this true with the Staff officers who have for these long months, been planning. We have had to keep our secrets for the entire period and believe me I have been afraid to talk for fear my shadow would overhear. It has really been a trying time for many and I know they feel like I do when I say I am happy to celebrate this birth.

The two packages went off today and I suggest that you save the stamps when they arrive. Some collector might want them.

June 7 - Wednesday

At this stage of the invasion you probably know more than I do as to what is going on. All I know I read in the morning paper and that wasn't much. About the only way I am sure that something is going on is by the constant rumble of aircraft--ours--going over. They are absolutely terrific!

June 8 - Thursday

As you can see my Liaison job has kept me temporarily in Merry England and I must confess it has been with reluctance. To miss out on the thrill of the first day has been a blow for we have all pointed to this affair for so long. The only compensation for remaining behind is the fact that I am doing an important job and am located in a position where I can see a bit of the big picture--and as Churchill would put it, what a picture!

Many of us who have worked on the plan, and there have been hundreds, feel mighty relieved now that the landings have occurred for we all were working under the strictest of secrecy and I know that the personal burden on each individual has been terrific. You had to be checked in and out of rooms where you worked. Always you worried that something you wrote down as a reminder would be lost; only half of the staff was in on the planning so everything that you said had to be carefully guarded. I believe that everyone was afraid to have more than one drink, kept away from public bars, and was afraid that he might talk in his sleep. This has been the most carefully guarded secret of all times and yet with all the hundreds working on the plan, there was the continual dread that somehow the secret would leak out. No wonder that we are glad to get about our business.

As you have read in the papers, all of our planes were painted with 3 white and two black stripes around the wings, tail and fuselage. This was for easy identification and as one reporter said, they look like a zebra. This was done only 8 hours before the take off and I happened to be on an air field on Monday

afternoon when that job was done so I had about six hours knowledge ahead of most that the big show was about to begin. The thrill of all of this made it just about impossible for me to have supper that evening. Everyone at the table was speculating about when it would begin while I quietly held my secret. Some fun! Then about 2315 the planes carrying paratroops and pulling gliders began to come over at about 500 to 1000 feet. From that time until dawn the sky was filled with passing planes all lit up like Christmas trees. Few of us got any sleep that night. By 0100 I am sure that at least one third of England must have guessed that the real thing had begun for the sky held always the constant rumble of planes either going over or coming back.

Since that time the air show has continued and except for a few confidential reports we know nothing more than what is in the papers and what we hear over the radio--which is all the same. I don't know what is going home for your edification but we are living in sort of a vacuum. I will send over the papers as long as I can so that you can see how England reacted.

The country took it all in its stride. After the first announcement they settled down to work- a bit harder and faster than ever I am sure. To everyone who has seen the training being done by the United Nations troops, the supplies rolling down to the hords, and the movement of troops toward the sea, I am sure that the announcement of the touchdown on the far shore came as a relief.

The enclosed message is my copy of General Ike's message to his troops. It is a good addition to our book of memories. I hope Bob is having the good luck and God's blessing that he wishes on his troops.

June 9 - Friday

Yours truly is still holding forth in England and beginning to suffer from the itchiest pair of feet any man ever had. Unfortunately after 3 weeks of wonderful weather in May we are catching some rain and heavy clouds. This adds to our depression for if we ever need sunshine and clear days this is the time. Seems as tho we will have to do it the hard way.

I am still moving around a good deal, averaging about 125 miles a day. For the past four days I have had civilian Lincolns, Oldsmobiles and a Humber. You should see the attention I get as I go thru the country just as tho I were a two star. My blood is getting thick.

June 10 - Saturday

It is odd now that everything is underway that there is so little I can write about. You would think that it would be the reverse and that I should be able to write pages and still not have said half what I wanted to say. However, we know nothing that you haven't read and heard many times in the papers and over the radio, and we are all just waiting our turn to get into the show. It's the waiting that gets you.

My job took me off the beach on the big day and when it happened I didn't know whether to be glad or sorry. Now that everything is underway I must confess that I wish I were over there. Perhaps it is a desire to share a great experience with one's friends and countrymen or it may be just a selfish desire to be in on the ground floor. Whatever the desire is, I know that I share it with every American and Britisher that is waiting his turn to do his bit. It seems now as tho nothing else counts but being able to help out.

June 11- Sunday

I just returned from Down Farm where we had the usual Sunday evening gathering of the circle. Took some of the Hiene tobacco over to Dick Ellis and

had a chance to say goodbye to little Jane. Peggy Ellis said we would have to get together and swap daughters for a year when our prides are in school and old enough to benefit, which isn't a bad idea. They are find friends and I do hate to say goodbye now.

June 14 - Wednesday

As per usual for the last week, there is nothing to report in the way of news. When you ride thru the country it is difficult to believe that the big push is really on. People continue to do what they did before, trains are about normal, telephones are a bit less busy and life is pretty near normal. The only real difference is that you see few GI's around towns and there is no question about what goes on if you look skyward. There are very few minutes in the day when you are unable to see or hear the great flights going to or coming from the battle zone. They have done, and are continuing to do, a magnificent job.

June 15 - Thursday

Have just a second to write and tell you that everything is O.K. and that I am in good shape. Have to confess that for the first time since I was 12 I am wearing long handle woolen underwear-- and enjoying it remendously. Fact is, I am giving a lot of thought to having them sewed on, for the duration plus six months.

June 16 - Friday

Just a quickie to let you know that all is well and that I am once again a field soldier. I am writing this from a jeep located in one of the many unmentionable places in the U.K. You would never recognize your husband in his present get up. I have woolen OD's, over them impregnated fatigues. That's only the beginning. Around my chest is a life belt that fits like a corset. After putting on the belt I had my web equipment, belt, suspenders, then a map case, a pair of field glasses and a musette bag on my back that weighs about 30 lbs. When I try and stand my knees actually bend. All I can say is that this war is making an old man out of me. What a life!

June 17 - Saturday

I suspect that this is another historical date in the family log for I am neither somewhere in England nor somewhere in France. I am once again a sailor and ready to become a more traveled gentleman.

After staying awake all night last night, traveling from a camp to a hord and then just sitting for hours we finally got under way, loading fair early this morn. Now at supper time we lie several miles off shore and some of England's quiet white cliffs are to become our last view of a land where we were well treated for these past nine months. Last night, about 0130, when we got into the hord area, where we sat forhours, who but the Red Cross was there to give us a hot meal. They must have fed hundreds for the chow line was long all night. Can you wonder that we think so highly of the Red Cross? They were the first persons we saw when we arrived, now the last before we take off. I honestly wouldn't be surprised to see them on the far shore with coffee and doughnuts.

June 18 - Sunday

(Somewhere in France) Just a quickie to let you know I have arrived and that all goes well. Paraphrasing Pershing, "Lafayette, I am here tho a few days late". Had a completely peaceful crossing, just as quiet as a bus ride from

Helena to G. F. only there were a goodly number of buses to share our quietude. I got in about ten hours of needed sleep last night, the first in two days, for which I will ever be in debt to the Navy. Now I am ready to take any kind of a beating necessary to accomplish our purpose.

June 19 - Monday

Please excuse the pencil, it is the only method available in this noisy place called somewhere in France. Don't ever let me hear anyone call it sunny France for right now those would be fighting words to me.

I believe I can safely tell you of my first day in France for it is so fabulous in parts that it sounds unbelievable. After getting my C. Port up I contacted Boyle, McRory, Warefield and Hutsflus. They invited Ned A. and me up to lunch at a farm house they had taken over. McRory had been foraging for some days and we had steaks off of fine cattle killed by Artillery fire, two of the very best wines--all we could drink, all the mushrooms I could eat--taken from captured German stores and the first I had had in a year, German candy and topped off by some quite good German cigars.

McRory saw Bob on D / 3, that is the 10th, and he was around Carentan. He had come thru fine and wanted me to know he was alright.

June 20 - Tuesday

Inasmuch as this is D / 14 it is possible to mention without breaking censorship rules that we have been engaged in the battle for Cherbourg and that I am alright. You have no doubt read a good deal of this campaign and know more about it than I do so I won't try and tell you anything except my impressions.

I have seen my first real Nazis, my first wounded American and enemy dead, and after seeing such sights I am the most humble of men. The Nazis are quite unimpressive as prisoners but that is understandable for few men would make much of an appearance as prisoners. That which I have read of them is quite true. They range from about 16 years in age up to 45 and I wouldn't trust one of them. They do not seem to be the first class line trooper of the German Army that we have been coached to expect as opposition. However, their equipment, rations, weapons and quarters are, in my opinion, very good.

The wounded are the hardest for a soft hearted person like me to face. The Medical Corps is doing a wonderful job here and I believe that every wounded man I have seen believes he has a 100% chance of recovery--all due to their faith in the Medics. However, every time I see them I get a lump in my throat, guess I would never have made much of a doctor for my sympathy would always be with the patient.

The dead are the toughest thing a man has to face in this man's army. In each of our own I always see an individual, a friend, a fellow countryman. Each man brought into our cemeteries is a tragedy, a heartache for an American home and for Americans who are friends; and worst of all is the direct payoff of 20 years of mis-spent American policy. How many times I have wished that the Rankins, Wheeler-Nyes, Borahs and Johnsons could witness the sights I have seen. Death is a terrible payoff for the mistakes of others, and in most cases that is what the case is.

The enemy dead do not have quite the same effect on me, except for the fact I can't help but feel sorry for the poor fellows. They are pathetic sights, as most men are when the spark of life ceases.

I know you would like to hear what France is really like--the kind of people and type of country. Well, I am afraid it will be a long time before I can supply the information about France that I had about England. First of all the language barrier will be a difficult one to overcome, secondly, due to operations it will be impossible to mention much about the country. The people at first glance

June 23 - Friday

This evening I received a call from a Capt. Bergeson who had quite a tale of woe to tell. I listened and as soon as I was sure that it was Benny I told him he sounded just like he used to after a Phi Delt rush week. Well, you know Benny and you can guess the rest--we had a bull session while the war went on around us.

June 24 - Saturday

Daily I see things that are just about unbelievable. First, the towns we have had to fight for are terrible places to see. The completeness of the destruction takes your breath away and puts a lump in your throat for the people who have lived there. These towns are not like ours--they are built of stone and are hundreds of years old, yet they are no strong enough to withstand the inventions of man. Our powers of destruction are beginning to exceed our powers of creation and if that continues, civilization has passed its high water mark.

The civilians generally are quite apathetic. As in pictures, you see families with very meager belongings trudging along the highway, some on bikes, others in carts pulled by horse or mule. They are as pathetic sights as our own dead. Many will wave, some will give the V sign, while in a few instances the children will give the German salute, taught no doubt by garrison troops. The war has been pretty rough on these people and I hope that they won't feel too bitter towards us. There is only one way to blow the Jerry out and that is by shell and hand to hand fighting.

June 25 - Sunday

Another Sunday has about passed under the bridge and there hasn't been any time to listen to our favorite radio programs (even if we had a radio). However, our perpetual 4th of July always furnishes plenty of interest. In fact, Terrible Hoiman, a hunting Heinie, zoomed in early this morning and got all of us out of our warm sacks into cold foxholes. Believe me, when he started dropping his cookies yours truly hit for his foxhole 50 per. The only trouble is I was in my shorts and barefoot. I have to stay in for about 10 minutes and darn near froze. Couldn't figure which was making my teeth chatter the most--the cold or being just plain scared. For all of his efforts our visiting fireman killed a horse, thereby making it tougher for some poor Frenchman to plow.

June 26 - Monday

I made contact with none other than Bob. He was in a bivouac area not far from a city that you have read a good deal about in the news ever since D day. His unit was getting ready to move but we were able to get about 25 minutes together.

When I was looking for Bob I picked up a Lt. who had jumped in with him and he told me that Bob had been recommended for a Silver Star, plus an Oak Leaf Cluster. He also is getting some silver on his bar and if he keeps up the sky is the limit. From what I can gather he has done a terrific job and will have enough stories of his adventures to keep us on edge for years. He has grown another moustache and appears to be both in the best of health and spirits. I have hopes that he will be back in the UK before long. Dad was right about his going in on the first waive--in fact he landed at 0050 on D day. I will be honest when I say that when I got up to where his unit was, I was afraid to ask whether he was still around, and next to seeing you and our Duchess, I was never so glad to see anyone in my life. Bob thinks I lead the life of Riley for whenever he

seem to be very poor, although on their farms, and this is the agricultural section of mid-France. They have some of the finest cattle and horses I have ever seen. The people do not show any signs of prosperity, they are small and thin, still somewhat frightened and quite apathetic. A small percentage are sympathetic to the German cause and there have been more than a few cases of French women sniping Americans. You need not worry about how we will react to French women--they are pistol packing manas and most everyone wants to have none of them.

If everyone could see what the real cost of war is, and all they would have to do is spend one day here, I feel sure that we would have a 100-year peace. The cost in life and material is revolting and against all human instinct.

June 21 - Wednesday

As you can well imagine there is a great deal to be done and our days pass in a hurry. As in England, there is always the expectancy of something new and different but on the other side of the ledger is the unpleasantness of death, poverty and destruction.

The countryside and many of the small towns have been badly mauled and you see a good many homeless families either roaming about or squeezed into the home of some other family whose house has been spared. It is hard for me to understand why the people should be so poor when they live in a country so rich in agricultural products. The fact that the Germans have been here for four years is not sufficient for they really do not have much to show for the past 20 years. The children are dirty, ragged and compared with the English children they are pretty small.

Never before have I known what the word debris really meant. After seeing a battlefield I now know. It is indescribable.

June 22 - Thursday

I have been reveling in the thought the past few days that our Duchess is a girl and that she will never have to see the sights her Dad is now seeing. I know that the job of women in war is not an easy one, but unless you are in the active theatre you are spared the sights that we see daily.

