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Hq - 102 Inf. Div.
APO #102
c/o Postmaster, N.Y., N.Y.

Germany
Apr. 11, 1945

Dear Folks and Friends,

All of us have been so busy the last two months that no one has had much time to write. The crossings of the Roer and Rhine were tremendous undertakings and the extra effort required had us all on day and night schedules. I finally decided today to steal some time and get caught up.

My new assignment for prosecuting war criminals started off with a bang. Our various intelligence sections and military government reported so many treaty violations and atrocities all at once that I could handle only the worst ones. They included such things as the starving, beating and killing of slave laborers from France, Holland, Poland and Russia and the torturing and killing of American Prisoners and wounded, occurring in this part of Germany before our occupation or during battle.

I have investigated many of these crimes first hand at the scene and have had the pleasure of arresting a few of the perpetrators. Some have already been tried and sentenced. Most of them, however, fled deeper into Germany, but their names, descriptions and connections are on the perpetrators' list, firmly supported with conclusive evidence of the crime and their guilt. A network of our organizations are alerted for their apprehension and in addition, Col. Melvin Purvis, the former G-man who captured Dillinger, has a special organization far and wide, just to be sure.

I know all of you will feel the same satisfaction that I do in knowing that in this war these inhumanities are documented history instead of newspaper articles and that the animals who committed them will properly suffer. The new history books will not permit the coming generations to overlook the meaning of war and its consequences this time.

The battlefield warcrimes committed against our own men always come first and are investigated quickly because thru prisoners and later captures we can often obtain information and screen in the perpetrators. Most of these are committed by the Nazi-infected S.S. troops and paratroopers, the Wehrmacht on the whole being fairly treaty-abiding. At any rate, these investigations took me all over the Ninth Army front and I seized every opportunity to check these personally so I could see what and how the doughfeet were doing, at the same time. Two years in the Infantry has done that to me, and wanting to see at least is probably more than more curiosity.

Anyway, I want to tell you something about the battle, and more about warcrimes later.

Before we crossed the Roer, there was the biggest massing of men and equipment that any of us had seen up to that time. Besides the usual artillery and armor in greater number than ever, a tremendous amount of water-crossing material moved up. This included amphibious jeeps, weasels and alligators, life jackets, assault boats of all sizes, both rubber and steel pontoons, and 10-ton trailers loaded with bridge material. Thousands of Infantrymen poured in and promptly disappeared into the ground and basements of wrecked buildings.

While this was going on for many days, the Engineers worked day and night to keep the roads open. Every road was used constantly. About half of them were blacktop, cracked and broken from the pounding, and they were being repaired in the same way we have seen it done at home -- with pneumatic drills, hot macadam and steam rollers. German civilians gawked with amazement at the big equipment and speed of the work.

The dirt roads were a bigger problem. Many of them are not ditched and standing water from long rains make the mud actually knee deep. There was no time for

drainage work, so the Engineers improvised by dumping brick rubble into the mud. Convoys of trucks loaded up at the nearest level town, dumped their loads in the mud, and the graders and rollers quickly crunched it down. Broken bridges were re-made simply by dumping rubble in the stream and throwing stringers on top. A ride over these roads was a backbreaker, but the important thing was that everything got thru.

In the daytime the situation was fairly quiet. Only a few shells came in and scouting planes became a rarity. The Krauts were shooting at only the things they could see.

In most parts of our sector, we were on low ground while the Krauts had high ground on the other side of the river, but in one long stretch we were also on high ground and observation was equal. The descending approaches to the river on both sides was a no-man's-land for about 3000 yards and anything of size that moved caught artillery. The only route on that front was a blacktop road along the crest of the ridges, every foot of it under enemy observation, so that heavy movements could be made only at night.

