

Good evening, darling:

13 July 1944 6:30 PM

I'm sitting in the CP in our olive grove looking out on the green shrubbery delightfully colored by the waning sun. As I look about I can see four of my men, with full field packs, walking, walking, plodding their way up hill to the bushes ~~and~~ bordering the end of our area, turning and plodding down to the opposite end of the area. These boys failed to make a hike, ducking off to a swimming hole, and as punishment they now have to walk five hours for each hour they miss. I'm sure that will deter any other men in the company from skipping out on hikes. This additional walking must be made above the usual daily hikes of two hours. They will have to walk for three hours every night until they have walked the 10 hours required of them.

Yesterday the boys failed to wake up the officers and as a result we awoke at 7:45, almost too late for chow. Of course that didn't bother us since we all felt pretty lazy and took most of the morning to get cleaned up. We kept our classes going by having the non coms give them, and it was a fortunate thing that we did because we were visited by Mac, who had come up with his forward platoon. I'm sure that if the company had been lying around he would have reported it to the colonel. To avoid any such incidents I have made it a point to keep classes going regularly, even tho everyone is fed up on them. In order to give them variety we frequently shift from the scheduled lecture and get off on worldly topics. For example, yesterday we had Swede Anderson conduct the class. Swede is one of those loud mouthed likeable fellows who has a radical viewpoint on everything. He keeps the company in constant amused turmoil. We all thought it would be a good chance to amuse us all and at the same time bring up some interesting things, so we had the class held outside of the officers tent where we could hear what went on. Such arguing! Such a diversity of subjects! Everyone ~~was~~ got into the heated discussion, and the class, which was due to be over at noon continued even after the chow call was made, and believe me that takes something interesting in this man's army.

Being tired of our rations, I sent out Drady, sgt. Macri and the acting Mess sgt. to scour the countryside for additional food, such as fresh vegetables, chickens, fruits, etc. However, it seems that the Germans, here, like everywhere else, took everything with them, and the natives had nothing to sell or even barter (there is a considerable difference, money doesn't mean much, but food, soap, or cigarettes may often get something which can't be bought with money), so I guess we'll have to continue eating only army food (I skipped supper entirely tonight, altho the noon meal was swell and I filled up on it).

The afternoons here are extremely hot and no one feels like doing anything. As a result the officers usually lie on their cots and undress completely and read or sleep. The sun beat down so strongly on our tent that I decided that it was hotter in there than in the direct sunshine, so I sat in the sun and took a sun bath while I read. In order to help while away the time we even had a water fight during the afternoon.

I rediscovered your Kaltenborn map and spent part of the afternoon marking in the front lines. I hope the Russians can keep moving as freely and rapidly as they have been, because I believe that the Jerries will have to pull their troops out of Italy if they keep going, in order to keep them from heading right into Berlin. I'm sure that the Germans will pull troops from all fronts to hold back the Russians for fear of what they will do once they get into Germany.

Last night we had the usual exciting volleyball games on our improved court. It is quite good since the bulldozer leveled it off. We are trying to develop a company team so that we can play some of the other companies around here, and possibly make a bit of money. We can really develop a good team for we have a number of good players in the company.

Last nite I received Soph's package from Hershey's - 48 nickel Hershey Almond bars, and I needn't say that they were most welcome. The thought comes to my mind as to whether Hershey charged the full retail price for them.

Speaking of food, some of my foragers went looking about the area yesterday and found a farm house where they bought a duck for \$1. They then brought it to the area and had a duck dinner late at night. You'd be surprised to what trouble many of these men will go to satisfy their stomachs. Maybe there is something in the statement that the way to a man's heart is through his stomach.

The officers in the company, including myself, are all up in the air about the pictures in Life showing the beginning of our push. The writeups accompanying the pictures don't even begin to tell the story of what happened in our sector and tends to dismiss it with slight consideration. The writer was with the French group, who we will admit are more spirited fighters having a dash and elan about them that American soldiers do not have. However, when it comes to efficiency I'll take the Americans any time. They didn't take into consideration the opposition we encountered, nor the difficult terrain features which resulted in the Germans being able to see every move which we made. We know that subsequently our division received full credit for the wonderful work which it did, but nevertheless we were up in arms about the way



-2-

they dismissed our efforts so nonchalantly. If we were the letter to the editor type they'd really hear plenty from us.

I refer to the May 29 issue of Life. I'll enclose some of the pictures - and write ups with some of my own ~~my~~ remarks appended. I'm going to send them in a separate letter because they will be too heavy to go by air mail.

I really have no more to say for to-night.

All my love , darling

Walt.