There isn't anyone in our Army who doesn't realize the importance of giving the German a thorough beating, but to have to do it on land that doesn't belong to them is most trying for you cannot possibly imagine the scenes of destruction that surround a town or village where the Germans have made determined stands. You can't help but wonder how many innocent people have given their lives. It is a most depressing sight to see passing thru these places, and you wonder how it is possible that anyone survived--yet the towns are beginning to refill and people are beginning to make their homes as livable as possible. I wonder what they really think of us.

Like a cyclone, the fortunes of war are mighty peculiar. There is one city where the destruction is the worst I have seen and yet several miles out in the country you would not know the war was on. The country is absolutely untouched, the road leads straight thru wooded rolling farm country and about 20 miles away is a provincial town absolutely untouched. Homes, churches, shops and all that go to make up a nice town are there and it is just like awaking from a bad dream and finding everything is alright. All the shops, cafes and hotels were open and the people were going about their business quite happily. The Jerry had been there only a day or so ago and very few Americans could have been there for we were treated like heroes. People wanted to give us flowers, wine and always everyone wanted to shake our hands. The French are the world's most handshaking people. I felt a bit taken back by the welcome, and not the least bit like a conqueror, so we got out as soon as possible.

least expects to see me, I show up.

You have probably seen in the papers and picture magazines pictures of General Collins with two very high ranking Jerry Officers. Don't look for yours truly but I was out in front watching the photographer do his business. My only wish at the time was that I could have seen them stretched out at the Jerry cemetery. Those are the babies that we have to get rid of if peace is going to be maintained. That may sound a bit blood thirsty but when you have seen the stream of American bodies that I have, you would reach the point of wanting to see every German under ground.

It is raining cats and dogs again and sunny France becomes more and more like the place the veterans of 17 and 18 have told about.

June 27 - Tuesday

This has been a most interesting day for your "somewhere in France" husband. Along with Ed Friend I did a bit of touring and found some interesting sights. It will be 14 days before I will be able to tell you the location but I can say that I saw Gen. Collins hand the keys of the city back to the Mayor of the first real city we have taken. It was quite a ceremony with a lot of Generals on hand and perhaps you may have heard the broadcast over NBC for Robert Donat was broadcasting across the square from where I stood. They had an Army band on hand for the occasion and they played the French, British and American anthems. The General made a speech, the Mayor an acceptance, and then a flag was given to the city made from the first parachute to land. It was quite a show and just a bit on the emotional side for the French. Practically the entire city was swacked to the gills. Believe me, the Jerry didn't drink up all the liquid refreshments by a long way. There is plenty of champagne, cognac and good wine left.

June 28 - Wednesday

Just by chance I learned today that Bud Forsyth is over here in the same kind of a hdqtrs. as I am in. I sent a message over to him and this evening he called me to say that he was coming by in the next couple of days to say hello. So it is in this place called "Somewhere in France" I have already seen more Montanans than I did in my nine months in the U.K.

There are many things here that make one think of the many niceties of home, and the things that we all consider absolute necessities for daily existence, when viewed from this angle most of them are of no real import. Some food--any kind, some sleep, and you really don't need all that you think you do, a chance to wash once a day, and the luck to keep alive is all that is really important. I think most of the civilians must feel the same way now that the war has taken about all they have. To them this fact must come as a terrible shock for they are the people who have, for generations, been tied to their homes. But to the soldier it is sort of the final step to his conditioning of years. I can now prosper with two pair of sox, two shirts, two shorts and two pair of pants. Truly, I believe I could go around the world with just that equipment--and a few bars of soap.

My job keeps me out a good deal so that I am seeing about as much of our France as I did of England. When I am not on the road, but going thru fields, you would be surprised to learn what I always look for--nothing less than fresh manure. Not where one would hold a picnic, but it is always a sign that there are no mines around. That becomes a very important point if one intends to remain in the world long enough to see who will be the next President.

This afternoon I had a very interesting conversation with a German prisoner who was in a work gang I had on a project. He was 49 years old, a manufacturer of violins. He was born in London, had traveled extensively in the U. S. and Canada, and believe me he was glad to be a prisoner. The Jerry had taken him from his home in Dresden last August and had made a pretty poor specimen of him physically. I haven't seen many real first class prisoners in the sense we expected from the German opposition. There have been a great many Poles, White Russians, Georgians, Slavs, a few Italians and several Japs. Quite a motley crew but any one of them would have killed you 24 hours before capture.

June 29 - Thursday

Included in my busy day was another visit with Bob and as per usual I caught him just as he was moving out. This time he will be near me but I, in turn, won't be around long. All very confusing but at least we had a few minutes together.

June 30 - Friday

I have just come from drawing my portion of the Cherbourg loot and it amounted to quite a considerable haul. Three qts. of champagne, 3 of Martel's Cognac, one qt. of Vermouth and one of Benedictine. What a shame it is that we can't have it in our stores at home, for I honestly have little use for that much liquor. I am hoping that Bob will show up this evening or tomorrow morn so that I can unload on him for his trip back to the UK. He earned what I have and I know that he will find good use for it when he goes into the rest and reformation area.

After reading the June 15th issue of Time there isn't much left to explain about the country we are fighting in. The country is a great deal like Maryland and So. Pennsylvania except, like England, there are a great many hedge rows. There are beautiful trees, fine grazing and orchard sites. Like Time said, the people are more interested in the prices of cattle and pigs than in the politics of the nation. They are peasant people who have lived in peace for over 100 years as far as their countryside is concerned. True, they have sent their men off for the many wars but until 3 weeks ago they had not felt the real impact. I honestly believe that the old people truly welcome us for they have fought the Hun at least twice in a lifetime and have no use for him. The younger people I am not too sure of, particularly the women. Most of the young and middle aged men are away in work places or in prison. There are a good many rumors that many of the women have lived with the Jerry sometime during the occupation and I don't think they are happy about the whole thing. They say that in several towns the people have shaved the heads of the women who have lived with the invader. I haven't seen this with my own eyes, but I believe that it has happened. One Frenchman told me that whenever you see a woman with good shoes, silk stockings or fairly well dressed you can be sure that she was a Hun friend. I certainly would not want to be one of these women for these are intense people and they will never forget.

There is another thing about these people that I have noticed. For the first couple of weeks they were not very demonstrative, due, I believe, to a question in their minds as to whether we were here to stay. Now that they see all the men and equipment that is in, they are gradually easing up a bit. At first, though, they were badly in need of shoes, they would not take any of the captured shoes for fear the German would come back.

Now we have no trouble getting rid of all the shoes we can lay our hands on. We are even taking them off dead Jerrys before burial and the French have their feet in them before they are cold. Too, the American GI and his love

for children is showing results. Wherever you see soldiers in town you will also see a bunch of kids. They have learned "Gum, please", "Bon bon" sometimes or "Candy". Some have learned to say hello and thank you and about all they seem to do all day is stand along the roadside waving and making the V sign to passing Americans.

The two enclosed items should be of interest to you. The issue of Stars and Stripes has a picture of an event I told you about several days ago and also shows you what our "great white father" looks like. The 10 Franc note is part of the \$4.00 worth of invasion money I brought across. I don't know whether it is any good for I haven't had any occasion to spend any, but it is pretty.

July 1 - Saturday

The Harrison boys from Montana got together again today and this time we really had a good visit. I was on a recon job and picked Bob up to be a traveling mate. We had about three hours together and I heard part of his travelogue since he arrived in France. We visited some of the German fortifications that defended Cherbourg--the Maginot line had nothing on them--and picked up a couple of fine new German rifles. Bob will take them back to the UK and I hope that he will be able to get them home. I also delivered my loot of liquor to him on the stipulation that it will not be used to his advantage or disadvantage until he gets to the U.K.

Today I was talking to a Jerry prisoner and he asked me whether it was true that the Russians were near Warsaw. I said that it was and it looked as tho the Russians would be in Germany long before we were. He said that the war would soon be over if that were true.

July 3 - Monday

We have found a Frenchwoman nearby to do our laundry--at long last-- and in a couple of days your husband will be clean again. Our French laundress will probably beat them on a rock in some creek, but anything is better than as they are now.

I saw Feet Lewis, now a Lt. Col., today and he told me that Bob Breen and a Dr. Cooney from Helena are in the same outfit as he. Betty Melbourne's father used to command it before taking over a unit like mine. F. A. Jr. will remember "Feet".

Tomorrow being the Glorious Fourth we will no doubt see a lot of fireworks. More than ever at home and more spectacular.

July 4 - Tuesday

To be sure this will be a Fourth that I will never forget. To begin the active day the field order read that at 0412 all Field Arty. pieces in place and zero'd in would fire one shell into German occupied positions. The Jerry must have felt for sure that his number was up. From our end it certainly did make quite enough noise to satisfy any cravings for a noisy Fourth.

Then I witnessed a ceremony that will always make this 4th of July one apart from all others. I attended a ceremony given by the French people of St. Mere Eglise celebrating our 4th and given to honor 2200 of our dead, buried just outside this little French town. For the first time since I arrived on French soil do I feel that I know how these people feel towards us and I can tell you that I have a warm spot in my heart for them.

This morning at 1100 the towns people and several hundred from the nearby country gathered in their battle scarred church to hold mass for our dead.

gathering of brass that I expect to see until the Peace Conference. Three Lt. Generals, Six Major Generals and a handful of B.G.'s. Sure and it was a send-off worthy of the man they buried.

I saw Arthur Garson today at his set up, which I might say is quite extensive. He looks fine and is beefing about being the permanent Army Captain. He is now handling the department in the Army that has to do with decorations. Believe me, he keeps plenty busy for as he says, there are plenty of brave men in the American Army. I tried to find out about Bob's Silver Star, but it seems that his division handles that by themselves.

I forgot to tell you about the big day for all of us here about five days ago. The occasion was for the first distribution of white bread. Fact is, the first white bread any of us had since leaving England and it really tasted like angel food. At the present we are getting about 20 lbs. per hundred men but before too long they expect to get this up to 40 lbs. per 100.

It is too bad we haven't progressed far enough to enter Paris today for that would really have given the French something to celebrate. Time will tell, however, and we will be there to do the job.

July 15 - Saturday

I heard today that Brother Bob is back in the UK and unless I miss my guess tonight is a night of celebration for the kid. With the grog I gave him he is in good condition to get a terrific head of steam.

Your V-mail of July 2nd rolled in this afternoon to tell me that the tribe had safely arrived at Lake McDonald and that all was well by you. Without her corral you are no doubt finding that you have quite a handful. I'll wager that she keeps both you and Phil on the move constantly.

This afternoon I sent off some perfume and cologne water to you. It is part of the spoils from Fort du Rue, so when you get all dressed up you can say that this is on the Jerry. What they didn't have in that Fort wouldn't be worth writing about and how we ever beat them out I will never understand. The place was made up of a number of small reinforced concrete works just like the Maginot Line, and there were actually a thousand or more cases of liquor, warehouses full of food, cosmetics, radios and weapons of all descriptions. Yet they quite when our doughboys got in close.

July 16 - Sunday

Another day, some more ruined towns and another move down jam packed dusty roads. To think that we can run down these roads, bumper to bumper, day in and day out without being bothered by the great (?) German airforce is one of the great wartime mysteries. Our road traffic here looks like New York City and State traffic on a holiday. I'll bet that the French people are convinced that no one in America ever walks.

Right now I am writing from one of the lucky houses in a badly ruined village. From my window on the second floor I can see what is left of a couple of homes. The burned timbers of one roof stick up against the sky-line with about a half dozen red tiles left to show what the composition was. What is left of the house shows that it was an adobe structure that was probably shared by the family and animals alike. All that is left of the second house is a chimney surrounded by rubble. As you pass by you wonder whether anyone is buried underneath and if not, where have the people gone? They are the tragic people, their homes destroyed, their land occupied by one Army or the other, their towns, homes and fields blown up and in many instances their family and friends are either dead, wounded or scattered to the far winds. There isn't much you can do for them, but hope that their lot will be better after we have run the Jerry out of the country.

July 17 - Monday

In a little village today a young French boy of about 6 years came up along side the jeep and addressed me thusly, "Hey Joe, what's your name?" You could have knocked me out of the car and as you have already guessed, it was all the English he knew except "Gum" and "bon bon". It doesn't take long for them to get the point, and like the English youngsters, they are getting plenty of sweets.

July 18 - Tuesday

Along with some sad sights you see a few funny ones too and it is one of the latter that I am still chuckling over.

A private and three Sgts. were taken prisoners, attempting to take a Jerry strongpoint, and the Sgts. were sent to the rear while the private was kept in the fortress to carry ammunition. When we surrounded the place, the German Captain decided to surrender the place and ordered the GI to get on top and wave a white flag. The GI told the German Capt. to do it himself and he knocked the GI down and kicked him four times. A German was killed trying to get the white flag out but the surrender was made and the GI became custodian. He got another man to accompany him and from the point of capture to the Prisoner of War Enclosure the GI kicked the Jerry's rearmost extremities about once every ten feet for a mile. I saw them come in and talked with the GI who said that he told the Jerry he would kick him all the way to a P.W.E. if he touched him. The Jerry found out he wasn't foolin'. Such are the fortunes of war.

The enclosed article on foxholes will give you some idea of the real ingenuity of the GI's, to say nothing of the Jerries. Truly some of these dugouts are ingenious, in fact I am occupying one when things get unpleasant that isn't half bad. I have an opening just big enough to admit my somewhat bulky frame and there I can snuggle down about $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet in the arms of mother earth. I have taken the earth from the hole to build up the sides, reinforced this with logs, and over my hole is a thick log roof reinforced with sod. Not bad and unless there is a direct hit, I am as safe there as any place on earth, which contributes much to mental composure during necessary visits.

Our men have had to learn the hard way about digging in, but believe me they have learned! All over the countryside you see fields completely dug up, either during a battle or during a bivouac period. It is not like a maneuver here--when you stop for any period everyone gets out a shovel and gets to digging.