I had to travel that road three days in a row and while I held my breath, I felt half-way safe in a fast-moving, lone Jeep. My negro driver, however, was so apprehensive that I had to jar him constantly to keep his eyes off the enemy ridge and stay on the road. He kept saying, "Suh, does we has to take dis road?" He didn't like the signs posted there either. Several large ones said, "Under Em Obs - Shells." Others, posted at 60-yard intervals, Burma-Shave style, read, "Did you Ever" -- "Stop To Think" -- "When Your're Dead" -- "How Much You Stink?" -- "Keep 60 Yd. Interval, Dammit!"

Several small hamlets dotted this road and at one of them I had to see Lt. Connors, an artillery forward observer. His observation post was in the peak of a church steeple and I climbed three stairways, then five ladders to reach him. He was in a precarious spot. It was the most forward O.P. & the highest, overlooking all the Kraut positions for many miles. I looked thru the powerful telescope for several minutes and didn't see a single Kraut or a gun emplacement, everything was so perfectly camouflaged. What looked like the most peaceful of countrysides was actually a potential volcano. The Roer was wide and fast from recent dam destruction and backwaters formed large ponds in some spots. There was a small foot bridge across it at one point which Lt. Connors took pride in blasting each night as the Krauts repeatedly tried to repair it. There was ceaseless night patrolling by both sides across the river, usually with rubber boats, so it was the worst possible place to be in the dark.

Kneeling in that church Steeple, looking thru the 'scope was as naked a feeling as I've ever had. I knew that every enemy observer could see the steeple plainly. It would have been simple for the enemy to knock it down with an .88 mm shell at any moment he chose. Yet in several weeks of static defense not one shot was fired at it. The answer was simple. The Krauts had a duplicate steeple for their O.P. directly across the river and both sides needed the observation. In a situation like that there is a sort of unwritten law of war that if you don't annoy me I won't annoy you.

Farther up the same road I went to a Cavalry Reconnaissance Unit that was holding an outpost position on the Flank. The boys in these outfits are skilled in close-in fighting with knives, automatic weapons and grenades and use their armored cars for spearheading, to draw fire and "employ" the enemy. When I went into the basement headquarters I told the negro driver to come along and get warmed up. He followed me in but when he saw these unshaven men in muddy camouflage suits he whispered quickly, "Suh, Ah'm gettin' outa here. Them men is me-ean," and he left. Altho there has been no race trouble over here, I've noticed before that negros, who are mostly rear-area workers, are scared stiff of combat troops.

The Recon. Commander gave me directions to another outpost position and loaned me a weasel to get there because the trails were impassable for a jeep. The weasel is a sort of caterpillar jeep, a steel box on a set of tracks. It can get around anywhere and in a hurry. Even thru deep, rough mud it rolls with ease. It is smoother than anything on wheels but has a funny rockingchair motion. It is a great vehicle for carrying men or ammunition. The amphibious model, and it's big brother, the alligator, can travel anywhere and were important equipment in the crossing.

In another sector one day I arrived at the Regimental Command Post at 1230. I had hardly left the jeep when some shells came whining in. It was at the mess location and the only hole around was the garbage pit, so I took a nose dive into that. The shells landed an instant later and were close enough to make me twang like a harp string. When I crawled out, dripping with corruption, some G.I.'s, still prone, laughed at me. But it was sympathetic fun because if they had been near enough they would have been in there with me. We've all learned two good lessons, long ago -- get in any hole, and get in head first. There are always a lot of leg and foot wounds, but the men are still alive.

I had lunch there in the customary basement mess and learned that they had been catching shells regularly at noon. The Krauts properly figured to catch men above ground with their mind on chow at that time, but with all their tries they failed to get a single man. After that, I always checked the shell reports before making trips to strange positions on the line.

In the stumps of towns before the Roer, German civilians were still persistently sticking to their property, even on the front line. Military government estimated about one-third of the population stayed put. As quickly as it could, M.G. forcibly evacuated those in most danger to the rear areas and organized food collecting to feed them. Even so it is hard to imagine how they exist. During hours when circulation is not permitted, almost every town is a lifeless mess of rubble. Yet, from 1100 1200 men, women and children are everywhere. There is no water supply, soap, electricity and rarely a grocery store. This strip of Germany took an awful beating and there is real civilian suffering, especially in towns.

