

Thurs day ~~off~~ n
May 10th 1945
Still in Italy (Leghorn)

Dear Mom & Girls;

Well that great day we've all been hoping and praying for for so long has finally come. The war is over over here! Germany has finally quit! We sure had quite a celebration. All got pretty well in the groove. Believe me Mom everyone is sure happy about the whole thing. I'm sorry I didn't write sooner, but with all the excitement and celebrating why I just had to put it off till things settled down a little. Our letters aren't censored anymore so I can tell you all about what I've been doing for the last 2 years. This will probably be the longest letter I've ever written but if you enjoy it Mom it'll be more than worth the time. First of all I'm still feeling okay and hope you're the same and Ann's home from the hospital by now. We've sure been pretty lucky not being in combat as long as we've been over here. (Knock on wood) I'm a little nervous from all the celebrating so you'll have to excuse the scratchy writing. Well Mom when we

left New York way back in '43 we landed in Oran-
 pricea after being on the boat for 13 days. The crossing
 was okay but pretty crowded. No submarines or any-
 thing like that. I slept out on deck with a lot of the
 other fellows. That was in August, so it was pretty
 warm. The deck was awfully hard but it was better
 than sleeping down in the hold. To damn stuffy and
 crowded. Any how I figured if we were torpedoed
 I'd have a much better chance being on deck to
 take off in a hurry! ha-ha-ha. I think it rained
 once in the 13 days and night. Didn't do anything
 but lay around on deck reading, eating, playing crap
 or cards or shooting the bull. Got pretty monotonous
~~after 10 days~~ after 10 days, but like anything else it had to
 be endured. The convoy itself was one of the
 biggest that came across and we were escorted
 all the way by cruisers airplane carriers and battle
 wagons. We felt pretty well secure. Lying out on
 deck at night looking up at the stars and thinking
 about home and everything else sure put sort of a
 knot in a guy's stomach. Didn't get sea sick at all.
 The ocean was calm all the time. To take a trip

like that in peace time I imagine would be okay, but under the conditions we were it wasn't very enjoyable. Anyhow that's past now we're looking forward to the ride back which I know we'll all enjoy under any conditions. We had 2 hot meals a day. One at 10 in the morning the other at 7 at night. We were also able to draw rations every day candy, gum, cigarettes. all in all it really wasn't too bad. Sure seemed funny when we landed in Africa and saw all the Arabs and all. Exciting and interesting until the newness wore off then the Arabs were a pain in the neck. They'll steal you blind to if you wouldn't watch them. Bay and talk about dirty! Never seen anything like it. No sanitation systems at all. They just stop and do their business any place, women or no women. Arabs think nothing of it. In Oran itself (we were bivouac'd about 2 miles outside of town) things were a little different or should I say a little cleaner! After staying in Oran for 2 months we motor conveyed to Tunis which is about 875 miles of ragged roads. That's when I was truck driving. We stayed bivouac'd about 8 miles from Tunis (the city) for 7 months.

Quite a city too. Nothing compared to Rome tho. all the time we were in Djedidia (that's the name of the little village we were bivouac'd in) we were operating 100 miles of pipe line pumping 100 octane gas to some of the largest airfields in N. Africa. Were recommended as one of the best pipe line units over here. Then in Feb. of '44 we were on our way to Italy. 13 days from Bizerta to Naples. and on C rations too! Boy were we a starved bunch of G.I.'s! C rations are a right for about 4 or 5 days then it's pretty tough to keep them down. Pretty rough too coming thru the straits of Messina. We were all sea sick on that ride believe me! Any one of us would have given 10 dollars for a good old fashioned hamburger before that trip was over. That's one I'll never forget. We came over on a Liberty ship without accomodations for troops. We slept on cold steel decks all the way. Really had some experiences mom. Worth a million bucks.

Well after landing in Naples we stayed there for a couple of days, then took off again, this time for something a little on the exciting side! We conveyed up to Ortona. A city on the Adriatic coast that was still being shelled by the Jerry's artillery & planes! We had an amphibious pipeline out in the port and we were always running for cover when old Jerry would start throwing a barrage. No one got hurt but plenty scared a few times. We were only about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the front. The only Americans in that section. All British 8th Army along with Canadians and S. Africans. That all took place when the 5th Army was still at Anzio & Cassino. We were actually ahead of the 5th Army only on the other side of Italy. We (that is the company) all received the bronze star for that. Really enjoyed ourselves with the Canadian L.I.'s. These pretty darn regular and would give us the shirt off their backs. Couldn't do enough for us. Seen a few dog fights between

some Jerry & English planes. Old Jerry being knocked down of course. One day I was sitting in the supply shack reading a story about our Navy pilot pilots in the Pacific raiding a Japanese convoy, when all of a sudden out of a clear sky I heard ~~mmmmmm~~ 3 oommmmm and then some thundering explosions. Just as I ran out of the hut I seen these 6 Jerry dive bombers pull out of their dive and retreat it for some. I didn't know what the ~~hell~~ to think so I took off for my fox hole, but fast. ha-ha-ha. That's how quick a thing like that happens. Anyhow after it was all over, we found out that they bombed a car park in town about 1 1/2 from us killing about 85 people. One of our fellows was up there and got the first hand story. That's the only one of those kind of raids we had. Anyhow after completing our job up there we packed up again and this time landed in Bari and operated a pipeline there for about 4 months. Pumping 100 octane again for the 12th airforce. We were attached to them at the time. Oh yes that patch I

wore on the shoulder of my uniform that Billy thought (A.F.) stood for air force, didn't. No, it stood for Allied Force. Were not with that branch any more. Were now with P.B.S. Did you ever hear of it. Stands for Peninsular Base Section. The infantry or front line troops depend on us for all there supplies etc. In other words were Service Troops. Then we left Bari on June 10th and landed in Rome on the 12th about a week after it was liberated by the allies. Beautiful city that wasn't touched by the war, as far as damage goes, but the people sure were hungry. Things here today seem to be getting pretty well under control. We were billeted about 1/2 mile from the city for about 3 months and we sure enjoyed that. Plenty of wine and amusements of all kind even a carnival. Yep they have them over here too and the kids. Are just as crazy about ~~them~~ here as they are back home. I guess kids don't change much the world over. Sure do run us down for candy, gum and last but not least, cigarettes. The way the saying

goes here is Chocality për Mama, Cigarette për Papa Caramella për Bambino. They have a regular system. ha ha ha. All you have to do is pull out a heavy bar and I bet before you could snap your fingers theres at least 25 kids begging you for a piece. The kids at home really don't know how fortunate they are. The movie houses over here are opening their doors again. American movies with writing in Italian. The majority of the movies over here before war were American made. They seem to know all the actors and actresses too. A real favorite among them is old Gary Cooper.

Tell Mom, I'm getting writers cramp, so I'm going to sign off for now but will take up where I left off, tomorrow. I still have quite a bit to tell you yet. Until tomorrow then Mom. Solong for now. Say hello to every one for me.

Love & Kisses,
Your Son,
Jack