I can now tell you that Bob was in on the capture of Carentan and had some very close calls there. At one time when they counter attacked he was run up into the 2nd floor of a house and a squad that was coming across the street after him were all killed by an Arty. burst. Bob picked up a 50 calibre slug in the heel of his boot--fired at him by one of our own guns. Needless to say, he has earned whatever his reward will be.

July 19 - Wednesday

I have been on the road most of the day and due to a bit of attention being paid to us by a few Jerries I feel as tho I could turn my head completely around with the greatest of ease. There were low hanging clouds most of the day and they thought they would heckle us but I am sure that when they take roll call tonight they will conclude that it was rather an expensive venture. I must admit that they made me "nervous in the service".

Our friends the British have begun to go to town and I am sure that as soon as we get out of the hedge rows that we too will get to getting. These hedge rows make it really wicked and I am more convinced than ever that the Jerry wouldn't have done much in England if he had landed there.

July 20 - Thursday

Once again I am tired and covered with dirt after spending a good part of the day traveling. In the afternoon we fought dust and then towards supper time it poured down rain and we had to fight mud. You can't win!

I saw Col. Englebrecht this evening and had supper with him. Tell Judge Fray I left his greetings to General Flank with the Colonel and that they will be delivered in the morning. I would have gone in and given them to him except that he was out.

The more I see of what we are doing here the more I am amazed at what men can do when they put their backs to the wheel. The part of France that we occupy is an absolute beehive of activity. When on the road in a day you actually see thousands of vehicles, hundreds of planes, and tens of thousands of men. Everyone is bent on doing his job and the thrill of achievement assures you the conviction of victory. We just have to go forward for there is no room in the rear to hold everyone. Everyone, including yours truly loves our patrolling air corps. Believe me, the sight of them in the sky makes jeep riding a good deal more comfortable.

A few of the French are now wandering back to their towns and the larger towns seem to be quite run over with children. They stand along the streets or roads for hours, automatically making V signs and reaping in turn quite a harvest of candy, gum, cookies, crackers, chocolates and all types of rations. Most of them now say "hello", "goodbye", "any gum, chum?" and "Cigaret?". The most amazing sight to me is to see little children of from four to six years of age smoking American cigarettes. That is the truth for we have asked several their age.

Quite naturally the children do not come up to the English for they are operating under the worst sort of conditions. Most of them are poorly clothed, have wooden shoes, and seem to be earthy dirty. No wonder, with the dust hanging over the countryside like a cloak. However, they are a healthy and sturdy tribe and when their homes are rebuilt and conditions become a bit less hectic I imagine that they will be a lot more presentable.

The women of both the towns and country dress very plainly, many in black and you see many wearing wooden shoes. Those that have good shoes, silk socks and good clothing are, nine out of ten, friends of the late departed Jerry.

July 21 - Friday

Today has been a day to end all days. When we awoke there was a low overcast that opened up about 0830 and poured down rain. Within a couple of hours it had turned this entire part of France into a sea of mud. As I have said before, the fields are already dug up by our troops and that just helped confuse the situation more. The most miserable men I have ever seen in my life were the dough boys who were bailing out their foxholes with a C ration can! Believe me, they had to work hard all day to keep their holes from filling up. No one will ever be able to give the "Do" real credit. He is the superman of this generation!

July 22 - Saturday

Peggy Gower sent me their permanent address for post-war correspondence and I would like to have it recorded in the Harrison files: Mr. and Mrs. James Gower, Cley Hall, Spalding, Lincolnshire, England. They have been good friends and I hope that sometime when this is over, you will be able to know them.

The weather continues to be miserable. The only good you can say for bad weather is that you don't have to keep a constant lookout in the evening for Jerry (just as I wrote those words, sounds come thru my broken window that sound distinctly hostile--some guys never know when they are licked).

Last eve we had a gas scare and everyone got out his mask. Once again all rumor but I won't forget it for a long time. As I was hurrying to get mine, Ed Friend came out of his hdqtrs. running like heck to get his and shouting, "The

The past 24 hours have been most interesting for I have been with one of our under-cover men who came in early and made contacts with the Resistance movement leaders. He had many interesting stories and today I met a few of them who operated in nearby towns. They are just the average people of the country and who truly loved France and were unafraid of the consequences of their acts. From time to time the Jerry would catch some of them and they said that when that happened the jig was really up. What amazed me was that in most cases the wife and children all knew of the man's activities and in one sizeable town one whole family was the local cell of the movement. The son was captured but has escaped, the 19-year old daughter carried dispatches to and from Paris, and the rest of the family were active members. Too, in the town mentioned they had two separate movements that operated entirely on their own and were unknown to each other. This plan paid off when the Gestapo caught the leader at San Lo and got the names of many of the leaders in other villages.

I am sleepy. Jerry broke up my sleep last eve when I took to the fox-hole while they fired AA at him. Everything that goes up must come down - unfortunately.

July 26 - Wednesday

Tell Judge Pray I have been getting some judicial experience as a member of a General Court. I finally got off as a TJA or defense council and now sit as a Law Member of a court. The other side of the picture is now opening and I am going to be known as old "flint heart".

July 27 - Thursday

This is a red letter day in my life for I think I am getting out of the AM section. A buck slip came across my desk that I was not supposed to see which came thru G-1 and arranged a transfer to the Liaison section which would be under Jack Barnes and tho it would mean that I would end up with a gold leaf believe me, it would be worth the difference. Tonight my heart is young and gay for soon the crossed rifles will come out of the moth balls. Oh happy day!

This evening at supper I had a very interesting conversation with Jack Belden of Time and Life magazines. You have no doubt seen some of his pictures for he is one of their best photographers and he seems to have decided to tag along with the rolling VIIth.

Life here proceeds at an uneven pace of rushes and waits. At times it rushes headlong at a mad pace that exhausts everyone, and then it seems as tho everything stops until the participants catch their second breath. It is not unlike the Missouri River which tears out of its canyons into a broad slow sluggish stream, or trapped in an eddy, it may flow backwards at times.

It is good that these eddies occur--periods in which the daily routine becomes so dull that the minds of all participants can ease up, that period of which all GI's are familiar when nothing happens. Of course something is always happening but it is so undiscernable, so dull, that everyone is unaware of it. Time passes toward that day everyone waits for. Life does not really stop, tho now and again it rests on its oars--always preparing for a fresh and greater acceleration. Always it is directed toward a definite goal of home.

We have been discussing the very optimistic reports of an early end to the war that have been coming in from the States via news, Time, Life and Newsweek. Maybe we are too close to it all to see the big picture, but I can tell you that we feel here that we have a long way to go. We all hope that the people at home are right and that the days are numbered, but in the meantime we will have to go forward to make all these prognostications come true. By the way, if you haven't been reading Newsweek, get the copies back to the invasion. I believe its coverage is better than Time's.

fact so rapidly that we found hundreds of loaves of sour dough bread in the vicinity--all of which we turned over to the Civil Affairs to feed civilians in nearby towns. This is once that they get a chance to eat off Jerry--probably the first time in four years.

Now that we are getting out of the peninsula country and into country that was taken rapidly we see less destruction. The country is more rolling, with spotted woods and the hedge rows are not quite so numerous. Our divisions have moved so fast that we are kept busy trailing them, and too, they have seen to it that a good many more Jerries are buried than Americans. All of them are doing a wonderful job, which, if it keeps us, will take us all the way.

August 1 - Tuesday

I am O. D. tonight and will have to sit up around the office until everyone leaves. As I wrote last eve, we had moved yesterday and when sack time rolled around all of us were ready for some real shut eye. However, Jerry had some other ideas in his mind and from 2300 to 0100 he kept us in our fox holes. Then, after he left, our heavy Arty. took up a chant, shooting over our heads and yours truly didn't get much sleep for I kept listening for the planes to return again. Because of these nocturnal serenades I am getting to be a mighty light sleeper--can pick up the sound of a Heinie plane long before it arrives overhead where it could do any damage. Nevertheless, I don't mind admitting that when you hear these planes overhead you can't help but feel nervous in the service. When they begin to circle overhead that is the time to hit for the hole for it is then that they are either looking for targets of opportunity within a given area, or for a definite target. As Pat Gleason says, a lot of men are getting religious overnight.

Last evening Ed Friend, George Fowles and I did a bit of sight seeing not too far from our C.P. What we saw was the most destruction I have ever seen. Along about seven miles of road, in the ditches and for at least one mile were German vehicles and guns of all descriptions that the Air Corps had seen to permanent inactivity. What a sight it was for in many instances tanks, trucks, troop carriers were still lined up bumper to bumper--completely destroyed. What a field day the Air Corps must have had. In the town square of a nearby village were three Mark IV tanks, four 88 guns, a troop carrier and two staff cars. In order to enjoy a scene like that you have to see what these Jerries have done as they fell back--then you can really say to yourself that they got just what they deserved.

The country we are now passing thru is getting to look more like the scenic France we have all read about. Also the weather is much better- a fact that tends to make everything look better. The countryside is rolling orchard land, much like the Pennsylvania and West Virginia hills. The farm houses that are left standing show a prosperity that existed even during the occupation and the numerous small towns reflect the prosperity of the countryside. Country and farm houses are all built of either an adobe clay, reinforced with stone or stone houses, both of which have old heavy wood beams overhead in all rooms. The farm houses are small, usually 4 or 5 rooms of a two story house, but they seem to have quite modern equipment. Electricity is in most every farm house, but it is used only for lighting. The cooking seems to be done either in the fireplace or on a little one-lid stove alongside the fireplace.

It is hard to believe but we have had three wonderful hot days in a row and it is keeps up I expect to soon hear someone beef about the heat--but not me! We are camped on a hillside, in a fine apple orchard, and where we get a nice breeze. After being OD yesterday I got four hours off today and used them to catch up on my sleep and to air, for the first time since arriving in France, my sleeping bag and blankets. Tonight I will have a dry sack for the first time. The three hours of sleep really put me on my feet.

is one of the first sizeable places practically untouched by the war. The shops, cafes and butcher shops were all in operation and the Saturday afternoon crowds all stood gaping at the passing parade of all kinds of American equipment.

The town we occupy was evacuated by a bunch of Jerries yesterday and the natives are still quite delirious with their new freedom. In fact, I think it makes them all just a little drunk. Everyone wonders just what the hangover will be for all of France after its liberation. The people are very friendly and the children are beginning to cash in on all the available candy carried by GI's. I think that every Frenchman from the four-year olds to the 80-year olds were smoking American cigarettes on the route down. They just stand alongside the road and the boys throw cigs to them as they go by. My guess is that they have a good store to last them for a couple of weeks.

Our Arty.--155 mm guns and How's--keep the table shaking most of the time, making writing a bit difficult,as they assist in the liquidation of a bunch of Jerries who seem to want to die for the Fatherland.

August 6 - Sunday

Another good day to praise LaBelle France for and another night to spend as OD. These past few nights have been spent under a full moon-and that ain't good in this land under existing conditions.

With I had a mighty sad experience this morning when I was checking a burial report / my Asst. Sgt. MacIver and we came upon the name of his brother. That is kind of a rough way to get that kind of news and we have all felt pretty rough for him all day. Something like that can only happen once in a million times, and it would have to happen to me.

In my jeep travels I came upon a very interesting sight. In a valley that we passed thru was a cathedral, or I should say, the shell of one, that had been built by the English in the 11th century. The walls of about 40 feet in height were still up; the top was off but the arches that run from wall to wall still stand. The windows are out and green moss lies on the windows' edges. The floor is all grass and a small band of sheep wandered around inside. There was only an American helmet with a bullet hole in it and an empty K-ration package around to give a modern touch.

August 7 - Monday

Today I have been on the road a good bit trying to help straighten out a few truck movements that had gone astray. I was close to several areas where we had Jerry encircled and saw several instances of where they had spread rumors among the civilians to put them in flight into our lines. Several roads were getting quite crowded and the Civil Affairs crowd had a difficult time getting the people turned around and headed for home. These civilian refugees present some of the most pathetic sights we have to witness and still they have to remain in place and off the hi-ways.

The road system in this part of France is made to look after the needs of a mechanized army like ours, fortunately. There are many miles of straight hard top about the same width as ours and they are being used as never before. All you have to do to ruin a good hard top road is send an Armored Division over it--then for weeks the Engineers are following along rebuilding the road. I will make a low bow to our combat Engineers for theirs is an endless job. If it isn't roads they are rebuilding, it is some other job like clearing a town or operating water points. Speaking of water, I now know why the French drink wine--this water isn't fit for man or beast.

There is always a humorous incident attached to a trip that makes for at least one laugh a day. I was in a little town that we took from Jerry a couple

of days ago and on the edge of town was a sign "Los Angeles City Limit-Brittany Suburb". Then too are the wonderful names that our GI's attach to their motor equipment. The most appropriate seen today "Heaven Can Wait". Some show real genius, some show the rough side of GI talk and others- many of them- carry the names of wives, sweethearts or children. Truly someone should make a collection of the better ones.

We had guests last night for an hour and a half and they certainly disturbed my sleep. We didn't have anything dropped near us but they were not too far away--we at least had the sound effects and saw some strafing at night.

August 8 - Tuesday

None other than Bud Forsyth just left the office after a quick visit into our sector. He is a Lt. Col. and has been for about seven months, which isn't bad for a young feller. He was in the Pacific with the 7th Division and when his C.O. came here they flew him all the way across to the UK. He saw Mose Cockson, Jack Connor, Bruce Babbitt and John Duncan and reports that they were all doing very well by themselves. In fact, except for Mose, they are all in the same Bn. and have the best Bn. in the Div.

The Hollywood crowd has begun to arrive in France. I met Edward G. Robinson this morning and someone got out a good latrine rumor that Dinah Shore would put in an appearance in a couple of days if we were not too far forward.

We have a colored orderly with us who supplies a good deal of humor to our daily lives. His name is Sylvester and he has adopted a chicken as a pet. The darn thing follows him like a dog and is now part of our traveling menagerie. This morning Sylvester asked me when we would reach the "Maggot Line".