We have become very conscious of the constant filth everywhere and are careful to drink only G.I. purified water, to keep clean and to use our potent bug powder freely. We have all been given additional typhoid and typhus booster shots and our men continue to be amazingly healthy.

One thing that strikes me in all these towns is the presence of so many typically American signs. Coca-Cola signs and icers are in every town, the only difference being the word "Eiskalt" instead of "Ice-cold." I have seen dozens of filling stations with pumps and equipment like ours and the signs, "Texaco", "Standard", "Shell", "Esso", and "Mobiloil".

Speaking of signs, our military has them every where. With typical Army neatness, they are made with stencils or by obviously professional signpainting G.I.'s. The most prominent is "Road and Shoulders Clear of Mines", and next "Danger - Mines". Some nailed on fence posts, say, "Lousy with Mines". At every bivouac is a sign with an arrow indicating an outfit by code name, like "Mermaid", - "Tornado" - "Lilac" - "Lucky", etc. These code names have alphabetical significance and are picked for phonetic ease of recognition in telephone and radio communication.

Entering a recently captured town you often see a huge, elaborate sign which reminds you, for example, that "You are Now Entering Aldenhoven, thru Courtesy of the 29th Division". In an exhaustion center my good friend Major David I. Weintrob of the Bronx is psychiatrist and with a flair for advertising his sign says, "Are you fed up with the set up? -- Are you nervous in the service? -- Are you scrappin' with the Captain? -- Are you grapplin' with the Chaplain? -- Come in and be Weintrobized!"

In January I was in Holland for a few days at Ninth Army headquarters being oriented on warcrimes. I was billeted in a hotel, served at the mess by a waiter in tails, went to movies and had a fine time at the beautiful officers' club. By drawing lots one night, I got a ticket to see Katherine Cornell and Brian Aherne in the "Barretts of Wimpole Street". It made us feel like civilized theatregoers and was thoroughly enjoyed. We talked with the cast afterward and enjoyed the old man who played the part of the mean father. He said, "I feel a little uneasy playing that part in front of an armed audience". It was a pleasant change and almost as good as a leave.

I was near the front on the afternoon before the jumpoff across the Roer and watched the last minute preparations. Everything was well set by that time, except for a little tuning up. Here and there men were soberly checking weapons, vehicles, tanks and personal equipment. Others just loafed or played games. One outfit was having a kittenball game in a school yard with noisy enthusiasm while the German kids yelled on the sidelines. Others were tossing footballs around. All the moods were there from grimness to "wothell".

There can never be another army like ours. The G.I.'s always manage to find fun, the more incongruous the better. They are always doing something screwball and starting new fads. That afternoon two G.I.'s playing ball wore tall silk hats; another riding a bike down the road wore tails with his. Many of the trucks have a silk hat hung on the radiator. Others have stuffed animals and birds mounted on the hood or fender. It seems that most German homes once had a silk hat for ceremonious occasions, and beerhalls once had some decorations.

Most of the tanks had a crucifix mounted on the front of the turret. Last Christmas, hurrying to the Bulge, they were glittering with Christmas tree decorations.

At dusk, the infantry began moving up. Long, open columns of riflemen sloshed thru the mud toward the river. Each had extra ammunition, grenades and gas mask. Toilet articles and extra socks were in a little bag hanging from the belt in back. Some wore shoe packs or overshoes, probably green replacements, while most wore leather combat boots, the better to run and damn the trenchfoot. Every face was clean-shaven and grim. No one spoke and all you could hear was the sloshing. The driver turned off the motor and we waited silently for the column to move away. It always gives me a blue feeling to watch an approach march.

All that night there was an unbroken rumble. If it wasn't artillery, it was planes or the heavy clanking of tanks. Searchlights were fixed at a low angle to light up the routes of supply. The horizon was alive with red flashes.

