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Image 1:

Jan. 30, 1944

Dear Mother, Dad, + Grandpa,

It was so good to hear your voices this afternoon. I waited over 2 hrs for that call – sometimes it takes even longer. I suppose it is best to call around noon on week days. On Sunday however it is very difficult to get a call through at any time, for the lines are so busy.

I received both your letters. Mother, on Friday, while I received yours, Dad, on Saturday, so you can see that the mail service down here is pretty good. I was wrong when I wrote you that the letter would be sent back if you weren't present during mail call. It will be held another day, and then, I imagine, be sent back.

I am writing this letter in the day room, where the 2 telephones are located. One boy placed a call to Chicago at 11:30 and the operator told him it would take 2 or 3 hours. He left and a half hour later the call came thru. But he couldn't be located so he waited 3 hrs. thinking the call would come through. Then the operator told him

Image 2:

what had happened. I am always afraid something like that will happen to me. You really can't set a definite time to call. In the evening I could talk to all of you, but there's always that same time limit of 5 minutes.

I just ran from the telephone room to the lounging room to hear [undecipherable] play "Speak Low." It was beautiful. I can just picture Mary Martin singing that now on Broadway. Something like that takes your mind off the Army even if only for a few minutes. How long is this thing going to last? How long will it be before I can get into the work I really love? Today a year ago we first started out for Oxford, and since then I've had nothing I've really wanted. I am grateful however that I was able to be at home for 4 months. I like freedom too well. I don't like to be told this and that, where I can put my shoes, my clothes, what I can and can't wear & etc. But that is the Army method.

I certainly appreciate the cupcakes, Mother. They were delicious. When you're a long way from home nothing could be more appreciated than good home-cooking. I am looking forward to the oranges and tangerines.

Dad, the stationary you sent is very good looking. Before sent my writing kit I bought

Image 3:

(3)

Jan. 30, 1944

this stationary at the PX.¹ It comes in tablet form and attached to a portfolio made of cardboard. I took the cardboard off and put the tablet in my leather kit. I'll use this up first.

The coat hangers were badly needed. A couple of the boys had only 1 or 2 hangers, so I lent them each one. As I told you over the phone, I could use about 6 more. We even have to hang our shirts and our summer uniforms up even though we can't wear the summer uniforms until April.

It was so cold last night I put on the top part of my long underwear. I also used a comfort besides the two blankets. It was very cold until about 10 A.M. where it began to warm up. By 1 o'clock it

¹ Post Exchange, essentially a department store carrying necessary goods for sale to service members on Army posts.

was so hot you could hardly stand it. That's the way it is every day. It must be unbearably hot in the summer. When its [sic] cold though my sweater will feel darn good.

I am gradually shaking off

Image 4:

my cold. I really had a very deep cold, barking and all. If I could had plenty of rest, I could have thrown it off in no time – that is, if I could have been at home.

The Army does [undecipherable] glasses, but not to A.S.T.P. boys.² So maybe you had better have an extra pair made for me just in case I should break mine. Also sunglasses to fit over my regular glasses wouldn't be bad. Mine might be in one of the drawers in my room.

I would also like something to carry my toilet articles in. When have to fight to get a place at the wash bowl, something into which everything could be just thrown would be better. A-I have a zipper bag at home that I used at school. That might do. It's hard to use that thing that ties around your waist. It would be wonderful to use if the latrine weren't so crowded. I've seen some nice leather zipper bags. I think something like that is better than those sacks with a string around them, don't you?

I also need slippers to wear to and from the shower. We have to walk outside to go to the latrine.

A radio would be wonderful, but we were told not to get

Image 5:

(5) Jan. 30, 1944

radios unless they would fit in our foot locker because the urge to steal radios is very great. I don't know what to do about the radio.

I went to the movies last night with Dan Schiff and [undecipherable]. The theatres are so darn far away.

Well, I wished I could write about the war being over. That is what I always dream about.

I understand that there is a very nice hotel in Columbus³ where you could stay if you came here. However I could never get a weekend pass. After 15 days, however, I could probably get a pass on Sunday. I don't know just how the procedures work as yet. It would probably be just my luck to get K.P. on Sunday. K.P. is only a half day though.

[undecipherable strike through]

I wonder if you could also send me my shoe brush it is on the shelf in my cupboard. I hate to keep you busy sending so many things, but I do need them. I always mean to ask you over the phone, and then I always forget.

Image 6:

I always want to tell you so much, and then I forget half of it.

² "The Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP) was a military training program instituted by the United States Army during World War II to meet wartime demands both for junior officers and soldiers with technical skills. Conducted at more than 222 American universities, it offered training in such fields as engineering, foreign languages, and medicine." Wikipedia, accessed 15 February 2018.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Army_Specialized_Training_Program.

³ Columbus, GA is the town directly outside Fort Benning, GA where Epstein was assigned at this time.

Well, that is all I can think of now. Write me.

Love,

Jerome, Jr.