August 9 - Wednesday

Things have slowed down a bit the last couple of days while we catch our breath and get ready to chase after Jerry again. In the meantime he tried to find out how strong we were and after finding out, I believe we are again ready for the chase. Last night was the quietest I have spent in a long time. I slept straight thru the night without being awakened either by one of our night fighters (bless them) or a Jerry.

August 10 - Thursday

Over here you have a hard time telling whether a child is a little boy or a little girl, for until they get to be about 5 years old, both sexes are dressed alike. It is most confusing when you are trying to say something to them but when you are a dumb kaff like me, and have taken only Spanish, it doesn't make too much difference. The youngsters are a healthy looking lot and are rapidly learning how to get along with the GI's. Already most of them have stored up enough sweets and cigarettes to last a long time. There is a family of about six that hang around our tent who have already learned "hello, thank you, good day and any gum, Chum?" If they don't learn anything worse than that it will be all right, but the language of an Army most certainly isn't parlor talk and I am afraid the kids will quickly pick that sort of talk up.

August 11- Friday

You are going to have to settle for a real quickie tonight for my light is getting worse by the minute. It has been moving day again and this time we went quite a distance. A few more like this one and I expect to see a few mountains.

power of this forward movement. Fifteen days ago I would have bet anyone that this war would not end before next year - now I believe anything can happen -- and probably will. One of the deciding factors now is whether we are able to get enough gas.

I have waved and V-signed at so many Frenchmen that I now have had to improvise a system in order not to completely wear myself out. My system is bases entirely on the length of my trip and the kind of country I am to go thru. It is sort of a budget system and here is how it works: 1. The very casual or bored acknowledgment of V-sign, delivered from the wrist with a slight turn of the head as we speed thru small towns or to country folk lining the roads. 2. The vigorous V- delivered from the elbow with a slight lift of the shoulder together with a large smile. This is for large groups particularly those that show signs of having eggs or vegetable to give away or trade for some of our rations. 3. The all out, shoot the works V with arm completely stretched out, a big Sunday morning smile, used generally when a good looking femme is near or when someone in the crowd has a bottle or drink that he or she wants to give to the brave Americans.

This is great training for young politicians for we are getting plenty of experience on how to greet crowds gracefully. No doubt, when we get into Germany we will get some additional training on how to handle hostile crowds.

Old "Bedcheck Charlie" came booming over last night about 2330 moving faster than any plane I have ever seen. I had gone to bed about 2300 and when I heard him and saw how anxious he was to get away from this area, I just rolled over and picked up some more sleep. The nights are really beginning to get cool up here and there is no question in anyone's mind that we are entering into the Fall season. For the past few days we have had a good bit of rain, but it has not slowed down our progress. About all it has done was to limit air activity to some extent.

Speaking of aerial activity, I want you to know that our air corps is doing a terrific job. In the past week or so I have seen hundreds of vehicles and at least 300 dead horses that the air looked after before we got to them. The Germans use a great many horse drawn vehicles for their stores and I can report that few of them got out of France. It is a great pity to see these fine horses dead, but such are the fortunes of war. The air patrols have so cleared the hi-ways that very little troop or vehicle movement occurs in the day time - even when they are in full retreat as they have been. If they were not Germans who were on the receiving end of these blows, I would almost feel sorry for them. These air blows have been so bad for a long period of time that along the main hi-ways the Germans have made the French dig foxholes, 5 feet deep, every 100 yards along both sides of the road. Each town was assigned certain areas so that Jerry could find quick protection when he got strafed. The chickens have really come home to roost in the house that Jerry built!

This morning I visited the most beautiful war shrine I have seen. It is constructed on one of France's most famous hills and the beauty and simplicity of the modern architecture is something to behold. The hill overlooks just about the entire battleground and by going to the top of the monument you can see for many miles around. I also saw the famous trench where all the occupants were buried alive and only the upright bayonets mark the burial spot. How a country that did what France did during the last war could give way so fast is a mystery, unless the answer lies in the thinking of Andre Maginot. Defense is not security - that lines only to those willing to take the offense.

September 5 - Tuesday

Once again my fortunes of war have changed and I am back at the old job getting out necessary supplies to the troops. I got in late last night and five letters were waiting my arrival, making it a real homecoming. I also had a letter from Bob who reports that he has been having a gay time in England, but oddly enough, is anxious to get over here again.

September 6 - Wednesday (Somewhere in Belgium)

Sure and this has been an eventful day for I not only have gotten into a new country but I also have spent most of the day in the air and have had an opportunity to see from the air some of the old battlefields and also get a good look at Northern and Western France.

We took off at about 1000 with a ceiling of about 2000 and I had an hour's flight both ways and I then flew up into the country I am now a temporary resident of. What a sight it was! The complete outlines were visable for miles, with all the interlacing communications trenches, and secondary lines of defense. Too, the shell holes completely pocked the landscape. At the end of our trip, or I should say at the destination, I had a chance to look at the defenses of the area I had been in for a week or so. I also had a chance to see the beginning of a big forward move that may help to bring this thing to an end.

I had chow with Ed Friend and Albion and we got to counting the days and suddenly realized that we had been at this job for three months to the day and looking over the set-up of our location tonight we are all in accord that we haven't done half bad. The distances traveled have been a bit terrific and when the history of all of this is written the VIIth should get some quite flowery praise.

I heard today the best definition so far of the rumored new German secret weapon - V-3. It is a bicycle and a suit of civilian clothes.

So far I have seen very little of my new location except from above. The flags are flying from every house and the boys who come up by trucks report that the crowds in the towns gave them some tremendous receptions. We are now getting into the beer country and the local residents have been quite free in handing out the "schnaps" to the lads. I had about a glass full this evening and can report that it is the best beer I have had since leaving the States. How I have yearned for a good bottle of beer this summer.

September 7 - Thursday

Your letter of August 25th arrived today with the news of our Duchess' maneuvers with a penny. For goodness sake explain to her that we have education insurance for her and that it is not necessary to keep her money safely deposited in her stomach. If ever her Scotch blood was in the foreground, that was the occasion.

The fall weather in Belgium got off with a flying start today with a downpour and plenty of cool weather thruout the day. My sleeping bag is going to begin to pay an extra dividend in this season. Sure hope we crack the Hun before winter sets in.

September 8 - Friday (Belgium)

It is way late at night and yours truly is more than on the tuckered side. I have just returned from a trip to Reims where we knocked over a "Wermacht" liquor warehouse and I picked up 200 cases (30 bottles to a case) of the best champagne and 85 cases of Cognac. The sum total at current U. S. prices would retire us for life with a comfortable income from at least \$200,000. Imagine my consternation to be riding blackout up roads I had never before been on, and with "Bedcheck Charlie" floating overhead. I felt a bit like the bootleggers must have felt running the stuff in from Canada during prohibition days.

There was something about the vast open spaces of Central and Northern France that puzzled me and it wasn't until today that I figured it all out- they don't have any fences of any description. How the people tell what belongs to them

England, I do not know whether or not you remember Col. Hagens who used to be with the Corps. He went to the So. Pacific about three months before we came over and we heard the other day that he had gotten his Star. That makes another from the Corps with Wayne Smith, Ruffner and Blount all supporting at least one Star and Hodges, Hull and Collins with two.

December 18 - Monday

I think that I will get a fair early start for if the evening entertainment arrives as per schedule, I had better be in condition to go below early. Old Bedcheck Charlie has been around by the numbers these past couple of days. In fact, he was around until about 1030 this morning in larger numbers than I have ever seen before.

There is no question bout the fact that the Kraut is making his final effort and it is a quite passable one. Altho we are not directly involved we are the recipients of a good deal of Air attention, which along with the chilly weather makes jeep riding most uncomfortable.

The mailman's best effort today was a Christmas pkg. from you. The pkg. was a bit beaten up but its contents were in good order.

I tried again last eve to get shold of Bob but I am going to have to give it up as a bad job. He owes me a couple of letters so I wrote him last night and told him to come thru.

December 19 - Tuesday

The situation is a bit topsy turvy at the present and many of us believe we are engaged in the final desperate struggle of the war. The Kraut has pulled one out of the bag and in one all or none throw of the dice he is gambling for something that is impossible for him to ever obtain. He is using all the possible tricks of deception, and when the last account of his actions are written, even the most prone people for a half-way break for him will throw up their hands in horror. There are no holds barred in this show, and the murder of between one and two hundred of our men is just one of the many things that he will have to answer to. I am sure that by the time this letter arrives that Time and Newsweek will have a full account of the activities of the past few days and the story that they will tell should give America just a bit better idea of what the men at the fighting front are having to contend with. I will tell you this that once I am at home and the first man who says one word in defense of the Kraut is going to get the hell kicked out of him.

I am going to have to make another trip up to Brussels to pick up some generators that we are having made up. I think that I will leave tomorrow morning and take about two days to do the job. If everything goes along in good order, I hope to get some time in the stores. Could be that I can find something worth sending home. Having been up there twice I am not too anxious to make the trip for it is a long way and traveling these days is mighty chilly, however, I have been elected so that ends that. I will probably have supper with Major Petts tomorrow eve at the fancy officer's club I told you about.

December 20 - Wednesday

Sure and I thought that I would be up in the big city but when I awakened this very dreary morning I found a ground fog hanging low over the countryside and considered myself grounded for the day. I intent to make another effort in that direction tomorrow.

I am enclosing a report of an incident that I referred to a couple of letters ago. It has been made official by publication in today's Stars and Stripes, but in case you have not seen it, here it is. The number of men murdered runs between 150 and 200 and in my estimation it is the worst massacre of U. S. Troops

in this theatre. Just in case anyone at home hasn't any idea of what kind of people we are fighting this should give them a good idea, and I am afraid this is not the only one of these that has happened in the past week.

The Kraut has really thrown the book into the present action and to give the devil his due it must be said that from a military action it is daring and well executed. In order to accomplish his purpose he has violated every known article of the Hague convention except the use of gas. The planning and co-ordination that goes into the move is up to the highest standards, but viewing it from a long term view, I am darned if I can see what he hopes to accomplish. True, he has caused some confusion in rear areas but attacking forces always lose more than defenders and he is not in too good shape to replenish those loses. Too, it will be a tremendous boost for the homefront morale, but what will they say when he returns home - a loser, and what will he gain when he starts to pay off for his atrocities. The situation is comparable to Dillinger shooting his way out of one hide out just to be cornered and killed in another one.

The artillery is sounding off in big fashion this evening and so far it is all outgoing. Sure and it has been mighty quiet around without it - but I sure did enjoy that silence.

December 21 - Thursday

I am still in that place called "lesser Germany" and if something isn't done soon we will be without benefit of a white Xmas. Instead of snow about all we are getting is a good deal of fog with a capital F. The weather is just cool enough for me to take it into consideration and today I put on my long handle underwear for the duration of the cold spell. Too, just in case we have to live in tents or do a bit of traveling via jeep, this long handle stuff makes a good bit of difference.

Bud Forsyth is down with his crew today and we have had a bit of pow-wowning at the noon hour. He said that there is a gal with the Red Cross unit attached to his hdqtrs. that is from Montana U. Her name is Marlice England and according to her story, she remembers me, but I am unable to recall her.

There isn't a great deal that I can say at the present time except that everything seems to be straightening itself out in good order and I think that before many more days the Kraut will be in a mighty precarious condition. Once again the Harrison family is 100% committed, with Brother Bob no doubt holding up his end in good order a bit farther south. I do not know whether or not I am going to get a chance to see him down there, but you can be sure that I will try. I can well imagine that his outfit is a bit "browned off" about getting thrown in after having such a short time in the rest area, but as the old saying goes, "necessity knows no (something or other) and that is just the case in this committment. I am afraid that he will have a mighty rugged Christmas.

The trip up to the city has had to be postponed a bit and the way it looks now I don't think that I will be able to get up there until sometime next week. When I do, I am going to take a bit of time off and do some shopping for you.

December 22 - Friday

(Belgium) This is one of those letters that could go on forever or end with the next sentence for I am chilled to the bone and what light is available is apt to blink out at any instant.

A good deal has happened in the past 24 hours that remains a secret until a further date. Bud Forsyth's lads took over and according to the best of

military customs we are to play Ed Wynn to the situation now at hand. A no more eager bunch of beavers could have been dispatched to the fire for we have absolute confidence in our abilities to accomplish the mission.

If everything moves according to schedule I should see Bob a day or so after Christmas. I wish the Harrison brothers could arrange a get together at some other place than in the lines. Your ability to move around is always so limited.

I inherited the job of bringing in one of the convoys and believe me it was quite a job. I had about 35 vehicles to bring in. For the job I had eight light tanks that I scattered thru the convoy and I had the not too envious job of riding out in front ahead of the first tank. As long as it was daylight it wasn't so bad but come the dusk and I must say I was nervous in the Service. The town where I got my gun (Liege) I had to get thru as fast as possible for the B-bombs were coming in by the numbers, and have been for days. To say the least they are not contributing to the beautification of that city. We got out of it alright and when we stopped to stretch one of the damn things dived about two miles away. It made the wierdest sound I ev r heard.

So far the weather hasn't been too bad. It is cold and for four days there has been a heavy ground fog. However, the ground is well frozen and so far has no snow so that our armour and trucks should be able to operate to their limit. Speaking of armour, Bob's outfit disposed of 51 of the Krauts yesterday. That is going to hurt plenty.

There is something quite thrilling about seeing all of the troops and armour moving in on the Kraut. There has been a steady stream for days and tho the Belgians are mighty worried I am sure that they are amazed at the sights they see. The armor moves about 25 miles an hour in and out of towns and to see and hear a medium tank roar thru a fair sized town, turn on one tread and never slow down a bit is quite a sight. The Belgians still line the streets and tho they are not as joyous as when we first moved in, they still wave and show their appreciation.

