

Hey girl:

8 July 1944 7 PM

It seems that our thoughts crossed again in the mails since I wrote you yesterday about my reminiscences of my trip home from California, and to-day I received a letter from you with much the same thoughts.

In my earlier letter I told you that I would tell you about my trip to the synagogue. As all other churches in the city it was quite elaborate, but not nearly so elaborate as the larger gentile churches. The inside was very high and built of white marble with a balcony of filagreed gold (I guess it was gold since that metal is used very freely in the churches of this city). It is far more elaborate than the synagogues back home and larger than many of the m. The place filled up very quickly and the services were held by a Chaplain of the air corps. Despite the fact that he asked the servicemen to come up to the front of the synagogue, I decided that it would be better if I stayed in the rear so that I could sneak out easily if the desire struck me. I had planned on bringing some candy with me, but unfortunately forgot to do so. The children crowded around all the soldiers begging for candy. They were obnoxiously forward. Unfortunately the Italian Jews do not speak Yiddish, but Hebrew, so that I was at a loss as to how to converse with them. However, there were some German Jewish refugees who did speak Yiddish so that I found some natives to talk to. I spent much of my time with a man originally from Germany who suffered from Angina Pectoris, and was therefore unable to work. He had to subsist on 20¢ per day, and his room plus some soup and bread which he received there cost him 15 of this 20. He is expecting to go to the US soon, where a camp is being set up for such refugees ~~at~~/somewhere in M.E. State. He has really had a tough time of it, having spent considerable time in concentration camps. The other person with whom I conversed was a Jewish youth, originally from Hungary, who fled to France with his folks who are still there. He has been in three concentration camps in Germany and escaped the fascists in Italy twice. At present he is living in a church and has no source of income. I ended up by giving him \$5. He told me how hard pressed the Jews were in Nazi occupied Europe with many communities having 20 to 25 deaths daily from starvation. Both the men to whom I talked believed that 4,000,000 Jews have died in Europe since the war started. Gosh, you in America, despite the occasional slight outbursts of antisemitism, are really fortunate.

Despite these interesting people, I'm afraid that I spent most of my time while at the synagogue with a little boy, the most gorgeous thing that you can imagine, who had a great resemblance to Elaine at the time I left home. He had black eyes that scintillated, dark hair with a long curl that extended over the top, just like Elaine's used to, and a glorious dimpled smile. I fell in love with him, and tickled him and winked at him all thru the part of the service that I stayed in the place. I finally left, in order to get some fresh air. However, I stayed outside, hoping that the youngster would come out soon, and sure enuf he and his mother and baby sister did. The mother was not at all attractive, but the sister certainly did have potentialities. Unlike most of the other children there, and there were plenty, both of these youngsters were well dressed and clean. I'm afraid that the Jewish people of this synagogue don't give one a very good impression of the Italian Jews. They are not as clean as the average Italian people of the city, nor as neat, nor are the girls as pretty on the average. That was quite a surprise to me since I have always noted that a group of Jewish people can stand well in comparison with groups of other people. However, the Italian people of this city are an unusually attractive people. I wondered whether many of these people did not wear old clothing purposely in the hopes of getting something from the soldiers. The group that went in with us decided that, since it was against regulations to bring food, we would donate money, for which food could be bought on the black market. The ones to whom I talked said that anything could be gotten on the black market. The group of 22 donated a total of \$28 of which big shot Hank donated 50¢, while Leip gave \$2. I gave \$10 feeling that that was the least I could do for them, since the money was to be used to buy food for the needy. When the little youngster finally came outside I spent some more time with him, unfortunately being unable to converse with him, and then got Capt. Cohen to take a picture of the two of us, so I would have some reminder of the incident. I also took the address of the folks in case I ever got to visit the city. One of the men who was present invited me to his home for dinner, and altho I won't go there to eat, or if I do I'll bring my own K nations and give it to him in exchange for my food, I do intend to go there because he speaks English fairly well. I certainly hope that I get back to see that little boy. He is simply darling.

Apparently the presence of Maj. Campbell is making itself felt in the battalion. I told you about the drinking episode which resulted in the investigation and the subsequent sending of Maj. Campbell to the battalion, supposedly to keep an eye on things and make sure that every thing was on the up and up. Well, Tobin, who was one of the drunken ones on that nite, has been shifted to a battalion aid station. This is contrary to the original tentative plan of the colonel as expressed before me and several other officers a few nights back, at which time he expected to send Nurnberger, who is eager to go to one of the aid stations solely to

to get away from battalion politics, to the aid station and send Tobin to the Collecting Co (Runde's) in which Nurnberger is an officer. Apparently his plan did not go thru and it makes me suspect that Maj. Campbell had something to do with sending Tobin up there. Well, I'll bide my time and maybe this whole situation will clear up one of these days.

I have been in the process of recommending John for promotion to 1st Lt. thru the medium of a combat promotion. We can do this when a vacancy exists and some man, even an enlisted man, has shown that he has the ability to take over the job. Everyone is in favor of it, and altho I haven't told John that I have been doing it because I want to surprise him, nevertheless I have been going to a great deal of trouble of getting recommendations from the battalion surgeons and the regimental surgeon in addition to my own recommendation. Otherwise, in order for him to get a promotion, now that Roy is gone, I would have to change him over to the motor officer, which I can't afford to do because of his value as the litter bearer platoon leader. If the combat promotion doesn't go thru then I will nominally make him motor officer, altho I will have him continue the same work as litter platoon officer. Drady, who has been a 2nd Lt. for more than a year, will automatically become eligible for a promotion just as soon as he has been with my company for 3 months, which means a month to go. In that way, I will have gotten promotions for all my officers.

I received the J.H. Bulletin to-day and learned that John Falk and Lou Kreindler are now Majors and Dave Lerner is a Lt. Col. Arthur Mirsky is a Major, but I'll bet he's bitching because he isn't a colonel or general or something. I'm going to send you some the copy along with a package which I have been readying for you. I also hope to send Alan a German Helmet if I can get around to mailing it to him, and I already sent him some currency in the mail of earlier in the day. I think I'll send some of this Italian currency for Judy and Elaine.

Did I tell you about the ice cream which we got for the company yesterday? The other day I collected 25¢ from each man in the company to help pay for some vegetables and ice and ice cream so that life could be made a bit more comfortable around here. Well, they had their 1st ice cream last nite, and as luck would have it I wasn't around so I missed it. However I've already gotten my money's worth out of the fresh vegetables and the cold drinks which are now available. It is interesting to know about the set up which we have regarding the ice cream. We furnish the milk and sugar and pay 8¢ per quart and they give us ~~half~~ as much ice cream as the milk we furnish. We had 15 gallons of ice cream yesterday. twice

With a set up like that I'm afraid that we won't want to leave this place. We have fixed a very nice ice box by digging a hole in the ground under the trees and putting a wooden box in it surrounded by burlap bags, moistened, plus sand. It is surprising how well ice keeps in this. Just leave it to the GIs and we'll have comfort no matter what the situation.

Tonite Van received an official looking envelope from battalion headquarters which I imagine will be the reprimand which he has been expecting. As yet, I have not received the note negating mine, but it only happened this AM so I will be patient.

Well, that's about all for now. I expect to see Bob Hope and Betty Hutton in a movie to-nite. It should be quite funny. I can't think of the name of it. I'm wondering if I might not have seen it in the states.

Believe me I miss you my sweet.

Walt.