

October 17, 1943
APO 4215
To Postmaster, New York, N.Y.

Dear George & Ruth, and friends -

So far I've received no news from anyone in the United States since my departure, nor has anyone else in our group. I am rather limited in what I can write you because of necessary censorship regulations.

George, I'd appreciate it if you would tell my Aunt & Uncle and my friends specifically what ~~our~~ group I'm a member of as there is no longer any secrecy about the matter. We have come completely out in the open both with reference to civilian and military personnel. Intelligence - espionage?

Living conditions where I am are quite good - I eat men to a tent, chow edible & in fairly sizeable quantities though I've thrown it up several times - there's something about the climate, the water, or the food that makes this a not unusual sight - I must repeat however that the chow seems very good.

Frequent entertainment is also provided - in this place there are three different movies almost every night. Last night I could have gone to see: Jeanna Darden in Nice Girl, Ginger Rogers in Batchelor Mother, and Pat O'Brien in the Mary Queen through; there was also a carnival - all this provided by the army.

The Red Cross provides much entertainment, recreation, & fulfills many requests for all sorts of conveniences. It handles all the work the Y.M.C.A. and the Salvation Army used to do - these two organizations play no part here do not even exist so far as I know. The Red Cross is doing a great job and is much appreciated by all the men. It will be my favorite charity after the war if I survive that long. As I said before

We are living eight men in a tent: one ~~was~~ ^{is} a forty-two year old Professor of Political Science at the U. of Minnesota who has published books & articles; one a liberal Washington lawyer

and former paratrooper; another a brilliant Chicago lawyer, ^{another} a former employe of the State Department for 12 years and a first cousin of Randolph Scott - and all corporals because of the overfilled and now almost rigidly frozen ranks & grades of our organization.

An official army directive has ^{been} abolished all O.C.S. schools this side of the ocean & has stated that no man will be sent back to the United States merely for O.C.S. training. The only commissions now seen over here seem to be those won on the field.

The frame in North Africa is worth two cents. To show you how values change my friends and I have paid sixty cents to buy a single Tootie Roll from other Soldiers. Candy is a rare luxury though we are rationed to two bars per week at the Pot Exchange where we can buy them for four cents a piece

The wine and cognac here are quite good, the beer very poor. There is little food to be purchased in such cities as Black Market meals are available at about three dollars per meal and are quite good. The usual non-Black Market meal consists of salad, omelette, head of wine, occasionally a pork chop or lamb chops from a dollar and twenty cents on up.

Some of the cities are quite modern in general appearance - very cosmopolitan in population - there are Greeks everywhere. Tall ~~white~~ Biblical ^{in appearance} faces - dressed in dirty flowing native costumes - their women with tattooed faces coquettishly ~~concealing~~ ^{concealing} all but one eye with their hooded head coverings. The Greeks here are considered uniformly to American troops and there are stories of their formerly having staffed our soldiers who were walking their posts as guards.

There are soldiers and sailors of all nations - French marines, soldiers, & sailors, French colonial troops, French foreign legionnaires, Scotch, English, & Canadian soldiers.

The French women here are pretty with unusually beautiful eyes - very seductive and sensual in an attractive sophisticated way.

A large number of houses of prostitution are to be found but they are all off limits to American troops.

Army medical authorities are valiantly combatting the very real dangers of widespread venereal disease. As I understand there used to be a house of prostitution available to American troops inspected by U.S. Army authorities with a prophylaxis station in the house the whole situation regulated by M.P.'s, but if this were once a fact the arrangement has been discontinued. Even the very young children are unusually mature in their sexual sophistication.

I know that one of these days I shall join some combat unit, and because of my knowledge of French and German I expect to participate in most of the campaigns right on into Germany. Our work with actual combat divisions is to a large extent front line work during an advance and rear guard work during a retreat.

There is one anti-personnel land mine used by the Germans which is particularly ominous. When stepped upon it propels a sharp pointed metal covering straight up; it usually passes ~~up~~ through the soldier's body, and a frequent wound from it is that of castration so the engineers tell us.

I'm in excellent health and in good spirits - haven't been ~~so~~ sick at all since those days of deep colds a long time ago in Florida. Please, if it is not too much trouble let my friends read this letter as I find it difficult to write a long letter to all of them.

If possible I'd like Tony & Roy, Perry & Billy to read it as it is addressed to all of you. At the end please retain it ~~for me~~ as a sort of record for me of South Africa. I should appreciate hearing from all of you.

The end of the war seems so very distant to me - to come only after long hard fighting but I have no doubt whatsoever about eventual victory over Germany and Japan. I experience no regrets and am glad to be where I am on my way to becoming a field soldier.

After another year ^{or more} of this it will seem strange to return to civilian life with all my time my own able to enjoy such simple comforts as sitting in an easy chair before an open fire, talking with friends and drinking a glass of wine or brandy.

A restlessness is being bred into many of us - a little while ago we were crazy to get

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off the boat and live on land.
Now a number of us are just
as crazy to get back on a boat
and go elsewhere. We no sooner
hit a camp than we want to move
on after a couple or three
days. In the ten months I've
been in the army I've been
stationed in seventeen different
places and in five different
states.

Give my regards to
everyone and my love to John
and his mother.

Your friend,

Jack

Jack is now with the 5th Army in

Italy - Mr. John H. Richardson
CIC section, Hq, Fifth Army
APO 464 % Postmaster, New York

Please return to Geo. Chisler

423 1/2 No. Milton Ave.

Whittier