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Image 1:

Ziracco, Italy

June 1, 1945

Dear Mother, Dad, and Grandpa,

Well, here it is the 1<sup>st</sup> of June already. How time does fly. In another month's time I'll be able to wear a gold bar for a half year's service overseas. One is enough, thank you. I'll go back to the states at any time without coaxing.

I haven't written like I should lately, but please don't worry when you don't hear from me. Naturally, I suppose, all sorts of things do come into your thoughts.

The past Monday I went on pass to Venice, the most beautiful city I have seen in Italy so far. It was a beautiful day for sightseeing, and I took a number of pictures. We left here at 8 in the morning and returned around 11 P.M. – spending about 8 hours in Venice. Of course the first thing we did was to take a ride in one of the gondolas. And what a peculiar feeling it is to ride down the streets of a city in a boat! I took several rides and would have gone for more had there been time. It is the only mode of transportation, you know. Our first ride was from Piazza Roma to San Marco Square, the center of Venice. It took us down the Grand Canal, the main “street” of the city <sup>which is</sup> incidentally, like something out of a fairy tale. All the gondolas are black and they indeed make a picturesque sight as they travel along—the gondoliers standing up and deftly maneuvering them about.

San Marco Square is a large square surrounded by San Marco Cathedral, the campanile, and other famous buildings, all gorgeous and all decorated with the riches of the world, myriads of precious jewels and fine marbles.

Please send some food whenever you care to do so.

Image 2:

(2)

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We took a guide through the Cathedral, but he spoke <sup>very</sup> poor English and we found it difficult to understand him. However, we did manage to learn quite a bit. He was quite a character – small and frail—the Peter Lorre type, and I kept thinking of Charlie Chan or Peter Lorre, or better yet “Arsenic and Old Lace” as he kept saying in that wistful voice of his – “Now I take you to the tomb. Yes, now I take you to the tomb. Come with me. Come with me.”

The British Eight Army runs an information center in what used to be the place where tourists reserved seats for the French Wagon-Lits trains and for Cook's Tours.

I also had tea and crumpets at the 8<sup>th</sup> Army canteen run by the Y.M.C.A. The British certainly go for their tea in a big way. We met a lot of British, New Zealanders, etc.

A Paramount newsreel cameraman rounded up a bunch of us G.I.'s in 3 boats—“ducks” they are called<sup>1</sup>, and took pictures of us riding through Venice. Another cameraman took colored movies of us and also some stills. So you might see me in the movies or in the papers yet. It was some experience! He was looking for picturesque scenes and took a lot of pictures around the Rialto Bridge.

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<sup>1</sup> DUKWs, commonly called “Ducks” were amphibious vehicles used by the Army during WWII. Today they can be found giving tours in seaside cities such as Boston and New Orleans. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/DUKW>

There are a lot of nice, modern shops in Venice. They are used to Americans, they say, for there were so many American tourists before the war. I didn't have a chance to buy much, for we tried to crowd everything into a short period of time.

I used up 2 films out of the 3 you sent me, so please send me some more if you are able to obtain them. It would have been marvelous if I had had

Image 3:

(3) Ziracco, Italy  
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kodacolor films.

I wish you could see all the pigeons in San Marco Square! It's beautiful.

Also we saw an outfit of Scotchmen stage a retreat parade there with their inevitable bagpipes and drums, Scotch kilties, and tassled caps. It is a weird ceremony, but something I will always remember for it's so very unusual.

I bought a lot of postcards, souvenir folders, etc. which I packed up today to send to you. Also a little gondola for a souvenir. I also am sending other souvenirs I have collected in different places, i.e. postcards, etc.

The famous "Lido" in Venice is the rest camp for the enlisted men, but you must have a 4-day pass to go there. Being only restees, it was off limits to us. They are starting to give out 4-day passes, though, so I might be able to get there yet. I hope so, anyway. They say the beach and hotels in the Lido are lovely. There is the Excelsior Hotel, the Riviera, the Grande Hotel Lido, etc.

The other day a friend of mine met a boy from the 10<sup>th</sup> Medics who (this is one of those friend tells friend affairs) had a letter from a fellow who met Bob on the boat going over to the Marianas. This medic wanted to know if there was an Epstein in the Signal Company. I guess Bob mentioned my name to this boy he met on the boat when he learned he had a friend in the 10<sup>th</sup>.

Please send some food whenever you care to do so.

Image 4:

(4) Ziracco, Italy  
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It's too bad Bob Prugh couldn't have remained in the 15<sup>th</sup> Army. That would have been a good deal.

How is Ray Fischer getting along? You wrote me some time ago that he was wounded, but I've heard nothing more about it.

I read the condensation of "Tomorrow the World." Yes, one does feel like pounding that little brat to pieces.

Incidentally, Cpl. Klaus Mann, son of Thomas Mann, the famous exiled German author and anti-Nazi, is a staff correspondent for "Stars and Stripes." He has written some marvelous articles, and since V-E day he has been travelling all over Europe visiting places and important personages he knew in the pre-Hitler days. Last week he reported his visit to his old home in Munich which was used by the Germans for the good old Nazi culture. The interior had been ravaged by war, and, not revealing his identity, he was told by the present occupants that some author who didn't get along with Hitler lived there years ago. He interviewed Richard Strauss (again incognito) who was more interested in his personal affairs than in those of the persecuted peoples. Franz Lehár refused to discuss politics with him, because politics are dirty and nasty. Of course it was all right for him and Strauss to play ball with

Hitler! Yesterday, he reported from Czechoslovakia and said it was good to get out of wrecked and paralyzed Germany.

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Image 5:

(5) Ziracco, Italy

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Last night all of us were issued another bottle of liquor. We had our choice of cognac or champagne, the latter being my choice.

Your box mailed May 5 came a couple of days ago. The cookies, especially, were swell, and went just right with the champagne.

We had a movie Thursday night – "[Greenwich Village.](#)" I saw it twice in the States but being starved for entertainment I sat through it again and enjoyed it.

Hope you are all feeling fine. Love to all of you.

Lovingly,

Jerome, Jr.

P.S. Please send some more food at anytime.