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Image 1:

June 11, 1944

Dear Harry, Sylvia, and Pearl,

I have been wanting to write you for weeks but something has always prevented me from doing so. However, even though I haven't written, I want you to know that I have been thinking of you all the while.

I have been in the Army for almost six months now, and during that time I have had many strange experiences – some good and some bad – but I know that in the years to come I will look upon it all as a great adventure and will be, as I am now, proud of the fact that I have done my bit for my country.

After spending three full weeks in Columbus, I was sent to Ft. Benning in the A.S.T.P. If things had worked out as originally planned I would have taken all my basic training at Benning, and then I would have been sent to some college

Image 2:

to study engineering. I had successfully passed all the tests and I was eagerly awaiting the day when I would be sent to school. But, as you probably know, A.S.T.P. folded up, and I was sent to the Infantry at Camp Livingstone, La. While I was there I went through some of the most intense and rigid training imaginable – 25 mile hikes with full field equipment, bayonet drill and the bayonet assault course, hand-to-hand combat, the close combat course where you fire live ammunition at targets that pop out around you in all directions, drill and practice in throwing live hand grenades –these are just a few of the many things that were on our schedule. I also fired for qualification the M1 rifle and the carbine. An interesting sidelight ~~about~~ is the fact that my carbine was made in Dayton by Inland. I got a big thrill out of that.

One of the worst experiences I had was going through the infiltration course. In it, actual battle conditions are simulated as much as possible. You have to creep and crawl on the ground for about 100 yards. while live machine gun bullets are fired a few inches above your head. 100 yards may not seem very long, but under those conditions it seems like 100 miles.

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The ground was all covered with water, and I in turn was covered with mud from head to foot. We had to crawl under a number of barbed wire entanglements, and that was no picnic either. On top of it all, white phosphorus smoke bombs and dynamite charges were set off. Several boys were overcome by the smoke, and one poor fellow had a dynamite charge explode on top of him.

About six weeks ago I was transferred to the Signal Corps at Camp Polk. It was a damn lucky break, and I was certainly glad to get out of the infantry.

The work here is hard but it is very, very interesting, and I am happy to be here. I have been placed in the Radio Intelligence section, whose principle duties are to locate enemy radio stations and to record all coded messages transmitted by the enemy.

Image 4:

I am learning the International Morse code, and also quite a bit about radio procedure. I never knew a thing about code until I came here. I would like very much to be sent to the German intercept school at Camp Crowder, Mo. I am working towards that. Up until a few weeks ago they were sending boys from here to the radio school at Ft. Monmouth, New Jersey. To have been sent ~~there~~ there would have been ideal. Imagine going into New York or Atlantic City for the weekend. What a perfect set-up that would be.

As far as the South is concerned, you can have every ~~but~~ bit of it—all except of course, Florida. The rest of the South consists of nothing but poverty, sand, red clay, and pine trees. It is undoubtedly the poorest section of the country.

Mother and Dad were down here for 3 days last week to visit me. Needless to say, it was wonderful to be with them. Although I have talked to him over the phone, I haven't seen Grandpa since I left home. He wanted to come down here, but the trips would have been too much for him. I think he will probably go to Wisconsin again this summer. It's simply wonderful to think that a man his age can be so active and be so interested in everything.

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I would surely like to see him. Perhaps I will in the near future for as far as I know now, I will be getting a furlough sometime in July. In the Army you can't be sure of anything, for orders are changed as fast as they are made. At any rate, I am keeping my fingers crossed. It would be swell to get home and back to civilization. Thomas Jefferson's greatest mistake was the purchase of Louisiana.

All kidding aside, some places in Louisiana are very nice. Some week I hope to go down to New Orleans on a 3 day pass. I have read so much about that historic city – its quaint shops, the French atmosphere of the Old World blended with that of the New World, the marvelous seafood restaurants – it all sounds very fascinating, and I am very anxious to see it.

Image 6:

Next weekend I am going to Lake Charles with a bunch of fellows from my company. There is a rest camp for soldiers down there. The town itself is very nice, and I am eagerly looking forward to the trip. The whole thing is being arranged by my company commander.

This camp is 8 miles from Leesville, La., which is equivalent to saying that it is 8 miles from nowhere. There are literally dozens of Army camps and air bases around here and all the soldiers quite naturally flock to Leesville where they can find row upon row of beer parlors and saloons and degenerate females. I have no desire whatever to go there.

There is nothing much to do here on the weekends expect to go to the theater and to the Service Club for a meal.

This week I have to fire the Thompson sub-machine gun, I have never fired it before.

If I do get a furlough, maybe you could arrange to come down to Dayton for a day. I would love to see you. Did you enjoy the winter season in Florida? Also, are you planning to go anywhere this summer?

The war seems to be going well for our side, but I am convinced that it will take

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a long while to beat Germany to her knees. Once Germany is defeated, though, I can't see how Japan will be able survive for any length of time. It's going to take a tremendous amount of effort to crack the German will to resist. Those fanatics would do anything for their God and Saviour, Adolf Hitler.

Well, it's time for bed check, so I must close. Let me hear from you. Love to all of you and to Sally and Manny.

Fondly,  
Jerome, Jr.