At 0300, the crossing began. The moon was so bright that the Engineers had to have a smoke screen with the artillery cover to keep off the Krauts as they strung the bridges. Riflemen, machine gunners and mortarmen went first on eight footbridges and carrying their weapons. With artillery support, they quickly secured a bridgehead, giving the Engineers opportunity to string the heavy pontoon bridges for tanks and trucks

It was a difficult crossing. The river current was 12 mph and the problem was to anchor the bridges. Usually an amphibious vehicle carries a cable to the opposite bank where it is secured to trees, then the pontoons are attached to the cable on the downstream side. The pontoons are pushed out one after another from the near bank until they reach the other side, stringers are fitted on and the traffic starts in a matter of minutes. But here, the swift current made the strain too great and the anchor trees stand in mushy ground gave way.

It took a lot of backstrain and improvising to complete the bridges. The cables were attached to several trees and at the same time naval anchors were secured to the pontoons on the upstream side while two-prop Sea Mules pushed against them at top speed from the downstream side. The Engineers always find a way and have never failed in a mission.

The first wave of riflemen had their troubles too. They used assault boats and amphibious vehicles. The current swept many over and made landing difficult. Many of the outboard motors on the small assault boats wouldn't start and those that started were very hard to handle. In one group of 30 boats equipped with heavy Johnson Seahorses, 29 wouldn't start and were paddled across. You can guess what happened to that wave.

The tanks got across on schedule and one of the slickest maneuvers of the war caught the Krauts on the backside. Instead of crossing at many places and making a frontal assault against the series of blockhouses and tank traps, the armor made a deep breakthru then swung north behind the whole defense line east of the Roer and Maas rivers and put the Krauts in a trap along 25 miles of their line. We were in Venlo so fast that the British, who were supposed to take it and had not yet crossed the Maas, were surprised to find themselves facing Yanks instead of Krauts. (We forever surprise the British as much as the Krauts). At Venlo, the spearhead turned east to the Rhine and the Krauts were caught off balance another time.

A few days later I travelled the road along the river and looked at the Kraut defenses that would have faced us in a frontal assault. The road was lined with trees which were thickly strung with barbed-wire 8 feet high. Notches were cut in many of the large trees, filled with explosives, ready to be set off electrically to topple the trees over and make a road block. Every field was mined, and narrow, zigzag infantry trenches, pillboxes, big blockhouses and direct-fire gun emplacements filled the whole area. We would have received a bloody nose for fair in a frontal attack. The Krauts had made another costly mistake. They couldn't turn their guns around and fire to their rear.

Across the Roer toward the Rhine the terrain is the flattest I have seen in Europe. It is not only good tank country but it is difficult to defend. So with the Krauts knocked out of their fixed defenses, dazed and off balance, the armor had it its way completely.

Many warcrimes were quickly reported in the newly liberated Dutch border towns. These quiet, inoffensive people had lived under a terrorism born of their captors' frenzy that is hard to describe. Since last September they have been starved, beaten, robbed and killed by Germans who were in the last stages of desparation.

In Roermond, a town of 20,000, the Nazi Party with its plug uglies, the Sturm Abteilung and Green Police, ordered all men 16 to 60 years to dig tank traps and gun emplacements along the river. Few responded and almost all went into hiding, so they blocked off a section of the town at a time and searched each house, forcing the Dutchmen under armed guard and by beating them with clubs to do the digging. This went too slowly, so they moved in 4000 Russian and Pole slave laborers, mostly women. The searches continued but the Dutchmen were doing a good job of hiding so in reverse they looted homes and shops, taking away trainloads of living necessities and valuables to Germany.

These namby-pamby tactics weren't producing so a paratrooper unit was called in. Immediately they went house to house and smashed the front door locks with axes and hammers, then in typical manner they raided homes during the night, arresting all the men they could find. One old lady barred her door, so they threw a grenade thru the window and killed her. Men who attempted to run away were shot and left lying.