Well, me darlin', my hand is just about frozen and I am all for calling it quits. The artillery is beginning to sound off in goodly numbers.

December 23 - Saturday

Yours truly is finally warmed up sufficiently to be sure that blood is running to all parts of the body. We are all set up with a good pot bellied stove throwing out plenty of heat.

Unless the weatherman does something about it in the next 24 hours, we are going to be without snow for Xmas. We had the usual ground fog for the morning but come noon the sun broke thru and our air had its first opportunity in five days to take a good poke at the Kraut. The heavies, mediums and fighters were all out striking a blow for the cause with quite a telling effect.

December 24 - Sunday

Well, it's the night before Christmas and I am sure that never again will I spend another quite like it. In what the military men call a very fluid situation we have had a mighty interesting day. For a Christmas present the weatherman cleared the skies early this morning and our air corps has made the most of it. We have seen an air show the likes of which we have not seen since the breakthrough at St. Lo. Hundreds of heavy and medium bombers have had a field day. We will know in a day or so just how effective their work has been.

I am a bit worried about Bob and his companions. They have been mixed up in one hell of a fight and from time to time they have been surrounded. The latter fact isn't so bad if supplies can be gotten to them. Those lads can account for themselves, but I will be might happy to see their situation cleared up.

There are several other instances of the murder of our men after they have been taken prisoner so there isn't much Christmas spirit in our men tonight. It has come down to kill or be killed and I can't help but think that they are going to come out in the bad end of the deal. There are a number of them riding around in our uniforms with jeeps and American equipment with the express purpose of spreading panic and killing off unsuspecting men. Such action is rebounding on them in no small manner of means. It is hard to understand how a people who are bound to lose could have resorted to the acts that these Germans have used. There is nothing in the world bad enough to impose upon the German people and for my lifetime I am going to do all I can to see to it that they get what's coming.

There isn't much to say about this eve for a Christmas eve. As I have said before, there just isn't any Christmas spirit. So far we have had no Christmas music and without it believe me the day will be just another day. It does not look as tho we will be able to have any kind of a church service. On a day when the Christian world should be celebrating "Peace on Earth" there are going to be a great many men doing or dying.

December 25 - Monday

I am now billeted in a little town "somewhere in Belgium". Sure and it has been one of the most unusual of days for yours truly. First of all it has been an unusually beautiful sunshiny day used to the utmost by our Air Corps. At about 1030 we attended a church service, armed to the teeth, and sang hymns of peace on earth to men of good will. Then we moved into our little village and I have been too busy to open up my Christmas pkgs. It looks as tho I won't get around to that pleasant task until tomorrow for I am OD.

I got a good Christmas pkg. last eve with the news that "Georgeous George" (Patton) had gotten relief up to Bob and his chums. Coming when it did, the news made a wonderful Christmas cheer for me.

After work hours, whenever that is, we had a little party last eve to welcome the big day. The early pkg. openers contributed food and the rest of us had a few quarts to contribute. Generally it worked up to a good show and when I retired to my ice box last eve, I had enough inside to keep me perking.

December 26 - Tuesday

Sure and it's the night after Christmas and all thru the house - all is quiet. At the last moment last evening I got over to my room and opened up my presents. Everything is wonderful and it was to the light of your candle that I did my unwrapping. I don't have to tell you the wish I made in the lighting ceremony for I am sure it is the same wish that you had when you sent it.

We are situated in a small village and for the first time I have a billet with a private family. They are an elderly farm couple who are mighty happy to have U. S. Troops in their house for they were terror stricken at the thought of having the Krauts return. I think that our unconcerned manner has kind of settled them a bit but you can be sure that they will give a sigh of relief when the Krauts are sent back to Germany.

I have a nice clean room with a bed built for a 5'8" but it is good and soft and has a bit of homelike atmosphere. The house has neither electricity nor running water and no heat. The country is much like the rolling hill country of the midwest with picturesque tree windbreaks outlining the horizons. The valleys are wide and gentle and if it is upon this section of the world that the next great battle is to be fought, our armor and infantry teams will be operating on the very best of terrain conditions. With what I know of the situation, I am completely confident that we are on the eve of the greatest Allied victory. If it comes about as complete as I think, it is possible this may all be over in 60 days.

In the distance tonight there is a terrific artillery duel or I should

say our artillery is giving them a real going over. Sounds just like other days I have known.

To finish this off with some future plans here is one that came to me gradually as the cold weather developed. I am going to build a two hole in our lawn that I can see from our bathroom window as an ever reminder of how lucky I am.

December 27 - Wednesday

After a rather interesting evening last night the situation has become normal and I might say routine. Last eve Lamplight Charlies and a few companions came near flying in one window and out the other. Boyle said he could hear the slapping of a loose cylinder and I am sure if the Kraut was listening he could have heard my heart pounding. I admit that I would have given just about anything to have been anywhere but on the second floor of an old farm house.

Today I had to perform my duties as law member of the General Court and send a few misbehaving fellows up for a time to think over their misconduct. The trip back to the place where we held court was one of the coldest I have had in a long time. The jeep is a wonderful vehicle but one of the coldest.

The situation today looks a good deal better and I think that before long the news will be a good deal better. The weather remains clear and the ground is hard enough to handle armor or any of our trucks. Such being the case, we will be able to operate much easier than we have been able to do for three months of mudding.

December 28 - Thursday (Belgium)

Another day like all the rest of our recent ones with no mail. The weatherman finally turned his back on us today for we have been engulfed in a thick frost fog that has kept visibility down to about 20 yards. Needless to say, the fog hasn't warmed up the countryside.

Just what this fog will do to the tactical situation is a matter of conjecture. Most certainly it shields the Kraut's ground forces in our area from an immediate going over, altho the Air has been going over in numbers most of the day to long range targets. Too, it will allow him to either do a bit of recon work or retire to favorable terrain where he can regroup for another effort. It does seem that the weather breaks all go to the enemy for he had just this kind of weather to set up his push and to cover it for the first few days which were most certainly the critical days of the endeavor. When the fog did lift five days ago he had made considerable progress but he came under one of the roughest air ground battles that he has ever had and tonight we are confident that his forward progress has not only been halted but that his exposed flanks offer the finest opportunity we have had since our arrival on the continent to destroy the shock troops of the German Army. Too, it offers an opportunity to kill or capture more SS troops than have ever come under us. If we can close the gap and trap this venum of the German people, we may be able to bring this thing to a short end.

Quite naturally there has been a good deal of speculation about why the Germans made this gamble. One of the most interesting is that Von Rundstedt sold Himmler the idea of throwing the SS Divisions into this affair knowing that it could not succeed and thereby ridding the army of the SS troops. With them out of the picture the Wermacht could hold the whip hand again in Germany and make the peace as they desire. It could be, but be that what it may, it was a desperate gamble that will have many interesting things written about it in the future.

Continued reports come in of murders committed by the Germans in the territory they have occupied. About 25 women and children were murdered in a house in Stavelot, Belgim, and confessions have been taken from some of the participants. I know it is difficult for you people at home to believe these kind of

stories but believe me I have seen what they will do and by now nothing is beyond my imagination. If I had my say we would line up every SS now a prisoner and dispatch them. The rest I would sterilize and then forget them. These people should have no mercy from anyone. It is only by the harshest kind of treatment that we can hope to control their military operations in the future. All we in the U. S. have to do is look at their use of V-1 and V-2 and we will see what is in store for the future. There is no reason to believe why their range can't be made to reach America and give us some of the terror raids that have been inflicted on England, Belgium, France and Holland.

I expect to go up to the big city tomorrow and will probably have supper with my friend, Major Petts, at the spacious officer's club. After this past ten days it will be a pleasant change.

December 29 - Friday

This has been a bit of a record day for just when I left hdqtrs. six packages came in and I have not had time to open any of them, and then when I got to the rear echelon your letter of Nov. 11th was just coming in. I imagine that a good deal of that missing mail will be on hand when I return to the forward.

As I said in last night's letter I was on my way to the big city and here I am. While at the rear echelon two of the Red Cross gals asked for a ride up so I had company. They both seemed quite thrilled at seeing a big city operating again, and I know I am.

We now have an American Officer's cafe here, food is really scarce, and after chow I spent just about an hour and a half walking in the throngs that crowd the streets. I stopped off at the Metropole bar to listen to concert music and at a rather modern spot to hear Belgium hot music. Now I am tuckered and ready for bed.

December 30 - Saturday

It has been an unusually busy day in the big city and yours truly being what he is, a country boy, is just about ready to turn down the bed and get some well earned shut eye. Fact is, I didn't get too much sleep last night due first to the fact that the Belgians do not make beds for persons over 5'10" and second to three air alerts (Buzz bombs). At this point I am quite allergic to the buzz b's and when one gets within 10 miles of me I seem to tune in on it.

This morning I tended to getting three generators and then following I started out to find a supply of liquor. There is plenty of liquor here but it is being carefully kept for over the counter trade at from 400 Belgic francs up for Cognac and 700 francs up for Champagne. I ran into a chance to bootleg some up from Reims if I could furnish the necessary trucks. The proposition being I would get 20% of all hauled. Of that I want none of!

In my travels I picked the Duchess up a dress-up apron that looks cute and I know will look much cuter on her. Pour vous I have a four piece luncheon set that is different from the run of things. I hope that the next time I come up I will have your glove size for they do have some fancy gloves here.

After supper I went down to the Metropole Cafe to listen to the concert orchestra and have a few beers. Too, to watch a most amazing parade of people. The beer hall is really a very large English pub where, in addition to a steady parade of characters, the families congregate for a Saturday eve party. The family gatherings include grandparents and children to the age of around 10. Sure and they all seemed to have a wonderful time and I, with my Kirsten pipe, was a source of much conversation.

December 31 - Sunday

Once again I am back in the little village and ending the year of 1944

as the OD. When I got home there were two letters from you, Nov. 20th and Dec. 11th and the pkgs. I mentioned. One was from you with all the tobacco and I can safely report that I have enough tobacco to last me for a long time. I also had pkgs. from the Campbells, Major, Mother and my Uncle Charlie. All in all, it was a very lucrative Christmas. Most of the candy I am contributing to a belated Christmas party that we are giving for the local children.

The trip down from the big city was slow going today for the roads were plenty icy and we had an air scare that turned out to be our own P-51's. They do look a good deal like Krauts and when everyone is watching the sky they sometimes mistake them for our enemy. Anyway, when you see people bailing out from cars in front of you, you are inclined to do the same.

Here's a prayer that this time next year will find us together.

1 9 4 5

January 1 - Monday

Happy first letter of what I hope turns out to be our year. The day has just about run out and yours truly is really ready for some shut eye. Not that I have been busy but for some reason I feel done in. We had a party for the village youngsters that will have them talking about the Yanks for a long time. Many of them (100) saw their first movie, first doughnuts, and I am sure more candy than they knew existed. All in all, it was a very successful affair.

I have seen quite a few New Years, including the Times Square one, but I don't think I will ever see one like last night. Just before 2400 the artillery all along the front opened up throwing everything in the book at the Kraut, and on the stroke of midnight the AA began firing everything from 50 calibres to 90 mm's filling the sky with lead poison for any Lamplight Charlie. Believe me it was some spectacle from where I watched it some ten miles away. We stood on a high ridge that overlooked about eight miles of rolling valley country and the big guns were firing from a woods just beyond the plain. You could see them belch flames and also the flash that a few seconds later filled the sky. The noise was just a low rumble. It was truly a New Year's greeting that the Krauts out in front will not forget in a long time. Too, it is no doubt the loneliest and coldest New Year's Eve that many Americans have ever spent.

The mail just came in and all I caught was a Christmas card from Maree. The pickings are still mighty slim for I have only had two December letters from you and none from the family.

There isn't a great deal to say about the beginning of what we all pray will be the year ending the war. On our front it was unusually quiet with some indications that the Kraut may be trying to escape from a narrow corridor. The weather is cold with just enough snow on the ground to make the roads quite icy. When the sun came up this morning it was really a lovely winter scene.

I have delayed this for a couple of hours to sit in on a running game at 10 francs per. My lunch was with me and I think I am about 100 francs to the good. Speaking of money, I sent along \$75.00 today thru usual channels.

I imagine that by this time they have officially told all about the 101st A/B's stand down at Bastogne. They did a terrific job and I hope Bob came thru in good order. He has certainly gotten in on some rugged fights.

January 2 - Tuesday

Today has been a record day for the mail bag for I came thru with ten letters - five from you. Also a V-mail greetings from the University. Truly I am basking in the light of wonderful words from home.

At one spot, an important road junction, some of our lads did away with 9 Tiger and Tiger Royal tanks. That must have been one heck of a fight for every building in the village was completely destroyed.

To add to the difficulties of the men down there, the snow has covered up mine fields and the difficulties in finding them make just about an impossible job. I wish some of these people at home who think we can make any other than an unconditional surrender with the Krauts could see some of the sights I have seen. These people have to be beaten so decisively and so completely that they will beg for a peace.

I hope that by this time my letters will have quieted your worries about the Christmas pkgs. All of them have arrived and are now being enjoyed. Last evening I opened up the box of mints and everyone in the section says thanks.

As for the Kraut counter-attack, I feel now that it will do more good at home than it will for the Kraut. From the reports we are getting over here, the people seem to be suddenly awakened to the fact that we can use a good deal more help over here. Now perhaps public opinion will get back of FDR and help him get some kind of a law to control labor supply into critical areas. Regardless of the statements made by politicians that were trying to make these reported shortages a political football, the fact still remains that there are things our troops need and have needed since August. One of these is Artillery ammunition. I know that we could have used a lot more than we have had and when we have not had it the sum total of the shortage has meant that the doughs have had to take places, and suffer unnecessary losses, because of the shortages. Now that the Kraut has showed his hand, I feel that the home front will see to it that we get what we need.

January 12 - Friday

It's a cruel, cold night outside, about 10 above, and it looks as tho tonight will be one of those nights that the postman fails to knock. With an added inch of snow, some wind to blow up drifts, plus some forward moves on our part has left the postman unable to deliver the goods.

