

C0262B001F002L008

Image 1:

March 5, 1944

Dear Mother, Dad, and Grandpa,

I am writing this letter from the Service Club where I have been most of the day.

I was a shame that the connections were so bad on our phone call this morning. I don't know why it should be that way so often. I had intended to call even earlier, but I just could not drag myself out of bed. Besides it being a bitter cold morning, I was still aching all over, all of which makes a fellow want to stay in bed. However, I managed to get over to the company day room where I always place my calls but there was a long line there already – and, mind you this was at 8 o'clock in the morning. So I dashed over to the Service Club where I got the call through in a few minutes.

After that, I stayed here and had a wonderful breakfast. It almost made me feel like a civilian again. Wonderful people civilians. I wouldn't mind being one of them.

Image 2:

But back to breakfast. I had tomato juice, half of a grapefruit, bacon and eggs, toast and marmalade, doughnuts, cereal, and a bottle of milk.

I then went back to the barracks to do some straightening up ~~to to~~ and to clean myself up. I made a law not to eat in the mess hall at all today, since I had my share of it yesterday on K.P. So I came back to the Service Club ~~to~~ for lunch which consisted of fried chicken with all the trimmings.

I have been here all after-noon listening to the orchestra and reading and writing.

I am eagerly looking forward to seeing you this week. I'm so thankful that you are able to make the trip. I had intended to ask for a pass yesterday, but K.P. put a crimp in that. However, I will apply for one the first of the week. I don't see any reason why I shouldn't get one under the circumstances. The parents of a boy in my barracks came down this week end, and he was able to get a pass.

I was on K.P. for about 7 hours which wasn't so bad. I ate anything I could get my hands on besides the regular meal. I sliced tomatoes, and I believe I had 5 or 6 of them. The cook was baking cinnamon

Image 3:

(3)

rolls, and so I helped myself to a number of them. I also had a glass of milk and 3 glasses of fruit juice. (What is it with me? All I can talk about is food.) During the afternoon the cooks chased all the K.P.'s out of the kitchen and gave us outside work to do. (The cooks then spent the afternoon shooting crap.)

We moved to another barracks yesterday where there are double-decker beds. I am on the bottom (That is what I wanted.)

We go ~~out~~ on bivouac for 2 weeks beginning March 26th. We come back for a week and then go out for 2 more weeks. I am glad that you will be here before we go.

Boy, was that box of cookies wonderful. I don't think anyone else can cook like you, Mother. Those chocolate cookies, especially, are excellent.

I received the boxes of candy from Cleveland the early part of the week. All of it is delicious. Those nuts are especially good. Funny thing, I didn't receive your

Image 4:

post card from Cleveland until yesterday.

Well thank goodness our bayonet training is completed. I never hated anything so much in all my life. We had to run the bayonet assault course 2 times in the past week. It is really a very difficult obstacle course about 275 yds. long complete with dummies, hurdles, barbed wire entanglements, shell holes, wide ditches, big bags to walk and jump across, etc. We also ran the regular obstacle course twice this week. On it there is an 8-foot wall which we have to climb over, big ditches to jump across, and other tough obstacles. Some fun!

We had grenades and hand to hand combat many times in the past week. Calisthenics we always have. We also spent a lot of time digging and camouflaging fox holes and fire trenches!

There is so much exercise – in fact—too much. It is hard for me to take it all. I am exhausted after I finish. It is doubly hard for a person like me who never exercised much and who was never athletically inclined. I can

Image 5:

(5)

hardly turn over in bed at night because my body is so sore all over. If I could only stop when I get so tired. But in the Army that is impossible.

I was glad to get the newspapers and magazines you sent me. I had a chance to catch up on my reading today. That was a fine article on A.S.T.P. by Dr. Dadds of Princeton. I do wish that the war were going faster. What in the world are they waiting for? When that new landing was made in Italy in January everyone thought that the Allies would be in Rome within a matter of days or even hours. And now look what has taken place.¹ It looks like Finland won't get out of the war after all. Yes, the air offensive is going well. But that won't win the war.² Things that we thought would happen long ago have not come into being so far. It's really darn confusing and disappointing, too.

Image 6:

There's not much else to write about. I sent the card to Mrs. Kemp today. I never thanked her for the Valentine. What should I do about that now? I haven't been able to write anyone else yet. I want especially to write Aunt Fannie as soon as possible.

I wish you knew how much I enjoy all of your letters. I think a soldier wants mail more than anything else.

By the way, I [undecipherable] cracked my watch crystal yesterday. The crystal is still on the watch, however. I imagine I can have it fixed in Columbus. Also, my flashlight which I need badly around her is on the [undecipherable].

¹ Epstein is referring here to the Allied landing at Anzio in January 1944. This amphibious invasion was intended to help the Allies breakthrough to Rome after they been stalled following the September 1943 invasion of Italy by German defensive positions called the "Gustav Line" or "Winter Line". However, the Anzio landings ("Operation Shingle) also bogged down in the face of rough terrain and heavy German counterattacks. Rome finally fell on June 5th, 1944, the day before the D-Day invasion of Normandy. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Anzio

² Epstein is referring to the Combined Bomber Offensive, which sought to apply the tenets of strategic bombing strategy develop before the war into practice. The intent was to bomb the German homeland and occupied Europe, in theory causing the Nazi war effort to collapse through a combination of economic distress and lowered morale. The Americans put more emphasis on the economic aspect, while the British believed the Offensive would cause German civilian morale to collapse. Epstein here is perhaps more realistic than either American or British Air Force leaders in recognizing that this would not, at least on its own, win the war.

Well, have a nice trip down, and I'll be waiting for you.

Love,

Jerome, Jr.

P.S. I wish this war would end soon. I'll probably be an old man before I'm able to finish my education. How I'd love to be going to school and knowing something fine and cultured, instead of all this horrible rot.

Topics: A.S.T.P. cancelation, homesickness, hand to hand combat training, bayonet training, Anzio landing