In the meantime, the defenses had been dug but more slave labor was needed in Germany, in a hurry. The paratroopers simply picked a group of men, made them dig their own graves, then shot them. Their only crime was hiding and they had no trial. A list of their names was posted and distributed to each house with the warning that any man 16 to 60 years who was found after 1600 the next day would be shot on the spot. Before that time the next day, over 3000 Dutchmen reported to the market place and

were marched off in a long column, 5 abreast, to Germany. The march was 33 kilometers and lasted 12 hours in snow and bitterly cold weather on December 30, 1944. Many had inadequate clothing and shoes. Those who dropped out from fatigue and exposure were left lying on the roadside without attention.

At 0500 the next morning, the march stopped at an open racetrack where the men were guarded by machineguns. There was no cover and the men rested in the snow for a few hours then were marched to an old factory building without heat, blankets, food or water and kept there overnight. At 0400 the next morning, they were locked in freight cars and taken on an 18 hour ride to concentration camp Giebel at Wuppertal in the Ruhr. There, for the first time in 3 days, they were given some food -- thin soup and black bread. Then they were split into groups and sent to various war industries.

In January all others, including women, were threatened out of their homes, or arrested, and herded together and marched into Germany. More thousands were driven down the road and hundreds fell out. Old men and women died on the roadside. Three children were born in the cold and both mother and child in each case died. Those who completed the march were immediately put to work.

This is only the main story, with few details. It took me 8 days with the help of the Dutch underground to interview the witnesses and victims who had escaped and returned, and to collect the documents. The most gross crimes are proved by their own methodical records which they left behind, and 42 perpetrators are completely identified.

During the investigation, none of our troops were in town except military government which was just setting up shop. All day long there was one big explosion after another. Booby traps had been set in many homes and as the liberated people returned to their homes from Germany they were setting them off by unwittingly opening a drawer or a door. M.G. had a bomb disposal squad at work but it was unable to work fast enough.

When people were sure it was safe, they began to come out of hiding. Included in some of the first men I met were 3 lawyers. I went to the home of one of them, Goen Van Boven, and he showed me his hiding place. He had burrowed a hole next to the gas meter in the cellar and had it cleverly concealed. It was just big enough for one man in a sitting position. His wife's face was covered with red sores from lack of nutrition and 5 of his 7 children were in the hospital with lung infections. The Germans had taken away all the food, coal and blankets. The old story I have heard hundreds of times in every liberated country.

The M.G. office had the American flag hung over its door. It was the symbol of haven for droves of Russians, Poles, French, Belgians and Dutch who were returning from years of slavery in Germany. They were being processed in the big church and there were given what little food could be found in the countryside.

Unless you have a stout heart and cold emotions, A Displaced Persons' Center is a trying place to visit. As we entered, my interpreter said, "Here is the best place to see what those beasts have done." And there it was, the physical evidence of years of drudgery and brutality.

Many of them were little more than dirty rags on body and feet. They stank and looked half dead. There were rash-faced babies to walking cadavers, 70 years old. They were slumped on the benches and on the floor, a spiritless mass of humanity. Walking by, their droopy eyes followed me. It was easy to discern their feeling of gratitude but they were too far gone to spare a smile. The only one who displayed any emotion was a small, gaunt boy who looked up at me with his mouth hanging open in fright. To him, I was probably just another soldier who might kick him.

At the big table up front were a group of our linguist interrogators, filling out cards. I looked at a pile of cards and saw entries like "peasant, chemist, blacksmith, carpenter, doctor" -- all slave laborers. I picked out two Russians and added their statements to the file.

One was Rosa Hapenoa, 21, a beauty operator from Varishilovsgrad. In October, 1942, she was taken with 2000 other unmarried women and marched into Germany. She said the women were taken before the men. The long march lasted for two months with little rest. She worked in a shell factory in the Ruhr and dug traps in Roermond last October. When the work didn't go fast enough, some of the women were "stripped naked and beaten with switches until they were pink". She didn't seem bitter, just phlegmatic -- and she looked 35.

