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Image 1:

April 9, 1944<sup>1</sup>

Dear Mother, Dad, and Grandpa

It was good to talk to all of you this morning. It was a pleasure not to wait so long for the call to come through. I was told that it would be a 3 or 4 hour delay but it took only 2 ½ hours. I suppose <sup>you</sup> wonder how I can be so elated over such a small matter.

I have been taking it fairly easy this week-end. Yesterday morning we had a big parade – a regimental review. It was really a beautiful sight – that is what I could see of it, for you can't see too much of what is going on when you are in a parade yourself. Expert Infantryman's Medals were presented to 400 men in the 86<sup>th</sup> Division. In order to qualify for them they had to pass all kinds of rigorous tests in firing, tactics, physical endurance, etc. There was an article in "Time" this week telling about the presentation of these medals all over the country. It's supposed to boost morale and to make the men proud of the fact that they are in the infantry. There was another

Image 2:

article in "Time" about the infantry. It seems that as the war progresses, they are counting more and more on the infantry. As time goes on the Air Corps will be subordinate to the infantry, for it is pretty certain that air power alone won't win the war. All this bombing must be producing results, however, for Germany has been given a terrific pounding from the air during the past 3 months. But the question is, how long will the "softening up" process have to continue before the actual land invasion? I hope this invasion comes soon! It seem to me that if we go in with enough force Germany could be brought to her knees in a short period of time. Then we could concentrate on Japan. I hope it will work out this way. It would be terrible if we would have to wage a war on the Western front like the one in Italy. As for Japan, I hope that we won't have to fight a major war for every little island in the pacific. If only this war would progress at a faster pace I would feel much better about the whole thing. The Russian are certainly going to town. Although I haven't any use for Henry Ford, I hope that he is right in his predictions. Sgt. York says June 15<sup>th</sup> for the European war. But what could a man like that know about the war?<sup>2</sup>

Image 3:

April 9, 1944

(3)

Remember Bobbie Wise's prediction last fall that ~~the~~ Germany would be out by April 12?

I have just been listening to Walter Winchell on the radio in the hut next door. If you open the windows in the huts you can hear any thing. I will be perfect just to sit around here in the evening listening to the radio.

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<sup>1</sup> This stationary has Camp Livingston, LA letterhead as opposed to the Fort Benning letterhead from earlier letters. Following the end of the A.S.T.P. program in February 1944, Epstein was reassigned from Fort Benning to Camp Livingston for Infantry training. Also note it is a "Camp" rather than a "Fort" such as Benning. Forts were permanent Army posts that, for the most part, predated the war. Camps were more temporary posts that were built to house the massive military build up that accompanied World War II.

<sup>2</sup> Maybe more than Epstein thinks...Sgt. York was only off by 9 days, as the invasion of Europe began on D-Day, June 6<sup>th</sup>, 1944.

Sam Friedberg just came in to return the \$7 he borrowed from me in order to go to Shreveport. He went up there over the week end to visit relatives. I don't mind lending him money because I know I'll get it back. He had a check but was unable to cash it here. That's where Traveler's checks come in handy. As yet I haven't used any of mine. By the way, I believe that we get paid tomorrow.. With all the deductions, there is still plenty left. It ~~undecipherable~~ hurts a lot of boys, though, for that is their only source of income. If

Image 4:

they are broke, their parents aren't in a position where they are able to help them.

Last night I went to a movie – [“The Young in Heart”](#) with Paulette Goddard, Doug Fairbanks, Jr. Billie Burke, and Roland Young. It is a revival which I saw about 2 years ago. It is a splendid picture. The Senior class before mine at Fairview gave it as its class play. They show some revivals at the theatres here, but most of the shows are new releases. They get around to the Army camps before they get to civilian movie houses. And what is more they aren't censored like they are in Ohio. I don't know whether it is just a privilege for Army posts. Anyways, some pretty raw jokes are cracked in the pictures. This afternoon I saw [“Four Jills in a Jeep”](#) with Martha Raye, Kay Francis, Mitzi Mayfair, and Carole Landis. Go see it when it comes to Dayton. It is based on the experiences of these 4 actresses in England and North Africa last year. I see that [“Shine on Harvest Moon”](#) with Ann Sheridan is playing in Dayton. It is also a good picture. I saw it last Sunday night. There is a U.S.O. Camp Show here every Tuesday night. I haven't gone yet, but I may go this Tuesday if I don't have some detail or a night problem, etc.<sup>3</sup> I was going to see [“Meet the People”](#) tonight, but I didn't. Jimmy Fidler just rated it the best picture of the week.

