

Good morning, dearest one:

22 July 44 8 A.M.

I'm afraid there's not much to tell you since I spent most of the day reading Studs Lonigan. I had planned reading one book of the trilogy each day, which means I should read the more than 1100 pages in 3 days. Unless something unforeseen occurs to-day I should finish it. I am keeping ahead of the schedule I set for myself but it has resulted in my practically spending all day yesterday with my nose in the book. I had planned to go back to our bn. HQ but I didn't want to waste the time away from Studs, so I sent Vince Drady. I have still the feeling that I'm better off away from that place & as a result I simply NEVER go there except on business.

Yesterday Macri received a letter from his mother telling about the terrible circus fire in Hartford. She had been at the hospital visiting her brother who had lobar pneumonia, when the casualties from the fire started coming in. They came in so numerous & rapidly that the hospital enlisted the aid of all the visitors so that Mrs. Macri pitched in to help. It must have been pretty awful. She met a group of soldiers who were patients of a neighbouring military hospital. They had all been ^{wounded} overseas & were recuperating at the military hospital & had gone to the circus in a large group. Fortunately only one of the entire group was seriously burned. That would be hell, to go thru battle & live only to die in a fire back home.

I hit the jackpot yesterday. Air mails from you for the 6th & 8th, a V mail of the 8th, an Ernie Pyle letter from Soph of the 5th, 2 Israelites, 2 PH's, 1 NY Times, 1 Readers Digest, & 1 Time. Your one letter included Ben's letter which really was swell & gave me an exciting time in its reading. I was so impressed by it that I had Van read it as I finished each page & we both became so engrossed in it that we were late for supper. This is a customary thing for me - I usually finish what I am doing before going to chow & as a result I usually am the last one thru the line. But Van, with that tremendous appetite of his, is always among the first in line & it must be something of extreme interest to make him ignore his appetite for even one minute. John, Vince, Leip, & Macri also read it with absorption. I certainly would like to get more letters like that. I still haven't touched the magazines etc I received in the mail because I want to finish Studs Lonigan first. However, the letters from you & Ben plus the WW & Pyle articles kept me busy for over an hour.

You know, I completely forgot the Mahoneys when I visited the Pope. I feel quite badly about it but if I send any men into the rest camp I'm going to make them see Father Joe & get ~~the~~ ^{the} rosary blessed by the Pope & also send one of those certificates to the Mahoney family. I hope I can think of the old man's first name.

The boys have my radio working quite well since they added more wire to the aerial & attached this to our telephone wire. We were at first worried as to whether it would interfere with our phone conversations but it works very well. I heard Grace Moore in the afternoon & Kay Kyser & Alec Templeton last night. However there was a bit too much interference in the latter two so that we finally gave it up as not being worth while. As usual the boys came into the station to hear their jive favorites.

I finally heard Sally, the Berlin Bitch. It is she who broadcasts to our troops. Sometimes her information is amazingly accurate, eg. she will at times tell the troops what the pass word for the day is or give the exact location of a unit. The program started off with a little skit which was extremely clever propaganda. It concerned the song "Don't change horses in the middle of the stream," which has been banned from the U.S. airways despite its lack of political content. They very cleverly get the point across, in this case the absurdity of such behavior, & then just as soon as they get the desired impression to you they immediately start a "digressing action" among themselves, such as arguing as to a choice of words used, etc. Thus they subtly get their point across without many of the soldiers realizing their method of doing so. Next they give Nazi-tainted war news of each front - tersely & without too much extra detail. Between the news of each front they play an excellent American name band record (actually it is this that attracts many of the G.I.s to the program). Finally, Sally reads messages to wives & families from Captured American

soldiers. They give the home addresses of the wives, the name, rank, & serial number of the soldier prisoner so that there is no question as to the authenticity of it. We do the same thing on our propaganda programs to the Jerries. Sally finally goes off the air with a clever adieu to the American soldiers. She really is quite good & the program is a clever one, but I'm afraid that it is really a waste of time because none of our soldiers believe anything they say since Stars & Stripes keeps us informed & we know we get accurate information because we can see the accuracy of the stories pertaining to our own area.