The other was Timepy Triceilonopsos, 38, a tailor from Pinsk. He was taken with hundreds of other families -- men, women and children -- in September, 1942. Some families tried to hide but gave that up after the Green Police killed a whole family of 7 in public view. This group was lucky and rode in boxcars. They were sealed in, had no toilets and a few died, but it was better than walking, he said. He worked in a uniform factory until he too was brought to Roermond for the digging. I asked him what he thought we should do with the Germans. He said "Kill them all alike". I asked, "Women and children, too?" and he said, "All -- they have drunk enough Russian blood".

It is extremely difficult to interview a Russian. I had to use 2 interpreters, a Dutchman who knew English and a German, and a Pole who knew German and Russian. I would ask a simple question, there would be a lot of jabbering and minutes later the answer would come back.

The worst atrocities were committed against Russians. In 1941, Hitler made a speech declaring that they were beasts, not humans, and should be so treated. German farmers, disgusted with the brutality, said that Russians were treated like dogs and even volunteered the names of some of the perpetrators. They were given the dirtiest jobs, the least food and were beaten and killed in numbers beyond belief. We found more cases in coal mines than we had time to check, but built the files that would get the big shots. These, we were happy to learn, are being turned over to the Russian government for prosecution.

The Germans have violated almost every provision of all the Hague and Geneva treaties, in just the cases I have handled. It would take reams to tell only what my notes show. Many of the crimes go beyond any treaty provisions -- things that decent men could not contemplate when they drafted them. I only hope that the War Crimes Commission will not be squeamish about finding a law for each crime but will prosecute these bozos on the broad common law concepts of humanity and chivalry that are the bases of international law in war. The reason for the hope is that already one British member of the Commission is hedging.

The Rhine crossing had all the preparation and flourish of a new invasion. It was at least 3 times as big in men, equipment and scope as the Roer crossing. Every man could sense, if he didn't actually know, that this was it -- the objective, unlimited. Morale was the highest it has ever been. We had just bowled them over for a good distance and we could see and feel the tremendous power that was being generated.

Trucks and tanks rolled day and night. Thousands of planes droned constantly. This time the gasoline was coming up in huge quantities. Double tandem tank trucks and 10 ton trucks with cans came in convoys. Pipe lines were laid in a matter of days, as many as three 4-inchers side by side in some places.

The Infantry all moved in trucks and the Germans asked, "Don't your men ever walk?" They were awed by the number of big guns and the speed at which the tracked prime movers pulled them along.

I saluted and was saluted by both Montgomery and Eisenhower in one day. They were everywhere, seeing everyone and you can bet your neck that morale was soaring that day. Incidentally, Montgomery's entourage looks like a circus train compared to Eisenhower's simple, little 2 jeeps and a sedan. We all size them up alike -- Monty is winning the war in the newspapers while Ike takes the ground.

There was no mistaking when the crossing happened. I was $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the river but even there the ground shook my legs. Every second for hours that morning the artillery was firing and planes were overhead. We saw hundreds of transports dump paratroopers for 3 straight hours. It was the most terrific violence I have seen since St. Lo.

At first the Kraut AA was very active but very soon was silent. And the surprising thing is that so little artillery came in. Our own artillery had carefully plotted each Kraut gun position for days before from air observation and had held their fire until now. They dumped the works on them in the first salvo and kept it up to be sure. They had plenty of shell this time -- they were piled and dispersed on every road for miles on end.

One cub air-observer told me later that the time schedule to support the infantry had to be abandoned. He flew over the targets just before the scheduled fires and saw our trucks already pouring thru the towns. So he radioed back and shifted the fire to new targets.

Riding across the Rhine was a great feeling. The pontoon bridges were strong and secure. Dozens of barrage balloons and AA guns were zealously guarding them and Engineers stood by with repair equipment, just in case. At last we were really inside Germany.