Image 5:

April 9, 1944

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It's coming to an other theatre sometime this week, so I may be able to see it yet. Please don't get the idea that all I do is go to movies.

I am in a hut with a swell group of boys. One of them, Jack Hulls is from Elyria, Ohio. He attended Ohio State, and knows of couple of boys from Fairview who went to State. He and I were the only ones to be on both C.C.C. lists. Remember, you heard his name and thought he might be Jewish. He isn't, however. His father is a Major in the Army. I believe he was in the National Guard.

Rob Oppelt, also in my barracks, is formerly from Ohio, but now lives in a small town in Iowa. His father is a professor of education at Simpson College, a small college there. Rob attended Simpson for a year.

Victor Orn is from North Dakota. A swell fellow – he is older than the rest of us – 20 to be exact. He lived on a farm, but you would never think of him as a farmer. He attended the University of Minnesota.

Joe Mc Laughlin, from Columbus, Ohio, went to Ohio State. His father is a pharmacist. He recently sold his drugstore, however.

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<sup>3</sup> During the World War II era the military used the term “field problem” to describe training events designed to replicate combat in which a unit would have to respond to some sort of tactical situation such as assaulting a bunker or laying an ambush. “Night problem” simply refers to a field problem executed at night.

Image 6:

Lowell Mason is from Washington, D.C. I forget <sup>just</sup> what college he attended. His father is a lawyer in Washington. He went down to New Orleans ~~to~~ this weekend to meet his father who is there on a business trip.

All of us might go to New Orleans next weekend. We all want to go, but we can't plan a thing for we might not be able to get a way next Saturday for any number of reasons. You know how it is in the Army. But we are going to find out about trains and bus schedules in case we are able to go. I think it would be a lot of fun. New Orleans is supposed to be a fascinating city. I have heard so much about it – the French atmosphere, the famous seafood house – I can't recall the name. I am really anxious to see what it is all about.

Last week we ran squad problems with live ammunition. [There are 12 men in a squad, each man having a definite role to play.](#) In a squad problem you simulate actual problems that would confront you on the battlefield. Run, fall to the ground, fire a shot, take advantage of cover and concealment get up, do it all over again until you have gained superiority over the enemy, the rush in for the final attack. We practiced this stuff without ammunition for 2 days then went out on the range for 2 days to do the real thing with ammunition. However, there was no enemy firing at us. Thank goodness for that!!

Image 7:

April 9, 1944

(7)

They took us out to the range in trucks early in the morning and brought us back in the afternoon.

Wednesday we also had a regimental review.

Tomorrow we start firing the carbine – a different type of rifle.<sup>4</sup>

There is a picture in this week's "Newsweek" showing Churchill, Eisenhower, and Gen. Bradley firing a carbine. It is much smaller and lighter than the M1 rifle – the rifle we have been using so far.

I was certainly glad to get so many packages this week. My glasses came in good condition. I needed them badly. The box with the apples and oranges came the same day. I always like fruit – funny, up until a couple of years ago I would never touch a piece of fruit. The papers and magazines were also a welcome sight.

Yesterday I got the cupcakes, and they were really a treat. At the same time I also got the Easter eggs and the pineapple. I love hard-boiled eggs and I went for them in a big way. That was a novel ~~[undecipherable]~~ way of decorating the eggs. I have never seen that before. The pineapple kept well, it was very good.

Image 8:

Remember the big pieces of pineapple we used to get in Miami Beach!

The candy and magazines came today. It's a wonderful feeling to be deluged with your many packages. Everything is almost all eaten up already. I wonder just what happened to the candy you sent from Cleveland. They must not be very reliable.

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<sup>4</sup> Epstein is referring here to the M1 Carbine, as opposed to the standard issue M1 Rifle, or M1 Garand. The M1 Carbine was smaller and lighter than the M1 Garand, and fired a short, pistol-style, .30 caliber round rather than the heavier 30-06 of the M1 Garand. The carbine was less accurate and had a much shorter range than the M1 Garand, and was typically assigned to soldiers whose primary duty was not engaging the enemy, such as officers, radio-telephone operators, or rear-echelon support troops.

I haven't been able to celebrate Passover in any way, but let us hope that things will be better next year. I will look up the Chaplain as soon as possible.

I had a lovely letter from Stella Rice this week. Also had a card from Mrs. Kemp in response to the card of condolence I sent...I always look forward to receiving your letters. Do write all the news.

Lovingly,

Jerome, Jr.