Just outside my window an MP is standing a four-hour stretch. Whenever someone comes along I can hear his "Halt, who goes there?" and then, "Advance to be recognized". These MP's take quite a kicking around by everyone but for my money they are alright lads. In addition to police and guard details, they have the tremendous task of traffic regulation. Until one can see a daily motor travel operation in a Corps Zone you are unable to comprehend the importance of the traffic regulation. They act as information booths to lost parties, unsnarl mixed up convoys, put up all kinds of signs and see to it that everything moves. Many a night I have called for the MP's in some lonely spot in order to check my location, and believe me, I have always been glad to see them.

January 13 - Saturday

We got a break in the weather today with what looked like a chinook day back home. The snow took very little beating but for the most part it was a nice winter's day with lots of sun. Our moves took us a mile or so closer to Bob's outfit and I hope we will join up with them before his unit is relieved and given a well earned rest.

Our situation over here seems to be straightening itself out a good bit for the Kraut has lost much of what he gained and it would not surprise me to see him back in Germany by the end of the month. To me one thing is self-evident and that is he has gained from three to six months. It is hard to believe that we will be able to go far in any winter offensive after this job is over and when Spring comes we will have to wait until we get some kind of weather. To me it's a rough deal for I want to get this over with and get home.

January 14 - Sunday

I think that within the next couple of days that I will be able to get in contact with Bob's unit and see how the kid has made out. You can just about throw a stone across the corridor now and as soon as the mines have been cleared off the road, I am going to pay him a visit. I want to find out for myself what has happened to him - if anything.

We have a couple of Belgian children, a girl 3 and a boy 16 months, living at the little hotel where we are and they are surely getting plenty of attention.

January 15 - Monday

The mail is in but yours truly got blacked out except for a November issue of Readers Digest. Believe it or not even that issue was new around here and is a definite addition to our library. With the Christmas rush over, I feel sure now that we will get back to where we were in October with about a two weeks period of delivery.

It has just been published over here that the American Ass'n of Educators voted down a recommendation for a universal draft act after the war, and I wish you could hear some of the uncomplimentary things being said about these so-called brains of the country. There is, I believe, an overwhelming belief among the men over here that had we had a good well-equipped army with a trained reserve, we would have had a lot smaller losses. Many, like myself, remember too that some of the strongest pacifists were among the college clique and they haven't endeared themselves to our hearts with their most recent showing that they know damn little about keeping healthy in an unhealthy world. What we need for educators is a few men who have had some experiences outside a college town.

The situation has cleared up sufficiently for me to make a run down into the area where Bob's unit is still operating. If tomorrow is any kind of a day, I think that I will make a run down and also check up on Tomry Sherburne. I was out and about this afternoon but tho the thermometer said it was 15 above, I felt as tho it were 20 below.

We had another atrocity reported - this time in the British zone of action. In one of the small towns taken by the Krauts, they took all the men under 35 and said that they were going to send them back to Germany as laborers. Instead, on Christmas Eve, after beating them, they took them one at a time into a house and told them to go into the cellar. As they stepped down, a German shot each one thru the back of the head and after completing their grim task they tried to cover the cellar over. How can people at home believe it is possible to handle these Krauts any other way than with bayonets?

The news of the new Russian moves is mighty good listening to everyone over here. If the drives are as big as first reported the Kraut is going to be in for some more large losses. There is one thing he can really do neatly - and that is retreat! When they see the jig is up, they can get out faster than a person would think possible, and about all they leave behind is foreign and scrub troops, plus a hell of a lot of mines. Once again we are finding that they are booby trapping our dead and their own. Not in just isolated cases but it has gotten to be the rule.

January 16 - Tuesday

No doubt by the time this letter rolls into Montana you will have heard that Bob is reported missing in action since Dec. 19th. I have just come back from a trip thru the corridor, one of the first across, if not the first, where I visited Bob's unit. The picture that I have written Dad and Mother is not a particularly rosy one, but there is still reason to hope.

Here is the story. They moved up to defend Bastogne on the 18th of Dec. and after passing thru the town they ran into very strong enemy positions about 4 miles east of town. Bob's company occupied a town on the Bn south flank by the name of Wardin and before they could set up a defensive position they were overrun by 10 Tiger tanks and a Bn of Panzer-Grenadier infantry. The story so far is complete--the rest is mighty dim. After three days all but 20 odd men of the company had gotten back to the division, Bob and his Capt. were among the missing. Two of the men said that they saw Bob get hit twice. However, this is not authentic tho it is to be considered. The Krauts held the town for about two weeks, during the period several Belgians stayed on and when questioned by the S-1 of the Bn when we again occupied the village, they had very little to offer. They did not know whether or not any prisoners had been taken out of the town, nor had they heard whether or not any of our men were wounded. The town has been quite thoroughly searched and only two bodies have been found, both identified as enlisted men of Bob's platoon. I have written Dad and Mother that they will have from a 30 to 90 day wait in finding out whether or not he is a PW and in that time they have to be patient. I will do all that I can over here in military and Red Cross channels and they will be kept informed by the War Dept. at home.

Personally, I cannot help but take a very dim view of it -- especially with the chance that he was wounded. However, being taken early in that action may have worked to his advantage for the Krauts may have needed prisoners to make identifications.

January 17 - Wednesday

As I wrote last night, I have gathered about all the information that is on hand except interviewing the few survivors that got back to the Bn. I think that I will try and contact them in the next few days to see if they can remember anything extra about the fight. Assuring that he was taken prisoner on the 19th or 20th - untouched - his chances of getting out are still slim for considering the time they would take to evacuate them to the rear they would have been just about where our Air let loose a terrific bombardment on Dec. 25th and 26th. If he was wounded, he would have all of the above to combat plus the fact that the Krauts are, we believe, short of medicine and competent medical troops. Being a PW would lessen his chances of getting the best possible aid. All in all, it is a very dim picture and while I am terribly worried about him, I am equally as worried about the family.

With me this has been a bitter pill to take for in spite of the hazzards of his kind of operation, I have always felt he would wiggle through somehow. I have seen so much of death at first hand that it's terrors have long since departed and I know that life and death are all pretty much a matter of chance. It is like a gambling wheel that keeps spinning - it's bound to stop on your number sometime, but as long as the wheel spins, nothing can happen. Now that the wheel has slowed down near Bob's number I am kind of like a gambler that has bet his wad that it cannot possibly stop. The fellow who said it's rough in the ETO said a mouthful.

Thru the Red Cross I sent a cable to Mother today and I hope she will understand. I was unable to mention either Bob or the fact that he was missing, but I feel sure that she has now received the War Dept. telegram and all I could say was that I had investigated and felt everything would be alright. She must believe that if she is to keep her chin up. If he is dead we must be ready and willing to accept the will of God, for to understand these things is not for man.

January 18 - Thursday

I have just come in from an all day trip that really chilled me to the bone. It was a typical wintry day with a cold wind that wrinkled my face and brought tears to my eyes just as some of the wintry Montana blasts. I finally got around to where Col. Englebrecht is located and I had a few hours visit with him. He has a very responsible job and seems to like his work. He wanted me to be sure

and say hello to you and to the Duchess, who's pictures brought forth many compliments.

The Stars and Stripes came forth with the War Dent. figure that 18,000 of our men are missing in action during the battle of the bulge so there are plenty of families in America, who like our own, are sweating out a loved one.

January 19 - Friday

We have a little Belgian gal named Monika (age 3) in the office with us this evening and we are spoiling the dickens out of her. She talks a blue streak of Belgic and we "oui" her all over the place. Truly she has a bunch of "yes" men for followers. For some reason she goes for Harry Nutflus and tho we point to our leaves and say, "Kommandant" she is still the Lt.'s girl, no question about that. In spite of all the candy bribes I have given her, she still won't sell Harry out.

A new General Court was announced today and yours truly ended up as the defense council, back to my old job of defending. The catch is that I have a murder and a rape case right off the bat and both are very doubtful cases - circumstantial evidence. I tried to talk G-1 into getting an experienced trial lawyer to handle these two cases, but they said I have had sufficient experience so that ended that. In addition, I have to defend a Capt., a friend of mine from Camp Lee days, who is a victim of a vicious Bn. Commander. Tho the case looks bad at first glance, I think that I will be able to beat it and give the Bn. C.O. something to think about.

The battle of the Bulge, as it is referred to over here, seems to be very definitely in its final stages. The penetrations are now no more than 15 miles in from the German border where they began and in most places it is much less. The Kraut has come and gone and has definitely left his mark. The country that he fought for is as badly damaged and scarred as any we have been in, and when the snow leaves it there are going to be some ugly sights for spring to cover up.

A very famous British Corps Commander in analyzing Von Rundstedt's plan said it was both brilliantly conceived and carried out and that it failed principally due to the four following reasons:

1. The unbelievable fighting ability of the American soldier.
2. The failure of the Germans to estimate correctly our Air strength.
He assigned only 1,000 planes to carry out the entire mission and after two days they were unable to give their troops any real protection.
3. They failed to capture any large stocks of allied food and gas.
Upon this they seemed to have definitely counted and with but few exceptions they didn't get enough to help at all.
4. The defense of the key position at Bastogne.
This links up with the first but because of the importance of the town its defense was an additional reason for their failure.

Be that as it may, the battle is over, we have had our losses but I do think they are closer than before to the end. Now with the Russians coming east at a great rate, I feel sure that the Kraut is going to have to do some re-shuffling in order to stay afloat.

January 20 - Saturday

I have spent most of the day either up with Judge Welch listening to him beef about everything in general, or back at my desk preparing two cases up for trial Wednesday. One is a desertion trial and consequently a serious case - just one of those things that are now arising where a man has been on the go since D-day with little or no rest, plenty of lost friends, and poundings until any man, or I should say many men, would break down just for the want of rest. So help me, I feel sorry for a fellow like that and hope that I can be of some good to him.

January 23 - Tuesday

I have just come in from a trip to the Army stockade where I interviewed a couple of so-called clients. After talking to them, I am not much more hopeful than I was before I saw them.

On the way back I stopped by to see Wild Bill Doyle, in the city where I got my shot gun, but he was away for the day so I had to leave an insubordinate message.

I am enclosing a clipping out of the London Daily Mail that has Churchill's speech of the Battle of the Bulge. It is one of the fairest and most completely honest statements that I have read in a long time and I would like to have it put in our clippings. After reading it, I have wondered how many men in public life at home would have made a like statement to our Congress. To the anti-British talk at home this should be quite an eye-opener.

I have recently seen a statement by a Frenchman about the American Army that is a classic description. He said that the American Army does not look like or act like soldiers as Europeans expect soldiers to look and act. They look like armed working men in a gigantic industrial plant on wheels rolling along and knocking down and blasting away and running over whatever got in their way. I felt as if the Americans were digging the Panama Canal right thru the German Army. How often I have thought the same when I have seen in one day everything from railroad locomotives to a ditch digger all made in the U.S.A. I can well understand the utter amazement of the local population at the never ending train of equipment that goes down the main roads.

A good example of the work that is done is the snow removal and sanding of the main routes done by the Engineers. The system operates just like the hi-way dept. back home. Snow plows, scrapers, and sand trucks are on the road about 24 hours a day. The Engineers had the good foresight to pile along the roads gravel to be used when the snow came early last Fall. That kind of planning has paid real dividends this past month.

Everyone here is talking about and watching the progress of Joe's boys and I don't need to say that we are more than pleased at every forward foot they make. It is hard to say whether their forward moves are a part of Combined Operations but even if they are not they could not be made at a more opportune time. After one month's operations in the Bulge he has had two armies pretty well chewed up and inasmuch as they were picked assault troops, I wonder with what the Kraut will use to fight off this new attack. It is a cinch that he hasn't had time to replace the men and equipment recently lost. All I can say is that I am glad I am not a Kraut.

I will be in court all day tomorrow and am turning into a guard house lawyer first class.

January 24 - Wednesday

Well we are all back to cussing the mailman for not even a newspaper arrived today. Too, I am in a growly mood so I have a real bark. My day in court was not what I would call a huge success for the case I wanted particularly to help get the book, and two men who were pretty poor specimens, got off with light sentences.

The weather has begun to let up a bit on us now that the big battle is over and our Air reports that they have had the two best days of operations that they have had since D-day. If they got all the vehicles that they claim, the Kraut certainly has a real headache.

To give you an idea of what the civilian hardships have been in the area, in an insane asylum down in the forest where there was no coal or wood to keep the place warm, two old women froze to death there one night. In the same building and during the battle, a woman had twins down in the cellar. At the last report the youngsters were still alive but no one could understand how they made it.

If this affair folds here there is a great deal of speculation about our next jump. Most everyone believes the CBI comes next and it is just a question of who will get to go there thru the States. I believe that the majority of units will go directly because of the economy of a one water move. It may be that a small higher hdqtrs. like ours will be shipped thru the States and we are all crossing our fingers. Most surely the personnel of divisions like the 1st, 3rd, 5th, 9th Infantry and the 1st and 2nd Armd. should be given consideration for they have been away from 28 months up. That's a long time, McGee.

Well, it's Saturday night and yours truly is headed for the showers to get his weekly cleaning and, believe it or not, to discard the long handles. It would be just my luck to have a snowstorm blow up.

March 25 - Sunday

I am going to have to write big tonight for there is hardly any juice coming out of the bulb and only by writing large can I see what I am saying. If that is important?

Arthur said to be sure and say "hello" and to tell you he likes the pictures. Tony also says "hello".

March 26 - Monday

Beaucoup mail tonight and I will stop beefing for a day or two for it will take me that long to digest all my catch. I had your airmails of 1,6,7,8 plus an Easter Card, a letter from the Major and one from Father Flanagan. To be sure, the Flanagan tribe was most generous to me.

