

C0262B001F004L024

Image 1:

Ziracco, Italy

June 20, 1945

Dear Mother, Dad, and Grandpa,

Well, we all expected to move nearer Trieste this week, but it didn't come off. Maybe we will move yet. I don't know. I like our area here, though. But after all, it wouldn't be the Army if changes weren't made. No good, bad, or indifferent rumor floating around these days.

I read that the 3rd and 7th Armies will be the army of occupation with the 9th and 15th assisting them for a while. The 1st, as announced before, is going Jap-hunting via the U.S. The 5th is a question-mark, I guess. They did announce that the 1st Armored started the big offensive here with us. I talked to a lot of fellows from the 1st Armored when they were bivouacked in our area then. You see the 10th started the push and drove the Germans out of the Apennines into the Po Valley. The fighting was pretty bitter then for the Germans were so deeply entrenched in dugouts they had prepared all winter. And the territory was thick with minefields. The Nazis wouldn't surrender until they had fired every bit of their ammunition. Whole platoons of our infantry were wiped out. But after a few days we broke into the Po Valley and the 1st Armored went to town with their tanks. The 10th Mountain was the first to reach the Po Valley and the first to reach and cross the Po River, and the first to reach the Alps. For all its achievements, the 10th is up for the Presidential Citations.¹

By the way, the 1st Armored was one of the first divisions over here.

Please send me some food whenever you would like to.

Image 2:

(2)

Ziracco, Italy

June 20, 1945

They trained in Ireland and England and made the North Africa landings in 1942. Very few of the original men are in it now. Most of them are replacements. After all, in 2 ½ years of battle the casualties are bound to be terrific. There were over a thousand death in the 10th Division. War is not very pleasant. I wish every delegate at San Francisco could have been in the front lines before the conference. We all hate to face unpleasant realities, but I never want to forget this war. No American should forget it, and each citizen should do all in his power to prevent a repetition of this human tragedy.

I'm enclosing a couple of clippings from "Stars and Stripes" about the 86th Division. You must have read about it by now, however. I was certainly glad to get out of that division. I didn't know it was over here until a couple of weeks ago when I read about its being sent to the U.S. I had heard in the States that it was broken up.

I'm leaving Friday for a 5-day pass to the Lido in Venice. I think it will be a lot of fun.

Yesterday I received the 2 films you sent May 29th. I have one other film left, so I will be able to take a lot more pictures.

Today the company sent a group over to Trieste to spend the day. Now that the Yugoslavs are out of the city, we can go there. I hope I can go when I come back from Venice. They intend to send a number of groups over there.

¹ The Presidential Unit Citation is the highest award in the system of unit awards of the United States Army. It is the equivalent, in terms of valor demonstrated, to the Distinguished Service Cross for individuals. My research has not indicated that the 10th Mountain Division actually received this award.

I hear that we're having ice-cream tonight. Big deal! We had some Monday noon that was delicious. They get an ice-cream mix that the Army issues and take it over to some Italian who mixes it with evaporated milk they give him and freezes it.

Please send some food at any time.

Image 3:

(3) Ziracco, Italy
June 20, 1945.

There is also a movie tonight in our area—[“See my Lawyer.”](#) We have movies every night now. One of the officers acquired a projector for the company, and we get the films from Special Service. Last night we saw the technical musical [“Bring on the Girls”](#) with Eddie Bracken, Sonny Tufts, and Veronica Lake. The night before it was [“Here Come the Waves”](#) with Betty Hutton and Bing Crosby.

Sunday night I went over to the Red Cross to see Sonja Henie in [“It's a Pleasure.”](#) They have movies there every Friday and Sunday night. Last Saturday we all had to see the War Department film “On to Tokyo,” the sequel to [“Two Down and One to Go.”](#) I understand these films are being shown to civilians. Have you seen them?

Wasn't Gen. Buckner's death on Okinawa a tragedy? Those generals take too many chances. During the offensive here Gen. Truscott made a crash landing right in our area. I was digging a fox-hole when his plane came down. I rushed over in time to see a 3-star general walk out. Neither he nor his pilot, a staff sgt. were hurt. The propellor [sic] was broken, but that was about the only damage. He was viewing the Po River crossing from above. He was whisked away to division headquarters right away.

That Okinawa campaign has been so long and so costly. That invasion was begun when we were still in the Apennines resting and preparing for the spring offensive.

Your package sent May 12th arrived Tuesday. All the cheese kept perfectly and is so good. Also the can of nuts and tomato juice are just perfect. In a minute I'll be going into raptures over everything. But seriously, it is swell to get all these things.

We have loudspeakers all over the area blaring out the latest records. Got stacks of them the other day. I don't know whether they came from the red cross or Special Service.

Don't forget to send some food at any time.

Image 4:

(4) Ziracco, Italy
June 20, 1945

I imagine the awnings look very nice on the house.

That's an excellent article on Italy by [Summer Welles](#). Too bad he is not in the State Department now.

I'd like to see the scrap-book you are making, Mother.²

Seems like all the girls are getting married or engaged. Saw Paula Zimmerman's engagement announcement in the paper.

I was just reading over your letter of the 11th, Mother, and see that you knew about the 3rd and 7th Armies before we did here.

² See Scrapbook of World War II Era Items, circa 1940s, Box 16, Folder 1, Jerome Epstein papers, C0262, Special Collections Research Center, George Mason University Libraries.

I too wish you could send a home-made peach pie. It probably wouldn't keep, though. Hope you are all on top of the world, and much love to all of you.

Lovingly,

Jerome, Jr.

P.S. Send some food whenever you would like to.