At the place I crossed, the river was about 250 yards wide and the banks were gently sloping. I noticed that this spot was far from any former bridge site and hardtop highway. There were a lot of shell holes there, but few foxholes and trenches on the east side.

The deeper we went in, the fewer minefields and trenches we saw. They had run out of manpower or had hoped to have more time. The defenses were all at scattered strong points and they had been pulverized. White flags, some whole bedsheets, hung from most of the houses still standing.

Further east, there were many towns that were untouched. This is the strangest sight I have seen since I landed over here. Complete towns without a scratch, with people and cattle moving around in a normal manner. I hadn't seen such a thing since I left England.

What griped me the most was that these people had good shoes and clothing and the women had good stockings. They had plenty of bicycles and there were lots of cows and horses in the fields.

In France, Belgium and Holland, the women were bare-legged and wore wooden or cloth shoes and cheap, worn clothing. There were not enough horses to plow the fields and they lay idle. I remember in one Dutch community there were only four horses left to plow hundreds of acres for 3 long years. The fields were not plowed and the people starved. I can't forget Roermond where nearly everyone had sores on his face and where every shop was cleaned out.

When I saw those fat, comfortable German thieves, I hated them worse than when I saw those slaves in the D.P. Center. And these pigs were actually smiling at us, trying to curry our favor. The thought that keeps recurring is that we ought to turn over the occupation job to the liberated people and turn our backs.

There is always some spiritual compensation in this mess. In France it was the Glorious reception of grateful people. Here it is the sight of thousands of slaves and prisoners walking free steps homeward.

The shoulders of every road on both sides are crowded with an endless stream of freed slave laborers and French, Polish and Russian prisoners of war. There are no cheers or handwaving, or even smiles. They are dog tired, broken in spirit and hundreds of miles from home. But the mere sight of them is heart-warming and wonderful. It makes the whole war seem more worthwhile than ever.

Best regards,

H.R.H.

P.S.'s

Note the new address -- A.P.O.102. It happened suddenly as I was halfway thru this letter, hence more delays. Reason is, they tell me, to put me in a vacancy for another promotion, Still in Ninth Army, right now in the spearhead so we're moving fast and often. A little excitement too, as we run into by-passed Krauts who are still enthusiastic.

Mother and Irma - This will have to answer at least 15 letters that you are up on me. Between all your letters and the clippings you send, I can't think of anything else. I would want to know about home. Please keep it up, and don't let my slow replies discourage you. Another box on way, including more souvenirs and some paintings a fine Dutch artist in Sittard made for me. Glad to hear my stuff is on the way --thanks.

Brother Dick - When you can tell -- where did you land? Everything is going so fast here, I have to get new maps every few days to find my way around new areas. Both the jeep and I need a first echelon overhauling, but nobody or nothing is stopping for a rest these days. All of us are hopped up over the possibility of a quick finish. Looks good over there too. Best of luck.

Bea and Burt - Send a V-Mail when I become a new uncle. In the box to Mother, I'm sending you two Dutch dolls, complete to wooden shoes, which an old lady made for me in Heerlen, Holland. If it isn't a niece you can give them to Irma to play with. Nice of you to remember my birthday.

The Burnstans - Had no idea, until your letters, how bad inflation is back home. Sounds terrific. I can't thank you too much for those nice long letters and especially the choice clippings, all of it was extremely interesting. I liked the description of your Canadian trip, Naome. Nice of you to suggest the books, but I hardly find time to read P.M. -- for which my special thanks. It's going to be wonderful to come back to such good friends as you.

Lila and Carlo - Thanks for the greetings, and good luck in the new venture.

Adeline Stief - Thanks for dope on the P.D. Congratulations to Schmidt and McMahon.

Dave and Nonie - Your holidays were apparently more interesting than usual. Where did the girls find the boy friends?

Swing Shift Kazella - After getting your analysis of new Englanders, I'll stay far away.