I was pleased to hear that the lunch set and our D's apron arrived. To the best of my counting that package took just a bit over two months to get home, so I have given up hope of ever hearing that your green hat got in by St. Pat's day. However, the news that it is going thru is enough to encourage further shipments. You probably won't see any of the crystal before the middle of May.

This afternoon I had an interesting experience when I had as an interpreter an American woman who had lived in one of the Rhine's beautiful cities for 20 years. She had married a Cuban and her family all grew up in Krautland. I would have liked to have spent a few hours talking to her, but unfortunately she had to keep my conversation limited. She was a woman of about Mother's age and appeared to be an extremely capable person. I was able to learn from her that nearly every German home has suffered at least one death and many have lost entire families of men at the front. She said that their losses have been terrific. I was interested to hear that the Nazis did not bother the family during the entire war, tho she had to report once every six months to get her identification checked.

I also was able to buy a fine camera that would have cost us a fancy figure at home - a Voigtlander - Bessa 66. Now I will have to learn to run the darn thing.

I don't know whether I told you about trading my P-38 Pistol for a beautiful double barrel 16-gauge shot gun. It will make a fine bird gun and was certainly a swap in my favor.

March 27 - Tuesday

Once again I fell heir to a mail bag and pulled out two air mails, 13th and 16th from you.

Things are beginning to roll again like they did after the breakthru. We are really rolling Berlin bound.

March 28 - Wednesday

Once again the rat race is on and tonight we are occupying new quarters

that will probably last but a day or so for our troops are running off and leaving us. The new billet is the house of a tribe of Nazis that overlooks a railyard that is one of the most destroyed spots I have seen for some time. The combination of air and artillery really did a job.

In some respects this is beginning to look like the run thru France except for the lack of joyous people. In their place we are succeeding in liberating thousands of slave laborers. Today's crop seems to be made up of hundreds of French and Belgian soldiers and what a site they make. Many have gotten hold of some grog and are definitely slap happy in their first hours of liberation. Some have actually started west walking towards their countries and will have to be stopped somewhere down the line to be processed, but tonight many are trudging westward toward homes they left four years ago.

In addition to these soldiers, the countryside is full of Poles and Russians who stand along side dusty roads to wave on each truck and to be amazed by the might of our mechanized army. I passed four standing looking at a dead Kraut and when they saw me look their way, they pointed and said "Gut".

The road east has taken us into new country somewhat reminiscent of the Hurtgen Forest except here the Kraut didn't hole up and fight as he did there. The high hills, called mountains here, just east of the river are really rugged. What roads there are wind up with series of switch-backs just like out in our country. It is a country a great deal like the mountain lands of Pa. and West Virginia. The land is covered with dense forests and had the Kraut decided to really fight here, it would have been tough for he had plenty of concealment and always in back of him were ridges higher than the one we were on. There are very few places that would pass for villages and most of them are just a group of farm houses built around a good well. For the most part they have been destroyed. It's a hell of a war and the Germans know it. The hour of decision is much nearer tonight.

Today I finally met Frank Kammerlohr, the Red Cross Director who used to be in Great Falls, and who you wrote to be sure and look up. We met by chance at a unit we were both visiting.

It is colder than blue blazes in this barn tonight, so I think I will call it quits.

March 29 - Thursday

We stayed in one place for a change today and I have spent part of the afternoon in bed trying to get rid of a touch of sinus. Instead of dust we have had a slow drizzle all day which has decidedly lowered the temperature. Too, we are on a plateau that I imagine must be 1000 feet above the river valley and it looks as tho Spring will be a little late this year up here.

The rat race is still in full running order and there is nothing looming up that can slow it down. What is going to happen no one can guess but one thing is sure and that is the Kraut is getting one hell of a licking.

March 30 - Friday

It is mighty late tonight and we are all plenty on the tuckered side. I believe when Corps history is written that today's jump will be recorded as the longest one we have made. The traffic was terrific and once again the Kraut missed the boat by not having Air available to polish us off.

As in other days, the roads were lined with liberated soldiers and slave laborers all headed for the rear. It is a regular League of Nations affair and I wonder just what they think of us. We do not have time or the manpower to stop and

afternoon I went a few miles out of town to visit a Polish Officers PW camp and believe me it was some experience. There were over 2,000 officers in camp and had been there for five and one-half years. Never until today had any of them been in town tho it is only 4 miles. Some men I saw had legs no larger than your forearm and their stomachs sagged below their belts. Some were so weak that they were unable to stand up straight and were pathetic sights when they tried to stand when we entered. At the other end of town were Polish and Russian civilians and their condition was beyond description. They worked daily from 0800 to 1900.

April 13 - Friday (London)

In spite of my good fortune, my heart is heavy this evening for I only learned of the President's death a few hours ago when we landed at an airport just outside the city limits.

If you think that our President was not one of history's great men, you should be where I am today. His loss is felt not only by the great, but by the most humble of men in this country. The Irish girl who served me supper said, "We will all miss your President, Major"; the cabbie who just dumped me off at my spacious quarters said, "He was the greatest of men, governor, and Britain's finest friend"; and the houseman who I invited in to have a short one, "If it had not been for Mr. Roosevelt the Hun would have gotten us sure. He was our friend". I feel sure that these people reflect the feelings of the world of little people who looked at him as a real champion of their right to live in peace and he will be missed as much or more by these people than he will at home. However, it is God's will that he go at this time and our country, being a democracy, will take our new leader and continue forward. Now is the time for all good men to come to the aid of their President and to give him our united strength. He will need it.

This has been quite a memorable day for me for my trip was a real treat. We left the rear about 0800 and got to the air field at 1230. On the way back we passed 55 truck loads of PW's along one road. After hanging around the field until 1600 we finally got under way. I ran into a friend, Col. Van Bond who commands 39th Inf. Regt. of the 9th Div. and we had a fine bull session most of the way. We had good flying weather the entire way and had a chance to see Coblenz, the Bulge, Liege, Calais, the White Cliffs of Dover and London from the air. The channel was completely fogged over and we saw no water the entire trip.

The trip was made particularly enjoyable to us for we were carrying a young 23 yr. old Tommy back home who had been captured at Dunkerque and this was his first plane trip and first time home in five and one-half years. Would that I could properly describe the eager joy of this soldier as we came to England and when we let him out of the plane first to touch down on his beloved England. All I can say is that it was a wonderful experience. An unforgettable bright spot in a world of black reality. Since he was captured the Kraut hiked him 800 miles and tho he was only 23 he looked 40 and physically he is 40. He was liberated by the Third Armd. Div. and believe me he will never forget the Yanks. We had donated a wool knit cap, a field jacket, pants, shirt and boots and American c'garets to his welfare. To top it off, they flew him to within 3 miles of his home to a mother who had not heard from him for five months. How I would liked to have seen that reunion!

Well it's late and I am a bit all in. Tomorrow it's off to Scotland.

April 14 - Saturday

This is going to have to be short and sweet for it is late and I have

beautiful in Paris this morning and we had to take off about 30 minutes ago. So I am C-47 bound for Germany and am now just about to Reims. In order to see the Champs Elysses, the Arc de Triumph and the Eiffel Tower, we flew over the city and saw it in all its glory. Definitely I have the urge to return. We have flown along over the flat plains north of Paris, over the Marne where we could see evidences of War I, and are now coming into view of the city of Reims. I can see the cathedral quite clearly with plenty of evidences of both wars in and around the city.

(Later) We have just landed somewhere in Krautland and the last part of the trip was mighty rough. There are planes taking off every few minutes from this field, carrying wounded and liberated PW's. I can see several hundred French waiting their turn to be flown to Paris.

April 23 - Monday

To come back to such good news after a fine leave made the month of April a most memorable one for me. In the pile of mail that awaited my arrival was a letter from Nellie telling me about hearing from Bob, a telegram from Dad and your letter from Harlo. When I use the word pile, I mean just that, for there were 11 air mails from you, 2 from Nellie, 2 from Mother, a pictoral letter from Ginner, Time and Reader's Digest. Surely I should go away again if I can be that lucky.

Of course the news of Bob is the most wonderful thing that has happened in a long time. I am now trying to contact the Third Army to find out if he has been liberated for troops of theirs over-ran that area where his Oflag was located several days ago. As you know, I have taken a pretty dim view of his situation for from what I could learn he was in a pretty tough spot. However, the luck of the Irish still seems to be on our side. If he is liberated he will be sent home just as soon as transportation can be provided so it is quite possible that he is now on the way. Of course there is the chance that the Krauts evacuated the camp but the way our troops were traveling, the likelihood is slim. While I was in London and Paris, I tried to find out all I could about Bob but they had no information on him. As far as they knew he was still a Missing in Action.

The ride up from the airstrip, a mere 230 miles, in a jeep was rugged. Col. Van Bond had a jeep waiting for him with two men and fitted me in along with our luggage. To say the least, it was crowded but I at least got back and had it not been for that ride, I still would be between here and there. We have moved forward just 130 miles since I left a week ago.

The country along the way was picturesque and too well preserved to belong to Germans. Most of the villages were intact and except for one city, Kassel, which is really destroyed, the people seem to be living a normal sort of an existence. Of course there are still hundreds of liberated slave workers who are living off the country and occasionally terrorizing the localites, but they brought them here, so that's their tough luck. I will bet that Germans will think a second time before importing slave laborers to do their work.

The enclosed picture was taken on a day leave to our rest camp last November. I took a lot of pictures on the trip, but it will be some time before they are developed.

Everyone is waiting for news of the link-up with the boys from Joe's land and we have about a 50-50 chance of doing it first. That really will make news of the first import.

April 24 - Tuesday

More than ever it looks as tho our task here is just about finished and we are all beginning to sweat out what gives for the next step. As per usual, the Corps lasts about 9 to 11 months in one place and we have been here nearly 11. If

yet we are taking PW's hand over fist. They seem to think that they would rather be our PW's than the Russian's, and probably have good reason. It is quite an amazing sight, this disintegration of the once powerful Kraut Army. They all know that the show is over and are trying to get an easy ticket home. I only hope that the powers that be will have the guts enough to turn these people over to the Russians, French, Belgians, English, Dutch, etc. to help rebuild Europe. If this is not done, we will be responsible for sending at least 2 million trained and conditioned soldiers back into Krautland - and that means nothing less than another war. The Africa Korps and SS must be put under strong military supervision for at least ten years, to say nothing of the elite Panzer units who have been indoctrinated with this Nazi bug.

I understand that they have decided to release as newsreels at home the pictures of the concentration camps. No doubt they will be doctored somewhat, but by all means see them so that you can see for yourself some of the terrible sights we have seen. Then you will begin to understand that the feelings we have for these people are based on real facts. Most certainly they should be shown to every American and it is too bad we do not have "smellies" as well as "talkies".

April 30 - Monday

Monday, instead of being wash day, was moving day and we have arrived in a spot that I hope will be a place where we spend some time, for it beats anything we have had so far. I have a hotel room all to myself with a bed, well just about as nice a hotel room as you would find at home in any town. Everything but a bath, but I do have hot running water in the room. Truly it is hard to believe and I am still pinching myself.

May 1 - Tuesday

As they say in the "new world" it's just the shank of the evening and I am going to use it to catch up on my correspondence. I have just come up from the dining room of the hotel where I had a fine meal, topped off with a bottle of good Moselle wine - all to the tune of excellent dinner music played by an Hungarian orchestra. To be sure the war has taken a turn for the better and all of us are enjoying it to the utmost.

I have a very comfortable room, nicely furnished and with hot and cold water. It is heated and on this cold May day, I appreciate this feature as much as all other conveniences, except the good bed. Last night I retired at an early hour of 2130 and indulged in a nearly forgotten pleasure - reading in bed. War is hell, but this occupation business is wonderful!

At noon we received a return visit from our Russian Allies and I hope that I got a number of good pictures of the ceremony. There were around 18 officers in the group, including a Corps Commander who is 34-years old and quite an impressive looking individual. General Collins held a reception for them and I imagine royally entertained them for from what we hear they really put on the dog when our representatives went across the other day. Our people respect them for more reasons than their fighting abilities, for they say that Joe's boys can hold their liquor better than any other men on earth.

May 2 - Wednesday

This noon Col. Murphy, Dr. Murphy to Missoulians, and I had lunch at the hotel and had a good Montana Pow Wow. He has seen fewer Montanans than I have since he got over and says John Bonner is about his only line to the homeland.

Last night while listening to a German broadcast of music, the Krauts came on with the news that Hitler was Kaput. Most of us are from Missouri. However

of this we are sure, an Admiral is going to have tough sledding in a country controlled by the Army.

May 3 - Thursday

Once again the OD tour has rolled around and having the nice set-up that I do at the hotel, I certainly do not enjoy it. However, our wonderful set-up is about over for we were told that a higher headquarters is coming in to oust us. Needless to say, there isn't enough bad things we can think of or say about them, but being the Army there isn't a damn thing we can do about it.

Unless my guess is wrong we will see V-E day in the next couple of days. With the total capitulation in Italy, plus wholesale surrenders to the North of us, there can be no question that it is a matter of hours before the whole show folds. These are indeed amazing days and yet the feeling of anti-climax that set in when we stopped going forward seems to make all of us apathetic to the whole thing. Our job is done and now each and everyone of us anxiously awaits our next move. The feeling goes way down to the lowest doughfoot who one day was going forward and then on the next found he had gone as far as necessary. The let down has been terrific all up and down. The job is done now and that is the general feeling. No one ever quite imagine that this is how it would end, yet no one had any idea of just how he would feel when it was over. There are no flags flying, no bands playing, damn little drinking, just a general numbness that probably is the summation of human emotions of homesickness, exhaustion - physical and mental - and bewilderment as to what happens next. This war has been different in many aspects from all others and it's end just follows the pattern of unusualness.

The set-up we now have is more cockeyed every time you think of it. Here we are in the middle of a million Krauts, with street cars operating, electricity and water running in most of the town, tho part of the city has really been flattened. All thru the daylight hours people parade around town with not a hell of a lot to do but, come curfew hour of 1900, the whole city life stops. Nothing but military traffic and very little of that rambles thru deserted streets.

