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Image 1:

(1) Feb. 13, 1944

Dear Mother, Dad, and Grandpa,

This is the first chance I have had all week to sit down and write a letter. I do want to write more often – if only I had some free time. I think that it is wonderful that we are able to talk together ~~to~~ so often. I run into difficulty there, also, because I have so little time to place a call. I find that the best time to call is on a weekday noon. At night and on Sundays you must wait hours. For example, it took 2 hours to get my call through this morning. However, if I have the chance to call home, it is worth waiting hours. Hearing your voices is the biggest [undecipherable] morale builder in the world. But I'd hate to take a look at the telephone bill. I called Friday afternoon but your line was busy. Friday night the operator told me it would take 1 to 2 hours. I couldn't place the call since I had to get ready for inspection.

I received all your letters

Image 2:

and Valentines today at noon mail call. Thanks loads for the Valentines. I certainly appreciate them. I especially like the beautiful poems on them. I felt badly because I couldn't send anything ~~to~~ home for Valentine's Day but there was no way to do it. The PX was my only hope and it didn't even have one Valentine card. It seems to me that they would carry all those things.

Yesterday I received with open arms the box of food you sent. Everything is wonderful. I grabbed the figs and ate them first thing. This afternoon I made salami sandwiches for myself and a bunch of the boys. I put pickles on the sandwiches. They really went for them. And I can understand why because they tasted marvelous. I still have a little salami and a few pieces of bread left. I also ate most of the potato chips. The cheese and crackers look mighty good. I think I have said this a hundred times and I'll probably say it a hundred million times – if only I were at home and could have a home cooked meal. I miss all the little things of home life, too. Everything in the Army is so crude. But then I don't suppose it could be any other way.

Earlier this week I received the box with the slippers, sunglasses, etc. I need all that you sent. Including

Image 3:

(3) Feb. 13, 1944

the malted milk tablets was a very good idea.

I can't understand why I haven't received Aunt Fannie's cookies. Maybe I will get the box tomorrow. It was really wonderful of her to send it to me. She's really the only one in the family who makes any sense. She's done more for me than my Aunts ever have done or ever will do. In fact, she is the only aunt or great aunt I have ever really felt close to.

I was shocked to hear about Seymour. I never thought he would be over that quickly. Is Sally still working in Indianapolis? Also, will Milton get into the Air Corps Ground Crew?

I do wish something big and decisive would happen in the war. Why should it take so long? And why aren't we stronger in Italy? Why? Why? Why? I could ask dozens of questions like that pertaining to every subject.

I went on 2 long hikes this past week. The one Thursday afternoon was 2 ½ miles, while

Image 4:

the one Friday morning was 5 miles. We get a ten minute break in the middle of the march during which time we can sit down and rest. I get awfully tired while I am marching. After a certain period of time, my feet seem to move mechanically. These hikes must be terrible in hot weather. We wore our overcoats, leggings, rifle belt, bayonet, canteen, field pack with pup tent only, and raincoat packed in. The rifles (9 lbs.) were slung over our shoulders. On other marches we will also have a to carry a steel helmet, blankets, clothes, toilet articles, gas mask. What a life! On Friday's hike we slogged thru wet sand and clay. It is just as bad as mud. I don't think there is any black dirt in Georgia. It is all red clay and sand. The sand gets in everything. I think Georgia is about the ugliest state in the Union.

Tomorrow we take another hike in the afternoon from 2 till 6. On this hike we are supposed to pitch tents. We were taught how to do this Saturday.

It has been bitter cold here. I wish † it would get warmer. There is no difference between the climate here and in Ohio. Everything is done outside and I have been so cold that I have ached all over from the cold.

It looks like we get up earlier every day. Tomorrow is 5:45.

Image 5:

(5)

Feb. 13, 1944

†We must get up so soon as soon as the lights are switched on. And on a cold, winter morning that is the hardest thing in the world to do. The cold is worse than the training we get. I don't know just what the temperature has been, but I do know that is has been way below freezing.

Last week in chemical warfare we had to run through clouds of poison gas without gas masks in order to recognize the odor. However, not enough gas was released to harm anyone. We smelled mustard gas, phosgene, chloropicrin, and Lewisite.

I thought I would have to be on 24- hr. guard duty, but it was only 12 – 7 P.M. to 7 A.M. I had to walk my post from 1 A.M. to 3:45 A.M. We should have been finished at 3, but the ~~Officer of the Day~~ Corporal of the Guard who relieved us was asleep and no one woke him up. It wasn't bad. I wore summer and winter underwear, field jacket, sweater, scarf, overcoat, woolen cap and helmet liner plus

Image 6:

Leggings, and O.D. pants and shirt. I ran into 2 drunks, members of the cadre, and I brushed them off and told them to go back to their barracks. As I left them they were falling all over each other practicing different movements left and right face, about face, etc. I challenged several others, but I encountered no difficulties. After we were thru, we slept in the guard house until 7 o'clock.

I saw Dick Mattingly tonight. He was over here. You remember him of course – he talks in a high voice. He said Bob Pugh wanted to come over tonight but couldn't because he was on guard duty. They are in the same company.

I waited all evening to hear Walter Winchell¹ but some of the boys wanted to hear something else instead.

¹ Winchell was a newspaper and radio gossip columnist.

I have to hurry this letter since I don't have much time. I'd like to wake up in the morning and find out that the war is over.

I want to write more often than I have been. If I could only find the time. Write me all the news. Hope to see you soon.

Lovingly,
Jerome, Jr.

Image 7:

(7)
Feb. 13, 1944

P.S. I forgot to tell you that I was paid this week for service up to Jan. 30. I got \$15.12 after deductions for war bonds, insurance, laundry. Then they wanted us to buy war stamps. I bought \$5 worth, so I have \$10.12 left. That was for the 4th War Loan Drive.² Woe to the person who didn't buy any stamps. In effect, it was really compulsory. But I don't care. I have loads of money and I can't buy anything with it.

I was glad to hear that the A.S.T.P. will not be closed. That only confirms what Father Gabe told you.

Well, I'll go to bed now and dream of everything I'd like to do but can't – my favorite pastime. For example, we were going to New York way back in Sept. – remember? Above all, I'd be happy if I could just be at home. (over)

Image 8:

Dad, I was glad I was able to talk to you. We've had a hard time making a connection.

You never mentioned anything about Norman Lippard's father passing away. I saw it in the paper last week.

² War Bonds were savings bonds sold to the public during World War II to help finance the war. They typically were sold at 75 cents on the dollar, and could be redeemed at par after a specified number of years varying by the interest rate. While many were sold continuously through a form of payroll deduction, several "drives" were held throughout the war to raise additional money. The 4th War Loan Drive occurred from January 18th to February 15th, 1944. War Stamps were sold in smaller denominations than the War Bonds, bore no interest, and were designed to allow people to save up to purchase a War Bond. For example, after saving 100 25 cent War Stamps they could be turned in for a single \$25 War Bond (the lowest denomination of War Bond).