John Levin - If I could be back there right now, I'd walk all the way down with you. Which reminds me -- after hiking about 1500 miles in Infantry training back there, I have been on one 6-mile march over here. This army is really motorized. In contrast, German prisoners tell us they are always on foot. Some hiked as far as from Denmark to this front. Thanks for the letter.

Fred Eiden - Looks like your club is amounting to something -- the progress is certainly interesting. I appreciate getting your slant from the civilian side, and the clippings.

Jim, Bill, Bud, Louis, Florence, Van and Bertha - Your accumulative letters this month pile about 6 inches high, with Jim nosing out Bill by about 1½ inches. I can easily stand such prosperity, so keep them coming. Thanks to all of you. Showed the clipping on Jim's accident to Col. Oliver, Former Ass't, to Buron Fitts in L.A., whose immediate reaction was - "Notice how he covers with that 'other important business' stuff -- just like we did," Much obliged for the dope on the medical bill. I'm anxious to hear what happened.

Carl and Mabel - Congratulations on the new assignment. It must keep you both very busy.

Major Bob Conrad - There should be plenty to talk about when we meet again. Will you send your new address to George when you get it?

Lt. Keith Evans - After sweating out Inf. O.C.S. with you, I wind up in J.A.G.D. -- find by W.D. last month.

Dick Archer - That was a good long letter full of news I like to hear. Our first ale is going to be on me.

Dutch Strout - I'll get you out of that rut as soon as I get back. Meantime I hope you will continue commentating.

Mildred Devine - I'm glad you found the kind of work you wanted. That was interesting story on the N.B. plant. Best of luck.

Capt. Homer Cannaway - With the clippings you forward I practically get the whole paper. It's certainly the best way to keep up. I've been using the feather sleeping bag you sent me all winter. With all the moving we've done, its been a godsend. You must have been a sight in Paris with that cast on your leg.

George Feller - Between you and Jim Lynch, I know I got all the clippings on the medical bill. Got them in about 10 days too. Many thanks.

Friends in GHM - I've received the blow-by-blow description of your fight against the medical bill. It was a good one, and if you lose it this time, there will be another round coming. I will not be surprised if it passes this week legislature in the face of what is to it such awesome sponsorship. But lopsided class legislation like that will never survive long before protest will overwhelm it, especially since it is such a puny answer to a big problem. Also there has been sufficient history to prove that doctors are singularly incapable of even starting to solve the economics of medicine. If they hog the field then piddle with the problem, as I expect they will, they are in for a bigger fight than they can handle.

Lt. Edna Highberg - This ends my complaints -- I have six letters here in a pile, including one with a snapshot. Glad to hear you got the transfer you wanted. Received a card from Bengé. More later.

John McConneloug - Your local news letter is a good, solid review of the important things happening there -- the best yet. I hope you continue it and I'm sure more like me would like to get it. Many thanks.

Walter Wifall - Got the magazine with the picture of Wally. Seeing how big he is now, plus passing another birthday last month, makes me feel very old and socially useless.

Joe Cowern - I certainly agree with you on that war memorial and am glad you put in a word for us.

John McDonough - As Joe says, What's the rush?

Art and Lois - You two are certainly busy and from all appearances have an interesting time -- except, that if Lois reads 60 non-fiction books a year, what do you do -- hold the books? Let's hear more from you.

Ben Belfer - As usual I got a bang out of the enclosures.

A.F. Lockhart - That was a beaner of a letter and I appreciate it. I can use the enclosures, and am waiting for more dope from Wash. Thanks.

Capt. Paul Redpath - That was a nice letter. I'll look forward to meeting you one of these fine days soon.

Bob Sermon - I guess they will never knock the fight out of you. I'm sure going to look you up when I get back. It will be a great reunion when the old gang meets again.

Helen Olson - Thanks for all the greetings. Do you ever see Larry and Leona?

Judge Brill - This new work is a wartime lawyer's dream. It's a pleasure more than a duty, and I'm learning some of the vagaries of international law as well. It was nice to get your letter.