This, as the other cities we have seen, has been an extremely rich city lacking for very little thru the war years. Beautiful homes, inside and out, and stores that quite definitely have nice things - luxuries to sell. More than ever we can see that Germany was a gigantic slot machine operated solely for German benefit. All they did for years was pull the handle and into the country poured the luxuries of Europe -- food, drink, clothes, machines and a million and one other things, including human beings. The only pay-off of the machine was death. What a country - what people! No where in history has arisen a nation of monsters so depraved that they are below our mental capabilities of adequately handling. There is no precedent and we who have seen their capabilities wonder whether we can handle them.

May 4 - Friday

According to Dad's letter from Bob he was at Stalag IVB which is just in front of us in Russian territory. If he is still there, there is a good chance that we will see one another for I have everyone handling returning PW's alerted.

Speculation is running wild on what comes next. If we are due for a boat ride, we are all hoping that it will be west thru the States, if we are slated to go elsewhere. 'Twould be nice to spend some of this summer in GF with you and our D.

May 5 - Saturday

For the past 24 hours I have been trying to find out whether Bob is out in front of us but with no avail. The Russians are sending over 2000 of our men and British tomorrow and I am going to check them as they arrive in camp.

Ed Friend asked me this noon if I was interested in going down to Paris with him for three days in the next week or two. Quite naturally the answer was "yes" for I have long hoped for a chance to really do some sight-seeing in the city beautiful. Both of us have about the same wishes and should make a good pair of rubber neckers. According to the dope we will fly down from just outside the town and that is the only way I am interested in going on leave. Distances are too great and covering them via jeep or truck does not appeal to my finer sensibilities.

No more guff for tonight. I am going over to the hotel to clean up a bit, have a good drink and then listen to the dinner music for an hour or so. It's a great life, this occupation!

May 6 - Sunday

Here it is Sunday again and about all I can say for the day is that Boyle and I just came in from a walk thru the Zoo. Believe it or not, the Zoo is quite comparable to any in our country considering the size of the city. Many of the animals including the elephants, lions, bears, etc. are still on the premises. Tho it is not a Golden Gate Park & Zoo, I must admit that it is quite a recreational center, and like everything else, seems to have flourished during the war.

Last evening we had a few drinks with a Lt. Evans, 3rd Ranger Bn., who had been taken prisoner a year ago January at Anzio beachhead. From him we got first hand the story of his months of captivity and believe me, it wasn't a pleasant one. He was at the same camp as Capt. Tom White of Bozeman until they moved him in January to a camp SE of Berlin. 1500 officers started the trip marching and only 362 finished, all on four loaves of black bread for 28 days of continuous march. Need I say more?

May 7 - Monday

Happy Victory in Europe day and all that sort of thing! Here it is, and I am officer of the day and quite unable to do anything about it and for the sake of the health of the Harrison command, it is probably a good thing.

No doubt you wonder how things are over here and this day for which we have all waited for so long - just as we wonder how you are taking the news at home. Oddly enough we have all expected it for so many days that the news of final capitulation is taken pretty much as a matter of fact. A foregone conclusion to those of us who have seen the disintegration of the German nation. Now that it is official, a few will get a bit canned but for the most it is just the end of a phase of their life with the next phase pretty much in doubt.

I heard the news in a Prisoner of War Exchange camp down near the Mulde river. In this camp were 6000 U.S., British, French, Indian, Czech, etc. who had come across from the areas occupied by the Russians. The news brought no great rejoicing in the camp, that is there was no shouting, ringing of bells, etc., but on the face of each individual you could see the emotional release and the feeling of extreme happiness. It was for each individual to enjoy this feeling himself rather than share it with his comrades in an emotional uprising. The GI just went around telling the fellows that had not heard the broadcast that officially it was all over and each man felt, as I did, that he had been granted a new lease on life. As time goes on and the status of peace becomes a more established fact, each man will think of the men who made this day possible but who have not lived to see the day. They are scattered in cemeteries from St. Mere Eglise east, and to each of them we will feel an undying sense of gratitude for all of us who have been in the forward areas for these last eleven months have felt that any minute he could lose his life and had it not been for the sacrifices of many of these men, more of us would have paid the supreme price. Now for a time at least, we will be able to live without that threat hanging over our heads and I think that the release from that threat is what each man feels most tonight.

This afternoon Tony Palerm and I went visiting a couple of camps where we have returning Allied PW's. They are really quite something to see for the Allied nations can be seen at a glance. In the first camp the predominate nation was France and all in all, there must have been 8000. The camp is located at one of the great Nazi airfields around which several hundred planes lie destroyed by the Krauts, and around each were Frenchmen enjoying the wreckage. We have a shower and laundry unit operating on the field getting the men cleaned and deloused and they are fascinated by the operation of the mobile laundry trailers. Such a thing they never saw or imagined in their Army and I imagine that they must think the Americans have just about everything. In the second camp we visited I ran into 14 Rangers who had been taken at Anzio and who had just come thru the lines. After talking with them for awhile we went down to a town called Grimma on the Mulde river to try and get a look at the Russians who occupy the other side, but none of their patrols were in sight so we didn't get our pictures.

They have just announced that tomorrow is the official V-E day, so I guess there will be some more celebrating.

May 8 - Tuesday

Happy V-E day, if this is the official day, and if not happy day anyhow. They have me a bit confused as to just what is V-E day, but the important thing is that this show is over.

Like the rest of the world we sat around our radio most of the afternoon listening to the celebrations in the cities of the world, and to Churchill's speech, and wondered how our own families were celebrating at home.

It would have been wonderful to have seen the sights described by the commentators - especially in England. I'll bet the English got so wrapped up in their celebrations that they forgot their 4:00 o'clock tea. Of all the people in this part of the world, this day means more to the Englishman than to any other. 'Tis they who have stood fast all of these years and who have, as a people, sacrificed more. What a wonderful feeling they must have!

May 9 - Wednesday

The enclosed photo negatives are of my trip to North Ireland and until they are printed there will be a question in my mind about just how good they are. Those of the planes and the aerial scenes were taken over the Emerald Isle and if they are any good at all it is just due to luck.

Tony, Beverly and I have just come in from a tour of the downtown section of the city Leipzig. It is not half as badly battered as many of the large cities we have come thru on our way. Tho before the war it had a population of 750,000 they say that at the present it has around a million. Of course there are a great many evacuees and most of them are women. Believe me I don't know how we are going to carry out this non-fraternization policy now that it all over and these women keep plaguing our men. Really it is brutal and the worst part of it all is that many of them are not half bad looking. All in all, the whole affair is going to be a headache and I hope we get out of here before we have to do much enforcing of the rule.

Arthur Garson was up last eve and spent the night with us. His outfit is moving back and for some reason he thinks they are on the way home. If he makes it he says he will call you to say "hello" and give you a first hand report on me. He is still the same good guy and we all wish he were still with us.

Along with Arthur was a Mr. Fifer, a Swiss, who is one of the International Red Cross men. He is one of the most interesting men I have encountered in a long time and I wish he could have stayed around longer. During the past four years he has wandered all over Germany looking after PW's and some of his accounts are something. They have numerous proven cases of forged receipts for Red Cross parcel and when caught the Kraut officials did not even try to deny their thievery. He

said that not longer than three days ago he had talked to rather high up officials in the Speer Engineering organization, one of Germany's greatest, and had heard them say, "If America continues their demands we must begin preparations for the 3rd war". That from a so-called beaten people! Unless we are merciless with these people, we are headed again for war.

As for the chance of getting out under the "Over 4-year rule" it is doubtful. Most of us think it applies to enlisted men, particularly over 38, but as you wrote, "hope springs eternal".

May 10 - Thursday

The war was sure hell, but peace is going to be rough too if we don't have something to do with our spare time. It is odd how one can recuperate from the tired feeling we had a week or so ago and become restless. Perhaps it is due to the uncertainty of our future or maybe it is a showing of any well knit organization to get on with the job.

I am quite convinced that this period of redistribution of units is going to be one of the most difficult in Army history. Men just have to be doing something in order to keep out of trouble and I am not too sure what they are going to have to do is going to meet their requirements. Fortunately we have drunk up most of the available liquor so that may not be a difficult problem.

Spring has finally decided to come out in this part of Germany and we have had three wonderful days. Lilacs are in full bloom - shades of Missoula.

May 11 - Friday

We have all had a lot of fun figuring out our points today for the system was announced last eve. According to the record, I have 116 points and only 85 are needed - if I were an enlisted man for it is not applicable to officers. So after figuring it all out, I tore up the paper and said, "It's a great war". At least the announcement gave us all something to talk about for a couple of days. I was talking with a Lt. Col. from the 9th Div. who has had 4 years in the Army, 34 months overseas, 2 Silver Stars, 1 Bronze Star and 11 Purple Hearts. Hells Bells, he has enough points to retire on and any man with 11 Purple Hearts should.

There continues to be a good deal of speculation about the fate of the fighting VIIth and many of us are beginning to wonder whether this reputation we have made isn't going to catch up to us. Perhaps due to the great amount of fighting we have had in our 11 months on the continent, we might get some kindly consideration on a deal going thru the States, but it is just wishful speculation. There are a couple of Corps in Italy who have been at it longer and no doubt they will get home, for I am sure very few of the Italian front troops will stay there. Most certainly they are deserving for theirs has been an unsung story and a tough one too.

With the redeployment getting under way very soon, I believe we are going to see a much quicker end to the Pacific than most people even dream. Certainly when our battle trained armor and artillery get at the Japs the way they have at the Krauts, something is going to happen. Too, we have a great many Infantry Divisions quite new in this theatre, but definitely battle hardened, who will be able to show the Japs a few tricks. I belong to the school that thinks when these forces are put into operation, the world will see peace.

By the way, we are celebrating a bit tonight for it is the first night that we have not blacked out. As OD I can look out over the city and see a few lights on in various buildings that are intact along our Strasse.

May 12 - Saturday

Another day of beautiful peace and not a lot doing. We went to see a movie, very well done, of the redeployment of troops after V-E day and are no

more enlightened as to our situation than we were before we went. The sum substance of it all is that plenty of men are going to be needed in the Far East and it is only a question of how lucky you are in the way you go to the other front.

Last evening they announced a battle star for the Spam Ribbon to show participation in the Bulge. That makes four for the Corps and I hope that is the last one we have for any ribbon.

The good weather you seem to be enjoying has finally arrived in this part of Germany and it has actually been hot. The trees and flowers are all out and the countryside is very lovely.

May 13 - Sunday

A Montanan finally looked me up and it was none other than Newell Gough. As you know, he is a Major in an Armored Div. and at the present they are coming under Corps which brought him into the office for a bit of information. I must confess I did not recognize him, probably due to the unexpectedness of his visit and the fact I had given up ever seeing a Montanan. I took him over to the hotel for lunch and then contacted John Bonner and had him stand by this afternoon for Newell was flying up to that Hdqtrs. Sometimes during the week Newell is coming in for the night and we will break open a bottle for a real meeting. If you see Willie, tell her that Newell looks like a million, he has lost a lot of the excess weight a lawyer collects and looks younger than I can remember him. All in all, the service seems to have agreed with him.

Like a good son I got to church this morning and while at the service the thought came to me that it was altogether fitting that the war in Europe should end in Mother's Day week. Services were held in a church here in town that had suffered very little damage, some of the windows are missing, and in the balcony the local congregation attended the service. There were not a great many of them and at first I think I had the same feeling as the rest of the men -- why were they allowed to even share our religious service? That feeling shows the depth of hatred and distrust we feel but on second thought, I am sure that each and every man attending felt ashamed of that feeling. After all, the church is a house of God and they had as much right there as I did. Throughout the service, I kept wondering what their feelings were as they looked down on a GI congregation of several hundred men. How I would have liked to have been able to listen to those inner feelings of the Germans for if they could be laid bare, I believe we could see what the future has in store for all of us.

Hatred is a terrible unnatural emotion for it runs contrary to every other emotion known to man. The difficulty is that once you have the bug, it is just about impossible to shake. It comes hard and always against your judgment and desire and I do not think I will ever lose the feeling towards the German people. I would like to, but I have seen too much. I can't make myself believe what I would like to believe, for by their own acts, I have learned to distrust everything they do, everything they say and all that they write. There are thousands like me and what a terrible thing it is.

May 14 - Monday

By the time you have this letter all of you will have heard from the War Dept. and most probably the 501st about what happened to Bob. I received the letter from the Adjutant last evening and have been so shocked by the news that I hardly know just what to write. That this should happen to Bob is hardly possible to conceive, and as you all have, I have asked myself hundreds of times, Why? Why couldn't he have waited just a few more days, or at the most a week or two, and as I sit trying to work it all out, I am going to try and help you to see the picture.

In the first place, it is like him to decide that he had had enough pushing around from the Krauts and decide that he was coming home. Too, he no doubt felt as I would have that all of us were worrying and when the opportunity presented itself, he just took off. Maybe he was hungry, who knows, but most certainly a combination of all these facts made up his mind to make a break and the only thing wrong with the idea was that it was too soon.

The following is an extract from the official report of Corporal Granvel D. Armel, who was with Bob on the escape, "On the morning of 6 April 1945, Lt. Harrison and I escaped near Burgwindheim, Germany. Around 0200 hours, 11 April, on the Ebrach-Wurzburg highway we started across a bridge about 13 kilometers west of Ebrach, on the Ebrach-Wurzburg highway. Just as we reached the center of the bridge a German sentry fired on us. Lt. Harrison, who was leading, was hit and died instantly. I was taken prisoner and taken to a German command post, and around mid-morning a German officer gave me the following items belonging to Lt. Harrison? The Bn. sent me 16 snapshots and I will send them along home very soon. That is about all there is to the story. It seems impossible, but yet it is so true that no words nor feelings can tell more.