The war news we received yesterday was marvellous, with the suggestion of a real, out & out, open conflict between the German army & the Nazis. If this is true we can expect the end of Germany before much long. That was the way the last war ended so suddenly. From some of the rumors we have been getting - well authenticated ones - something tremendously big is going to happen one of these days - I don't know where or when but it should make a decided difference in the war situation. I'm hoping that none of this is necessary & that Germany has its internal collapse before we find it necessary to lose any more lives.

The other day I was going to tell you about Matusik but never did get around to it. He is a 30 year old lad who spent 15 years on a farm in Michigan. He is of Polish extraction & takes great pleasure in talking Polish at every opportunity. Oftentimes we hear strange noises emanating from a nearby area & find that it is Matusik who is talking Polish with Allenzy. When the two of them get to drinking beer or vino (they both get drunk whenever we have anything to drink - Allenzy obviously so, Matusik pleasantly so) they start in singing Polish songs with Katho, our extremely graceful jitterbug, joining in. Usually Katho then starts on a Polish dance & Allenzy joins him while Matusik plays the Polish melodies on his harmonica. Matusik is just the opposite of Allenzy, the trouble maker. He causes no trouble whatsoever, and is always volunteering to do odd jobs around the area, e.g. screening the kitchen with mosquito bars, chopping poles to make stands for the volleyball net (he doesn't play the game himself) and any other chore that may arise. I guess it is a holdover from his farming days. He, like almost all other farmers, is a jack-of-all trades & is quite a handy man to have around. The other night I passed by the farmhouse at the edge of our area & heard some peculiar noise in one of the buildings & the voice of a GI talking. I became curious as to what was going on so I went inside. (I'm always trying to keep the boys out of mischief.) The place was a stone barn housing five cows & 2 calves & in a small room next to the cattle there was Matusik cutting hay with an old machine, similar to a bread slicing machine in a delicatessen, while one Italian put the hay on a feeder & another one pitched it out of the way after it was cut. Matusik was supplying the main power to the slicing machine. He just can't stay away from farms.

My boy Allenzy has not been causing any difficulty at all ever since I gave him his last warning that I would not tolerate it. He is very frightened of a courtmartial because the sentences given over here are very severe. He protested me quite a bit in our west area to be permitted to go to Rome but I refused knowing that he would only get into trouble. I told him he couldn't go because I knew that he had gone into Rome when we were still on the lines at the house at the cross road. He inadvertently admitted this by the smile he gave me when I told him I knew but had no proof. I have been waiting for him to do something really wrong so that I can get rid of him as mentally unsuitable for the military service but I have been unable to catch him doing anything alone. He usually has some one else with him who doesn't deserve severe punishment & therefore I have to forget the incident & bide my time. I thought I really had him the other day. An Italian civilian came into my area complaining that a barrel of wine had been stolen from him by 2 soldiers - a tall one with bald head, & a short one. Both had red crosses on their helmets. That simply could not be anyone but Allenzy & Kaminski. The Italian

didn't care if they took the wine but he wanted the container back. Allenczy wasn't around for the Italian to identify & we told the latter to come back at 6 PM (Allenczy never misses show.) I had Allenczy brought in to me later & he denied all knowledge of the act. The civilian did not show up & since I had no proof I had to forget the matter. The next morning Allenczy foolishly implicated himself by telling Macri that the Italian wouldn't be around because he got his container back. Our farmer, here, complained to some of our Italian-speaking boys that since we have been in this area 11 of his chickens have disappeared. I'm sure Allenczy got most of these but I have no proof, & since there are so many soldiers around, there are probably Allenczy types in some of the other outfits too, which should account for the disappearance of so many chickens in so short a time. I have issued a warning to the boys to leave things alone. We shall see.

We received a new Yank magazine (European edition) yesterday, & the picture on the back of it put anything Esquire prints to shame. It was a photograph of a very well built pretty girl wearing a dress with lacing down the front middle. You could see just about all of her breasts save the nipples & these showed themselves impressed thru her dress. I can't see why Esquire can't get the 2nd class mailing privilege when this type of stuff goes thru unhindered.

I think I'll close now & go back to Studs Lonigan. I imagine I'll finish it to-day having only 400 pages to go.

I love you so, darling, and think & dream of you constantly.

Walt.